

Examination of the Student Training for a Restorative Outlook for Needed Growth
(S.T.R.O.N.G.) Program to Decrease Student Tardiness

by

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ABSTRACT

Student tardiness has not received as much attention as absences in research on school attendance, despite the disruptions to learning it can cause. The purpose of this study was to design, implement, and study an alternative intervention—the Student Training for a Restorative Outlook for Needed Growth (S.T.R.O.N.G.) Program—to the existing punitive tardy detention practice at a high school where tardiness was a problem. The program promoted on-time behavior to school and class by utilizing positive restorative practice elements along with self-paced learning modules focused on growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. The driving force behind the creation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was to determine if this intervention could support a change in students’ intent to be on time for class. Students in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention participated in three steps, beginning with individual restorative conversations and a group restorative conversation. In the second step, students engaged in learning module lessons related to growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. After each learning module, students reflected on their learning in individual journals. In the final step, students exited the intervention with a student feedback form. This mixed-methods action research study involved collecting data from interviews, surveys, and reflective journals. Thirteen students participated in the intervention and took an initial student intake questionnaire asking them about their student experiences in the existing punitive tardy detention practice. Qualitative data were coded, analyzed, and used with quantitative data to triangulate findings. The results of the study indicated that students were not in favor of the existing punitive tardy detention practice and preferred an alternative, positive tardy practice that supported self-

improvement to help with their on-time behavior. Results also showed the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be useful and effective at teaching students information related to the constructs in the learning modules, resulting in students declaring a positive attitude.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Leslie; our daughter, Cassidy; my parents, Tom and Carolyn; and my brother, Brian. Thank you for your continued support and love throughout my doctoral journey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The high school students at Seaview High School (a pseudonym) arrive by city bus, by car, and by their own two feet on their way to the school campus. The students file through the large steel entrance gates, which guide them into the main thoroughfare of campus. Large swaths of eager 14- to 18-year-olds press on up the stairs into campus. What most of the students and families do not see is what happens when the school bell strikes 8:00 a.m. and campus supervisors close the gates, directing students into the main administration building. A line begins, sometimes a long one, of students who wait to be processed through the tardy accountability system, similar to cattle being herded into a pen. The tardy system at Seaview High School is a physical, psychological, transactional, and punitive accountability system crafted to corral students into a space where they are processed into campus.

One by one, students hear “Next” and “ID card” as they approach the attendance clerk at the computer station. A scanner, an expensive tool of discipline, scans their ID card, and an equally costly movie-ticket-like machine produces a tardy pass, which allows the student to proceed onto campus and into their class. The transaction is brief, but the wait can be long. After receiving their pass, students carry their brand with them into class. Students who reach a fifth tardy earn the additional punishment of a lunch detention. Knowing their fate, students march toward a classroom that has already begun instruction, only to walk in late and see their classmates’ eyes glaring at them as they shimmy by into their desk, presenting their pass of shame. This is the punitive

accountability policy that comes with being tardy at Seaview High School. And many students will wake up the next morning only to do this all over again.

I have long been a practitioner of punctuality and time management as a foundation for my own success. As an assistant principal, however, I have also observed students' chronic tardiness and played judge and jury by handing down punitive action due to their untimely entrance into their classes. Discipline is a practice deeply rooted in societal norms and can be viewed by how we problem solve, through methods of social control or social engagement (Maag, 2012). My personal practice of being punctual as a means to my own success drove me toward my problem of practice in crafting a positive intervention that supports tardy students to arrive in class on time. This action research study examined an alternative intervention to a punitive tardy detention practice. The intervention promoted on-time behavior by utilizing restorative practice elements along with a self-paced learning module that focused on growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills.

Context

A tardy accountability system is the first hurdle that some students face to start the school day where they are marked late, are punished, and miss learning opportunities because they arrive late to class. For schools, absences and tardies carry weight, as the entire system is designed around being in class on time so that students' learning is not affected. A punitive tardy accountability system's focus is on punishing students for being late as opposed to communicating a focus on learning or relationship building (Skiba & Losen, 2016; Sutphen et al., 2010).

Schools spend time and money utilizing attendance accountability systems of practice to track student absences and tardies. The purpose of the attendance accountability system is both to meet the mandated requirements of the state in tracking student attendance and keeping accurate records, as well as to initiate any disciplinary practices for chronic absenteeism, truancy, or tardies. *Chronic absenteeism* is defined as repeated excused and unexcused absences, whereas truancy is defined by California educational code as a student missing more than 30 minutes of instruction three or more times a year without an excuse (CA Educ Code § 48260; CA Educ Code § 48263.6; California Department of Education, 2021b). California Education Code § 48260 does not define tardiness, as tardiness is defined by school sites (CA Educ Code § 48260; California Department of Education, 2021b). In general, tardiness is defined as any time a student arrives late to class after the school bell has sounded. Studies on chronic absenteeism and truancy have tended to focus on students' unexcused absences, with less focus on student tardiness (e.g., Birioukov, 2016; CA Educ Code § 48260; Flannery et al., 2009; Gage et al., 2013; Gottfried, 2009; Reid, 2000, 2012). However, most school tardiness research has focused on positive school behavioral interventions that encourage adult supervision to and from class, parent meetings and communication, or zero-tolerance punitive disciplinary measures such as detentions and Saturday school (see Enomoto & Conley, 2008; Hirschfield, 2008; Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; Sutphen et al., 2010; Tomczyk, 2000; Tyre et al., 2011).

None of the prior research had examined the implementation of innovative practices that address student tardiness in a proactive, nonpunitive, and restorative model, although there is some research that suggest that interventions that focus less on punitive

social control measures and more on restorative teaching and learning practices have the potential to engage students to make proactive behavioral changes (Anyon et al., 2016; Macready, 2009; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Chronic tardiness, like chronic absenteeism and truancy, negatively affects student performance and hinders future student mobility (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2018). For this study, I designed, employed, and examined an alternative tardy intervention that utilized the theoretical frameworks of restorative practices (Schott Foundation, 2014) and growth mindset (Dweck, 1999) to teach students skills in goal setting, organization, and punctuality. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) guided the creation of a survey that measures students' attitudes toward being on time.

National and State Context

In the 2013–2014 school year, the U.S. Department of Education began to collect data on chronic absenteeism at the national level and estimated that six million students were chronically absent that year (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). In 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), as a system of accountability tasking states to develop indicators for student achievement and school quality (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). By the 2019 school year, 36 states included measures of chronic absenteeism as an indicator for school success, but student tardiness was not noted as an indicator (Klein, 2020).

On a national level, chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing 15 days or more of school in a year (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). In a report using data

from the Civil Rights Data Collection for 2015–16, the U.S. Department of Education (2019) found that chronic absenteeism increased that year, and seven million K–12 students missed 15 or more days of school. Chronic absenteeism rates were highest among high school students, with one in five high school students missing 15 or more days of school. Rates were also higher among Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and American Indian students. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), chronic absenteeism is associated with poor academic performance, high school dropout, and behavioral challenges.

Recent research studies have focused on the impact of chronic absences on students, particularly in relation to dropout rates, success predictors for adulthood, and academic success in the classroom (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Musu-Gillette et al., 2016; National Forum on Education Statistics, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Absent from the ESSA and the aforementioned studies, however, is any mention of student tardiness as a measurement indicator of student school success. Tardiness is procedurally accounted for under local school districts' absence policies, whereas chronic absenteeism is directly accounted for at the federal, state, and local levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

The state of California, where this study took place, has mandated rules for average daily attendance (ADA), requiring schools to track and report student attendance (CA Educ Code § 48240-48244; California Department of Education, 2021a). California uses chronic absenteeism and truancy as indicator measures for attendance accountability but leaves tardiness to local control (California Department of Education, 2019). Chronic absenteeism in California is defined as a student missing 10% of the school year

(California Department of Education, 2019), and a truant student is “any pupil between age 6 and 18 absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year” (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2018, p. 2). In California, chronic absenteeism is a violation of Education Code § 48260 and is subject to criminal prosecution from the district attorney’s office under California Education Code § 48292 (CA Educ Code § 48260). California Education Code § 48321 allows for Student Attendance Review Boards (SARB) to address students and their families with chronic attendance challenges with truancy letters sent to their homes or the involvement of law enforcement and the courts for extreme cases (CA Educ Code § 48321). While SARBs can be used to address individual student attendance challenges, establishing a SARB is not mandated by California education code, enforcement is left up to the local schools under the direction of the school district, and follow-through is subject to county law enforcement under the direction of the district attorney (CA Educ Code § 48321).

Contrary to the federal focus on chronic absenteeism, student tardiness is a challenge that local school districts and schools must address according to state-based education codes or local administrative regulations (CA Educ Code § 48321). Despite the national and state focus on chronic absenteeism as a metric for school and student success and achievement, studies also have shown that tardiness affects students academically and behaviorally. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, 3.3% to 9.5% of students attending K–12 schools are tardy each day in the United States (Haarman, 2007). Studies on student tardiness have revealed the negative impact school tardiness has on students’ achievement and behavior (Chang & Romero, 2008; Dinkes et

al., 2007; Kaufman et al., 1992; Reid, 2000; Sprick, 2003; Sprick & Daniels, 2007; Tyre et al., 2011). Tardiness affects student performance and behavior as students miss information at the beginning of class and then interrupt the class and teacher as they arrive late (Chang & Romero, 2008; Dinkes et al., 2007; Reid, 2000; Sprick & Daniels, 2007). Ekstrom et al. (1986) noted that truant or tardy students place themselves at greater risk for dropping out of high school, and Kaufman et al. (1992) found that tardy students were six times as likely to drop out of school compared with those who were not tardy.

Local Context

The context for this study was Seaview High School (SHS), a suburban Southern California comprehensive school located in San Diego's North County. SHS's student population fluctuated between 1,300 and 1,450 students from 2018 to 2021. The school is accessed by students and families who drive into school and park in three large parking lots, utilize a circular drop-off with access to the campus, walk, or take the city bus. Intentional messaging is sent to all families and stakeholders regarding parking, drop-off, and when the school day begins and ends. Students are required to be in the classroom at the beginning of the school day prior to the bell ringing to announce the start of Period 1. The school district for the high school has used California Education Code § 48260 as the guiding education code from which to adopt Administrative Regulation 5121 and 5113.1 (AR 5121; AR 5113.1). AR 5121 stipulates that tardiness to class is a serious matter, encourages students to be in their classes before the bell rings, and defines a student who is tardy without an excuse three times in a school year for more than 30 minutes as truant. AR 5113.1 provides strategies to address student truancy, such as notification and

conference with the parent/guardian, a school absence team convened to discuss the student's truancy challenges and actions to be taken, punitive disciplinary actions such as suspension, police involvement depending on the severity, and alternative placements if the situation deems this warranted.

Just after I completed the design of this research study, California became the first state in the country to mandate later high school start times. Senate Bill (SB) 328 was signed into law in 2019 and states that by the 2022–2023 school year, all public high schools in California must start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The decision to move high school start times later was supported by research about the effects of sleep deprivation on adolescents (CA Educ Code § 46148; Dunster et al., 2018; SB 328). SHS and the school district decided to be an early adopter of SB 328 and implemented the new 8:30 a.m. high school start time in the 2021–2022 school year.

Problem of Practice: Identifying a Need for Change

The primary data and literature regarding attendance have focused on chronic absenteeism and truancy. However, a significant nexus to the problem of student attendance exists with respect to tardiness (Dinkes et al., 2007; Sutphen et al., 2010; Tyre et al., 2011). The literature and national data on chronic absenteeism and truancy have shown that students suffer academically, behaviorally, and in terms of upward mobility to be future ready for college and career. Tardies have a similar impact on students, as well as negative effects on both the teacher and the other students who are present and ready to learn when class begins (Chang & Romero, 2008; Dinkes et al., 2007; Haarman, 2007; Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; Kaufman et al., 1992; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Tomczyk, 2000; Tyre et al., 2011).

I began working as an assistant principal at the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year, with one of my primary responsibilities being attendance. The school tardy system is paid for and managed by SHS and serves as a tracking system for students and parents. Tardy students receive their admit slip into school if they are not in their classes prior to 8:30 a.m., and parents subsequently receive an email notification for every tardy or unexcused absence for the student. During each passing period between classes, any late student is marked tardy by the teacher, who manually inputs the tardy into the online attendance management system. The punitive tardy accountability system administers one lunch detention for students who reach five total tardies in a given semester, then one lunch detention thereafter for every tardy a student amasses.

During a 12-week period in the fall/winter of 2019–2020, there were a total of 3,120 student tardies, including 2,815 tardies for first period. Additionally, 187 students had compiled 1,126 total detentions, which were required lunch detentions to be served. Of the 1,126 detentions assigned, only 126 total detentions (11%) were served, leaving 1,000 (88%) unserved. Ninety percent of the total daily student tardies were during first period, indicating that students were more likely to be tardy arriving at school in the morning as opposed to being tardy once on campus. The lack of detention compliance for tardies demonstrated a significant problem and need for a change away from the punitive system based on social control to prompt student behavioral change.

I observed that by Week 4 of the 2019-20 school year, SHS had many students with five or more detentions, and the tardy management system began to be less of a preventive tardy system and more of a clumsily punitive one, where student detentions increased at an exponential rate. Moreover, the tardy management system was

expensive (\$5,000 a year), produced long lines, and served as a barrier into the school. I also discovered that after students reached more than a week's worth of lunch detentions, they saw the purpose of serving the lunch detention as futile. Compounding the compliance problem, students attempted to negotiate their detentions down through alternative means to attend a dance or other event.

In my role as assistant principal, students shared with me their displeasure with the tardy management system. A defining moment came when three students with more than 15 tardy lunch detentions approached me to explain their situations because they wanted to attend the prom and time was running out to serve the detentions. They cared less about explaining why they could not get to school on time and instead shared how the system was overly punitive and made them give up trying to serve their detentions. Embarrassed, they had given up on attending an event that was part of the social fabric of their high school experience. I knew a change needed to be made, and so I created an intervention that shifted the punitive system for student tardiness to a student-centered learning model built upon the theoretical frameworks of restorative practices and growth mindset so that students could begin to learn skills that could change their attitudes related to being on time to school.

