Colvin & Scott's "De-escalation Cycle": Professional Development for High School Teachers

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Teachers often receive little formal training in how to effectively intervene when a student is behaving in a non-productive manner. Research shows that punitive consequences are usually not effective and are connected to negative outcomes for students. This study aimed to provide teachers with a working knowledge of Scott and Colvin's "De-escalation Cycle" through a series of professional development sessions. The participants also assessed the helpfulness of the instructional strategies used in each session.

Thirty teachers volunteered to participate in four professional development sessions about student behavior and effective interventions at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." Instruction included virtual and in-person strategies delivered asynchronously and in real time. Data was gathered through three surveys given over the course of the professional development series. Each survey included closed-ended questions, and responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics in Qualtrics. Results showed that teachers could identify the stages of the "De-escalation Cycle" and recognize at least one indicative behavior and one effective intervention at each stage following the professional development sessions. Respondents found all the instructional strategies used to be helpful to some degree.

Future professional development could practice strategies so that teachers have more than one intervention ready to use at each stage. Various instructional strategies that respondents found helpful should be considered when planning future sessions. The results of this study indicate that

a thorough understanding of the predictable “De-escalation Cycle” can help teachers accurately decode student behavior and apply evidence-based interventions to limit non-productive behavior and increase learning opportunities.

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Preface

This dissertation would not have been possible without the many people who were willing to help me achieve this goal. First, my husband and daughters have encouraged me every step of the way, even when it meant more work and time away from them. The same is true of my family and friends who have all supported me in this process. Second, I greatly appreciate the educators in my building who helped me by listening, sharing thoughts, and generously volunteering their time. Third, thank you to the 2019 EdD Cohort and the Educational Leadership ARCO, especially those I am honored to work with every day. I couldn't ask for a better network of dedicated professionals.

I'd also like to thank my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Charlene Trovato. She has encouraged and mentored me even into her retirement. I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr and Dr. Melissa Nelson for the important contributions they made to my professional understanding of student behavior as members of my committee. Dr. Thomas Ralston has been a mentor in both the practical and scholarly aspects of school leadership over the last five years and I am grateful for his thoughtful guidance. Finally, thank you to my editor, Susan, for working through this process with kindness and encouragement.

1.0 Problem Statement

Each public school in Pennsylvania is required to develop and publicize a code of conduct to guide school discipline. These codes include provisions to comply with federal, state, and local laws and adopted school board policies as well as district-specific rules commiserate with local norms ("Pennsylvania School Code," 2020). It is usually school administrators who enforce school district policies, rules, and regulations after an infraction has occurred. Though on the surface this appears to be an uncomplicated practice, many elements make this procedure far from straightforward.

In a K-12 public school environment, stakeholders play an important role in the functioning of the school within the community. Though administrators often enforce school policies, the stakeholders most closely impacted by disciplinary infractions at the classroom level are students and teachers. Each of these groups brings a different level of power and interest to their role, which influences their perspectives. Many infractions are subjective and determining that an infraction took place is often the work of the classroom teacher (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). When a teacher determines that an infraction has occurred, the student does have some power in their choice of reaction. Students do not have as much power, though, as the adults who are immediately involved in classroom interactions (Bryson, Patton, & Bowman, 2011).

Once the teacher determines that a subjective infraction has occurred, next steps need to be determined. A teacher may decide to deal with the infraction within their classroom, or they may refer the student to a building administrator. There are many factors that go into this decision. Some teachers may have the requisite classroom management skills to deal with the situation effectively, while others may not. (Welsh & Little, 2018). Since frequent disciplinary referrals and

punitive consequences correlate with negative outcomes for both students and society, figuring out how to sustain a positive environment where learning can thrive is important (Skiba et al., 2014). If a teacher could identify an effective intervention to stop negative classroom actions before or as they occur, they may be able to prevent, or at least decrease, non-productive behavior (Colvin & Scott, 2014). Teachers often receive little formal training in classroom management strategies, making it more likely that teachers have not had the opportunity to learn and practice effective strategies (Alvarez, 2007; Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019). When interactions escalate rather than diffuse problematic behavior, less learning occurs and there is more stress for both the student acting in a non-productive manner and teachers (Long, Fecser, Morse, Newman, & Long, 2014). When teachers use evidence-based strategies to set classroom expectations for behavior and learning, less non-productive student behavior occurs (Colvin & Scott, 2014). The use of these strategies then leads to an increase in the amount of time students are engaged in productive learning.

1.1 Definition of Terms

Zero Tolerance – "a highly structured disciplinary policy that permits little flexibility in outcome by imposing severe sanctions (often long-term suspension or expulsion)" (Gregory & Cornell, 2009, p. 107).

Subjective Infraction – a behavioral event that is interpreted by school staff as a disciplinary moment (Vavrus & Cole, 2002)

Classroom Management – “all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place” (Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 84).

Disciplinary Referral – an office referral that signals that a teacher has reached their limit to control behavior within the classroom and needs further resources (Fields, 2004).

2.0 Review of Supporting Knowledge

Ideas form about how schools should function and how the people within them should behave as information flows into and out of educational organizations. Knowledge about student behavior transfer throughout schools as shared experiences, advice, and ideas (Petrides & Guiney, 2002; Runhaar & Sanders, 2016). Teachers come to their jobs familiar with a particular type of school system that either did or did not serve them well when they were children. These perceptions of school shape the ways in which interactions take place in present-day classrooms (Facer, 2011). Research exists on what management strategies work to increase learning and decrease negative interactions in classrooms.

The following questions guided this literature review:

1. What types of interactions are likely to lead to negative interactions between teachers and students?
2. What factors influence how teachers approach classroom management?
3. How can teachers and administrators better respond to negative student behavior within K-12 classrooms?

2.1 Discipline in American Schools

2.1.1 Zero Tolerance & Exclusionary Policies

In 1994, the Gun Free Schools Act introduced zero tolerance for guns and weapons to every school in the United States through federal law. Since then, zero tolerance policies that include mandatory exclusionary discipline have become pervasive in American public schools (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Some assume that removing disobedient students will keep them away from compliant students and maintain order within the school. Research shows, though, that when school administrators remove disruptive students, previously well-behaved students then emerge as defiant (Noguera, 2003). Traditional discipline stems from the idea that negative behaviors will not be repeated if the student faces strong consequences. While strong, punitive consequences make for good public relations for school districts, there is no evidence that strong consequences prevent or deter bad behavior (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). It also follows logically that suspensions are reserved for only the most serious infractions, but that is not always the case. Demographic characteristics such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status matter play an influential role when it comes to exclusionary discipline rates (Skiba et al., 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018). The consequences of severely punitive policies are real and life-changing. Research shows that exclusionary practices lead to negative outcomes such as low achievement, high drop-out rates, bad school climate, and increased likelihood of arrest (Skiba et al., 2014). According to Gregory and Fergus (2017), "School discipline, poor achievement, and contact with the juvenile justice system are interconnected…over the long term, these facts imply that groups of students who are disproportionately suspended are less likely to succeed in life" (p. 119).

2.1.2 Infraction Subjectivity

Gregory and Ripski (2008) observed that "a discipline encounter represents only one socializing moment between an adult and a student" (p. 339). Behaviors leading to a potential incident usually take place in a classroom, which is a social space with its own culture, expectations, and social structure. Context and interactions prior to a disciplinary incident make a considerable difference in the outcome (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). When a behavior occurs, the teacher may classify the behavior as either acceptable or unacceptable in the moment (Welsh & Little, 2018). Many factors such as disciplinary history, context, teacher resources, and classroom management skills contribute a teacher's interpretation of student behavior (Skiba et al., 2014).

2.2 Classroom Management Techniques

2.2.1 Traditional Teacher Roles

Effective classroom management and building inclusive school environments are not often directly addressed through teacher preparatory programs, new teacher mentorship activities, or career long professional development (Alvarez, 2007; Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019) Though many new teachers enter the field unprepared to effectively manage a classroom, all come with some idea of what they think should happen in a learning environment (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). There are different ways to view authority in schools. More traditional views expect compliance from students, while a more relational approach focuses more on the care and well-being of student (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). A traditional view of a teacher's role expects complete obedience with

no exceptions or acceptable explanations for noncompliance with school rules (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). In this view, students who resist are viewed as either unwilling or unable to learn and so are sometimes removed from the classroom (Noguera, 2003).

Traditional beliefs about discipline can be seen in classroom interactions. As Gregory and Ripski (2008) state:

> Thus, it is striking that we were able to find a significant association between a discipline approach…and student behavior as reported by both students and teachers. This suggests that teacher beliefs about discipline may be detectable in how they interact with students. (p. 346).

Forced compliance through threat of punishment leads to more office referrals as the year progresses (Hafen, Ruzek, Gregory, Allen, & Mikami, 2015; Pane, Rocco, Miller, & Salmon, 2014). Constant attempts to coerce students to behave can ultimately lead to teacher burn-out and student resentment (Hafen et al., 2015). Yelling, getting into a student's personal space, not listening, and power struggles all negatively escalate discipline situations (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

2.2.2 Relational Classroom Management

Effective classroom management can be described as "a positive, supportive classroom environment based on a clear and well-organized management plan" (Norris, 2003, p. 315). Respectful conversations, clear rules, opportunity for student voice, frequent feedback, targeted praise, and real-world relevancy can all lead to a positive learning environment (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008; Kerr & Valenti, 2009). The warm demander or compassionate discipline approach couples structure with high expectations and teacher support to meet those

expectations (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Research shows that empathic responses to misbehavior are effective at establishing a classroom environment conducive to learning. In fact, student/teacher relationships are a strong predictor of student behavior (Haberman, 1991). When students feel respected, they are more likely to do what the teacher wants them to do (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). A relational approach to classroom discipline includes intentional relationship building and scaffolded teaching of prosocial behavior (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Lebaron Wallace, Sung, & Williams, 2014). Supportive and inclusive words, listening to student concerns, providing meaningful choices for students and explaining reasons for classroom rules and procedures are all ways to build positive relationships (Lebaron Wallace et al., 2014).

Teachers who know their students well may be able to recognize cues and intervene before behavior accelerates or deescalate the situation if a student misbehaves (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). Exclusionary and punitive discipline do not work, but early response before misbehavior does (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). According to Gregory and Cornell (2009):

> Authoritative [relational] discipline requires the school authority to make a judgement about the seriousness of the infraction and to consider the adolescent's intent and the circumstances of the behavior. The adolescent is respected as an individual and his or her motives and intentions are given fair consideration. Furthermore, punishment or consequences for misbehavior are calibrated to fit the seriousness of the offense which supports the adolescent's sense of justice and fairness. (p. 109).

Schools can help encourage a relational mindset by providing resources for teachers to intentionally engage in positive relationships with students (Gregory & Cornell, 2009).

2.3 Student Behavior

2.3.1 Student Self-Concept

There are many layers to what happens during a disciplinary incident in a K-12 classroom, but understanding the way in which conflict situations unfold is important to intervening effectively. Students may act out or withdraw in the classroom for a variety of reasons – they lack social and emotional skills, they can't meet expectations, they are looking to satisfy an unfulfilled need, or they are just bored (Kerr & Valenti, 2009; Long, Fecser, Morse, Newman, & Long, 2014; Norris, 2003). Teachers may not realize why their well-intentioned attempts at classroom discipline sometimes end in frustration and anxiety (Long et al., 2014). Understanding the complex interaction of student self-concept, classroom stressors, student behavior, and adult reaction can help in understanding why seemingly simple situations can unravel quickly.

When each student enters a classroom, they already have a preconceived self-concept and a tendency to seek out data to confirm that their self-concept is correct. Students with secure self-concepts can accurately predict how to gain favorable reactions and avoid unfavorable reactions from adults. Students with negative self-concepts, though, may not be able to accurately distinguish and alter their feelings and reaction based on adult intention, expectation, or circumstance. This can lead to behavior that generally disrupts the learning process (Long, Wood, & Fecser, 2001).

2.3.2 Behavioral Cycles

Though all students come into a classroom with a preconceived self-concept, those with negative beliefs about themselves are more prone to being triggered by some stressful event and reacting negatively. This trigger puts into motion a predictable pattern called the Conflict Cycle (Figure 1).

