

Reduction of class time lost due to morning lateness

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The Question: “Would the use of a morning sign-in sheet change student lateness patterns?”

The Problem: The three learners in our Level 3 Math course, which meets daily from 9:00 am to 10:00 am, very rarely maximized their learning potential because they were arriving late so often. Rather than arriving at 9:00 a.m., they often would come to class late as 9:45 a.m., leaving only fifteen minutes for the math class. Since learners are on individualized programs in Level 3 Math, we concluded that their attitude may be that it doesn't really matter what time they show up because they can access the help they need from us whenever they do arrive, and they had not actually missed a taught lesson. However, since none of the three were math “keeners,” there also seemed to be little incentive for them to show up on time, and they seemed to see no negative consequences if they kept arriving late. .

The Interventions:

- **Cycle 1:** In previous years, we had addressed any of the “more than an occasional lateness” problems right away, but this year we saw a consistent lateness pattern developing with these students. To begin the new school year, when taking attendance for this class, we decided Shannon would record late arrival with “PL” (present/late) on the attendance sheet. We first needed to collect the data on the lateness patterns at this point. When we realized part way through October that these three learners were almost always late, and had a feeling that they might even be getting later by the day, we agreed Shannon would start recording their actual time of arrival, and we thought that perhaps at the end of the month we would tally up the minutes lost. Each 60 minutes would be recorded as a missed class. Despite talking about their unnecessarily low math grades and expressing our concern about their lateness, especially how lateness was affecting their grades, we began thinking that absences of more than 10% in a month should trigger some kind of *more formal* instructor/counselor intervention.

- **Cycle 2:** By mid-November, when we saw that their lateness seemed to be getting worse, we reconsidered and wanted to find a way to help these students become more aware of, and more accountable for, their arrival times. We wondered if perhaps having them sign in each morning with their own arrival time might have more impact in improving punctuality. Shannon therefore printed up a 2 week sign in sheet, taped it near the entrance to her classroom, and asked the learners to start using it.

The Results:

	average daily lateness pre learner sign-in: first half November	average daily lateness post learner sign-in: second half November	
Student 1	41.25 mins/day	30 mins/day	
Student 2	21 mins/day	12.5 mins/day	
Student 3	10 mins/day	5 mins/day	

Analysis and Discussion: Each of the three learners arrived significantly earlier after they were asked to sign in their own arrival times. As seen in the matrix above, for students #2 and #3, the pattern improved by approximately 50%; For student #1, by almost 30%, suggesting that this intervention prompted them to reflect on their practices and become more accountable for their own actions.

Recommendations: We would recommend this approach to others if they are teaching in a situation of individualized programming such as ours, and learners are consistently late. This , approach seemed to reduce lateness with these students. It is simple to implement so other instructors with a similar problem should try it. Significantly, the intervention is one of raising learner awareness and sense of accountability. It seems to depend on evidence at least as much, or more than instructor persuasion. We suggest it can be an effective adult approach. But, it begins with collecting the data on the lateness patterns first so learners can actually see the issue, see how their grades are being affected, and then you have a benchmark to compare with later. Having a benchmark helps set a criteria for success for instructors. In our case, when we reflected back, we had hoped to see at least a 25% change, and we met and even exceeded that hoped for criterion. .

For future study, we are thinking that it will be informative to see if grades do in fact improve with improved attendance with these and future students. Is there a cause-effect? Does more punctuality and better attendance lead to higher grades? And, is this true for all students?