Complicating any school's management of student tardiness is the separate variable of the student's mode of transportation to school. The complexity, management, and impact of student tardiness lends itself to being defined as a wicked problem. A *wicked problem*, as introduced and described by Rittel and Webber (1973), is a complex problem that has many tentacles and can veer off in various directions once one begins to try to solve it. It is easy to see student tardiness as a wicked problem, as there are multiple

layers and variables such as mode of transportation to school, student self-awareness, time management and organization, and a tardy management accountability system aimed at correcting student tardiness behavior. Seeing this problem and the wicked nature it possesses, my focus for this action research project was to lean into the challenge and address student tardiness through a positive intervention.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to implement an alternative intervention to the punitive tardy detention practice. The intervention was designed to promote on-time behavior to school by utilizing positive restorative practice elements along with a self-paced learning module that taught students goal setting, time management, and organizational skills. The intervention is called the Student Training for a Restorative Outlook for Needed Growth (S.T.R.O.N.G.) Mindset and Motivation Intervention Program (hereafter, S.T.R.O.N.G. Program). Phase 1 of the intervention relied on developing an authentic relationship with the students through restorative conversations, both individually and in groups. I utilized restorative practices to ascertain the reasons students are late to class and listened to students' opinions regarding tardiness and tardy detentions. During Phase 2, students' learning was driven by teaching modules focused on goal setting, punctuality and on-time arrival, and organization. Teaching modules were built around the theoretical framework of growth mindset, which posits that students can learn new concepts if they have a growth mindset and not a fixed mindset, thereby empowering students to engage in the new learning with the intent of applying it (Dweck, 1999, 2019). Student attitudes toward behaviors and practices that support being on time to class were measured using a pre- and postsurvey to determine if there was a

change in their attitude (Ajzen, 1985). In Phase 3, which concluded the intervention and study, students completed the postsurvey and filled out a student feedback form exit questionnaire reflecting on and providing their opinions of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. The desired outcomes of the intervention in using restorative practices (Schott Foundation, 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2016) and engaging students with learning modules were to determine if a restorative alternative to a punitive accountability practice could lead to a student's change in attitude that would lead them to being on time. In summary, the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program shifts an accountability practice away from punitive social control, and toward a restorative learning-centered practice offering social engagement through building new skills and relationships with students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided my research study:

1. How did students feel about their own tardiness and respond to the idea of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention before participating in it?
2. To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention taught them time management skills, organizational skills, and goal-setting skills?
3. What did students find effective and ineffective about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention?
4. To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention promoted a change in their attitude to be on time for class?

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation provides an overview and analysis of the action research mixed methods project, which was implemented at SHS with 13 participants. Chapter 2 provides an examination of the theoretical frameworks guiding the study and literature associated with each. Chapter 3 provides information and the framework for the study methodology including participants, the intervention design, the timeline for implementation, data instruments, and data analysis. Chapter 4 shares the results of the quantitative and qualitative data collection. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the results in relation to theory and literature as well as limitations, implications for practice, and potential future areas of study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE STUDY

In the previous chapter, the national and local context was provided to frame the problem of practice, specifically that there is a need to delve deeper and craft an innovation that addresses high school tardiness by creating a positive intervention that replaces the current negative accountability practice. Schools in the United States have routinely dealt with discipline problems through the application of zero-tolerance policies to promote social control over students (Foucault, 1979; Fuentes, 2003; Garland, 2001; Hirschfield, 2008). As described in Chapter 1, SHS manages student tardiness with a punitive tardy accountability system that assigns a detention on the fifth tardy and an additional detention for every subsequent tardy. Previous research on tardy interventions has used a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) framework (e.g., Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2014; Nocera et al., 2014; Tyre et al., 2011). In contrast, my action research project utilized concepts from the restorative practices theory and framework (Pavelka, 2013; Schott Foundation, 2014) to engage tardy students in positive restorative conversations aimed at exploring the reasons for their tardies, discuss the purpose of punctuality, and allow students to reflect on the purpose of positive on-time behavior. Furthermore, I took students through learning modules on goal setting, punctuality, and organization with the intent to produce a change in students' attitudes toward being on time to class.

This literature review first contextualizes tardiness as a “wicked problem” as developed by Rittel and Webber (1973) and frames the challenge as a problem with many variables. The theoretical framework guiding this study was the theory of planned

behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). Additionally, I discuss student discipline and how institutions view discipline: as a means of social control through punitive measures, or as social engagement where discipline is reframed as learning. I review punitive zero-tolerance discipline policies and practices in order to provide contextual framing and understanding of how discipline has been treated in K–12 schools over the years. This chapter then provides an overview of previous interventions used to address student tardiness and a discussion of their shortcomings. I present the restorative practices theory and framework and growth mindset theory as complements to TPB that were used to support and guide this intervention. I used restorative practices as an alternative framework and growth mindset theory to support the creation of the learning module lessons the students received as a part of the intervention. Finally, I share previous cycles of action research to illustrate the prior action research completed and how it supported the creation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study.

Chasing the Tardiness Wicked Problem

As noted in Chapter 1, student tardiness can be viewed as a wicked school problem because many variables and multiple layers need to be taken into account in order to solve the challenge of students being late to school and to their classes. Sutphen et al. (2010) evaluated multiple studies of truancy interventions, which also included student tardiness as a variable, and found that there is a “paucity of evidence-based truancy interventions” and no set definition for truancy (p. 168). The terms *absenteeism*, *truancy*, and *tardiness* are defined by each state and applied inconsistently by states and districts (Sutphen et al., 2010). While habitual tardiness, known also as chronic tardiness, is viewed as a form of nonattendance (Reid, 2000), not all research definitions,

interventions, or studies agree to include tardiness as a form of truancy, thus complicating the student tardiness challenge by primarily focusing more on unexcused absences for truancy interventions (Sutphen et al., 2010).

Research has found that student tardiness is a predictor of student success and is a risk factor for future at-risk behavior (Christenson et al., 2000; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Kearny, 2008; Reid, 2012; Warne et al., 2020). Family resources (access to transportation), family income levels (poverty), and growing up in a single-parent household can also contribute to arriving late for school (Garriga & Martinez-Lucena, 2018; Kearny, 2008). However, research is limited on the roles that race, ethnicity, and gender play in student tardiness and academic achievement. Data from a 2011 dissertation study examining the impact of student tardiness at three high schools in Georgia indicated that student tardiness did affect student achievement on test scores, but race and gender did not show a correlation with the number of tardies and academic achievement (Quarles, 2011). Except for the studies applying Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and SWPBIS to student tardiness, there has been limited research specifically targeting student tardiness with an actionable intervention that promotes positive behavioral change, which underscores the wicked problem that student tardiness poses for schools and for researchers. To address the complex nature of student tardiness, this study used TPB as the main theory, as the desired outcome of the intervention was to ultimately change student behavior through their social engagement in a skills-focused learning module (Ajzen, 1985, 1991).

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The idea behind Ajzen's (1985) TPB is that the behavior of a person can be predicted by determining the intention of what an individual is planning to do. The goal of TPB is to measure a participant's intention to carry out the behavior that is being studied (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). TPB utilizes three direct measures or factors in order to predict a participant's behavior: (a) a participant's attitude(s) (i.e., whether the participant is in favor of doing the thing being studied), (b) subjective norms (i.e., the amount of social pressure a participant feels to do the behavior), and (c) perceived behavioral control (i.e., whether the person feels that they are in control of the behavior being studied) (Ajzen, 1991, 2002). These three factors are also influenced by several specific beliefs. A participant's attitude is influenced by behavioral beliefs (i.e., beliefs about the outcome of the behavior being studied), a person's subjective norms are influenced by normative beliefs (i.e., the societal norms and expectations pertaining to the behavior in question), and perceived behavioral control is influenced by control beliefs (i.e., those factors that could aid or deter the behavior in question from occurring) (Ajzen, 1991, 2001, 2002). Central to someone's intention to act on something is their attitude toward that behavior, as "attitudes are relevant for understanding and predicting social behavior" (Ajzen, 2001, p. 48).

Criticism of Ajzen's TPB has posited that a person's intent to do something is not always accurate in predicting behavior when there is an involuntary or unconscious influence on the person's behavior (Sheeran et al., 2013). Other criticism has proposed that planning, and not intention, is a better predictor of acting (Carraro & Gaudreau, 2013). In response, TPB proponents have argued that most planned behaviors of humans

do not involve an involuntary response, as people plan or intend to do that which they want to do, and the intention to behave has been found to be a strong predictor of someone's behavior (Ajzen, 2001, 2002; Reuveni & Werner, 2015; Werner, 2003).

TPB has been used in research for various applications. In a study aiming to predict the willingness of teenagers to volunteer with elderly persons, Reuveni and Werner (2015) found TPB to be an appropriate theory to use to measure the behavioral intent of participants. A 52-item questionnaire and multiple regression analyses revealed that teenagers' attitudes, subjective norms, and personal identity predicted the extent to which they were willing to work with elderly persons.

TPB has been used in university settings to predict the attendance of students by looking at their intention as the predictor (Martin, 2010), to predict high school students' intentions to select a gap year (White et al., 2008), to determine the behavioral intentions of young drivers to construct an effective online intervention (McDonald et al., 2018; Steinmetz et al., 2016), and to measure the effectiveness of an online health-related intervention for university-bound students (Epton et al., 2013). Additionally, studies have shown that TPB was an appropriate model framework to use and help explain student attendance intentions (Centeio et al., 2018; Hollett et al., 2020). Hollett and colleagues (2020) used a TPB-based 10-item questionnaire to determine students' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to predict their intentions regarding university lecture attendance. Centeio and colleagues (2018) used a TPB survey with high school students in a physical education class and found that students who had positive intentions toward being physically active scored higher on physical fitness tests and had fewer unexcused absences. Conversely, students who had negative intentions

toward physical activity had lower scores on physical fitness tests and increased unexcused absences (Centeio et al., 2018). Past research supports the use of TPB as a measurement tool to evaluate students' attitudes toward a behavior, thereby predicting their intention to carry out that action (Ajzen, 2001, 2002; Centeio et al., 2018).

Therefore, it was an appropriate tool to utilize postintervention in the present study.

Social Control or Social Engagement: The Role of Zero-Tolerance Discipline Policies

Traditional school discipline practices have centered around school discipline as punishment, with punitive practices being employed in response to student behavior (Deakin & Kupchik, 2016; Hirschfield, 2008). Central to zero-tolerance policies are exclusionary and punitive disciplinary practices that seek to punish and control (Fabelo et al., 2011; Foucault, 1979; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Skiba et al., 2014). As Foucault (1979) contended, schools have been organized around the institutional principle of social control, comparable to prisons, as both are physical places and constructed for social order. Schools in the United States have utilized prison-like systems such as campus security, scanners, and cameras as objects to uphold punitive school disciplinary structures (Foucault, 1979; Lustick, 2017). Thus, zero-tolerance policies emphasize and sustain a climate of fear through punishment (Foucault, 1979; Kafka, 2011; Lustick, 2017). Therefore, the fear of violent events occurring on a school site and the desire to be both preventive and proactive in targeting violent behavior has framed school discipline under the guise of law and order (Deakin & Kupchik, 2016; Hirschfield, 2008; Kim et al., 2010). Student tardiness has been viewed as a behavior to be corrected using school disciplinary practices (Sprick & Daniels, 2007). Research has indicated that tardiness is

negatively impactful for students and has linked tardiness to students who are chronically absent and face academic and disciplinary challenges (Haarman, 2007; Sprick & Daniels, 2007).

Although research has suggested that it is appropriate to maintain zero-tolerance policies for the most serious of disciplinary behaviors and that staff members and families want to know that disciplinary practices are in place to deal with problematic behavior, the application of zero-tolerance policies cannot be one size fits all (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Alternatives to zero-tolerance disciplinary practices have arisen from K–12 schools, in part because of a growing awareness of zero-tolerance discipline policies contributing to exclusionary practices toward Black and Latinx students (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Losen et al., 2013; Maag, 2012; Morris, 2016; Pavelka, 2013; Skiba et al., 2014). The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) presented data from the U.S. Department of Education (2004) and Office of Civil Rights (2002–2003) showing that Black and Latinx students are overrepresented groups for out-of-school suspension and expulsion compared with White students. Black students specifically have the highest risk in the United States for corporal punishment, expulsion, and suspension from K–12 schools (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Moreover, research has shown that between 2011 and 2012 in the United States, 10% of secondary public school students had been suspended, with only 6.7% of White students suspended, while 23.2% of Black students had been suspended. This evidence points to the discipline

disparities of students related to race and suggests a need to change zero-tolerance policies to something positive (Skiba et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, some school administrators may be conflicted in utilizing alternative practices to support students, as site school administrators face the challenge of respecting the disciplinary expectations of their superiors (McGee & Mansfield, 2014). In some cases, K–12 administrators have struggled to balance the potential success of a new approach with the strict and stringent expectations that school discipline policies establish (McGee & Mansfield, 2014). In this sense, teachers and school administrators face a double mandate: to ensure that students are being held accountable for their actions and to do what is in the best interest of the students so that they learn from their behaviors (McGee & Mansfield, 2014). Alternative practices used to implement whole-school interventions to target student behavioral change include the frameworks of PBIS and SWPBIS (Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2021).

PBIS and SWPBIS have been used as alternative intervention frameworks to combat student behavior challenges (Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2014; Nocera et al., 2014; Tyre et al., 2011). PBIS and SWPBIS have also been used as alternative practices to combat student tardiness (Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; Tyre et al., 2011). PBIS is a three-tiered framework for schools to implement interventions to teach positive behavior student supports as a means of implementing change (Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2021). SWPBIS applies PBIS school-wide, with the collection and evaluation of data to determine the intervention's effectiveness (Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2021). SWPBIS has been implemented successfully to decrease student tardiness by having school staffs teach on-

time behavioral expectations (Tyre et al., 2011) and providing whole-staff active supervision between class periods (Johnson-Gros et al., 2008). Challenges to implementing SWPBIS in schools have included realigning long-standing traditions and school discipline practices among the whole staff, which requires the buy-in of all teachers in adopting this practice with fidelity (Swain-Bradway et al., 2015). Research has shown that the lack of full faculty support and participation is a significant challenge for high schools in adopting these interventions (Edmund et al., 2014; Flannery et al., 2009). While the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation intervention does not specifically follow the multi-tiered PBIS framework, the PBIS and SWPBIS models provided inspiration for the creation of this research study's intervention. PBIS/SWPBIS will be revisited in Chapter 5 as a possible future direction or evolution of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program.