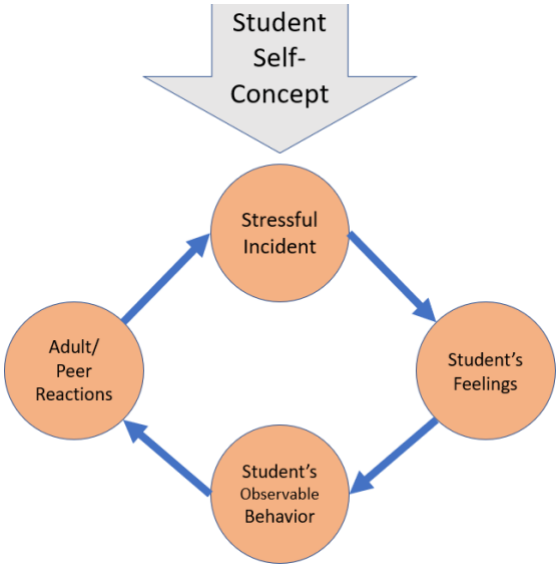


Figure 1. The Conflict Cycle

Note. Adapted from Long, N. J., Fecser, F. A., Morse, W. C., Newman, R. G., & Long, J. E. (2014). *Conflict in the classroom: Successful behavior management using the psychoeducational model* (7th ed.). Pro-Ed. Copyright 2014 by PRO-ED, Inc.

This trigger could seem like nothing to anyone else in the room, but personal beliefs cause the student to interpret the event in a way that causes intense stress. If the student does not have the coping skills to effectively deal with this intense stress, this results in feelings that manifest as observable, defensive behaviors that are not conducive to a learning environment. These negative behaviors then elicit a response from others in the classroom that may compound the first triggered

event to begin another conflict cycle. Without intervention, this cycle continues to grow in complexity as it repeats itself until an intervention occurs (Long et al., 2001).

Students engaging in the Conflict Cycle can trigger similar stressful emotions in teachers. If teachers are unaware of their own role in this cycle, they may be prone to mirror the student's behavior regardless of their intentions. This may lead the teacher to counter the student's behavior with escalating behavior of their own – yelling or threatening for example. This can further escalate student behavior and lead to a power struggle that fuels a continuation of the Conflict Cycle (Long et al., 2014). As teachers learn to be aware of their own emotions and take steps to stay calm, their capacity for good decision making in these highly charged situations will increase (Fields, 2004; Shukla-mehta & Albin, 2003).

Once a student begins to display negative behaviors, they have already moved through the first three stages of the Conflict Cycle: the stressful incident, feeling the emotion that the stressful incident triggers, and then channeling those feelings into an observable behavior. If an intervention is not tried or is not effective at removing the trigger, another predictable cycle of behavior occurs. As seen in Figure 2, student behavior may move from the trigger to a state of agitation where communication becomes more difficult. If still no effective intervention takes place, the student moves into the acceleration stage where they actively try to provoke the teacher by swearing, arguing, leaving the room, or engaging in other negative behaviors. If the student continues to escalate, their behavior may then peak (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). At this stage, the student may begin to physically act out, throwing, hitting, or knocking things over (Colvin & Scott, 2014). After the peak of escalation, the student's behaviors will typically de-escalate. The student may become calm, apologize, or blame others for their behavior. Unless something else happens to retrigger the student, they will return to a state of calm. Though this cycle varies in how quickly it

occurs, it will continue to occur unless effective interventions interrupt it (Colvin & Scott, 2014; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

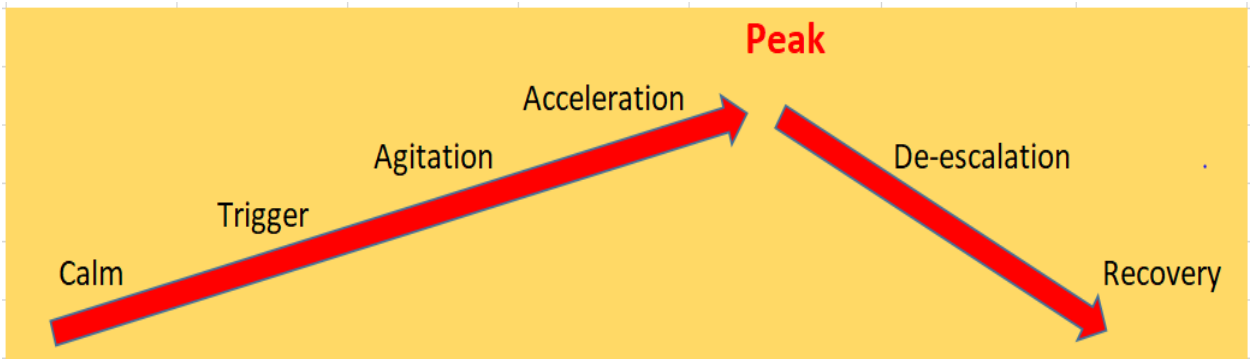


Figure 2. De-escalation Cycle

Note. Adapted from Pittsburg State University. (2015). Kansas Technical Assistance System Network. Copyright 2015 by Kansas State Department of Education.

2.3.3 Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies

Preventative measures, such as engaging instruction and developing positive relationships with students based on mutual respect, can minimize the chances of negative behavior happening in the first place. These strategies help to decrease the stress levels of both teachers and students (Duchnowski, Sheffield, Kutash, & Vaughan, 2005; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). Teachers can provide positive reinforcement for desired behavior and opportunity for frequent positive interactions with students (Conroy et al., 2008; Duchnowski et al., 2005; Fields, 2004; Shukla-mehta & Albin, 2003). An environment of learning where seating, transitions, and schedules are all appropriately planned, along with explicitly taught rules with consistent reinforcement increase the probability that a calm classroom will result. Students who have frequent opportunities to respond allow teachers the opportunity to monitor their progress and remove potential triggers before they arise (Conroy et al., 2008; Duchnowski et al., 2005; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

Teaching students social skills and having a plan increases the probability that everyone can cope if negative behavior does occur (Duchnowski et al., 2005; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016; Shukla-mehta & Albin, 2003).

Though preventative techniques will stop many problem behaviors before they start, some students will inevitably be triggered by a classroom event. Recognizing this can help the teacher choose an appropriate de-escalating intervention. Successful intervention at this stage depends on accurate decoding of student behavior by the teacher (Pittsburg State University, 2015). Teacher knowledge of the student can help them to know the best way to deal each particular student's behavior to intervene before it gets worse (Fields, 2004). The teacher can leverage positive relationships they have with the student at this point to encourage active listening and compliance (Colvin & Scott, 2014; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). Reminding a student of coping strategies that have worked in the past and acknowledging any improvement through the use of these strategies can help (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). Depending on the student and situation, it may be best to ignore the behavior in the moment and address it later, or it may be best to intervene right away (Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Long et al., 2014). At early stages of misbehavior, redirection, getting on the same level as the child and speaking in a calm, confident voice with non-confrontational body language can help de-escalate the situation (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

If the student continues to increase physical movements, communicate less, and lose focus, the focus shifts to ensuring the safety of those in the area. Even at this stage, calm body language and supportive tones from the teacher can help de-escalate the situation (Colvin & Scott, 2014). The teacher should avoid getting into an argument and provide clear choices to the student. They should allow the student to vent and avoid being baited into a power struggle. Though the student may be disrespectful, provoking, and inappropriate, this is not the time to address this behavior

(Kerr & Nelson, 2010). Active listening and stating clearly what the consequences for the behavior will be may bring the students emotions down or at least minimize the peak of their misbehavior (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). Avoiding ultimatums and ignoring anything a student mutters under his breath can also alleviate the situation (Kerr & Nelson, 2010). Only after the student begins to slow down should the teacher attempt to reengage the student without endorsing the negative behavior. The student should then be returned to normal activity as quickly as is practical. Once the immediate crisis is passed, however, follow-up with the student will need to take place. It is at this point that next steps can be discussed along with a plan to try to avoid escalation in the future (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

2.4 Synthesis

Zero tolerance and exclusionary discipline practices are popular but ineffective ways to deal with misbehavior in schools. These practices disproportionately penalize students on the basis of race, gender, and socioeconomic status and are linked to long-term negative outcomes (Skiba et al., 2014).

Though effective classroom management is important to the smooth running of a classroom, many teachers do not benefit from formal learning on this subject (Alvarez, 2007; Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019). Traditional discipline tends to focus on compliance instead of teaching positive behaviors (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Relational management emphasizes the development of positive student-teacher relationships. This enables teachers to better know when a student may act out and select an effective intervention to prevent

negative behavior from either occurring in the first place or escalating (Fields, 2004; Gregory & Ripski, 2008).

Understanding the predictable conflict and de-escalation cycles can help teachers learn skills to de-escalate tension during potential disciplinary interactions (Long et al., 2014; Pittsburg State University, 2015). Teachers who learn to de-escalate misbehavior do not allow students to do whatever they want in class, but they establish high expectations with supports to help students achieve those expectations. Learning that behavior follows a predictable cycle can help teachers to accurately decode and then effectively intervene to lessen negative behaviors (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016).

3.0 Theory of Improvement and Implementation Plan

3.1 Theory of Improvement

School administrators enforce school rules and regulations, but many infractions occur outside the direct view of principals. Therefore, it is usually the classroom teacher who first deals with student misbehavior. Subjective infractions, such as disrespect, often lead to office referrals only if they escalate to a level where the teacher perceives it to be extreme or repeated (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). At that point, teachers then send students to the office because they either see the behavior as so egregious that a higher level of authority is needed or they are out of ideas for handling the situation themselves (Fields, 2004). When a teacher is unable to address student behavior in the classroom, a great deal of the time and energy that should be devoted to learning is instead expended toward reactionary discipline. This leads to a great deal of emotional strain for teachers and lost opportunities for learning for their students. When teachers have better skills to prevent problem behaviors in the first place, there is more time for instruction and less toxic stress at school (Long et al., 2014).

Though teachers spend a great deal of time working with students in a classroom setting, they usually receive very little guidance on how to deal with non-productive student behavior effectively (Alvarez, 2007; Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019). Traditional punitive measures are usually ineffective at best and detrimental at worst (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Since teachers are often expected to learn how to manage a classroom by actually doing it on their own, providing opportunities to develop and practice management skills could be useful. All teachers could benefit

from adding new tools to their classroom management toolkit and learning techniques from their peers.

As teachers have the opportunity to learn and practice the use of positive, research-based intervention strategies, they should be more equipped to handle subjective infractions in their own classroom. Increased preventative measures will decrease the likelihood that a student will disrupt classroom learning in the first place, while newly learned interventions will change negative student behavior in the moment (Colvin & Scott, 2014). This will lead to less escalation and less time off track for the teacher and students alike (Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). As teachers become increasingly adept at using positive intervention strategies in their classrooms, it follows that the need for office referrals and the resulting consequences would decrease over time. Figure 3 provides a graphic representation to this theory of improvement (Perry, Zambo, & Crow, 2020).

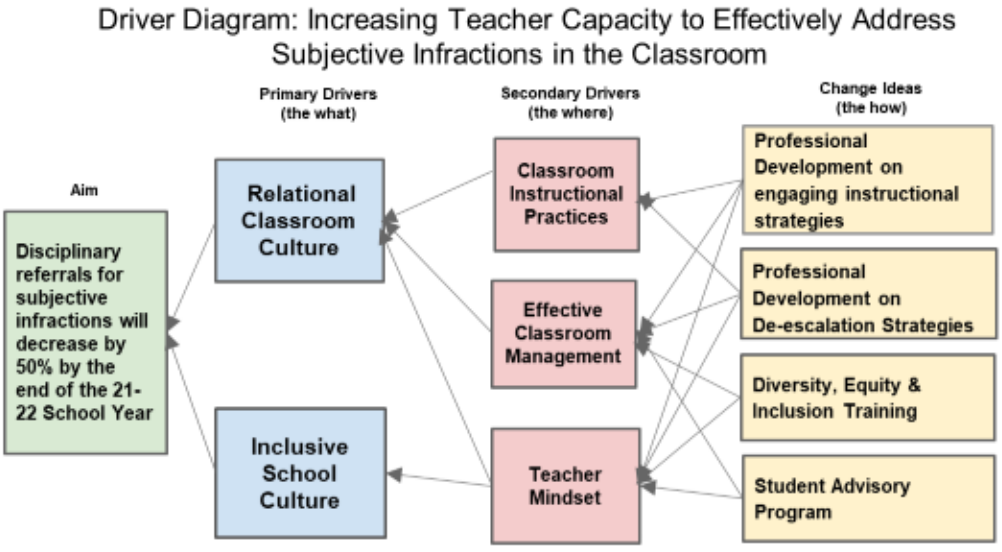


Figure 3. Driver Diagram

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The change idea that will produce the most positive change in a relatively short period of time would be to train teachers on de-escalation strategies. This change is entirely within the researcher's purview and would be relevant to all teachers, making it the most viable change idea (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Classroom conflict follows a predictable and research-based pattern that can be dissected and taught to teachers. Colvin and Scott (2014) hypothesize that conflict escalation takes place in seven distinct stages (Figure 2). If a teacher can interrupt the cycle at the initial stages of escalation, then they may be able to prevent misbehavior from occurring or keep the behavior from becoming worse. Specific preventative strategies such as establishing a classroom environment of respect, using engaging instruction, and redirection tend to work best at these early stages. Many teachers are familiar with these strategies but may not know what to do if these strategies fail to prevent misbehavior. Professional development that promotes a thorough understanding of this pattern can help a teacher to either prevent a conflict from happening in the first place or intervene effectively to mitigate the explosiveness of such a conflict (Colvin & Scott, 2014).