Restorative Practices: An Alternative Framework to Punitive Discipline Practices

Restorative practices have roots in the traditions of the native Indigenous peoples of North America, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, and the Maori of New Zealand (Strang, 2001). The Indigenous peoples of North America have used restorative circles as a traditional practice to work out differences and find commonality (Schumacher, 2014). The historical background of restorative practices is based in the conceptual humanistic experience of living in peace and harmony, with people resolving their differences in a respectful and responsible way (Drewery, 2013; Mbambo & Skelton, 2003; Strang, 2001). *Restorative justice* is a term specifically related to individuals meeting with those persons with whom they have been in conflict, seeking to repair any harm and agree on how best to move forward (Amstutz & Mullett, 2005). Similarly, restorative practices are

defined by a shift away from punitive and retributive systems of control, and toward a practice to focus on the needs of those affected to repair harm, involve stakeholders, build relationships, and reframe discipline as a learning process and not a punitive label (Gonzalez, 2016; Strang, 2001; Zehr, 2002; Zehr & Toews, 2004). Restorative practices involve various strategies such as restorative conversations, circles, and peer mediation to resolve conflict, discuss behavioral change, and generate solutions (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Mansfield et al., 2018; Teasley, 2014).

Responding to studies that emphasized the discipline gap and disparities created by zero-tolerance punitive practices, researchers have advocated for the need to shift toward alternative discipline practices (Braithwaite, 2006; Deakin & Kupchik, 2016; Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016). Studies have highlighted the growing movement of restorative justice practices as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies (Deakin & Kupchik, 2016; Schott Foundation, 2014; Teasley, 2014). Discipline reform studies have illustrated the strength of restorative practices in establishing relationships, teaching responsibility and problem solving to students, and having a learner-centered discipline approach that focuses on social engagement and not social control (Carr, 2012; Deakin & Kupchik, 2016; Maag, 2012; Pavelka, 2013; Schott Foundation, 2014; Teasley, 2014). Strategies and concepts that have contributed to restorative practices frameworks include relationship building, social-emotional growth, mentorship, positive behavioral interventions, and learning interventions (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Skiba et al., 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Restorative Practices as an Intervention in Schools

Restorative practices have become a more formal, defined, social science practice used to repair harm rather than dispense punishment in primary and secondary education (Lohmeyer, 2017). Restorative practices as a process aims to change the way educators think about school disciplinary practices and transform their mindsets to reframe conversations toward supporting students in peaceful resolution of conflict or challenges, to allow them to learn from their behavior and choices (Pavelka, 2013). The core principles of restorative practices are based on the historical traditions of repairing harm without punitive measures, listening first before making judgments, and empowering the community to support one another collaboratively (Pavelka, 2013).

Essential to the application of restorative practices as an intervention or framework is recognizing the power dynamic in the relationship between the adult and the student (youth) (Foucault, 1979; Lohmeyer, 2017; Sercombe, 1992). As an integral element of recognizing and working through this power dynamic in restorative practices, the adult must use positive, helpful language in order to build a trusting relationship with the student so that the student feels empowered to communicate openly (Lohmeyer, 2017; Sercombe, 1992). The different types of restorative strategies traditionally stem from restorative justice practices, such as peer mediation, conferencing, and restorative circles (Pavelka, 2013; Schott Foundation, 2014). While these restorative justice practices are formal and focused on conflict resolution, repair of harm, and student empowerment, educators can use other informal restorative practices to positively influence the school environment and provide guidance for students (Schott Foundation, 2014).

Restorative practices have been viewed positively by schools and when used to check in and connect with students as a means to build relationships with trusted adults, problem solve, and provide mentoring for students (Eyler, 2014). Mentorship and positive behavioral support from trusted adults was found to be a proactive approach to be used with restorative practices (Eyler, 2014). Establishing relationships with students is central to building a collaborative school culture and positive environment from which school administrators and staff can begin to make a commitment to restorative practices (Pavelka, 2013). In addition, informal restorative practices, such as restorative conversations, table talks, and mentor relationships, allow for proactive engagement of the educator and student (Schott Foundation, 2014). Furthermore, restorative practice strategies have had a positive impact on student relationships when modeled and supported by school administrators and when restorative practice professional development was provided to staff (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Successful student-teacher mentoring relationships allow students to develop trust with the mentor, allow students to benefit from a social capital exchange, and dissolve the perceived power imbalance in order to have a more reciprocal bond built from the mentoring relationship (Ferguson, 2017; Rhodes, 2002, 2005). As a concept, mentoring can help students with a variety of social or academic challenges (Miller, 2004). In multiple studies, positive mentoring relationships and mentorship programs with adolescents led to a reduction in student absences (Rhodes et al., 2000; Sipe, 2002). Although informal restorative practices such as restorative conversations and mentorship may not be the norm for dealing with student tardiness challenges, they have been shown to facilitate the successful development of young people facing a variety of challenges.

Using restorative practices as the guiding framework for an intervention to target a specific school challenge, such as student tardiness, utilizes a positive approach instead of a punitive practice. When restorative practices were used by one high school leadership team, discipline gaps across race, ethnicity, gender, and special education categories shrunk over a 5-year period (Mansfield et al., 2018). Restorative practices teach students social responsibility, teach dignity to students who participate in a restorative circles framework, and can be used in conjunction with social-emotional learning (SEL) programs where restorative practices are used as the vehicle to deliver the curriculum (High, 2017; Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018; Macready, 2009). Restorative practices could help students learn to formulate their own solutions to their individual challenges (van Alphen, 2015). For the present study and intervention, I used restorative practices as a conceptual framework to guide the work with students and during the initial stage of the intervention when engaging in student individual and group conversations. In step one, I practiced a restorative conversation, grounded in establishing mentorship and providing a safe space for students to listen, speak, and build student-educator relationships based on kindness as opposed to emphasizing discipline and punishment.

Regarding school attendance, Velloso and Vadeboncoeur (2015) used interviews to establish educator relationships with students at a high school in an effort to understand the students' attendance challenges and remediate school attendance. They found that attendance policies were grounded in zero-tolerance disciplinary approaches that punished absentee or tardy students by inducing them to retrieve a tardy pass. Students who had previously been forced to go to the office to retrieve a pass into class, missing valuable time for learning, were now allowed to stay in class and work with the teacher in

building a relationship around understanding the challenges they faced. The outcomes of this study emphasized (a) understanding more about the student experience, (b) establishing student-educator relationships, and (c) instituting social mediation with students who are challenged by absenteeism and tardiness, so that students can develop a sense of responsibility, belonging, and community. Studies have further indicated that consistent behavior-specific praise by teachers (or staff) used as a positive intervention to support students reduced inappropriate behavior by increasing students' time on task and reducing student tardiness (Caldarella et al., 2011; Royer et al., 2019). In this setting, specific types of restorative practice concepts were used in the intervention, specifically informal restorative practices such as restorative conversations and mentorship concepts (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Drewery, 2013; Gonzalez, 2016; Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018; Rhodes, 2005; Schott Foundation, 2014).

Growth Mindset Theory

This study used growth mindset theory as a complementary theoretical framework to help develop the online learning modules that were a part of the intervention provided to the cohort of students in the study. Growth mindset theory evolved from studies and literature on mindset and motivation and the theories on intelligence as it relates to one's ability to learn or achieve something (Atkinson, 1957; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Regarding motivation, growth mindset theory has been influenced by achievement motivation theory (AMT) and goal orientation theory (GOT). AMT holds that a person will be motivated to achieve something if they see that their time and effort put toward achieving that something will result in success and/or they find value in the result (Atkinson, 1957; McClelland et al., 1953). GOT posits that students are motivated to do

something based on their perceptions of themselves as a mastery-oriented learner (Schallert & Martin, 2003).

Schroder et al. (2014) contended that “people generally hold one of two beliefs (or ‘mindsets’) about the malleability of self-attributes such as intelligence: the ‘growth mindset’ construes intelligence as malleable and improvable; the ‘fixed mindset’ understands intelligence as an absolute entity that cannot be changed” (p. 27). As it relates to motivation, a student who believes that their intelligence can be developed and increased through hard work will be motivated to put in the time and effort to achieve their goal or task, whereas students who feel that intelligence is fixed or unchangeable are less likely to be motivated to meet a challenge when faced with one (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck, 1999; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Schroder et al. (2014) also asserted that “individuals who hold the growth mindset believe that successful performance is largely driven by effort, whereas fixed-minded individuals believe success is determined mostly by natural ability” (p. 27).

Growth mindset theory does not come without criticisms, as suggested by a recent statement from Dweck: “We don’t think it works every time, we want to know where it does not work so we can find out why” (Tes Editorial Team, 2017, para. 2). Dweck further acknowledged that a growth mindset may not work in all settings but said she does see it as a valuable framework for motivation and learning application (Tes Editorial Team, 2017). A study conducting two meta-analyses of the effectiveness of mindset interventions on academic achievement showed that while mindset interventions do show some effect on academic achievement for some groups, such as low-socioeconomic students, overall effects were considered weak (Sisk et al., 2018). Dweck (2018)

responded by stating that growth mindset interventions are inexpensive, efficient, and continually being improved upon.

One of the signature concepts of growth mindset theory is the belief that one's intelligence or abilities can be changed (Dweck, 2017). Interventions using a growth mindset have been shown to be cost effective and scalable in positively influencing students' achievement, while also being implemented in less than an hour and a half (Yeager et al., 2019). Growth mindset interventions can "facilitate performance through persistence" when students are empowered with a "sense of autonomy" (Manchi Chao et al., 2017, p. 1402). Blackwell et al. (2007), using a targeted intervention with seventh-grade students promoting positivity and classroom motivation, showed that encouraging a growth mindset increased the motivation of students to achieve. This study demonstrated a significant difference between the control group and the experimental group, with the experimental group showing greater positive change in math achievement after receiving the growth mindset intervention (Blackwell et al., 2007).

Academic achievement has been the primary source of data for growth mindset studies with a focus on improving students' views of their abilities as either fixed or malleable (Dweck, 2006). Aronson et al. (2002) utilized an intervention that focused on students' growth mindset by having college students write mentoring letters of encouragement to middle school students. The African American college students undergoing the growth mindset intervention went on to achieve higher grades in their college courses than the students in the control group.

Growth mindset interventions have also been shown to be positively impactful in school social settings where the intervention targeted a change in behavior (Yeager et al.,

2013; Yeager et al., 2019). Yeager et al. (2013) found that using an in-person growth mindset workshop with students, which focused on communicating to students that they have the ability to change their personality traits, made a significant impact in reducing aggressive behavior among the adolescents. Dweck and Yeager (2019) said, “The growth mindset message was this: people’s behaviors often come from thoughts and feelings, which live in the brain, and can be changed” (p. 31). In a 2019 study in the journal *Nature*, Yeager et al. (2019) reported on the transition of an in-person intervention previously used in growth mindset studies to an online intervention. The online intervention took just under 1 hour and conveyed the message that a student’s intellectual abilities can change and develop. The intervention was delivered to more than 12,000 ninth-grade students in 76 public high schools. This was the largest growth mindset study of its kind to date and showed that a short online growth mindset intervention did, in fact, bring about academic improvement among lower-achieving students, so long as the school’s message was aligned with the growth mindset interventions message (Yeager et al., 2019).

Related to my intervention, the application of a growth mindset did not focus on “growing” students’ intelligence but instead focused on a student’s ability to learn something new, have an intent to apply new learning, and view their abilities as changeable. Therefore, the intervention’s approach in having students take part in learning modules to motivate them through new learning focused less on changing intelligence and more on students’ attitudes toward the new concepts presented in the learning modules (goal setting, punctuality, and organization).

Fostering Change: Small Wins

It is no small feat to motivate students in such a way that they modify their behavior and make the changes necessary to see the benefits of their positive behavioral adjustments. In considering the complexity of addressing the student tardy system from the causes of why a student is tardy to the system that is in place to deal with tardy students, one can see how this is truly a wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973), where solving one aspect of the problem leads to the development of more problems. Attempting to solve the entirety of student tardy issues is a large-scale wicked problem that has the great possibility of morphing into a never-ending challenge. Weick (1984) argued that there needs to be a shift from taking on large-scale problems, instead refocusing problem solving into smaller, more controlled opportunities with the prospect of success:

To recast larger problems into smaller, less arousing problems, people can identify a series of controllable opportunities of modest size that produce visible results and that can be gathered into synoptic solutions. This strategy of small wins addresses social problems by working directly on their construction and indirectly on their resolution. (p. 40)

Weick's (1984) small wins approach sees small opportunities as problem-solving challenges of moderate importance that can be built upon and allow people to see success from, grow from, and multiply the small win into more small wins. Calling issues "minor challenges" psychologically causes us to react differently than if we called the problems "serious issues"; the human sees the minor challenge as achievable, is aroused to it, and is not intimidated by the potentially serious challenge (p. 41). Therefore, a series of small incremental wins can add up and serve to allow students to see that with each small win, they are working toward making positive modifications in their behavior.

In this study, students could experience small wins by completing phases 1, 2, and 3 of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program sought in part to foster positive change in students' attitudes toward being on time to class, and the use of Weick's small wins played an important role in the design of the study. Specifically, in the Phase 2 learning module, I designed the information the students received (on growth mindset, restorative practices, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills) to be motivating and positive, and students answered reflection questions that could see them achieve incremental, small personal successes from the learning, thereby culminating in the modification of their behavior.

Previous Action Research

Two cycles (Cycle 0 and Cycle 1) of action research, carried out in fall 2019 and spring 2020, influenced the design of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. Tardies, like chronic absenteeism, negatively affect student performance and future student mobility (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2018). Based on these findings and my Cycle 0 and Cycle 1 research, I determined that there was a need for new studies focused on implementing innovative practices that address student tardiness in a proactive, nonpunitive, and restorative model.

Cycle 0 Action Research: Fall 2019

In my Cycle 0 study, I interviewed students and teachers to ascertain their attitudes toward the existing punitive tardy policy at my school site, determine what they felt the policy's purpose was, and discover what changes, if any, they would design if the existing punitive tardy policy were to be changed. The goal of my Cycle 0 investigation was to gather qualitative data from a small number of students and teachers that would

inform my problem of practice and determine the next steps through the identification of emerging themes produced by the interviews.

Cycle 0 Research Questions

The research questions I developed and used to guide my Cycle 0 research were the following:

1. How do students feel about the existing tardy accountability system as it pertains to holding them accountable for their tardies and teaching them to be in class and on time?
2. How do teachers feel about the existing tardy accountability system as it pertains to holding students accountable for their tardies and teaching them to be in class and on time?

Method

I conducted in-person interviews with students ($n = 4$) and teachers ($n = 4$). The interview questions focused on student tardiness; the impact of student tardiness on the student, teacher, and class; and their opinions on both the purpose and the effectiveness of the punitive tardy discipline detention practice. I designed the qualitative interview questions to allow for open conversation and prompt responses from students and teachers in order to reflect on the tardy management policy and investigate if they would favor an alternative to the punitive system. I conducted the interviews in a private office and recorded them so that I could transcribe and analyze the respondents' answers. I then coded the student and teacher answers using an inductive coding method (Saldaña, 2016), where categories and themes emerged from the respondents' answers.

Summary of Findings of Cycle 0 Study

Three themes emerged from my analysis: (a) Tardy students affected teacher instruction because they were a disruption, (b) the punitive tardy lunch detention system was not a deterrent to students, and (c) any alternative to a punitive system needed to be supportive and focus on changing student behavior. Three themes emerged from the student interviews: (a) The punitive tardy lunch detentions were ineffective, (b) detentions cause students to feel negative about the system, and (c) any alternative to the punitive tardy lunch detentions needed to focus on being positive. Although the Cycle 0 study was limited in scope, it still produced an interesting overlap between the students and teachers interviewed. Specifically, both teachers and students felt the punitive tardy lunch detention policy was not working to change student behavior and that any alternative to the existing system needed to be positive or supportive to change student behavior.

Cycle 1 Action Research: Spring 2020

In my Cycle 1 study, I interviewed more students as well as parents, as stakeholders who could speak to their views and attitudes toward the existing punitive tardy policy at my school site. The overall goal was to determine what these groups felt the policy's purpose is and discover what changes, if any, they would design if the punitive tardy policy were to be changed. The goal of my Cycle 1 investigation was to gather new qualitative data from parent stakeholders as well as from an additional cohort of students and add to the number of students I had previously interviewed in Cycle 0. This would inform my problem of practice and determine next steps through the identification of emerging themes from the interviews.

Cycle 1 Research Questions

The research questions I developed and used to guide my Cycle 1 research were the following:

1. How do students feel about the existing tardy accountability system as it pertains to holding them accountable for their tardies and teaching them to be in class and on time?
2. How do parents feel about the existing tardy accountability system as it pertains to holding students accountable and teaching them to be in class and on time? Would they prefer an alternative?

Method

I conducted phone-based interviews with parents of 13 students at the site school ($n = 13$) and conducted in-person interviews with five students (not from the Cycle 0 cohort) at the site school. I designed the interview questions from the two research questions, and they pertained to student tardiness; the impact of student tardiness on the student, teacher, and class; and participants' opinions on both the purpose and the effectiveness of the punitive tardy discipline detention practice. I designed the qualitative interview questions to allow for open conversation and prompt responses from students and parents in order to reflect on the current tardy management policy and investigate if they would favor an alternative to the punitive system. I conducted the interviews in a private office and recorded them so that I could transcribe and analyze the respondents' answers. I then coded the student and parent answers using an inductive coding method, where categories and themes emerged from the respondents' answers.

Summary of Findings of Cycle 1 Study

Two themes emerged from my analysis: (a) The punitive tardy detention system may be effective as a deterrent for some students but not all students, and (b) the stakeholder groups desire an alternative system. Three themes emerged from the student interviews: (a) Students understood that the purpose of the punitive tardy lunch detention system was to provide a consequence for being late to class, (b) the lunch detention consequence was not a deterrent to students, and (c) students desired an alternative to the lunch detention received for tardies. Two themes emerged from the parent interviews: (a) The punitive tardy lunch detentions may work for some students but not for all students as a disciplinary measure, and (b) an alternative to the punitive tardy system needed to support students positively.

Rationale for S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Intervention

The previous cycles of action research, theoretical perspective, conceptual frameworks, and research guiding my study served as the foundation for my S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be implemented at my school site. Ajzen's (1985, 1991) TPB provided the foundational basis for determining the extent to which the intervention learning modules provide effective instruction that changes students' behavioral intent to be at school on time. Dweck (1999) and Dweck and Legget's (1988) growth mindset offered theoretical and conceptual support for crafting an intervention that includes learning modules. The notion that students can learn something new when they believe that hard work, training, and dedication will lead to their growth was a driving factor for creating learning modules to support student instruction and promote student motivation. The restorative practices framework provided the foundation for using positive

mentorship, relationship, and restorative conversations to support students positively instead of punishing them through punitive disciplinary measures.

Restorative practices, when applied in conjunction with growth mindset principles, can support students positively to help them learn new information that can change their intent and attitude about getting to school on time. Previous cycles of action research indicated a need for a change from a punitive approach in dealing with student tardiness to a positive alternative that supports and involves students. Students, teachers, and parents felt that a punitive approach was ineffective and a more positive alternative was needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Chapter 2 provided an overview of past and current research in positive behavioral interventions in relation to student tardiness and detailed theoretical perspectives of motivation, mindset, and restorative and positive behavioral intervention. Chapter 3 focuses on an innovative mindset and motivation intervention I created: the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this mixed methods action research project and includes a project summary along with the research questions guiding it, followed by an overview of the action research setting. I further describe the procedure and timeline I used to implement the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, followed by the instruments and data collection procedures used to measure the intervention, and conclude with a section on data validity and reliability. Based on the data collected from two previous cycles of action research involving students, teachers, and parents, this action research study addressed the needs of these three stakeholder groups and advances the current research on effective student tardiness programs for K–12 schools.

Setting and Participants

The setting for this mixed methods action research study was a suburban public comprehensive high school (SHS) located in the suburbs of San Diego County, 35 miles north of the city of San Diego. The 9- to 12th-grade campus of 1,450 students is made up of the race and ethnicity demographics found in Table 1. Nineteen percent of the students at SHS qualify as low socioeconomic status (Aeries, 2021).

Table 1

Student Race/Ethnicities at SHS

| Race/ethnicity | Percentage of student population |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| White | 56 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 26 |
| Black African American | 2 |
| Asian | 15 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.3 |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 0.7 |

Note. Student demographic data is from the SHS Aeries (2021) absence management system.

At the time of the study, the school day started at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m., with five 71-minute classes and 5-minute passing periods in between, a 10-minute brunch, and a 39-minute lunch. Students are expected to be in their classroom prior to the bell; otherwise, they are deemed tardy and required to obtain a tardy entry pass from the school administration building. Students receiving their fifth tardy also earn a lunch detention, which appears as a notation on their tardy admit-to-class slip. Each subsequent tardy earns a further lunch detention added to the student's attendance record. Students must report to the lunch detention classroom to serve the detention, whereby the detention is removed from their record. Unserved detentions remain on the student's record and can prohibit a student from participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities (e.g., dances).

Participants in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study were students who had one or more tardy lunch detention(s) from the first 4 weeks of the fall 2021 term. I collected

daily student tardy data from the school district Aeries Absence Management System and used them to inform the study and recruit qualifying students who would potentially benefit from the intervention (Aeries, 2021). At the end of the first 4 weeks of the trimester, I contacted all students who had accrued enough tardies to receive one or more lunch detentions, invited them to opt in to the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, and provided them with a letter and parent permission slip to be signed. A total of 60 students who had accrued enough tardies to receive a lunch detention were contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. Interested students completed an assent form and had their guardians sign permission slips approving their participation in the study. All students were instructed that their participation in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study was voluntary and required approval from their parents or guardians prior to any interventional interviews or learning modules. Students participated in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study in lieu of any lunch detention(s) they were required to attend for that week. However, any lunch detentions students accrued before their participation were not excused. Of the 60 invited students, 13 opted in and all 13 finished the study. Invited students who did not opt in did not receive the intervention and were subject to the standard tardy accountability system of SHS. See Table 2 for participant demographics.

Table 2

Participant Demographics for S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Study

| Self-reported characteristics | Participants |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 8 |
| Female | 5 |
| Ethnicity | |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4 |
| White | 7 |
| Black/African American | 2 |
| Year in school | |
| Senior (12th) | 10 |
| Junior (11th) | 3 |

Note. $N = 13$. Appendix A has the full list of demographic choices.

Role of the Researcher

As the assistant principal of the school at the time of the study, I acted as both the researcher and an active participant staff member responsible for developing, leading, and implementing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. I administered the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention by creating and providing the learning modules to the students. I collected and analyzed all qualitative and quantitative data.

Intervention Design

The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program is a learning-focused responsibility intervention providing additional training for students who are assigned detentions because of excessive (five or more) tardies. The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program uses a restorative and learning-focused model grounded in teaching students goal setting, time management, and organizational skills for the purpose of changing their attitudes related to being on

time to class. The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention's three phases began with the "restorative phase," where students participated in individual and group restorative conversations (see Table 3). Students completed four learning modules as part of the second phase: "learning & growth." The learning modules consisted of students learning about restorative practices, growth mindset, punctuality, and organizational skills. Students then reflected on the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention and their learning in the third "reflection" phase. I describe each of the phases in Table 3.

Table 3*The Three Phases of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Intervention*

| Phases | Activity |
|---|---|
| Phase 1: Restorative | Restorative Conversations <i>1–2 weeks</i> |
| <i>Student Intake Questionnaire Individual Restorative Conversation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide demographic information and background information on how students arrive to school • Students participate in individual restorative conversation with staff member (researcher) |
| <i>Group Restorative Conversation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in group restorative conversations with staff member (researcher) • Phase 2 introduced and discussed |
| Phase 2: Learning & Growth | Individual Learning Module Lessons and Reflections <i>1 week</i> |
| <i>Individual Learning Module Concepts</i> | Students complete learning modules on the following concepts: restorative practice, growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. Modules focus on best practices and have students complete reflections after each learning module to reflect on their learning. |
| Module 1 Restorative Practice | Learning Goal: Determine the students’ context and reasons for being tardy; listen to the students to determine the primary factor for their tardiness |
| Module 2 Growth Mindset | Learning Goal: Students can grow through learning skills to support them positively, as an alternative to being punished for being late |
| Module 3 Goal Setting | Learning Goal: Students learn purpose and process for goal setting and reflect on their learning |
| Module 4 Punctuality | Learning Goal: Students learn punctuality skills best practices and reflect on their learning |
| Module 5 Organizational Skills | Learning Goal: Students learn organizational skills best practices and reflect on their learning |
| Phase 3: Reflection | Student Feedback Form Exit Questionnaire <i>Fall: October–November 2021, 1 week</i> |
| <i>Student feedback form exit questionnaire</i> | Asks the students to reflect on what they learned, how they will apply what they learned, and what they found effective and ineffective |

Phase 1

During Phase 1 of the intervention, participants filled out a student intake questionnaire providing demographic information and background information about student transportation to school and discussed overall feelings related to the current tardy program in place. I used restorative conversations to understand the students' challenges, build a mentor-based relationship, and provide the students a supportive space to feel safe and problem solve. Restorative practices and the restorative practice framework have been shown to be a positive alternative to punitive discipline practices in schools because they focus on learning and problem solving, building relationships, and mentorship (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Skiba et al., 2014). Restorative conversations have been used previously in high school settings to initiate interviews that seek to build relationships, as opposed to disciplining students who have attendance challenges (see Vellos & Vadeboncoeur, 2015). Other studies have found that teacher and mentor praise used as a positive intervention technique supported students in getting to class on time (Caldarella et al., 2011; Royer et al., 2019).

As part of the intervention, I asked open-ended questions to the participating students to guide the restorative conversation and allow the students to provide commentary. Individual conversations with all 13 students and one group restorative conversation with all students were aimed at shifting perceived blame and shameful feelings about being late and receiving punitive detentions away from the students and providing the students a voice to understand they can both take ownership of their actions and feel empowered to voice their opinions on the current tardy accountability system.

Phase 2

During Phase 2 of the intervention, students accessed the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program learning modules grounded in growth mindset theory (Dweck, 1999, 2006), with an emphasis on educating students in restorative practices, growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality skills, and organizational skills. The learning modules were designed for students to learn best practices with regard to the five concepts (restorative practices, growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills) with the hope that the 13 participants would develop the intent to arrive in class on time. Studies have shown that growth mindset interventions used in a variety of settings and under various contexts have positively affected achievement, self-regulation, resilience, and academic achievement (Aronson et al., 2002; Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck, 2006; Yeager et al., 2013; Yeager et al., 2019). In addition, restorative school intervention practices teaching positive behavioral expectations have produced a decrease in student tardiness (Tyre et al., 2011).

The learning modules were presented using a self-guided Google slide deck shared with the 13 participants. Each learning module was organized by the concept that was being taught, with short videos focused on teaching students best practices of the five learning module concepts (see Table 3). The learning modules guided students in how they could utilize or implement the information being presented. The modules began with introducing students to restorative practices and growth mindset theory, so that they would understand learning is a positive practice, attitude is a mindset that can be developed, and believing they can learn something new is the first step toward their own growth (Dweck, 2006; Skiba et al., 2014; Skiba et al., 2016). The three remaining

learning modules taught students the basics of goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. The motivational framework of the learning modules was meant to build from the Phase 1 framework of restorative practices, while utilizing the growth mindset concept to promote student learning and positively influence student attitudes regarding making changes to be to class on time. Students wrote reflections after completing each learning module to reflect on their learning, their growth, and how they would incorporate their learning into their own practice moving forward.

Phase 3

Phase 3 of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention was a reflection phase where students completed a student feedback form exit questionnaire. The questionnaire was created as a Google form so that students could type out their responses (see Appendix F). As part of the questionnaire, students reflected on Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the intervention and provided both feedback and reflection on both the process and the learning that they experienced. Questions asked students about the effectiveness of the intervention and gauged student feelings about the usefulness of the learning as it related to any change in their attitude to be in class on time.