3.3 Methods and Measures

3.3.1 Setting and Participants

Approximately 45 staff at a small suburban public high school were invited to participate in a series of professional development sessions about the basic structure of the predictable

escalation cycle. Ultimately, 30 of eligible staff chose to participate. These stakeholders provide direct instruction to students in grades 10-12 during school hours and are therefore most likely to encounter situations where they could use the knowledge they gained. Other adults in the building, such as paraprofessionals, custodians, and secretarial staff, were not invited to participate because, while they interact with students regularly, they do not provide direct instruction. Twenty-six participants (86.6%) were classroom teachers who teach classes of students in grades 10-12 at least twice a day. One (3.0%) was a long-term substitute teacher and one (3.0%) was a pre-service student teacher. Fourteen (46.6%) taught core courses (English, social studies, math, or science), nine (30%) taught elective courses (art, world languages, family/consumer science or physical education), four (13.3%) work specifically with identified populations (special or gifted education), two (6.6%) work with students as school counselors and one (3.0%) works as a media center specialist.

Several steps were taken to incentivize participation. The researcher explained these as part of the recruitment of volunteers. An introductory presentation took place during a faculty meeting and addressed why knowledge of the "De-escalation Cycle" would be useful to teachers. All high school teachers and counselors saw this presentation, and no data was gathered. The purpose of the introductory session was only to solicit volunteers to participate in four subsequent sessions about the "De-escalation Cycle." The introductory presentation framed the "De-escalation Cycle" professional development as a way to help lessen the stress of negative interactions with students (Appendix A). This piqued interest and increased the perceived value of attending professional development in this area.

Contractually, every teacher must be at school between 7:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. with the exception of Wednesday morning, when teachers are required to be at school from 7:15 a.m.-7:45

a.m. to work at the discretion of building administrators. A period of time known as "LEAD time" begins at 8:00 a.m. each morning. This serves as a mandatory homeroom session for 10th graders and is an optional time to connect with teachers for 11th and 12th grade students. For two in-person sessions, participants chose between "De-escalation Cycle" sessions and alternative professional development opportunities on Wednesday mornings. All sessions concluded prior to 8:00 a.m. so that teachers could get to "LEAD time." Participants worked in small groups of their choosing throughout the sessions. In-person sessions were held in the Collaboration Center of the high school and lasted about 45 minutes.

Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, teachers must work an additional half hour but can choose *when* they do that. They may arrive as early as 7:15 a.m. and leave as early as 3:00 p.m., or arrive as late as 7:45 a.m. and leave as late as 3:30 p.m. This is known as "discretionary time." Two professional development sessions on the "De-escalation Cycle" took place asynchronously using Google classroom. Each session took about 45 minutes to complete. Each participant was either permitted to forego a week's worth of discretionary time or to record three hours of compensation time for completing the modules by the posted due date. These measures incentivized 30 educators to voluntarily take part in the "De-escalation Cycle" professional development series.

Following the explanation of the sessions and the incentives during the introductory session, the researcher sent out a Google form to all eligible participants through their school email. The body of the email gave the dates and times for each session, along with a link to a Google form to opt in to the professional development (Appendix B). The Google form contained a consent statement asking participants to opt in and asked if there was an interest in working with particular people in their small group over the sessions.

3.3.2 Instructional Content and Delivery

Participants learned to identify student behaviors and effective intervention strategies through the progression of the escalation cycle using materials from the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network website, as seen in Table 1 (Pittsburg State University, 2015). These modules allowed participants to focus on understanding the “De-escalation Cycle” and effective interventions. The series was presented in a hybrid format using Google classroom as a learning platform for both in-person meetings and asynchronous work. The following questions guided the implementation:

1.) To what extent can participants accurately identify the seven stages of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
2.) To what extent can participants accurately identify student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
3.) To what extent can participants accurately identify appropriate, evidence-based strategies to deescalate student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
4.) To what extent did participants find the instructional strategies used in each session helpful to their learning?

Learning took place over several sessions and each session was also aligned to Guskey’s (2002) five levels of professional development evaluation (Table 1). Ultimately, this will lead to better classroom management, better student-teacher relationships and a decrease in disciplinary referrals for subjective infractions (Perry, Zambo, & Crow, 2020). This series also served as a program evaluation by gathering data on how helpful participants found the instructional strategies used in each session.

Table 1. Professional Development Session Content

Session	Instructional Focus	Activities/ Assessment of Learning	Source	Evaluation Level
#1 (45 minutes)	• An Introduction to the Cycle of Escalation	• View "Module 1: An Introduction to the Cycle of Escalation" individually through Google classroom • Discuss "Activity" and "Task" sections of corresponding worksheets asynchronously using Google documents • Complete Qualtrics Survey #1	https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/1033 Qualtrics Survey #1	• Participants' Reactions • Participants' Learning
#2 (45 minutes)	• Signs of Escalation	• View "Module 2: Signs of Escalation" in person as a large group • Discuss "Activity" and "Task" sections of corresponding worksheets in small groups • Complete Qualtrics Survey #2	https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/1100 Qualtrics Survey #2	• Participants' Reactions • Participants' Learning • Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills
#3 (45 minutes)	• Early Intervention	• View "Module 3: Early Intervention" individually using Google classroom • Discuss "Activity" and "Task" sections of corresponding worksheets asynchronously using Google documents	https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/1102	• Participants' Reactions • Participants' Learning • Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills
#4 (45 minutes)	• Escalation Reaction	• View "Module 4: Escalation Reaction" in person as a large group • Discuss "Activity" and "Task" sections of corresponding worksheets in small groups • Complete Qualtrics Survey #3	https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/1104 Qualtrics Survey #3	• Participants' Reactions •Participants' Learning •Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills

After opting into the "De-escalation Cycle" professional development series, participants received an email with the code they needed for joining the Google classroom used to deliver instruction and materials for each session. Once they joined the Google classroom, they were able to access course materials and objectives and see who was assigned to their small group. The researcher made sure that each person had at least one person they had requested to work with in their small group. Step-by-step directions to complete each module were given on Google classroom. All participants were familiar with how to use Google classroom because they use that platform to teach their own classes. For modules one and three, the researcher linked one Google document for each small group labeled with a different group number. Each group's Google document had the questions needed to complete the module and asked participants to edit the Google document with their responses. Participants discussed these question prompts with their small groups in-person during modules two and four, so no Google documents were needed. Worksheets accompanying each session were used to supplement the video prompts and were downloaded from the website housing each video, then linked to the corresponding Google classroom module. Each worksheet provided an overview, big ideas, an activity, and a task to be completed before the next session. Participants completed surveys after they worked through modules one, two, and four in order to collect data (Appendix C). Participants needed a device that could connect to the internet in order to complete all sessions, and Google classroom was used to send out regular reminders about sessions.

After emailing the staff that opted into the "De-escalation Cycle" professional development the information they needed to join the Google classroom, the researcher published the first module on Google classroom and set a date for participants to complete the module. Step-by-step

directions were posted as an assignment on Google classroom to walk participants through the module as seen below:

1.) Participants began by reading the objectives and looking at the "De-escalation Cycle" image posted on the "class stream" section of the Google classroom.
2.) Participants then clicked on the Module 1 video linked to the module (see Table 1 under "Sources" for URL). They watched the video until prompted to pause it and discuss the "Activity" questions with their small group.
3.) When participants paused the video, they located the linked Google document assignment labeled with their small group number on Google classroom. They opened their group's Google document, selected a unique font color, and responded to the "Activity" prompts in writing.
4.) After responding in the Google document, participants continued watching the video until it was over.
5.) Participants then clicked on the Module 1 worksheet linked in the assignment and read through the worksheet. Participants were told they should be ready to discuss the "Task" prompt at the bottom of the Module 1 worksheet at the next session.
6.) After reading through the worksheet, participants clicked on the linked "De-escalation Cycle Survey #1," answered the survey questions, then submitted the survey (Appendix C).

The second module was presented in person. Step-by-step directions were again published as an assignment on Google classroom as a guide, but participants worked through this module together in-person as seen below:

1.) The researcher began the session by projecting and reading the objectives and the "De-escalation Cycle" image posted on the "class stream" section of the Google classroom.
2.) The researcher then clicked on the Module 2 video linked to the module (see Table 1 under "Sources" for URL) so the group could watch the video together until prompted to pause it and discuss the "Task" from the end of Module 1.
3.) Participants got into their small groups and discussed the "Task" prompt at the bottom the Module 1 worksheet for five to ten minutes as the researcher circulated around the room to ensure participants stayed on task. Each group then chose one member verbally summarize their discussion for the entire group.
4.) The researcher then began the Module 2 video again until prompted to pause it to discuss the "Activity" question.
5.) Participants then clicked on the Module 2 worksheet linked to the module, read through the worksheet and then discussed the question under the "Activity" heading with their small group for 5 to ten minutes as the researcher circulated around the room to ensure they stayed on task. Each small group then chose one group member to verbally summarize their discussion for the entire group.
6.) The researcher then played the Module 2 video until it was over and reminded participants that the third module was to be completed asynchronously by the due date posted on the Google classroom.
7.) Finally, the participants were asked to click on the "De-escalation Cycle Survey #2" linked to Module 2 in the Google classroom, answer the survey questions, and submit the survey (Appendix C).

As with the first module, step-by-step directions were given as an assignment on Google classroom to walk participants through the third module as seen below:

1.) Participants began by reading the objectives and looking at the "De-escalation Cycle" image posted on the "class stream" section of the Google classroom.
2.) Participants then clicked on the Module 3 video linked to the module (see Table 1 under "Sources" for URL). They watched the video until prompted to pause it and discuss the "Task" prompt with their small group.
3.) When participants paused the video, they located the linked Google document assignment labeled with their small group number on Google classroom. They opened their group's Google document, selected a unique font color and responded to the "Task" prompt in writing.
4.) After responding in the Google document, participants continued watching the video until prompted to pause it again to discuss the "Activity" question. They went back to the linked Google document assignment labeled with their small group number on Google classroom and responded to the "Activity" prompt in writing.
5.) After responding in the Google document, participants continued watching the video until it was over.
6.) Participants then clicked on the Module 3 worksheet linked in the assignment and read through the worksheet. Participants should be ready to discuss the "Task" prompt at the bottom of the Module 3 worksheet at the next session.

The fourth and final module was presented in person. Step-by-step directions were again published as an assignment on Google classroom as a guide, but participants worked through this module together in-person as seen below:

1.) The researcher began the session by projecting and reading the objectives and the "De-escalation Cycle" image posted on the "class stream" section of the Google classroom.
2.) The researcher then clicked on the Module 4 video linked to the module (see Table 1 under "Sources" for URL) so the group could watch the video together until prompted to pause it and discuss the "Task" from the end of Module 3.
3.) Participants got into their small groups and discussed the "Task" prompt at the bottom the Module 3 worksheet for 5 to ten minutes as the researcher circulated around the room to ensure participants stayed on task. Each group then chose one member verbally summarize their discussion for the entire group.
4.) The researcher then began the Module 4 video again until prompted to pause it to discuss the "Activity" question.
5.) Participants then clicked on the Module 4 worksheet linked to the module, read through the worksheet, and then discussed the question under the "Activity" heading with their small group for 5 to ten minutes as the researcher circulated around the room to ensure they stayed on task. Each small group then chose one group member to verbally summarize their discussion for the entire group.
6.) The researcher then played the Module 4 video until it was over.
7.) Finally, the participants were asked to click on the "De-escalation Cycle Survey #3" linked to Module 4 in the Google classroom, answer the survey questions, and submit the survey (Appendix C).

3.3.3 Surveys

After modules one, two, and four, the researcher asked participants to complete a survey generated through Qualtrics. All survey questions were derived from the inquiry questions and clearly linked to research, as seen in Table 2. Participants were not asked for any identifying information in order to remain anonymous.

Table 2. Survey Question Alignment and Analysis

Inquiry Question	Survey/ Question	Analysis	Source
1.) To what extent can participants accurately identify the seven stages of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #1 Questions 2-6	Group-level analysis	Colvin & Scott (2014); Martel & Cavanaugh (2016); KTASN (2015)
2.) To what extent can participants accurately identify student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #2 Questions 2-8	Group-level analysis	Colvin & Scott (2014); Martel & Cavanaugh (2016); KTASN (2015)
3.) To what extent can participants accurately identify appropriate, evidence-based strategies to deescalate student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #3 Questions 2-11	Group-level analysis	Colvin & Scott (2014); Martel & Cavanaugh (2016); KTASN (2015)
4.) To what extent did participants find the instructional strategies used in each session helpful to their learning?	Survey #1 Question 7; Survey #2 Question 9; Survey #2 Question 12	Group-level analysis	KTASN (2015)

Survey #1 was linked to the assignment for Module 1 on Google classroom (Appendix C) and organized as noted below:

1.) The first question asked for participant consent.