Research Design

The research questions for this study were the following:

RQ1: How did students feel about their own tardiness and respond to the idea of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention before participating in it?

RQ2: To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention taught them time management skills, organizational skills, and goal-setting skills?

RQ3: What did students find effective and ineffective about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention?

RQ4: To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention promoted a change in their attitude to be on time for class?

This study utilized a convergent mixed methods research design to allow for both qualitative and quantitative data to be collected, analyzed independently, and triangulated to provide greater insight for the research study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This study met most of the characteristics of an action research study: It addressed a practical problem in schools with a practical solution, utilized both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention posed to address the school problem, and produced new knowledge related to the field of student school tardiness (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2017). In addition, another key characteristic that this convergent mixed methods research design shares with practical action research is that I was the active participant researcher addressing a problem of practice (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2017). However, because of time constraints, the study did not have continued collaboration with a team or group of collaborators throughout the research design plan and implementation—a common characteristic of action research studies (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2017).

The central purpose of this study was to determine the impact and effectiveness of a new student tardy accountability intervention as an alternative to a punitive student tardiness system. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985) informed the study conceptually and theoretically to determine a student's intent to be to school and class on

time before and after participation in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention and was measured by utilizing a pre- and postsurvey with the 13 participants.

Instruments and Data Sources

Table 4 provides an overview of the instruments used to collect data and the corresponding research question that each instrument sought to answer.

Table 4

Instruments and Corresponding Research Questions

| Instrument/data source | Data type | Corresponding research question |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Student intake questionnaire | qualitative/quantitative | RQ1 |
| Questions for individual & group restorative conversations | qualitative | RQ1 |
| Researcher memo | qualitative | RQ1 |
| Pre/postsurvey | quantitative | RQ2, RQ4 |
| Student reflection journals | qualitative | RQ2, RQ3 |
| Student feedback form exit questionnaire | qualitative/quantitative | RQ2, RQ3, RQ4 |

Quantitative Data Sources

The purpose of the quantitative methods in this study was to determine if the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program promoted a change in the students’ attitudes toward practicing certain behaviors related to being on time and is specifically tied to RQ1 and RQ4.

Presurvey and Postsurvey

Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior was the theoretical framework guiding the creation of the pre/postsurvey to determine, through quantitative data, whether participants had an intent to be on time to class after participating in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program.

I provided a presurvey to students during Phase 1 of the intervention, prior to students taking the Phase 2 learning module lessons (see Appendix E for the pre/postsurvey). The purpose of the presurvey was to set a baseline measure for students' attitudes toward the behavioral practices of the constructs. I provided the same survey as a postsurvey instrument during Phase 3 after students took the Phase 2 learning module lessons containing the three constructs of the pre/postsurvey (goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills). The pre/postsurvey informed RQ2 and RQ4 by providing data to determine if students learned the information from the learning module based on their pre- and post-scores and had the intent to be on time to class (Martin, 2010; White et al., 2008).

As taught in the learning modules, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills were identified as key concepts that could inform and contribute to students intending to be on time to school (Kajidori, 2015; Mindset Works, 2017; MindTools, 2021; Reynolds, 2021).

I used several resources to guide the creation of the survey items pertaining to goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. The websites MindTools (2021) and Mindset Works (2017) and punctuality information on LinkedIn (Kajidori, 2015) provided information I used to build five survey items each for goal setting, punctuality,

and organizational skills. Other readings I used for information on goal setting and punctuality included Reynolds (2021) and Kajidori (2015). Finally, I used peer-reviewed journal articles and dissertations to support the creation of the questions for the pre/postsurvey (Anday-Porter et al., 2000; Carmody, 2019; Hassan et al., 2016; Midwest Comprehensive Center, 2018; Okubo, 2020; Werner et al., 2014). I designed the items to be specifically connected to an action or behavior of the construct, either goal setting, punctuality, or organizational skills.

Survey questions asked students to consider the attitudes they had toward a specific behavior. Questions were grouped into three constructs: goal setting, punctuality and on-time arrival, and organizational skills. These three groups each contained five statements. For example, there were five items as a group for the concept of goal setting. Each question in a group was scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The instruction for answering the survey items was “The following statements are related to goal setting, punctuality (being on-time), and organization. Please select only one response that indicates your current attitude toward practicing the behavior. Please answer honestly.” The questions used the following Likert scale: 1 = *not important at all*, 2 = *not important*, 3 = *slightly important*, 4 = *important*, and 5 = *very important*. I developed the Likert scale by looking at sample Likert scales from other research studies.

Student Feedback Form Exit Questionnaire

Students filled out the student feedback form exit questionnaire (Appendix F) after they completed the learning modules and postsurvey. The student feedback form exit questionnaire asked students specifically about their intent to be on time to class based on their participation in the learning modules and, combined with the pre- and

postsurvey data, to support findings for RQ2 and RQ4. The quantitative section of the questionnaire consisted of four questions asking students to mark their selection based on this Likert scale: *to a great extent, somewhat, very little, and not at all*.

Qualitative Data Sources

I collected qualitative data from the 13 study participants through (a) student intake questionnaires, (b) student restorative conversations (individual and group) using the questions asked during those conversations as the instrument (see appendices A, B, and C), (c) student reflection journal responses completed after each learning module (see Appendix D), and (d) open-ended questions from the student feedback form exit questionnaire (see Appendix F).

Student Intake Questionnaire

A student demographic intake questionnaire was used after students opted into the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program (see Appendix A). Students filled it out using a Google form, which asked for the student's year in school, gender identity preference, how the student arrives to school, and questions related to the student's opinion of the punitive tardy lunch detention policy. The form provided qualitative data that informed RQ1 as well as demographic student data. The open-ended questions focused on time management, growth mindset concepts such as the student's belief in learning new concepts, organizational skills, and goal setting.

Individual Restorative Conversations

Individual student conversations with the 13 participants were part of Phase 1 of the intervention and conducted prior to students taking the learning module in Phase 2 (see Appendix B). The conversations lasted approximately 10 minutes and were audio

recorded and transcribed using Zoom. Audio recording is a common way to record an interview so that the interviewer can focus on the many facets of the interview (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Paulus et al., 2014). I transcribed the audio recordings into a data file document from the Zoom web platform so that initial and *in vivo* coding could be performed. Student responses during the conversations were used as a data source to inform RQ1. The intent of these conversations was to allow the students to establish a rapport with me, provide mentorship, and provide participants the opportunity to open up about their feelings toward their tardiness and the punitive tardiness policy, as well as their opinion on a new model to deal with student tardiness. Students also answered questions describing their current mindset on punctuality, goal setting, and organizational skills prior to completing the intervention.

Group Restorative Conversations

A group restorative conversation was held as part of Phase 1 of the intervention with the 13 participants. The conversation was an interview style where data were collected from the questions asked of the students (see Appendix C). The group conversation lasted 17 minutes and was audio recorded using Zoom and a transcribed data file produced by Zoom. Student responses during the conversations were used as data to inform RQ1. The semi-structured conversation allowed students to listen to one another and provide their opinions on the current punitive tardy policy, their beliefs about tardiness, and the challenges they face getting to school on time. I grounded the questions I used and my sentence tags and responses with restorative, affective statements, allowing the students an opportunity to express the feelings they had about being tardy to school, with a focus on improving themselves through learning new concepts. As an example, I

asked students to share their feelings openly and without judgment. Responses to student answers I used included “I really like what you shared” and “I understand that this makes you feel . . .”

Student Reflection Journals

As part of the intervention, I asked students to write down their thoughts and reflect on their learning in four of the five learning modules: growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. The goal of the student reflection journals was to gauge the impact the learning modules had on student learning and the impact the S.T.R.O.N.G. program intervention had in promoting a change in attitude toward the students’ behavioral intention to be to class on time. The reflection student journal questions connected to the information in each of the learning modules. Students were prompted to answer the reflection student journal question after each learning module. (See Appendix D for the questions for each module.)

Researcher Memos

I wrote analytic memos of my reflections from the individual and group restorative conversations directly following each individual and group conversation (Miles et al., 2014).

Student Feedback Form Exit Questionnaire

Students filled out the student feedback form exit questionnaire (Appendix F) after they completed all the learning modules. The qualitative section of the questionnaire consisted of the open-ended questions 5–9. The goal of the learning module feedback form was to assess the effectiveness of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. The questionnaire asked for students’ evaluation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention and whether

they learned the concepts and felt that the material influenced them in a way that would change their behavior to be on time to class.

Study Timeline

Table 5 provides a timeline of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program actions, data collection, and analysis steps as approved with IRB permission (see Appendix G). The intervention occurred at the beginning of the fall 2021 trimester in preparation for students receiving and accruing tardies. I gathered pre-intervention student tardy data during the first 4 weeks of the fall 2021 school year using SHS's absence management system to determine students who had detentions due to tardies. The tardy detention data informed the next steps in reaching out to students who might benefit from the intervention. Phases 1, 2, and 3 took place from September through October 2021, concluding with students exiting the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program.

Table 5*Timeline and Procedures of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Study: Data Collection and**Analysis*

| Timeframe | Actions | Sources | Procedures |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| September 2021 | Collected pre-intervention student tardy data from absence management program | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with attendance clerk and tardy system computer program to gather the data |
| October 2021 | Recruited eligible students | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided IRB consent letters for completion |
| October 2021 | Implemented S.T.R.O.N.G. Program: Phase 1 and 2 | Student intake questionnaire, presurvey, individual/group restorative conversations, student reflection journals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-learning survey completed Student individual and group conversations completed Student reflection journals completed Student learning modules completed |
| October 2021 | Completed Phase 3 | Postsurvey, student feedback form exit questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-learning survey Student feedback form exit questionnaire completed |
| November 2021 | Transcribed and coded interviews, field notes, restorative conversations, student and researcher reflection journals | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transcribed interviews Code responses |
| November 2021 | Statistical analysis | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre- and postsurvey statistical analysis Interpreted data |
| December 2021 | Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreted triangulation of data from data sources Prepared conclusions from data analysis |

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis focused on the pre- and postsurveys, which students completed for Phase 1 and 3 and questions 1–5 from the student feedback form exit questionnaire. The pre/postsurvey had three groups of five items. Summing the student answers to the five questions of each of the three concept groups produced greater variability and significance than using an individual score for each survey statement asked would have. A maximum total score for the five items in a group was 25, and a minimum total score for the five questions for a group was 5. A student’s scaled score (out of 25) for each of the three constructs was produced for the pre/postsurvey. An example of the three constructs on the pre- and postsurvey scaled scores for one participant is shown in Table 6; all participant scores are discussed in Chapter 4.

Table 6

Excerpt of Scaled Scores for Pre/postsurvey Constructs

| ID | Year in school | Gender | Pre: Goal Setting | Post: Goal Setting | Pre: Punctuality | Post: Punctuality | Pre: Organizational Skills | Post: Organizational Skills |
|------|----------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 86PA | 11th – Junior | Male | 13 | 22 | 16 | 23 | 13 | 21 |

I used descriptive statistics to analyze the summed scores from the 13 participants on the pre/postsurvey. Descriptive statistics were also used to analyze data from the participant answers to questions 1–5 on the student feedback form exit questionnaire. A paired samples *t* test was used because the pre- and postsurveys were the same

measurement taken at two different times. The paired t test was used to compare the measurement of the pre- and postsurvey responses for the three constructs (goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills). The paired t test was used to determine if the mean difference between the two paired surveys, for each of the three sets of five questions per construct, was different from zero, showing any statistically significant difference after the intervention was given (Salkind & Frey, 2020). Statistical significance was determined and found if the p value was less than .05.

To further support the significance of the paired t test results, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used as a supporting statistical test due to the small N of 13 (Salkind & Frey, 2020). The summed scores from the pre- and postsurvey from the three constructs (goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills) were compared using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to measure each student's change in their answers from the pre- to the postsurvey. If there was improvement, the Wilcoxon test determined the probability of the occurrence (p value) to see if the improvement from the pre- and postsurvey summed scores was significant (Salkind & Frey, 2020). Significance was found if the p value was less than .05.

Qualitative Analysis

I used coding to facilitate qualitative data analysis of the student intake questionnaire, all interviews, free-response student feedback form questionnaire questions, and student reflection journals. I used a grounded theory coding approach for the qualitative analysis of student intake questionnaire Question 4, interviews from the restorative conversations, student reflection journals, and questions 6 and 7 from the student questionnaire feedback form. According to Charmaz (2014), grounded theory

coding consists of both initial coding and more focused coding. I used *in vivo* and initial coding in the first two rounds to determine meaning for all qualitative data sources (Saldaña, 2016). *In vivo* coding allowed me to focus on the participants' actual words so that their experiences were preserved and marked as codes (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). In round two, I used initial coding to describe concepts not discovered during *in vivo* coding. Initial coding allowed me to determine what the words and sentences were suggesting (Saldaña, 2016). For the individual restorative conversations and group restorative conversation, I applied focused coding so that I could merge the initial and *in vivo* codes and develop them into more focused themes (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

I used three cycles of coding when analyzing each data source. In the first and second round analysis of the qualitative data sources, I developed codes and categories, and in the third round, I identified themes. First round coding used *in vivo* coding to gather the data according to what participants stated. Second round coding used initial coding to identify specific categories present in the data from the participant responses, and a third round of focused coding allowed me to move from the students' actual responses and specific categories to develop themes (Flick, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). I discuss each cycle further here.

I used first and second round *in vivo* and initial coding to code each qualitative data source. The following are examples of first and second round *in vivo* and initial codes from the individual student restorative conversations: *was not prepared, nervous and embarrassed, a desire to learn new concepts, detentions do not work, and interested in something new*. The following are examples of *in vivo* and initial codes from the group restorative conversation: *students left their house late, embarrassed to arrive late, the*

feeling of blame (for a tardy), and the desire for a positive tardy system. For the final (third) round of coding, I practiced focused coding to develop themes for the individual restorative conversations and group restorative conversation, reflection journal responses, student intake questionnaire, and student feedback form exit questionnaire.