2.) The second question asked about the familiarity of the respondent with the "De-escalation Cycle" prior to these professional development sessions on a Likert-like scale.

3.) The next series of questions asked respondents to answer four multiple choice questions designed to assess whether they could identify the given stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." Respondents could only choose one answer.

4.) The last question on the survey asked respondents to use a Likert scale to rate the helpfulness of instructional strategies used in the session. The responses to this question were used to evaluate how useful the respondents thought each instructional strategy was in meeting the stated session objectives.

Survey #2 was linked to the assignment for Module 2 on Google classroom (Appendix C) and organized as noted below:

1.) The first question asked for participant consent.

2.) The next seven multiple choice questions were designed to assess whether they could accurately identify student behavior at each stage "De-escalation Cycle." Respondents could choose as many answers as they believed to be correct.

3.) The last question on the survey asked respondents to assess the helpfulness of instructional strategies used in the session using a Likert-like scale. The responses to this question were used to evaluate how useful the respondents thought each instructional strategy was in meeting the stated session objectives.

Survey #3 was linked to the assignment for Module 4 on Google classroom (Appendix C) and organized as noted below:

1.) The first question asked for participant consent.

2.) The next ten multiple choice questions were designed to assess whether they could accurately identify evidence-based intervention strategies at each stage "De-escalation Cycle." Respondents could choose as many answers as they believed to be correct.

3.) The last question asked respondents to use a Likert-like scale to rate the helpfulness of instructional strategies. The responses to this question were used to evaluate how useful the respondents thought each instructional strategy was in meeting the stated session objectives.

4.0 Results

The purpose of this study was two-fold. The first purpose was to assess participant knowledge of the “De-escalation Cycle” following professional development sessions specifically designed to teach that information. The second purpose of this study was to assess the instructional delivery of these professional development sessions. The findings in this section are presented by survey responses correlating to the following research questions:

1.) To what extent are participants able to identify the seven stages of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
2.) To what extent can participants accurately identify student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
3.) To what extent can participants accurately identify appropriate, evidence-based strategies to deescalate student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?
4.) To what extent did participants find the instructional strategies used in each session helpful to their learning?

4.1 Participants

All participants were current employees of a small suburban high school. They consisted of teachers and counselors who interact regularly with students in grades 10-12. Participation was voluntary; 30 of the 45 people invited (66.7%) took part in the study. Eligible participants were made aware of the opportunity to participate during a faculty meeting where they viewed a short

presentation. They then completed a brief Google form to indicate they were interested in participating (Appendix B) and were invited to join a Google classroom. The Google classroom was then used as the primary mode of instructional delivery throughout the study.

4.2 Data Analysis

After three of four total professional development sessions, participants were asked to complete a survey. Each survey assessed participant knowledge of the “De-escalation Cycle” and asked them to rate the helpfulness of the instructional elements of each session. Surveys were developed to align with the research questions following completion of sessions 1, 2 and 4. Table 3 shows how each inquiry question was aligned with one or more survey question.

Table 3. Inquiry & Survey Question Alignment

Inquiry Question	Survey/ Question
1.) To what extent can participants accurately identify the seven stages of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #1 Questions 2-6
2.) To what extent can participants accurately identify student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #2 Questions 2-8
3.) To what extent can participants accurately identify appropriate, evidence-based strategies to deescalate student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?	Survey #3 Questions 2-11
4.) To what extent did participants find the instructional strategies used in each session helpful to their learning?	Survey #1 Question 7; Survey #2 Question 9; Survey #2 Question 12

Descriptive statistics generated by Qualtrics were used to measure participants' learning about the behaviors and effective interventions associated with each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." Group-level analysis demonstrated to what extent this learning took place. Descriptive statistics also indicated how useful participants found the instructional strategies used during each session. These data were used to assess participants' overall perception of these instructional strategies. Outcome measures show whether change ideas are influencing the entire system and will be measurable as the school year goes on. If fewer students are referred for subjective infractions over the next year or so, that may show that this professional development made an impact. An overall reduction of these numbers will at least indicate that the system is moving in the right direction (Guskey, 2002; Perry et al., 2020).

4.3 Findings

In this section, participants' responses from the surveys are presented for each research question. Findings are reported via narratives, figures, and/or tables.

4.3.1 To What Extent are Participants Able to Identify the Seven Stages of the "De-escalation Cycle"?

In order to answer the first research question, participants were asked how familiar they were with the "De-escalation Cycle" prior to their first professional development session. As Figure 4 shows, no respondents self-reported being "very familiar" with the "De-escalation

Cycle"; 20 (69.0%) self-reported being "somewhat familiar" with the "De-escalation Cycle," and nine (31.0%) self-reported being "not at all familiar" with the "De-escalation Cycle."

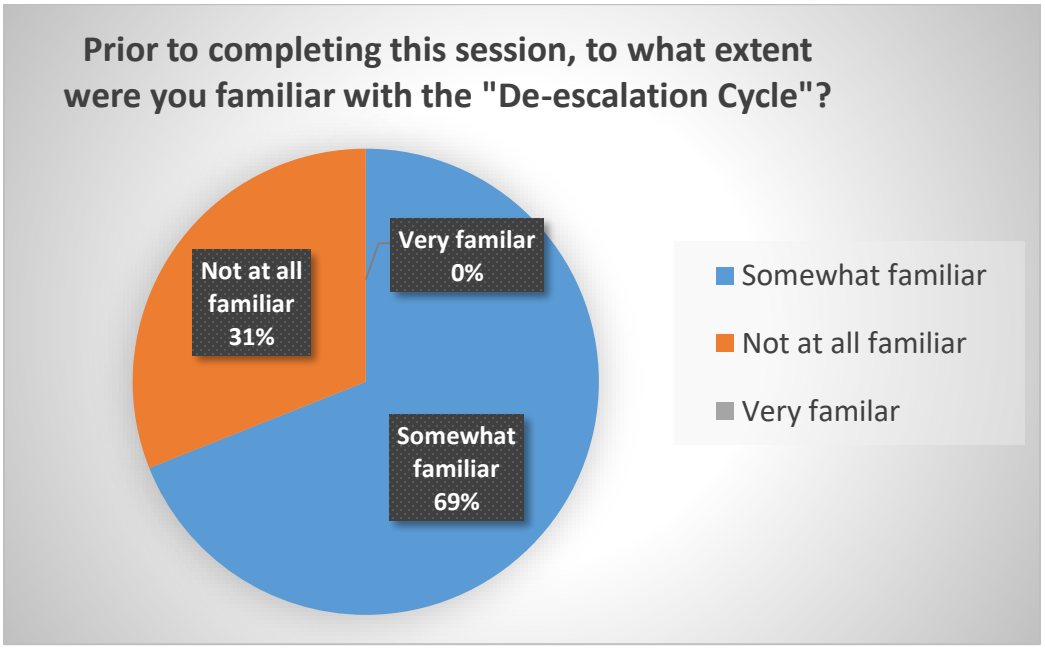


Figure 4. "De-escalation Cycle" Familiarity

After the first session, 29 of 30 participants (96.7%) completed the first survey and 26 respondents (89.7%) were able to correctly identify that there were seven stages in the "De-escalation Cycle." As Figure 5 shows, 27 respondents (93.1%) accurately identified the first stage of the cycle as the "Calm" stage, 27 (93.1%) correctly identified the "Peak" stage as the stage where the most extreme behavior occurs, and 29 (100%) accurately identified the "Recovery" stage as the final stage of the cycle.

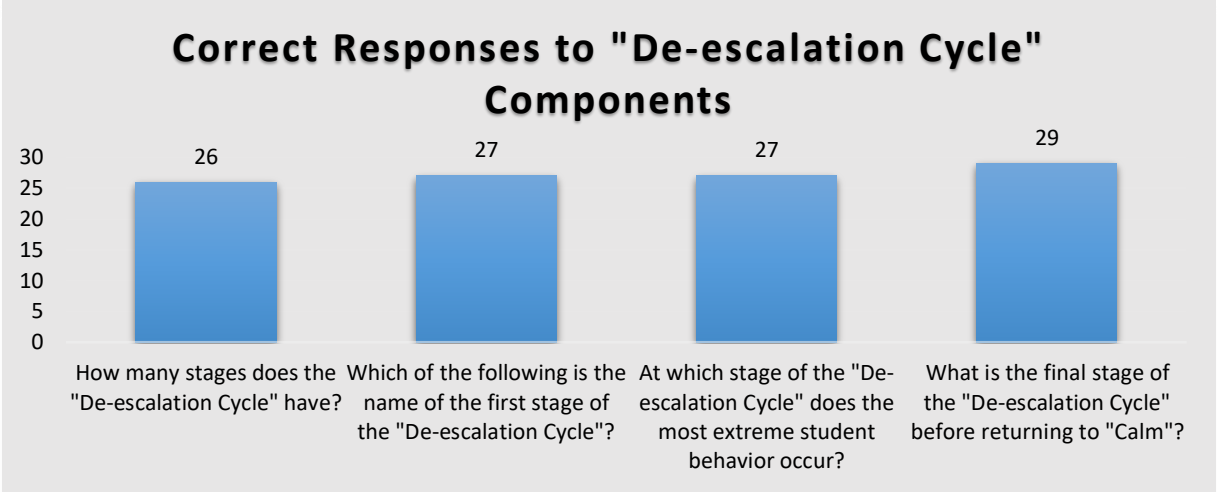


Figure 5. "De-escalation Cycle" Component Responses

4.3.2 To What Extent Can Participants Accurately Identify Student Behavior at each Stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?

Participants completed the survey that corresponded to this research question after the second professional development session. Twenty-nine out of 30 participants (96.7%) responded to the survey. Questions prompted respondents to select which student behaviors of a list of five given behaviors were indicative of each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." If the respondent selected a student behavior from the list, this indicated that the respondent believed that this behavior occurred at the given stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." The respondent could choose as many listed behaviors as they thought accurately described student behavior during the given stage of the cycle. For each stage of the cycle, there were both correct and incorrect behaviors listed.

The first question of this nature asked respondents to identify, from a list, the behaviors that would indicate that a student is currently in the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle."

As seen in Table 4, 27 (93.1%) correctly chose “Cooperative or following directions” as behavior demonstrated by a student in the “Calm” stage. While a large number of correct responses were chosen, an extremely low number of incorrect responses (one response, or 3.4%) were chosen. This indicates that most respondents were able to identify correct behaviors at this stage, and almost everyone was able to identify behaviors that are not associated with this stage.

Table 4. “Calm” Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Accepting feedback or focused	72.4%	21
Attentive or engaged	62.1%	18
Cooperative or following directions	93.1%	27
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Jittery or bothering others	0.0%	0
Non-compliant or complaining	3.4%	1

The next question asked respondents to identify behaviors indicative of the “Trigger” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle.” Again, a large number of respondents were able to choose a correct answer, as seen in Table 5. “An unexpected change” was chosen by 28 respondents (96.6%). No one chose the incorrectly listed behavior, indicating that teachers have a strong idea of what types of behavior students display at this stage.

Table 5. "Trigger" Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following can move a student from the "Calm" stage to the "Trigger" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
An accumulation of errors	62.1%	18
An unexpected change	96.6%	28
Displaced anger	55.2%	16
Frustration	72.4%	21
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Being positively reinforced	0.0%	0

As respondents moved to choosing behaviors that indicate that a student is reaching the "Agitation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle," though, things become a little less certain. As seen in Table 6, a large number of respondents (24 responses, or 82.8%) chose at least one behavior that indicated the "Agitation" stage, but far more (10, or 34.5%) chose at least one incorrect behavior at this stage than at previous stages. This indicates that while many teachers may be able to identify student behaviors at this stage correctly, behaviors at this stage may be interpreted incorrectly almost one-third of the time.

Table 6. "Agitation" Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Agitation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Difficulty focusing on work	69.0%	20
Increase in eye & hand movement	82.8%	24
Less willing to communicate	75.9%	22
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Defending actions or blaming others	34.5%	10
Gross defiance or swearing	31.0%	9

The next question moved back toward more consensus, as seen in Table 7. An overwhelming 28 participants (96.6%) correctly chose “Argumentative or verbally intimidating” as a behavior indicating that a student is in the “Acceleration” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle.” Only one response was incorrect.

Table 7. “Acceleration” Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Acceleration" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Argumentative or verbally intimidating	96.6%	28
Gross defiance or swearing	62.1%	18
Threats or provoking language	75.9%	22
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Apologizing or denying actions	3.4%	1
Calming or showing shame	0.0%	0

Though respondents were generally able to match student behavior to the correct stage of the “De-escalation Cycle” throughout, they were very adept at choosing correct behaviors for the “Peak” stage of the cycle as shown in Table 8. “Defending actions or blaming others” was the highest chosen incorrect response at 20.7% (six total responses).