I used an inductive approach to group the initial and *in vivo* coding data and the focused coding categories to build a coding frame that organized and identified rounds of coding to develop the themes from (a) the students' answers to the student intake questionnaire Question 4, (b) the individual and group conversation questions, (c) student feedback form exit questionnaire questions 6–9, and (d) student reflection journal responses (Flick, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). I used the coding frame for each qualitative data source. As an example of the coding frame I used for each data source, Table 7 presents the 13 participant responses from Question 4 of the student intake questionnaire with coding data from *in vivo* and initial coding rounds and third round focused coding, which helped with the identification of themes.

Table 7

Coding Frame for Student Intake Questionnaire: Question 4

What is your opinion of the current tardy lunch detention practice which punishes students with a detention for every tardy over five?

| Participant | Response to question |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | I think that the current tardy practice is tough for students because it makes them stand out and brings people's attention to how often they are late. |
| 2 | It is pointless if you don't talk to the student to figure out why they're late. |
| 3 | Students shouldn't be punished for something that they can't always control. |
| 4 | I think it's inconvenient and useless for everyone involved. Detention should be reserved for disciplinary actions rather than things out of their control. |
| 5 | It's very easy for people to just not go during lunch because they won't have anyone come after them to try and make them go. |
| 6 | I think for some students who don't have the choice of being late it is harsh |
| 7 | I think the system fails to take the reasoning behind tardies into account. It could be a struggle for a student and seems unfair to be punished for this. |
| 8 | I think it doesn't work great and is a waste of time |
| 9 | I mean I leave early enough so I can get my brother and I to school. Back in like junior year it did affect me and it sucked and I remember I hated it. |
| 10 | I don't know if it's appropriate since it gives students a few chances to improve but it might not be essential to punish them further and some kids don't care. |
| 11 | I am opposed to the strategy because many students can't control being late. |
| 12 | I don't like it and it's really annoying because I understand the school wants to hold students accountable but it feels like you are just getting in trouble |
| 13 | Sort of sucks and takes the time away from my friends at lunch. |
| Initial & <i>in vivo</i> coding | Harsh; Punishing for something out of student's control; Waste of time; Judgmental before determining reasons for tardiness; Can't control being late |
| Themes | Punishing for something out of their control; Detention's waste of time |

The coding frame provided a conceptual framework to connect and triangulate the data for greater reliability and validity. I used analytic memos to reflect upon the individual student conversations and the group conversation as they were completed. The analytic memos were used along with the initial themes to support the creation of developed themes from the individual restorative conversations and group restorative conversation. Examples of analytic memos from the individual student restorative conversations and group restorative conversation are the following: Participant annoyed at the current tardy system because it punished and did not take into account their life situation (from interview #3) and a participant expressed family challenges of getting to school on time and shame and blame of arriving late (from interview #10). The following analytic memo summary was written from the group restorative conversation:

Participants were unanimous in displeasure of the punitive tardy practice; saw detentions as punishing and misaligned with the school's vision for supporting students. All participants backed a new tardy system that supported students and was grounded in positivity.

I collected data for the student reflection journal response prompts on growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills (see Appendix D) using the coding framework of *in vivo*, initial, and focused coding. Students completed the prompts just after they finished the specific learning module section and were prompted on the next slide to answer the reflection journal response prompt. Students typed answers into a Google form, where I then collated the answers by each construct. I then coded the answers to look for patterns and categories, and finally I used focused coding to develop themes.

The coding framework was applied to student answers on questions 6 through 9 with *in vivo* and initial coding to develop categories and focused coding to develop themes. I collected further qualitative data from the student feedback form exit questionnaire, which students filled out after they completed the learning modules and postsurvey. The student feedback form exit questionnaire questions were tailored to be very specific—asking students to write their responses to what they felt was effective (Question 6) or ineffective (Question 7) about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention, and whether the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention changed their attitude (Question 8) or their intent to arrive at school on time (Question 9). Table 8 displays the summarized analysis of the qualitative data sources.

Table 8*Summarized Analysis of Qualitative Data Types: Codes and Themes*

| Analysis process | Individual/group restorative conversation(s) | Student feedback form exit questionnaire questions 6–9 | Student reflection journals by construct |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Family & traffic challenges, Unprepared -Student emotions to being tardy (stressed, embarrassed, annoyed), Self-blame -Self-improvement expressed, -Detentions are dysfunctional, Punitive tardy measures ineffective -New positive program to help students improve themselves, Positive tardy system is preferred, New tardy system should support students | <p><i>Question 6-</i> Change your mindset, life skills, useful for problem solving, supports being on time,</p> <p><i>Question 7-</i> Positive for students, nothing ineffective, improve on-time behavior</p> <p><i>Question 8-</i> Focus on important things; positive attitude about being on time; Know what to focus on</p> <p><i>Question 9-</i> Yes I intend to be on time to school; S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was helpful</p> | <p><i>Growth Mindset-</i> Self-improvement, problem solving, positive attitude, focus on learning, plan ahead</p> <p><i>Goal Setting-</i> Helps with planning, accountability, Calendar app/planners keeps me organized, Helps me stay focused, Goal for leaving on time is important</p> <p><i>Punctuality-</i> miss information when tardy, Being on time shows you care, Reduces stress, Influences relationships</p> <p><i>Organizational Skills-</i> Set reminders and set alarm, Keep a calendar app or planner, improves time management, planning supports success</p> |
| Themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Various student challenges and emotions faced when arriving late to school -Ineffectiveness of punitive tardy system -Support for positive tardy system -Desire for self-improvement | <p><i>Question 6-</i> Teaching life skills; Useful information; Helpful intervention</p> <p><i>Question 7-</i> Nothing ineffective reported, Positivity & helpfulness of intervention</p> <p><i>Question 8-</i> Positive change in focus towards supportive constructs and changed attitude about being on time</p> <p><i>Question 9-</i> Positive student intent to be on time to school</p> | <p><i>Growth Mindset-</i> Focus on problem solving and positive improvement</p> <p><i>Goal Setting-</i> Support for time management and accountability, Support for student success</p> <p><i>Punctuality-</i> Benefits of being on time: respect, relationships, stress reduction</p> <p><i>Organizational Skills-</i> Benefit of proactive planning to support student success</p> |

Data Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the data are very important aspects of my convergent mixed methods action research study. Validity, also known as the accuracy or credibility of the data analysis and findings, must be demonstrated (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Reliability means that the data collected are trustworthy, can be relied upon, and are reproducible (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Quantitative Data

In quantitative data collection, reliability is whether the measurement tool used measures something reliably and consistently (Salkind & Frey, 2020). To verify reliability for the quantitative data collected using the pre/postsurvey, I ensured that the survey questions were directly related to and tied to my research questions and the TPB, which I used as the theory to determine a student's intent to be on time. The pre/postsurvey had questions pertaining to goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. As the TPB (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) was used as a guiding theoretical framework from which to construct the pre/postsurvey, I used data gathered from the surveys to assess whether a student had an intent to be on time after participating in the intervention.

To further establish reliability, I performed an internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of the questions within the three constructs (goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills) for the pre- and postsurvey. Cronbach's alpha is a widely accepted and utilized internal reliability test with scores ranging from 0 to 1 and reliable scores of the instrument being tested found at .70 and higher (Barbera et al., 2021; Salkind & Frey, 2020). As an example, I ran

Cronbach’s alpha using SPSS version 27 to measure the internal consistency of the set of five questions measuring the construct goal setting, to determine if the five goal-setting questions reliably measure goal setting for the pre- and postsurvey. This was done for all three constructs for the pre- and postsurvey for a total of six Cronbach’s alpha tests performed. Results from the reliability tests can be seen in Table 9 (presurvey) and Table 10 (postsurvey). Ranges for the presurvey internal reliability scores were from .71 to .78. Ranges from the postsurvey were between .71 and .76. It can be assumed that although the coefficient alpha was just above the acceptable .70 for reliability, the numbers were likely affected by the low *n* and small number of questions (5) per construct. As discussed in Chapter 5, I recommend increasing the number of question items per construct.

Table 9

Presurvey Cronbach’s Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability (n = 13)

| Construct | Construct items | Coefficient alpha estimate of reliability |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Goal setting | Items 1–5 | .76 |
| Punctuality | Items 6–10 | .78 |
| Organizational skills | Items 11–15 | .71 |

Table 10*Postsurvey Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability (n = 13)*

| Construct | Construct items | Coefficient alpha estimate of reliability |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Goal setting | Items 1–5 | .71 |
| Punctuality | Items 6–10 | .74 |
| Organizational skills | Items 11–15 | .76 |

In quantitative data collection, validity is met when a test measures what it is supposed to measure (Salkind & Frey, 2020). According to Mertler (2017, 2020), validity can be established based on the content of the test and what the test is trying to measure (p. 155). To establish validity for the pre/postsurvey, I used a content-based validity method based on instrument content using the pre/postsurvey. Validity was established by directly aligning the pre- and postsurvey questions with research questions 2 and 4 specifically referencing the three constructs of goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. I collected and analyzed data from the pre- and postsurvey directly tied to RQ2 and RQ4. Moreover, as Mertler (2017, 2020) stated, another source of validity is validity based on the internal structure of the instrument. To address validity of the instrument beyond the content connecting with the research questions, each of the three constructs had five questions specifically connected and related to that construct to ensure participants were asked about that construct multiple times.

Qualitative Data

According to Creswell and Miller (2000) and Mertler (2020), qualitative validity focuses on whether the data that have been collected by the researcher do in fact measure

what the researcher had set out to measure. To ensure validity in my study for the qualitative data collected, I used multiple methods of data collection that were directly tied to the research questions so that the data could be accurately analyzed (Mertler, 2017, 2020). This strategy ensures validity by using triangulation to interpret the various themes, categories, and commonalities that emerged from the qualitative data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mertler, 2017, 2020). As my study used a convergent mixed methods approach, triangulation is a validity procedure that ensures the study is accurate and reliable. I was able to both look for convergence among the qualitative data for major and minor themes and seek out convergence between the qualitative and quantitative data in order to draw additional conclusions (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, multiple qualitative data points were collected from individual and group conversations, student reflection journal questions, the student intake form, and the student feedback form exit questionnaire. Independently, each finding has a story to tell and an inference to draw from it, and together and when integrated, the data form a robust collection that both informs and supports the individual findings.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that reliability is connected to reproducibility and trustworthiness, where a study can be reproduced at other times by other researchers (p. 281). A challenge noted in using qualitative interviews is using leading questions, which can “bias” the participant(s) (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). To achieve reliability for my qualitative data collection methods, I used open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to answer and control the narrative, and Google forms for students to enter their own information without being led to answers, thus establishing both a reproducible

study and a study where the students supplied the information and were not led by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present quantitative and qualitative results in four sections by research question. The quantitative data included participant responses to the pre- and postsurveys taken before and after the intervention as well as answers to questions on the student feedback form exit questionnaire. The qualitative data included answers to the student intake form, responses to the individual restorative conversations and group restorative conversation, participant responses to the student reflection journals, and answers to the student feedback form exit questionnaire. I present assertions and support them with evidence from the collected data. Table 11 displays the four research questions, the themes from the collected data connected to the research questions, and the assertions developed from the data to answer the research questions.

Table 11*S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Study Research Questions, Themes, and Assertions*

| Research question | Themes | Assertions |
|---|---|--|
| RQ1: How did students feel about their own tardiness and respond to the idea of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention before participating in it? | <p>Various student challenges and emotions faced when arriving late to school</p> <p>Ineffectiveness of punitive tardy system</p> <p>Support for a positive tardy system</p> <p>Desire for self-improvement</p> | <p>There were/are various challenges faced and emotions felt by student participants in arriving late to school.</p> <p>There was a shared participant displeasure for the punitive tardy system supporting a belief in its ineffectiveness.</p> <p>There was collective support in favor of a positive tardy program.</p> |
| RQ2: To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention taught them time management skills, organizational skills, and goal-setting skills? | <p>Focus on problem solving and positive improvement</p> <p>Benefit of proactive planning to support student success</p> | <p>Participants demonstrated that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught them goal setting, time management (punctuality), and organizational skills, to a great extent.</p> |
| RQ3: What did students find effective and ineffective about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention? | <p>Nothing ineffective reported</p> <p>Positivity & helpfulness of intervention</p> <p>Teaching life skills</p> | <p>Participants found the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be helpful and useful in teaching them important skills to learn and practice to be on time to school.</p> <p>Participants did not indicate that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was ineffective.</p> |
| RQ4: To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention promoted a change in their intention to be on time for class? | <p>Positive change in focus toward supportive constructs of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program</p> <p>Positive intent to be on time to school</p> | <p>Participants demonstrated a positive change in their learning through the module constructs and expressed a positive impact that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had on their attitude, evidencing their intent to be on time to school.</p> |

RQ1: Student Tardiness Affect and Pre-S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Student Disposition

Three assertions have been developed from RQ1: (a) There were/are various challenges faced and emotions felt by participants in arriving late to school; (b) there was a shared participant displeasure for the punitive tardy system, supporting a belief in its ineffectiveness; and (c) there was collective support in favor of a positive tardy program. The assertions are supported by qualitative data from Question 4 of the student intake questionnaire, the individual restorative conversations, and the group restorative conversations.

Challenges and Emotions Felt by Participants in Arriving Late

Participants typed in their initial responses to the punitive tardy program at SHS prior to beginning the intervention by taking the student intake questionnaire. On Question 4 of the student intake questionnaire, one student commented, “It is pointless if you don’t talk to the student to figure out why they’re late,” while another shared, “I think that the current tardy practice is tough for students because it makes them stand out and brings people’s attention to how often they are late.” One student said, “I don’t like it and it’s really annoying because I understand the school wants to hold students accountable, but it feels like you are just getting in trouble.”

Students further expressed their emotions and challenges in the restorative conversations. Participants shared that they are late due to “waking up late,” “traffic,” and other “challenges” that leave them “unprepared” or that are out of their control, such as leaving late, having to drop off their sibling(s), and parental challenges. Participants further shared their emotions regarding being late to school, such as “feeling blame,” “anxious,” “embarrassed,” and feeling “stupid.” One student said, “I really don’t want to

be late but sometimes my mom was late leaving the house when she drove me to school and now I just leave late and that's my fault." It was clear from the data collected that the participants faced many challenges in arriving to school on time, some within their control and some not within their control. Participants experienced self-conscious and stress-based emotions as a result of arriving late to school.