Table 8. “Peak” Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Peak" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Physical threats or acting out	89.7%	26
Violent behaviors or tantrums	96.6%	28
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Calming or showing shame	0.0%	0
Defending actions or blaming others	20.7%	6
Re-engaging or showing regret	3.4%	1

Respondents were asked to identify behaviors associated with the “De-escalation” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle. As seen in Table 9, again a large number (26 responses, or 89.7%) were able to identify at least one behavior indicative of this stage. Only just above half (16 responses, or 55.2%), however, correctly identified “Projecting blame on others” as an observable behavior at this stage. Almost half (13 responses, or 44.8%) misidentified “Accepting feedback or focused” as a behavior indicating this stage.

Table 9. “De-escalation” Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "De-escalation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Apologizing or crying	89.7%	26
Projecting blame on others	55.2%	16
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Accepting feedback or focused	44.8%	13
Increase in eye & hand movement	3.4%	1
Violent behaviors or tantrums	0.0%	0

Respondents were able to identify at least one behavior of students at the “Recovery” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle” 96.6% (28 total responses), as seen in Table 10. No one chose an incorrect response, indicating that respondents could accurately identify behaviors indicative of this stage.

Table 10. "Recovery" Stage Behavior Identification Responses

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Recovery" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Calming but not engaged	96.6%	28
Wanting to be alone	82.8%	24
Incorrect Responses		
Behavior	% Responses	# Responses
Gross defiance or swearing	0.0%	0
Threats or provoking language	0.0%	0
Yelling or screaming	0.0%	0

4.3.3 To What Extent Can Participants Identify Appropriate Evidence-Based Strategies to De-escalate Student Behavior at Each Stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?

Participants completed the survey that corresponded to this research question after they finished both the third and fourth professional development sessions. Only 28 people were able to participate in the fourth session, and all 28 people (100%) took the third survey.

One question asked respondents to select the main purpose of interventions in the early "Calm," "Trigger," and "Agitation" stages of the "De-escalation Cycle." Respondents could select as many answers as they liked from the provided list of five possibilities, but there was only one correct answer. As seen in Figure 6, 25 (89.3%) chose the correct answer of "Prevent escalation to a peak."

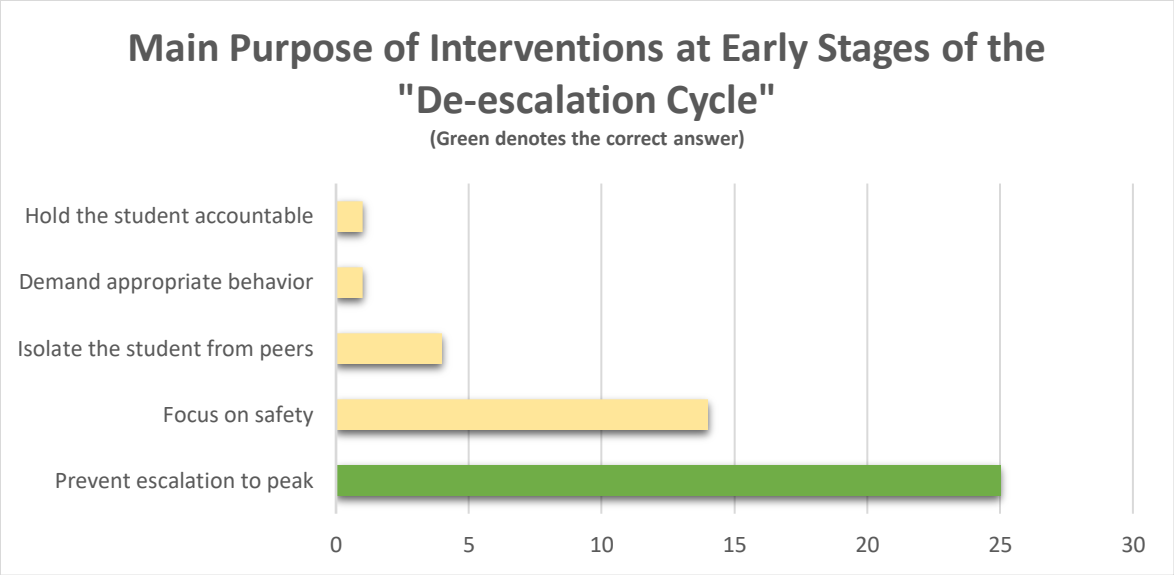


Figure 6. Purpose of Early Stage Intervention Responses

Another question asked respondents to select the main purpose of interventions in the later "Acceleration," "Peak," "De-escalation," and "Recovery" stages of the "De-escalation Cycle." Respondents could select as many answers as they liked from the list of five possibilities, but there was only one correct answer. As seen in Figure 7, 27 (96.4%) chose the correct answer of "Focus on Safety."

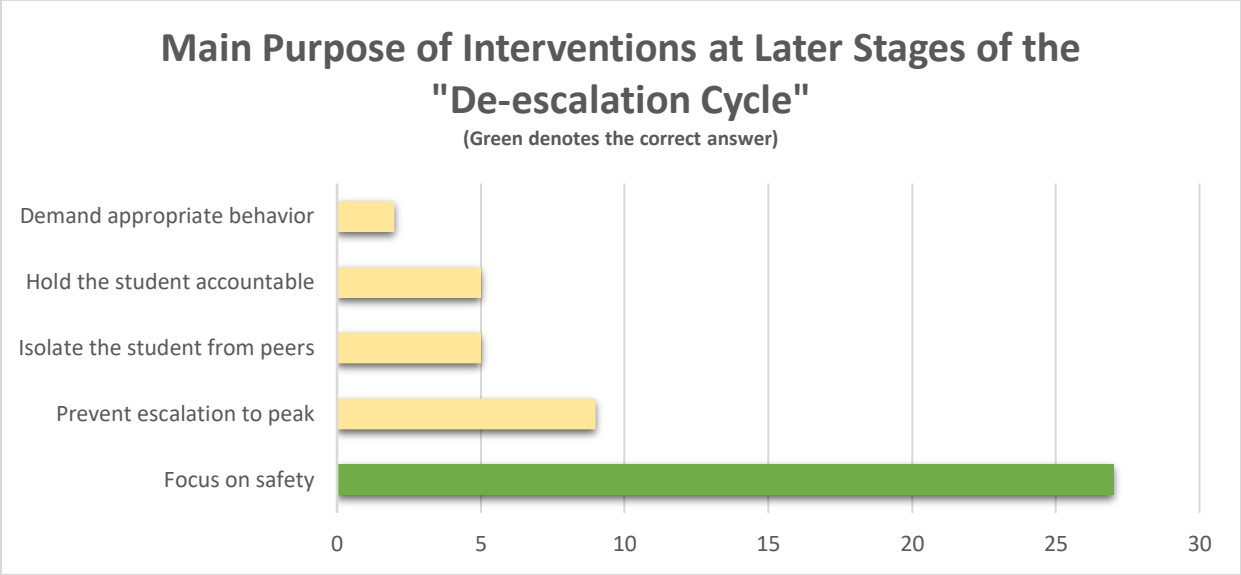


Figure 7. Purpose of Later Stage Intervention Responses

Other questions prompted respondents to select which intervention of a list of five interventions were most effective at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." If the respondent selected an intervention from the list, this indicated that the respondent believed that this intervention was most effective when used at the given stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." The respondent could choose as many listed interventions as they thought accurately described an effective intervention during the given stage of the cycle. For each stage of the cycle, there were both correct and incorrect interventions listed.

As seen in Table 11, respondents were able to identify at least one effective intervention strategy at the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle" 85.7% of the time (or 24 total responses). They overwhelmingly knew that "Reinforcing positive behavior" and "Building positive relationships" were effective strategies at this stage. No one chose the one ineffective strategy that was listed, "Making sudden movements."

Table 11. "Calm" Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Building positive relationships	71.4%	20
Establishing standard consequences	32.1%	9
Reinforcing positive behavior	85.7%	24
Teaching replacements to problem behaviors	53.6%	15
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Making sudden movements	0.0%	0

As seen in Table 12, at the "Trigger" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle," respondents again overwhelmingly were able to choose one effective intervention strategy – 23 (82.1%) correctly chose "Distracting the student." Responses to the other correct listed strategies, though, were considerably lower with only 39.3% (11 responses) choosing "Prompt to increase student success" and 50.0% (14 responses) choosing "Reinforcing positive behavior." Five respondents (17.9%) incorrectly identified "Following a crisis plan" as an effective strategy at this stage. This strategy is, in fact, most effective at the "Peak" of the "De-escalation Cycle."

Table 12. "Trigger" Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Trigger" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Distracting the student	82.1%	23
Prompts to increase student success	39.3%	11
Reinforcing positive behavior	50.0%	14
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Following a crisis plan	17.9%	5
Physically touching the student	0.0%	0

Respondents overwhelmingly were able to identify “Focusing on redirection” as an appropriate intervention at the “Agitation” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle,” as seen in Table 13. While 26 (92.9%) chose this correct response, only 11 (39.3%) chose “Providing choices.” As with the “Calm” stage, however, no one chose an incorrect intervention at this stage.

Table 13. “Agitation” Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Agitation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Focusing on redirection	92.9%	26
Modifying the environment	75.0%	21
Providing choices	39.3%	11
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Raising your voice	0.0%	0
Using confrontational body language	0.0%	0

When respondents chose what they believed to be the most effective intervention strategies at the “Acceleration” stage, most were able to readily identify “Giving simple choices” (85.7%, or 24 total responses) and “Using a calm voice” (92.9%, or 26 total responses), as seen in Table 14. Far fewer (10.7%, or three total responses) correctly identified “Reminding the student of possible consequences” as an appropriate intervention at this stage. Five participants (17.9%) incorrectly chose “Engaging the student in a conversation” as effective at this stage, but no one incorrectly identified “Getting the last word in an argument” as a strategy they should use.

Table 14. "Acceleration" Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Acceleration" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Giving simple choices	85.7%	24
Reminding student of possible consequences	10.7%	3
Using a calm voice	92.9%	26
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Engaging in a conversation	17.9%	5
Getting the last word in an argument	0.0%	0

As seen in Table 15, at the "Peak" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle," almost all respondents were able to identify that "Giving the student space" (96.4%, or 27 total responses) and "Removing an audience" (92.9%, or 26 total responses) were effective interventions. Fewer correctly chose "Avoiding eye contact" (53.6%, or 15 total responses), but this still indicates a high level of correct responses at this stage. Again, no one chose an incorrect intervention.

Table 15. "Peak" Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Peak" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Avoiding eye contact	53.6%	15
Giving the student space	96.4%	27
Removing an audience	92.9%	26
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Issuing consequences	0.0%	0
Yelling to get student attention	0.0%	0

Respondents were very adept at correctly identifying both "Giving student space" and "Providing simple, calm direction" as effective interventions at the "De-escalation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." As seen in Table 16, 23 participants (82.1%) and 27 participants (96.4%) respectively chose these strategies. Only two respondents incorrectly chose "Teaching social

skills” and one incorrectly chose “Issuing ultimatums,” strategies that would not be effective at this stage.

Table 16. “De-escalation” Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "De-escalation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Giving student space	82.1%	23
Providing simple, calm direction	96.4%	27
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Blaming the student	0.0%	0
Issuing ultimatums	3.6%	1
Teaching social skills	7.1%	2

As seen in Table 17, every respondent correctly chose “Returning to routines” as an effective intervention strategy at the “Recovery” stage of the “De-escalation Cycle.” Significantly fewer, however, correctly chose “Reinforcing compliance” as another effective intervention with only 39.3% (11 total responses) choosing that option. Many also knew which strategies would not be effective, but two respondents incorrectly chose “Using sarcasm to inject humor” and one incorrectly chose “Making sudden movements” as an intervention at this stage.

Table 17. “Recovery” Stage Effective Intervention Strategy Responses

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Recovery" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.		
Correct Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Reinforcing compliance	39.3%	11
Returning to routines	100.0%	28
Incorrect Responses		
Intervention	% Responses	# Responses
Making sudden movements	3.6%	1
Physically touching the student	0.0%	0
Using sarcasm to inject humor	7.1%	2

4.3.4 To What Extent Did Participants Find the Instructional Strategies Used in Each Session Helpful to Their Learning?

The final question on each survey asked the respondents to use a Likert-like scale to rate how helpful they found certain elements of the instruction. Participants were asked to rate the helpfulness of the video and Google classroom resources such as the objectives, worksheets, and related materials that were a part of every session in all three surveys. They rated written responses using Google documents for asynchronous small group collaboration and the asynchronous virtual format on the first and third survey. They rated the group discussion and in-person format on the second and third surveys.

The Likert-like rating scale ranged from "Extremely Helpful" as the best possible rating to "Not Helpful at All" as the worst possible rating. Each textual rating on the scale was coded with a numeric value in order to aid in analysis. An "Extremely Helpful" rating = 5, "Very Helpful" = 4, "Helpful" = 3, "Not Very Helpful" = 2, and "Not Helpful at All" = 1. Responses were coded using these values, then added and averaged. The higher the average, the more helpful the respondents as a whole found that element of instruction. Overall, all instructional elements were rated between 3.62 and 4.52, indicating that participants found all elements overwhelmingly helpful. Only three (10.3%) rated the "Written Responses Using Google Doc" as "Not Very Helpful" on Survey #1 and the same number rated the "Asynchronous, Virtual Format" as "Not Very Helpful" on Survey #1. One person (3.6%) rated the "Video" as "Not Very Helpful" on Survey #3. No one rated any instructional element as "Not at All Helpful."

Some instructional elements were more helpful than others, though, and some helpfulness changed over time. As shown in Figure 8, respondents found the video less helpful as the sessions progressed, as the average rating of this element fell from 4.29 on a 5-point scale to an average

rating of 3.96 (Figure 8). Though respondents found the "Google Classroom Resources" more consistently helpful (Figure 8), they found the "In-person Format" and face-to-face "Group Discussion" instructional elements to be much more helpful to their learning overall than the "Asynchronous, Virtual Format" and the asynchronous "Written Responses Using Google Doc." Respondents found the in-person format much more helpful to their learning, with an average rating of 4.49 on a 5-point scale as opposed to an average rating of 3.88 for the asynchronous virtual format. The same was true of group discussions, which were rated on average at 4.44 on a 5-point scale, over written responses, rated on average at 3.81 (Figure 9). This correlates with the Google documents themselves, which show that while all participants engaged asynchronously in the prompts given on the Google documents the first time they were asked to do so, only 52 of a possible 60 prompts (86.7%) had responses the second time that instructional element was used.

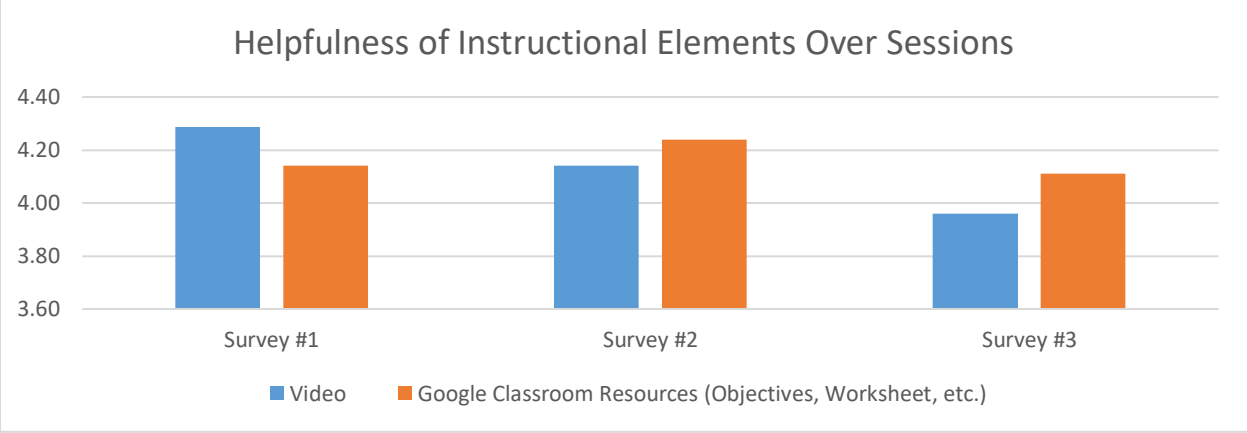


Figure 8. Helpfulness of Instructional Element Responses

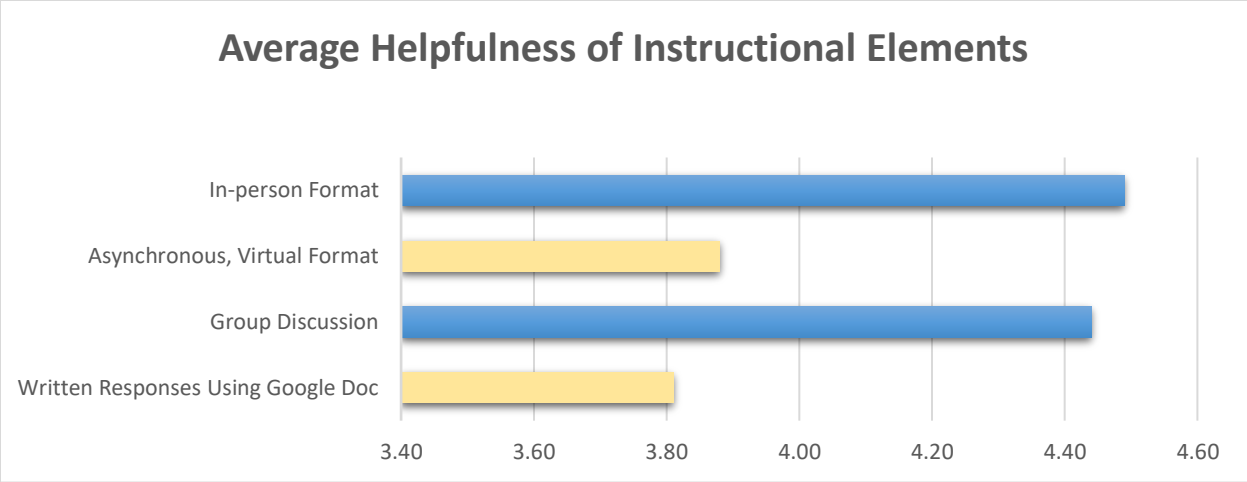


Figure 9. Average Helpfulness of Instructional Elements

4.4 Summary

Prior to the professional development intervention, just over two-thirds of participants reported being even somewhat familiar with the "De-escalation Cycle." Following the first session, an overwhelming majority were able to identify key parts of the cycle and the correct number of stages in the cycle.

Following the second professional development session, a large majority of participants were able to correctly identify student behaviors at each stage (as seen in Tables 4 - 10) between 71.6% and 93.1% of the time. Respondents chose the incorrect student behaviors to be associated with the "Agitation" and "De-escalation" stages most often (see Tables 6 and 9).

Following the last two professional development sessions, respondents were able to identify the purpose of interventions at the early and later stages of the "De-escalation Cycle" (see Figures 1 and 2). They were also able to correctly identify effective interventions more often than not, but at a lower percentage rate than they were able to identify student behaviors at each stage

(Tables 11 – 17). Respondents were least able to identify effective interventions at the "Calm" and "Trigger" stages of the cycle (Tables 11 and 12). Incorrect interventions were also chosen sparingly, with ineffective interventions being chosen most often at the "Acceleration" stage (Table 14).

Finally, participants indicated that they thought all instructional elements were helpful to a high degree, with each element averaging between 3.62 and 4.52 on a 5-point scale. It was clear, though, that they preferred the in-person elements to the online asynchronous elements. This became even more clear over each session, where engagement with the online written portion of the sessions fell by almost 15% and the reported helpfulness of this portion decreased slightly. The in-person elements, including group discussion, were reported as being much more helpful overall (Figure 9).

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of key findings relevant to the problem of practice, including interpretations of key findings, recommendations for the future, further implications, and limitations of the study.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

Key findings in this study can be divided into two broad categories. The first category regards the degree to which study participants accurately demonstrated understanding of the "De-escalation Cycle." The second category pertains to the instructional strategies used in the study's professional development sessions.

5.1.1 Understanding the De-escalation Cycle

When asked if they were familiar with the "De-escalation Cycle" prior to participating in the professional development sessions as a part of this study, no respondent reported being very familiar with it. If we accept that familiarity with the "De-escalation Cycle" is helpful in managing student behavior, then this finding is consistent with the literature that teachers tend to receive very little guidance in this area (Alvarez, 2007; Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019). Those who reported that they had some familiarity with the cycle may have been thinking of the presentation given to

encourage people to participate in the study (Appendix A). This presentation posited that student behavior that resulted in subjective infractions such as classroom disruptions or insubordination tended to be very stressful for teachers. This assertion is consistent with the literature that says that even when teachers have good intentions, ineffective classroom management can lead to frustration, anxiety, and burn-out for teachers as well as negative outcomes for students (Hafen et al., 2015; Long et al., 2014). Since about 66.6% of eligible participants elected to take part in the study, something about this topic must have resonated with them.

Most respondents were able to answer questions on the first survey asking them to identify the number and order of stages in the "De-escalation Cycle." There was a very high degree of understanding here, with over 90% of respondents answering each question correctly. It was in this survey that the highest level of understanding was seen, perhaps owing at least in part to the fact that there was only one correct answer to each survey question. In later surveys, questions pertaining to the cycle had several possible correct answers. On these questions, respondents tended to choose at least one correct answer with a very high degree of accuracy (82% or higher), but a much smaller number also chose subsequent correct answers. This indicates that while they were able to associate at least one student behavior or effective intervention with each stage of the cycle, they may still be missing a complete understanding of the complexities at each stage.

While many respondents were able to correctly identify at least one behavior associated with each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle," they were much more likely to misidentify behavior at the "Agitation," "Peak," and "De-escalation" stages of the cycle. In general, they incorrectly identified behaviors at these stages that actually occur later in the cycle. For example, 10 respondents (34.5%) chose that "Defending actions or blaming others" happens at the "Agitation" stage. This actually does not happen until much later in the cycle at the "De-escalation" stage.

Similarly, 13 respondents (44.8%) chose that "Accepting feedback or focused" was a behavior indicative of the "De-escalation" stage, when that does not actually occur until the "Calm" stage returns. These misconceptions could lead teachers to misinterpret where students are in the cycle and result in them choosing an ineffective intervention at that stage. It is also important to note that the "Agitation" stage is the last stage in which stopping escalation to a "Peak" in possible. Misinterpreting behavior and applying an ineffective intervention at this stage could lead to an unnecessary "Peak." "De-escalation" is also a critical stage because an inappropriate intervention could start the cycle all over again (Pittsburg State University, 2015). This also underscores the importance of teachers building relationships with students. According to Gregory and Ripski (2008), teachers who know their students well may be able to pick up on behavioral cues and intervene before behavior escalates. It follows, then, that teachers who know their students well will be more likely to accurately interpret student behavior at an earlier stage of the "De-escalation Cycle" and intervene to halt further escalation.

When asked to correctly identify effective interventions at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle," respondents were very good at identifying what they should not do. This finding shows that teachers know generally which interventions are inappropriate and ineffective, but the rate of identifying the correct intervention at the correct stage was much lower. As with identifying behavior at each stage, respondents were able to identify at least one correct intervention at each stage over 82% of the time. There were at least two correct interventions listed as possible answers at each stage, however, and respondents were much less likely to choose all the correct interventions listed. For example, 92.9% of respondents (26) correctly chose "Focusing on redirection" as an effective intervention at the "Agitation" stage of the cycle. Only 75% (21), though, chose the also correct response of "Modifying the environment," and only a relative few

39.3% (11) chose “Providing choices,” which was another correct response. Similarly, 100% of respondents (28) correctly chose “Returning to routines” as an effective intervention with a student at the “Recovery” stage, and only 39.3% (11) also chose the also correct “Reinforcing compliance.” This implies that while teachers have a good understanding of what they should not do at each stage and have at least one effective strategy ready to use at each stage, they may be more at a loss as to how to intervene if the one strategy they know does not work. Understanding how and when to use at least one intervention may prevent escalation more often than knowing no effective interventions at all, but knowing how and when to apply even more strategies would be beneficial.

5.1.2 Instructional Strategies

While all instructional strategies used in this study appear to have been helpful, participants seemed to prefer the elements that included in-person interaction over asynchronous activities. While participants rated the asynchronous virtual format at a 3.88 on a scale of 1-5, they rated the in-person format at 4.49. Even more telling was that teachers rated the helpfulness of “Written Responses Using Google Docs” as 3.81 on a scale of 1-5 as opposed to a 4.4 average rating for “Group Discussions.” While 100% completed this written task the first time it was asked of them in Module 1, only 86.7% of prompts were completed the second time in Module 3. This is not surprising since the teachers involved in this study had just endured two years of COVID-19 restrictions that often led to remote learning being their only option. The researcher believes that while the participants probably liked the flexibility allowed by the asynchronous nature of some of the modules, they found interacting with peers in real time to be more valuable to the learning experience. This was reinforced by the “In-person Format” being rated at 4.49 on a scale of 1-5.