Displeasure Toward Punitive Tardy System and Ineffectiveness

The second assertion evidenced from the qualitative data was a shared participant displeasure for the punitive tardy system supporting a belief in its ineffectiveness. One student wrote, "I think the system fails to take the reasoning behind tardies into account. It could be a struggle for a student and seems unfair to be punished for this." Participants further found the punitive tardy system to be a waste of time, unfair, and inconvenient.

Individual restorative conversations and the group restorative conversation presented additional displeasure toward the punitive tardy system. Participants said, "Detentions do not work for tardies," and "We [students] don't like being punished for something out of our control." One student had a unique perspective which was, "I don't know if it's appropriate since it gives students a few chances to improve but it might not be essential to punish them further and some kids don't care." This participant's statement spoke to the inappropriateness of the punitive tardy system because it punishes some students who simply do not care about receiving a tardy and detention. All students shared a collective displeasure toward the punitive tardy system as stated in the participant individual restorative conversations and the typed responses to Question 4 on the student intake questionnaire.

Desire for a Positive Tardy Program

The third assertion evidenced from the qualitative data was collective support in favor of a positive tardy program. In the Student Intake Questionnaire, one student wrote, “It is pointless if you don’t talk to the student to figure out why they’re late,” which speaks to the very purpose of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, to support students and not punish them. Participants also expressed support for a positive tardy program in the individual and group restorative conversations: “I’d like something that is positive,” “Yes I would be interested in something new that is better supportive of us,” and “I think something that can help me improve [tardiness] would be much better.” It was also found that students wanted to self-improve and were in favor of a nonpunitive tardy system that supported their personal growth (to be on time). When asked in the individual restorative conversation about their interest in improving their on-time behavior to school, all participants expressed a desire to improve as well as a desire to learn something new as part of their improvement. One student said,

I really don’t think detentions work for students, but I think if there was something that was more helpful and supportive of students, that could definitely work. . . . I definitely am open to learning new things as part of a new tardy system because I think it would be useful for me.

Individual and group restorative conversation themes demonstrated a desire for a new tardy system that would help improve student habits, thereby supporting the assertion for a positive tardy program.

Summary of RQ1 Findings

The qualitative data collected for RQ1 illustrate the various challenges students face arriving to school and the emotions they experience upon arriving tardy. Participants specifically reported their displeasure with the current punitive tardy system and their

desire for a new, positive tardy system. RQ1 serves as a baseline for participants' feelings about student tardiness and the current punitive tardy practice prior to their participation in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program's learning module phase of the intervention.

RQ2: Extent to Which the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Taught the Construct Skills

Participant data established the assertion for RQ2 that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught student participants time management, organizational, and goal-setting skills to a great extent. This assertion was demonstrated through quantitative data collected from the student feedback form exit questionnaire, a pre/postsurvey of questions pertaining to the three constructs—goal setting, time management skills (i.e., punctuality), and organizational skills—and a paired *t* test analysis verifying the statistical significance of the survey, as well as qualitative data collected from the student reflection journal responses.

Quantitative Data Supporting Assertion

Three multiple choice questions on the student feedback form exit questionnaire were asked pertaining to the three constructs taught in the learning modules to determine the extent to which participants felt the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught them each of the three constructs (see Appendix F): “To what extent do you feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention taught you [the construct]?” For goal setting, 12 participants (92%) selected *to a great extent*, and one participant (8%) selected *somewhat*. Regarding time management skills, 12 participants (92%) selected *to a great extent*, and one participant (8%) selected *somewhat*. For organization skills, 12 participants (92%) selected *to a great extent*, and one participant (8%) selected *somewhat*. These three

questions from the student feedback form exit questionnaire served as the foundational evidence supporting the assertion to RQ2.

Descriptive statistical data from the pre- and postsurvey taken by the 13 student participants demonstrate support for the assertion that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention taught student participants goal setting, time management skills (punctuality), and organizational skills to a great extent. The descriptive statistical data showed student improvement in all three constructs in the postsurvey taken after the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. Figure 1 displays a graphical representation of student pre- and postsurvey answer choices and mean values for questions pertaining to the three constructs. Panels A through C show that the postsurvey mean values for all three constructs are greater than the presurvey mean values, with the increase occurring after the students completed the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. Pre- and postsurvey collected data also found all student responses on their individual postsurvey responses to every question to be greater than their previous responses for every question on the presurvey. These data support the assertion that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention did teach students and supported student learning across all three constructs.

Statistically connected to Figure 1, Table 12 displays descriptive statistical data for the pre- and postsurvey data for the three constructs. Statistical data for minimum, maximum, range, mean, and sum show gains for the postsurvey columns of all constructs as compared with the original presurvey results for all data points. There is a reduced range of response values in the postsurvey column with increased value gains for the minimum and maximum scores across all three constructs, supporting the assertion that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention supported student learning of the three construct

areas. Mean differences from presurvey to postsurvey for goal setting was 4.5, for punctuality was 4.15, and for organizational skills was 6.24. Total sum value differences for goal setting was 59, for punctuality was 54, and for organizational skills was 81. Organizational skills had the highest gains in both mean value difference gains and total sum difference gains from the presurvey to the postsurvey. All 13 participant responses to all 15 questions on the postsurvey had higher value responses than their respective responses to all 15 questions on the presurvey, evidencing postintervention gains.

Figure 1

Pre- and Postsurvey Constructs Mean Values of 13 Student Participants

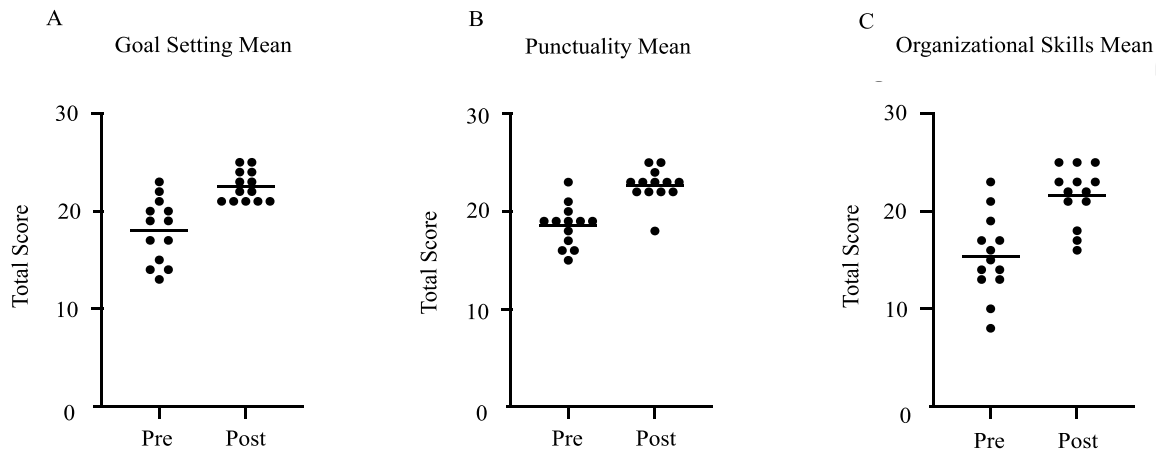


Table 12*Pre/postsurvey Descriptive Statistics: Goal Setting, Punctuality, Organizational Skills**Questions*

| Characteristics | Goal setting | | Punctuality | | Organizational skills | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|-------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| Minimum | 13.00 | 21.00 | 15.00 | 18.00 | 8.00 | 16.00 |
| Maximum | 23.00 | 25.00 | 23.00 | 25.00 | 23.00 | 25.00 |
| Range | 10.00 | 4.00 | 8.00 | 7.00 | 15.00 | 9.00 |
| <i>M</i> | 18.00 | 22.54 | 18.54 | 22.69 | 15.38 | 21.62 |
| <i>SD</i> | 3.266 | 1.561 | 2.184 | 1.750 | 4.154 | 2.987 |
| Std. error of mean | 0.9058 | 0.4329 | 0.6057 | 0.4855 | 1.152 | 0.8285 |
| Sum | 234.0 | 293.0 | 241.0 | 295.0 | 200.0 | 281.0 |

Note. N = 13.

Table 13 shows the presurvey and postsurvey summed scores for all 13 participants for each of the three constructs in the learning modules. As stated in Chapter 3, the 15 questions in the pre/postsurvey were divided into the three construct sections containing five questions each. All 13 participant responses to all 15 questions on the postsurvey had higher summed value responses than their respective responses on the presurvey, evidencing postintervention gains after participants went through the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program learning module. These results demonstrate that after the intervention learning module, participant postsurvey scores gained on every question, for every participant, supporting the assertion that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught participants time management, organizational, and goal-setting skills to a great extent.

Table 13*Scaled Scores of Pre/postsurvey (N = 13)*

| Grade level | Gender | Pre: Goal setting | Post: Goal setting | Pre: Punctuality | Post: Punctuality | Pre: Organizational skills | Post: Organizational skills |
|-------------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 11 | M | 13 | 22 | 16 | 23 | 13 | 21 |
| 12 | M | 20 | 23 | 19 | 23 | 17 | 23 |
| 12 | M | 22 | 23 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 22 |
| 12 | M | 19 | 24 | 19 | 24 | 13 | 25 |
| 12 | F | 23 | 24 | 19 | 22 | 19 | 23 |
| 12 | M | 21 | 25 | 23 | 25 | 16 | 25 |
| 12 | M | 15 | 21 | 18 | 23 | 8 | 17 |
| 12 | M | 17 | 21 | 15 | 18 | 15 | 16 |
| 12 | F | 19 | 25 | 20 | 25 | 23 | 25 |
| 12 | F | 20 | 22 | 19 | 23 | 17 | 23 |
| 11 | F | 14 | 21 | 16 | 22 | 10 | 18 |
| 11 | M | 14 | 21 | 17 | 22 | 14 | 22 |
| 12 | F | 17 | 21 | 19 | 23 | 14 | 21 |

Note. Total score out of 25 for each construct; junior = 11th grade, senior = 12th grade.

A paired t test was completed for the pre/postsurvey to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences for the three constructs. Figure 2 displays the results of the paired t test for each of the three constructs. The 13 participants' postsurvey values for the three constructs increased, showing a positive change from the presurvey after participants completed the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention.

Figure 2

Pre/postsurvey Values for Goal Setting, Punctuality, and Organizational Skills With Mean of Differences

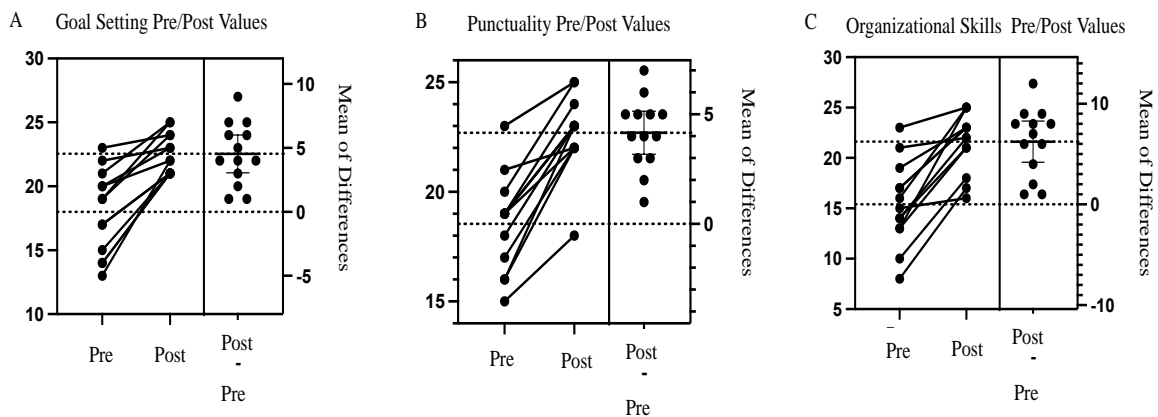


Table 14 displays the statistical results from the paired t test for the three constructs. The three constructs' p values were all less than 0.05, indicating the differences were statistically significant in the postsurvey compared with the presurvey.

Table 14

Paired t Test: P Value and Summary Chart

| Characteristics | Goal setting | Time management (punctuality) | Organizational skills |
|--|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| p value (two-tailed) | <0.0001 | <0.0001 | <0.0001 |
| Significantly different ($p < 0.05$)? | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| How big is the difference? | | | |
| Mean of differences (B-A) | 4.538 | 4.154 | 6.231 |
| SD of difference | 2.436 | 1.625 | 3.370 |
| How effective is the pairing? | | | |
| Correlational coefficient I | 0.7030 | 0.6791 | 0.5972 |
| p value (one-tailed) | 0.0037 | 0.0053 | 0.0156 |
| Was pairing significantly effective? | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Note. $N = 13$.

The paired t test results support the assertion that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had a positive impact on participant responses as they relate to the three constructs that students learned about. Due to the low number of participants, a Wilcoxon signed rank test was performed to support and verify the paired t test results. Table 15 displays the statistical results of the Wilcoxon test. Just as with the paired t test, the p values for the Wilcoxon test were less than 0.05 for the three constructs, indicating the differences were statistically significant in the postsurvey compared with the presurvey.

Table 15

Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed Rank Test

| Characteristics | Goal setting | Time management (punctuality) | Organizational skills |
|---|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| p value | 0.0002 | 0.0002 | 0.0002 |
| Exact or approximate p value | Exact | Exact | Exact |
| Significantly different ($p < 0.05$) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| One- or two-tailed | Two-tailed | Two-tailed | Two-tailed |
| Median of differences | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| Number of ties | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note. $N = 13$.

Qualitative Data Supporting Assertion

Students shared their thoughts about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention learning modules by completing student reflection journals about growth mindset, goal setting, time management skills (punctuality), and organizational skills. Table 16 displays the themes that emerged from the student reflection journals.

The student reflection journals provided evidence supporting the assertion that students felt they learned the construct skills taught in the learning module to a great extent. Specific themes arose from the qualitative data of the student reflection journals indicating the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention helped students focus on problem solving and positive improvement (of their on-time behavior) and that students benefited from the proactive planning to support their success.