Clearly, the participants felt that time spent discussing the "De-escalation Cycle" in real time with their in-person colleagues was the preferred learning experience. It is also important to note that the modules were developed to be used in an in-person format. It is not surprising, then, that participants reported a better instructional experience using the modules as they were designed to be used.

5.2 Recommendations for the Future

Though the surveys indicated that participants in the study largely learned the content and found the information to be useful, there is still room to increase mastery. For example, now that all participants are familiar with the "De-escalation Cycle" and its general stages, reinforcement of student behavior and effective interventions at each stage would be useful. As noted earlier, while most respondents were able to identify at least one behavior indicative of each stage, they struggled to identify more than one. Refreshers at a later date and further instruction using other resources with the same content could be useful in helping teachers to accurately identify student behavior at each stage. Since most behavior misidentification happened at the "Agitation," "Peak," and "De-escalation" stages, further professional development could focus on behaviors at these stages.

A similar approach could be used with reinforcing effective intervention strategies at each stage. Respondents knew very well what not to do, but were not always able to identify what they could do to prevent escalation at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle. Most surprising to this researcher was that several effective interventions were not chosen more frequently at the "Calm" stage of the cycle. For example, not many respondents identified "Establishing standard

consequences" and "Teaching replacements to problem behaviors" as effective interventions. It is possible that many teachers assume that students at the high school level will intuitively know what appropriate classroom behavior looks like and what the consequences for not behaving appropriately are, but this is not always the case. Students often have multiple teachers every day who all have different expectations and classroom cultures. What may seem so obvious that it can go unsaid to the teacher may not be so obvious to the student. As a result, misunderstandings can ensue about what appropriate behavior is and what the student can expect if they are not behaving in a way that the teacher finds appropriate (Kirwan Institute, 2016; Norman et al., 2016). If teachers explicitly teach replacements to problem behaviors and establish standard consequences in their classroom, they will increase the amount of time students spend in the "Calm" stage and avoid escalation more often. In addition, even though most teachers did know that "Reinforcing positive behavior" and "Building positive relationships" were effective interventions at this stage, they may not know what actionable steps to take to accomplish that. It may be beneficial to provide professional development on ways to build and maintain appropriate, positive relationships with students.

Even establishing a strong foundation at the "Calm" stage will not prevent escalating behaviors entirely. For that reason, teachers could also benefit from taking another look at which interventions are effective at de-escalating behavior at every stage. Participants in this study tended to correctly identify one student behavior at each stage but then not correctly choose a second or third behavior at a given stage. They did the same with effective interventions. For example, though 92.9% (26) of respondents knew that "Focusing on redirection" would deescalate behavior at the "Agitation" stage, only 39.3% (11) knew that "Providing choices" could do the same. Perhaps even more telling, 92.9% (26) of respondents correctly identified "Using a calm voice" as

an effective intervention at the "Acceleration" stage, but only 10.7% (three) correctly identified "Reminding student of possible consequences." This particular example makes sense because if the teacher is not clear about establishing consequences as noted earlier, then it is impossible for them to remind students of the possible consequences for inappropriate behavior. Providing further professional development on when to use which intervention could increase the number of effective interventions teachers have available to them to use in these stressful situations.

Since participants preferred in-person to asynchronous learning, further professional development in both student behavior and effective interventions should use interactive and in-person strategies as much as possible. Though teachers found the videos used in the modules to be useful, they also rated them as less helpful over time. The researcher suspects that this may be because while the videos portrayed universal school situations, the participants found it more difficult to see themselves and their students in the videos as each installment progressed. The fact that teachers preferred the in-person group discussions indicates that looking at case studies generated from participant-submitted scenarios may increase group buy-in. Analyzing and practicing scenarios that have actually happened in the school will lend more credibility to the situations that are discussed and help teachers relate to one another through shared experiences. This level of authenticity may lead not only to more mastery of the objective material but more practice in authentic situations.

Participants may also benefit from working through the next six modules available from the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network website (Pittsburg State University, 2015). These modules dive more deeply into specific subjective disciplinary infractions, such as non-compliant or disruptive behavior, and align them to behaviors and interventions along the "De-escalation Cycle." Working through these modules could also help broaden the teacher view of

how an understanding of the cycle would benefit their practice and solidify understanding of each stage of the cycle.

5.3 Limitations

Though the "De-escalation Cycle" is widely applicable, there are some limitations inherent in this particular study. First, participation was voluntary. Only teachers who saw value in engaging in the study (whether for knowledge or donuts) participated and therefore entered with a strong sense of buy-in. Second, though participation at this particular site was relatively high, the sample size still only constitutes 30 people. Although the group was diverse in terms of years of experience, many have deep roots in the school and community. The school is also relatively small, and it is not unusual to have generations of families attending. These deep roots for students, families, and staff, with multigenerational community engagement with the school and with low teacher turnover, could affect the way the teachers look at themselves, their students, and the overall school community.

In addition, all data from surveys resulted from close-ended questions. Respondents were forced to choose one or more answers from the options listed, so they were limited in what they could express about the sessions. While survey responses showed whether a teacher absorbed knowledge about the "De-escalation Cycle," they did not measure the degree to which this knowledge was actually applied following the sessions. Future studies could test the applicability of the knowledge from these sessions in real time or ask teachers to express their feelings on the subject in their own words. This could be achieved through gathering qualitative data through

open-ended questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. This could give more insight into why participants responded the way that they did and provide direction for related studies.

5.4 Conclusion

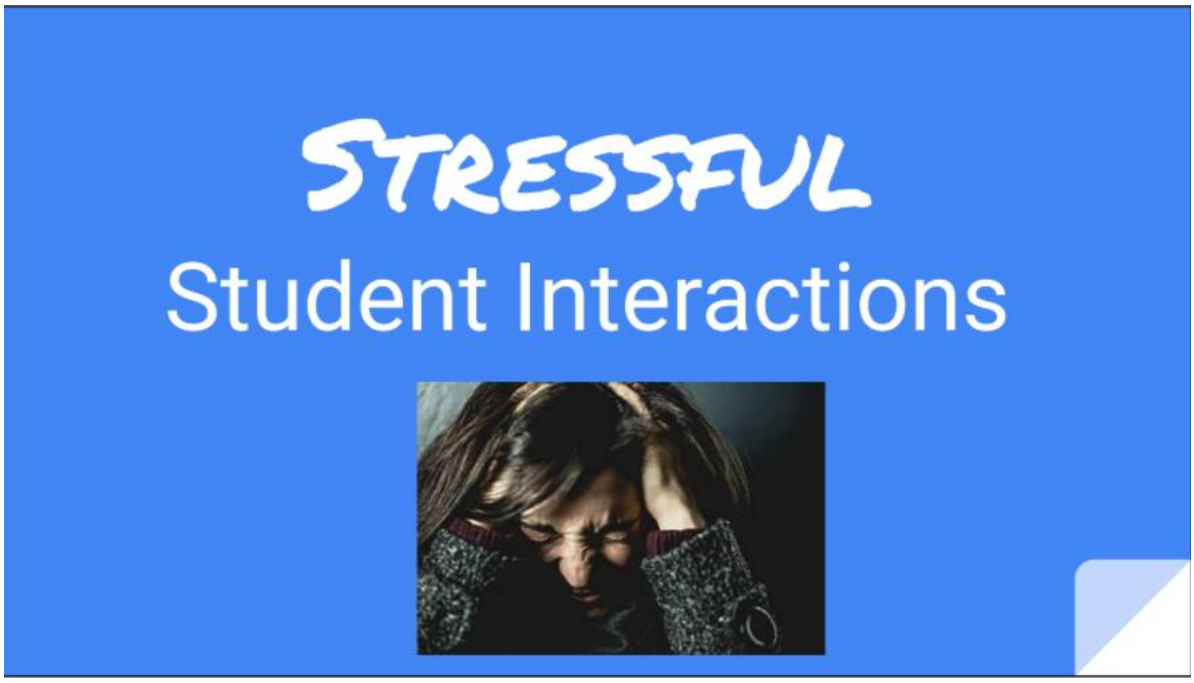
A solid understanding of the "De-escalation Cycle" could greatly decrease the number of disciplinary referrals that make it to the office, but it could also contribute to a more positive climate for teachers and students alike. By understanding where students are on the cycle, teachers are likely to be thoughtful in their responses to non-productive student behavior and effectively de-escalate this behavior. In turn, students may feel more respected by their teachers and trust that their teachers really do have their best interests at heart. An awareness of the "De-escalation Cycle" encourages teachers to get to know their students so that they can be more attuned to what might really be behind negative behavior. As teachers and students develop more positive relationships with one another, more learning can take place. Even when problems do occur, the presence of a positive relationship will decrease the potential for escalating behaviors. As a result, more time will be spent learning in a supportive environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted at least three school years to date. Students who are currently in 10th grade were only in 8th grade when their world shut down in March 2020. Over 20% of their overall schooling has occurred in conditions no one could have predicted or considered to be normal. Even as masks became optional and a majority of schools returned to primarily in-person learning this past school year, students had to grapple with figuring out how to act and perform in school again. They have lived in a world of constant flux, limited social

interaction at times, and experimental learning. We cannot expect them to act as students their age did prior to the pandemic.

Teachers also have lived through these profound changes. They have had to learn how to teach in this ever-changing, stressful environment – something no teacher preparation program could have effectively prepared them to do, yet they did so with admirable success. The predictability of the "De-escalation Cycle" and the evidence-based interventions at each stage give teachers a frame of reference in order to make sense of student behavior moving forward. This tool gives teachers a resource to reference and use in real time in order to help regulate their own emotions as well. Teachers can now take a minute to step back, think clearly and implement strategies they have already thought about. In the future, more practice identifying student behaviors and effective interventions may help teachers become even more adept at applying and reflecting upon student interactions even in changing and uncertain conditions.

Appendix A Prospective Study Participant Presentation



Think back to a stressful student interaction over the last few years...

- What made it so stressful?
- What did you feel when you thought/talked about that interaction?

Have teachers share with a partner, then volunteer answers to the group.
What do these things have in common? Probably that they built over time, happened within context of heightened emotions, etc. That makes them SUBJECTIVE.

Subjective Experiences

- "relating to the way a person experiences things in his or her own mind" (Merriam-Webster)
- "affected by personal views, experience, or background" (Merriam-Webster)
- "relating to properties or specific conditions of the mind as distinguished from general or universal experience" (dictionary.com)

Different experiences can be interpreted differently by different people.

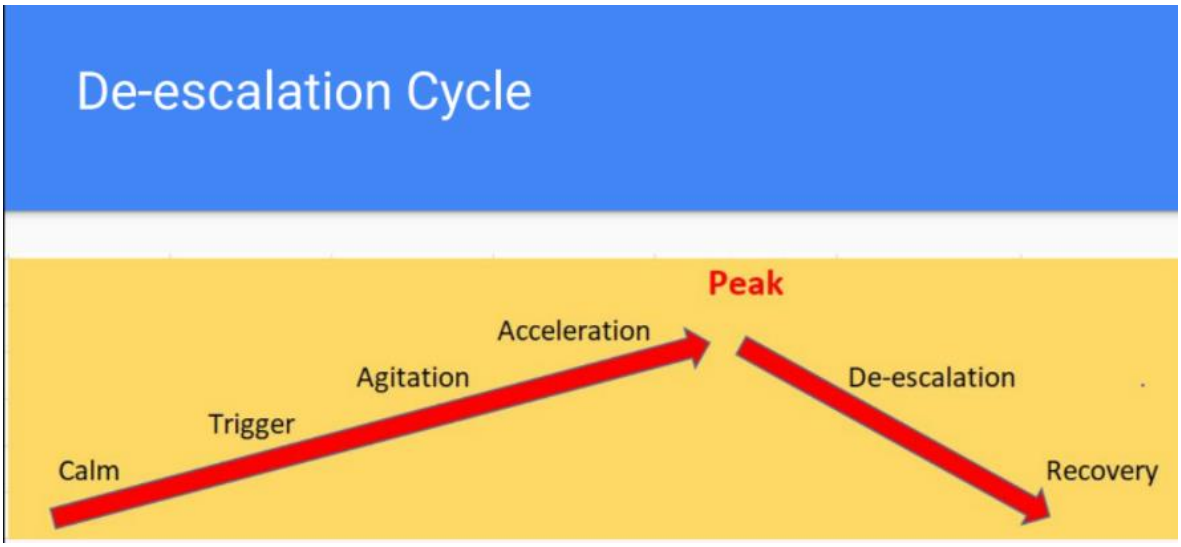
Subjective *Infraction:*

- Acceptable Use Violation
- Disruptive Behavior
- Insubordination/Disrespectful to Staff
- Swearing at Staff/Blatant Disrespect to Staff
- Use of Inappropriate Language

"A behavioral event that is interpreted by school staff as a disciplinary moment" (Vavrus & Cole, 2002)
People interpret events differently. These are the 5 I felt were most open to interpretation.

What next?

- How can we lessen stress of stressful interactions?
- How can we lessen frequency of stressful interactions?



The best way to deal with negative student behavior is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Preventative measures such as engaging instruction and developing positive relationships with students based on mutual respect help to decrease the stress levels of both teachers and students (Duchnowski, Sheffield, Kutash, & Vaughan, 2005; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016). When negative behavior does happen, though, it follows a predictable cycle. Knowing the behaviors that characterize each stage and effective interventions can minimize the negative impact of these behaviors. (Colvin & Scott, 2014; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Martel & Cavanaugh, 2016)

De-escalation Cycle PD

IF YOU PARTICIPATE: *Forego a week of discretionary time (either all at once or over the month) OR use to satisfy 3 hours needed for conference time*

- 4 total sessions over a 1 month period
- 2 Wednesday morning, in-person sessions (coffee/donuts)
- 2 asynchronous sessions using Google classroom
- Work with group members of your choice
- Each session about 45 minutes to complete
- Data collected anonymously - short survey after 3 of 4 modules

Schedule

IF YOU PARTICIPATE: *Forego a week of discretionary time (either all at once or over the month) OR use to satisfy 3 hours needed for conference time*

March 2 - March 7: Complete Google form if you are interested in participating

March 9: Receive Google classroom invitation & group assignments

March 9-15: Complete Module 1 via Google classroom

March 16: Meet in-person @ 7:15 (coffee/snacks) to complete Module 2

March 18 - 25: Complete Module 3 via Google classroom

March 30: Meet in-person @ 7:15 (coffee/snacks) to complete Module 4

Appendix B De-escalation Cycle PD Opt-In form

Hi everyone,

Thanks for listening this morning and thinking about participating in my PD on the "De-escalation Cycle". I hope it will empower those participating to identify and intervene with students in a way that decreases stress for everyone!

Here is the schedule and a link to the Google form to sign-up to participate - grade 10-12 teachers, paras and counselors are eligible:

March 2 - March 7: Complete Google form if you are interested in participating

March 9: Receive Google classroom invitation & group assignments

March 9-15: Complete Module 1 asynchronously via Google classroom

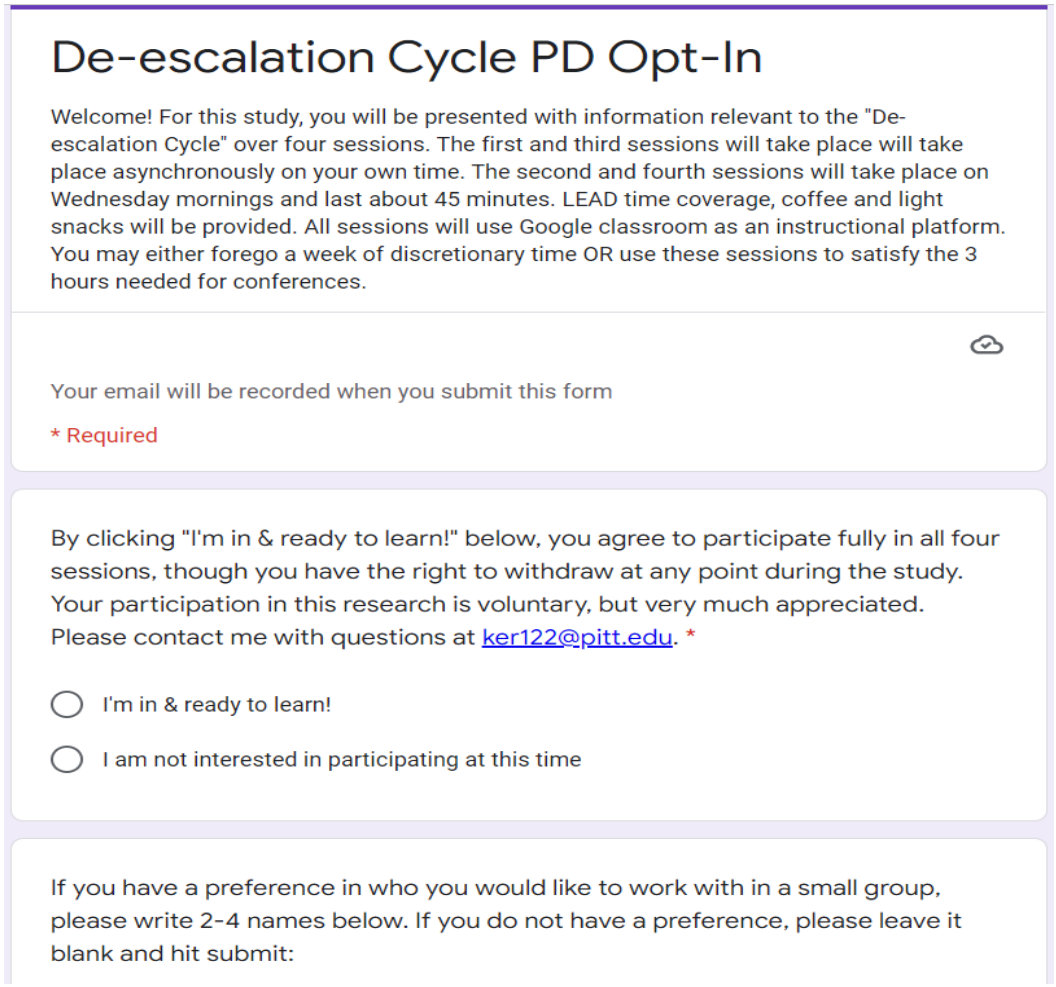
March 16: Meet in-person @ 7:15 (coffee/snacks) to complete Module 2 (this will be in place of your regular Wednesday morning meetings)

March 18 - 25: Complete Module 3 asynchronously via Google classroom

March 30: Meet in-person @ 7:15 (coffee/snacks) to complete Module 4 (this will be in place of your regular Wednesday morning meetings)

IF YOU PARTICIPATE: *Forego a week of discretionary time (either all at once or over the month) OR use to satisfy 3 hours needed for conference time*

Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!



Note: Screenshot edited slightly to maintain anonymity of Google account

Appendix C

Appendix C.1 De-escalation Cycle Survey #1

Q1
Welcome!

For this survey, you will be presented with information relevant to the "De-escalation Cycle." Then, you will be asked to answer some questions about it. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous.

The survey should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, but very much appreciated. Please contact me with questions at ker122@pitt.edu.

- ○ I consent, begin the study
- ○ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Q2 Thanks for agreeing to take this survey.

Now we are going to move on to some questions about the "De-escalation Cycle". Student behavior follows a predictable pattern called the "De-escalation Cycle."

Prior to completing this session, to what extent were you familiar with the "De-escalation Cycle"?

- ○ Very familiar
- ○ Somewhat familiar
- ○ Not at all familiar

Q3 How many stages does the "De-escalation Cycle" have?

- 9
- 7
- 5
- 3

Q4 Which of the following is the name of the first stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"?

- Calm
- Agitation
- Peak
- De-escalation

Q5 At which stage of the "De-escalation Cycle" does the most extreme student behavior occur?

- Trigger
- Agitation
- Peak
- Recovery

Q6 What is the final stage of the "De-escalation Cycle" before returning to "Calm"?

- ○ Trigger
- ○ Acceleration
- ○ Peak
- ○ Recovery

Q7 To what extent did the following parts of the first session help you learn to identify the stages of the de-escalation cycle?

	Extremely Helpful	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Not Helpful At All
Video	○	○	○	○	○
Written Responses Using Google Doc	○	○	○	○	○
Google Classroom Resources (Objectives, Worksheet, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Asynchronous, Virtual Format	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C.2 De-escalation Cycle Survey #2

Q1
Welcome!

For this survey, you will be presented with information relevant to the "De-escalation Cycle". Then, you will be asked to answer some questions about it. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous.

The survey should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, but very much appreciated. Please contact me with questions at ker122@pitt.edu.

- ○ I consent, begin the study
- ○ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Q2 Thanks for agreeing to take this survey.

In order to identify each stage of the cycle in real situations, we need to know what student behaviors are associated with which stage of the "De-escalation Cycle." In this next section, you are going to tell me what you know about student behavior at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle."

Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Cooperative or following directions
- ☐ Jittery or bothering others
- ☐ Attentive or engaged
- ☐ Accepting feedback or focused
- ☐ Non-compliant or complaining

Q3 Which of the following can move a student from the "Calm" stage to the "Trigger" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Frustration
- [ ] An unexpected change
- [ ] An accumulation of errors
- [ ] Being positively reinforced
- [ ] Displaced Anger

Q4 Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Agitation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Difficulty focusing on work
- [ ] Gross defiance or swearing
- [ ] Increase in eye & hand movement
- [ ] Less willing to communicate
- [ ] Defending actions or blaming others

Q5 Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Acceleration" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Apologizing or denying actions
- [ ] Threats or provoking language
- [ ] Gross defiance or swearing
- [ ] Argumentative or verbally intimidating
- [ ] Calming or showing shame

Q6 Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Peak" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Defending actions or blaming others
- [ ] Physical threats or acting out
- [ ] Violent behaviors or tantrums
- [ ] Calming or showing shame
- [ ] Re-engaging or showing regret

Q7 Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "De-escalation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Apologizing or crying
- [ ] Violent behaviors or tantrums
- [ ] Increase in eye & hand movement
- [ ] Accepting feedback or focused
- [ ] Projecting blame on others

Q8 Which of the following behaviors indicate that a student is currently in the "Recovery" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Yelling or screaming
- [ ] Wanting to be alone
- [ ] Calming but not engaged
- [ ] Gross defiance or swearing
- [ ] Threats or provoking language

Q9 To what extent did the following parts of the second session help you learn to identify behaviors associated with each stage of the de-escalation cycle?

	Extremely Helpful	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Not At All Helpful
Video	○	○	○	○	○
Group Discussion	○	○	○	○	○
Google classroom resources (objectives, worksheets, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
In-Person Format	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix C.3 De-escalation Cycle Survey #3

Q1
Welcome!

For this survey, you will be presented with information relevant to the "De-escalation Cycle". Then, you will be asked to answer some questions about it. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous.

The survey should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, but very much appreciated. Please contact me with questions at ker122@pitt.edu.

- ○ I consent, begin the survey
- ○ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Q2 Thanks for agreeing to take this survey.

Research shows that some interventions are much more effective than others at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle". In this section, you are going to tell me which interventions you believe to be most effective at each stage of the "De-escalation Cycle".

Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Calm" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Reinforcing positive behavior
- ☐ Establishing standard consequences
- ☐ Building positive relationships
- ☐ Making sudden movements
- ☐ Teaching replacements to problem behaviors

Q3 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Trigger" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Prompts to increase student success
- [ ] Following a crisis plan
- [ ] Physically touching the student
- [ ] Distracting the student
- [ ] Reinforcing positive behavior

Q4 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Agitation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Providing choices
- [ ] Raising your voice
- [ ] Using confrontational body language
- [ ] Focusing on redirection
- [ ] Modifying the environment

Q5 The main purpose of interventions at the "Calm" through "Agitation" stages are to

- [ ] Demand appropriate behavior
- [ ] Focus on safety
- [ ] Hold the student accountable
- [ ] Prevent escalation to a peak
- [ ] Isolate the student from peers

Q6 The main purpose of intervention strategies at the "Acceleration" through "Recovery" stages of the "De-escalation Cycle" is to

- [ ] Demand appropriate behavior
- [ ] Focus on safety
- [ ] Hold the student accountable
- [ ] Prevent escalation to a peak
- [ ] Isolate the student from peers

Q7 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Acceleration" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Getting the last word in an argument
- [ ] Using a calm voice
- [ ] Giving simple choices
- [ ] Engaging in a conversation
- [ ] Reminding student of possible consequences

Q8 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Peak" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Removing an audience
- [ ] Giving the student space
- [ ] Yelling to get student attention
- [ ] Avoiding eye contact
- [ ] Issuing consequences

Q9 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "De-escalation" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Giving student space
- [ ] Teaching social skills
- [ ] Blaming the student
- [ ] Providing simple, calm direction
- [ ] Issuing ultimatums

Q10 Which of the following intervention strategies are most effective in the "Recovery" stage of the "De-escalation Cycle"? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Physically touching the student
- [ ] Returning to routines
- [ ] Using sarcasm to inject humor
- [ ] Making sudden movements
- [ ] Reinforcing compliance

Q11 To what extent did the following parts of the third and fourth session help you to learn effective interventions at each stage of the de-escalation cycle?

	Extremely Helpful	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Not At All Helpful
Videos	○	○	○	○	○
Written Responses Using Google Doc	○	○	○	○	○
Group Discussions	○	○	○	○	○
Google Classroom Resources (Objectives, Worksheet, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Asynchronous, Virtual Format	○	○	○	○	○
In-Person Format	○	○	○	○	○

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