Table 16

Student Reflection Journal Themes

| Growth mindset | Goal setting | Time management (punctuality) | Organizational skills |
|---|---|---|--|
| Focus on problem solving and positive improvement | Support for time management and accountability Support for student success | Benefits of being on time: respect, relationships, stress reduction | Benefit of proactive planning to support student success |

The following examples of statements from the student reflection journals indicate what participants learned from the learning modules. In response to the growth mindset question, a participant said, “I’ll use this [growth] mindset to try to find solutions to the problem and not just try and run away from the problem.” Another said that “a growth mindset can change my attitude to something more positive and make me strive to be on time in the future.” Many of the responses focused on problem solving and positive attitude changes.

Regarding the question on goal setting, a student said,

I have set goals but I have not followed the examples [in the learning module] to make them effective goals. Now, I will write down my goals of being on time to school and use sticky notes to visualize my goals and see them more clearly. I think this will be beneficial not just for tardies, but all of my goals in life.

Another student shared, “I can use goal setting to be on time to class by setting a goal to get out of the house five minutes earlier.” Goal-setting answers evidenced participant learning gains from the learning module related to on-time behavior. Regarding time management, a student said, “Being on time can make me more prepared for school and improve my relationships with my teachers.” Another student wrote, “Something I learned about being on time that I would like to bring into my daily routine is to be 10 minutes early everywhere.” Student responses to on-time behavior demonstrated a focus on being on time to be prepared.

Finally, student written responses to the student reflection journal question on organizational skills had one student sharing, “I am going to plan my mornings better to be on time to school,” and another student stating that “by using the calendar app I can have reminders sent to me throughout the day reminding me to complete tasks or be

punctual.” Student responses to the organizational skills questions focused on proactive planning and strategies to support being on time.

Summary of RQ2 Findings

Results from the student feedback form exit questionnaire collected for RQ2 support the assertion that students demonstrated that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught them goal setting, time management (punctuality), and organizational skills, to a great extent. The pre- and postsurvey descriptive statistics further support the assertion and reveal an increase in all postsurvey values and figures. For all 13 participants, the sum of their responses for each construct increased in value from the presurvey to the postsurvey. Participant responses in the student reflection journals provide specific examples of what students learned from the constructs.

RQ3: S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Intervention Effectiveness

The purpose and motivation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was to create a positive tardy intervention program that could replace school punitive tardy programs. Therefore, RQ3 served as a postintervention research question tasking participants with assessing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention by asking them what they felt was effective and ineffective. Quantitative and qualitative data established two assertions: (a) Participants found the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be helpful and useful in teaching them important skills to learn and practice to be on time to school, and (b) participants did not indicate or communicate that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was ineffective.

S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Teaching Supportive Skills

Students were tasked with answering a question regarding recommending the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to other students struggling with student tardiness, as well as

questions about the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the program. The quantitative and qualitative data collected support the assertion that participants found the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be helpful and useful in teaching them important skills to learn and practice to be on time to school.

Quantitative Data Supporting Assertion

Participants were asked to respond to multiple choice and open-ended questions as part of the student feedback form exit questionnaire regarding their recommendation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to others and whether the intervention should be used for schools (see Appendix F). Postintervention, 13 out of 13 students responded “yes” to whether they would recommend the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to students struggling with being on time. All 13 participants also answered the follow-up question and indicated they preferred the school use the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program instead of the punitive lunch detention program. Students were then asked to answer two open-ended questions asking them for their opinion on what they found effective and ineffective.

Qualitative Data Supporting Assertion

Data from the open-ended question on the student feedback form exit questionnaire support the assertion that the intervention was helpful and useful in teaching students important skills for being on time to school. Participants were asked, “What, if anything, did you find effective (you liked) about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention?” Themes developed from coding responses to this question included students saying the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program taught life skills, provided useful information, and was helpful. One participant responded, “The organization to help with my morning routine to be on time can help me in my life and the goal setting can help

give me something to push for.” Another stated, “I thought the intervention was effective as it taught skills that could be applied to many aspects of life, including personal and school.” One student wrote, “It was applicable to me and helped me with some stuff I definitely could put to good use like being organized so I can be on time.” Another wrote, “I like that students can reflect on what they are doing to fix their behavior. I learned I can change my mindset to help my morning activities to be efficient.” These examples show that students were able to develop ideas about the application of what they learned in the modules.

S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Not Ineffective

As part of the student feedback form exit questionnaire, the 13 participants were tasked with answering two open-ended questions about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program’s effectiveness and ineffectiveness. It should be noted that the two multiple choice questions from the student feedback form exit questionnaire, discussed already as part of the quantitative section related to the effectiveness of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, did not indicate ineffectiveness of the intervention. The open-ended participant responses will be discussed here as part of the qualitative data supporting the assertion that students did not indicate or communicate that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was ineffective.

Participants answered an open-ended question on the student feedback form exit questionnaire about the ineffectiveness of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program: “What if anything did you find ineffective (did not like) about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention?” Students shared, “There was nothing that I found ineffective,” “I don’t feel that I disliked anything about this intervention, I liked it all,” and “To be honest I thought it was all good information.” One student elaborated: “I found nothing to be ineffective.

All of the modules were helpful and I can truthfully say that I was able to learn something beneficial in each module.” Of the 13 participant responses, none described the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program as ineffective.

Summary of RQ3 Findings

The data from the student feedback form exit questionnaire questions on program effectiveness, ineffectiveness, recommendation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, and preference for the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program or a punitive tardy system overwhelmingly support the assertion that students found the program to be effective.

RQ4: S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Promoting Change

While the primary focus of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was to redesign a tardy program to replace what I saw as an ineffective punitive tardy system at SHS, the driving force behind the creation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was to determine if this intervention could support a change in students’ intent to be on time for class. RQ4 asked, “To what extent did students feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program promoted a change in their attitude to be on time for class?” The theory used to craft RQ4 and create the pre/postsurvey was Ajzen’s (1985, 1991) TPB. The theory of planned behavior suggests that a person’s behaviors are determined by their behavioral intent, or attitude toward something. RQ4 was drafted to determine if the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had an impact on students’ attitude (intent) to be on time to class. Many of the data presented for the previous research questions were used to draw a conclusion about the assertion for RQ4.

Positive Change and Intent

The quantitative and qualitative data collected to answer RQ4 indicated that participants demonstrated a positive change in their learning through the module constructs and expressed that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had a positive impact on their attitudes, evidencing their intent to be on time to school. This assertion is supported with data showing 13 out of 13 participant postsurvey scores demonstrating a positive change postintervention. Furthermore, the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program pre- and postsurvey results evidence student participant learning gains regarding the three constructs of goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills. The assertion is also validated through participant qualitative data, which expressed positive attitude changes from the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention about being to school on time and intent to be to school on time.

Quantitative Data Supporting Assertion

The assertion in response to RQ4 is that student participants demonstrated a positive change in their learning of the module constructs and expressed that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had a positive impact on their attitude, evidencing their intent to be on time to school. The quantitative data collected from the pre- and postsurvey scores (Table 13) show that 13 out of 13 participants demonstrated an increase for every question pertaining to the three constructs. Evidence of this is seen also in Figure 2, where each pre- and postsurvey response is displayed, showing an increase for all 13 participants.

The positive gains in scores on Table 13 for every participant, in each of the three constructs, show an increase in learning after the participants completed the learning

modules. Descriptive statistical data, as previously presented in Table 12, also illustrate gains in all postsurvey columns for all constructs, supporting the assertion that students learned information from the learning modules. The value gains in all construct columns of the descriptive statistics and positive gains for every construct column of the postsurvey also provide support for the assertion that student attitudes positively changed. While positive gains in every construct column for all 13 participants on the postsurvey from the presurvey is evidence of students learning the information from the modules, it may not be enough to state definitively that these quantitative data alone demonstrate a change in student attitudes showing their positive intent to be on time to school. However, the quantitative data combined with the qualitative data that follow do support the assertion.

Qualitative Data Supporting Assertion

Participants were asked two final questions on the student feedback form exit questionnaire:

- Please explain whether the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program changed your attitude about being to school on time? (Question 8 on student feedback form exit questionnaire; see Appendix F)
- Please explain your answer to this statement: As a result of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, do you intend to be at school on time? (Question 9 on student feedback form exit questionnaire; see Appendix F)

One theme was developed from the 13 student participant responses to Question 8 on the student feedback form exit questionnaire regarding a changed attitude. First and second round coding developed the theme that students had a positive change in focus toward

supportive constructs and changed attitude about being on time. One student shared, “It was helpful for me and definitely more positive for my attitude th[a]n a detention. It helped change my attitude to be organized to be on time.” Another student stated, “I think my attitude to be on time was always positive, but this program made me think more about the stuff that was important and could help me to be on time.” Similarly, a student shared, “Most definitely it helped me and focused my attitude on being on time.” Another participant stated, “I would say it did change my attitude to really focus on the important things that would help me to be on time to school like planning to leave early.” These responses demonstrate the impact the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program had on participant attitudes postintervention.

A theme was also developed from Question 9 on the student feedback form exit questionnaire regarding students’ intent to be on time to school. First and second round coding developed the theme of a positive student intent to be on time to school. Students said, “I do intend to be on time to school and this program did help me in a positive way,” and “Yes I intend to be on time and yes this program was helpful for me.” Another student shared, “I really think this program helped me and yes I do intend to be to school on time every day because I know that this is important for me.” Other responses demonstrated an affirmative answer declaring the participants’ positive intent to be on time to school after going through the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. All 13 participants provided an affirmative and positive declaration of intent to be on time to class in response to Question 9. Coupled with Question 8, these results support the assertion that participants had a positive change in their learning through the module

constructs and expressed that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention had a positive impact on their attitude, evidencing their intent to be on time to school.

Summary of RQ4 Findings

The quantitative data coupled with student answers to two open-ended questions on the student feedback form exit questionnaire indicated student learning from the postsurvey results compared with the presurvey results and further supported a change in student attitude after completing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. All 13 participants stated their positive intention to be on time to class.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study was guided by four research questions, which were answered through student surveys, individual student restorative conversations, a group restorative conversation, a pre/postsurvey regarding constructs taught through a self-guided learning module, student reflection journal responses, and a feedback form exit questionnaire. The purpose of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was to implement an alternative tardy intervention, which taught on-time behavior by utilizing restorative practice elements along with a self-paced learning module to teach growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills.

The results of the study indicated that participants preferred a positive tardy system over the current punitive tardy system and were interested in self-improvement and learning new concepts that may help them with their on-time behavior. Results also indicated that participants found the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to be helpful, useful, and effective at teaching them information related to the constructs in the learning modules, resulting in students declaring a positive attitude toward their intent to be to school on time. Findings from this study focused on the students' feelings about the current punitive tardy detention practice, their assessment of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program and to what extent it taught them the skill constructs, and whether the intervention produced a change in attitude from the students to be on time to class.

In this chapter, I discuss the results and analysis of the data collected from the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program by addressing the results as they relate to the extant research and theoretical frames. I then discuss limitations of the study, implications for practice, and

recommendations for future research. I conclude with my reflection on this action research study and overall experience.

Dislike of Punitive Tardy System

Prior to students taking the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention, they completed a student intake questionnaire that collected demographic data and asked for their opinion on the current school punitive tardy detention practice. Results from the student data collected demonstrated overall participant dislike for the school punitive tardy detention practice. The shared participant displeasure for the punitive tardy system aligns with other studies that have shown the punitive nature and dislike of zero-tolerance policies in U.S. schools (Kafka, 2011; Lustick, 2017). Research has shown that disciplinary policies and structures promote a climate of compliance and fear, similar to what participants expressed. The students' dislike of the current punitive tardy system as punishing something out of their control also emphasizes the focus on student tardiness as a corrective problem (Sprick & Daniels, 2007). Furthermore, the students' overall dislike of the SHS punitive tardy program supports the need to recognize that any application of zero-tolerance school policies should not be one size fits all and should be applied sparingly for egregious acts (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Overall student dislike of the punitive tardy program as punishing them for something out of their control further raises ideas of an unfair practice or unjust system.

Support for Positive, Restorative Alternative Tardy Program

One theoretical framework guiding the construction of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was restorative practices. Students found nothing ineffective about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program and spoke to the usefulness and positive support the intervention had on them,

which supports research on restorative practices focusing on the needs of the students, shifting away from any punitive practice or discipline, and reframing discipline toward learning (e.g., Gonzalez, 2016; Strang, 2001; Zehr, 2002; Zehr & Toews, 2004).

Participants suggested a desire for something different and positive, in lieu of the punitive tardy program. Results from the initial intake questionnaire supported the overall purpose of the study in instituting a positive tardy intervention practice with students as an alternative to the punitive tardy practice, which is in line with research supporting alternatives to zero-tolerance and punitive disciplinary practices in schools (e.g., Crenshaw et al., 2015; Losen et al., 2013; Maag, 2012; Morris, 2016; Pavelka, 2013; Skiba et al., 2014). The support of all participants backing the use of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program as a tardy accountability program instead of the punitive tardy detention program speaks to the need to have positive interventions in schools. As an alternative practice to combat student tardiness, the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention is very similar to alternative practice programs that have been used to proactively target tardies, such as PBIS and SWPBIS (e.g., Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; Tyre et al., 2011). However, where PBIS and SWPBIS focuses on the actions of students, the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program inserted the support of an adult to provide the space and a place for students to voice themselves in a meaningful and restorative way while also learning important and supportive skills.

Impact of S.T.R.O.N.G. Program on Teaching Skill Constructs

One of the results of the study was that students found the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention to be useful and helpful in teaching them important skills related to goal setting, punctuality, and organization. A similar result was that students said the

S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention taught them the skill constructs from the learning modules to a great extent. These findings supported the use of growth mindset as a guiding theoretical framework, which played a meaningful role in the overall construction and creation of the learning module lessons (Dweck, 2017; Dweck & Yeager, 2019). Growth mindset posits that a student's intelligence or ability can be changed and is not fixed (Dweck, 2017). Those who do not feel or believe they can change or grow their intelligence or ability are said to have a fixed mindset. I used the concept of a growth mindset to create positive, restorative learning module lessons for students to engage with and learn from. Students completed the self-guided learning module lessons on growth mindset, goal setting, punctuality, and organizational skills by clicking through the content slides, watching the videos, and completing the reflection journals. Upon an examination and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, I conclude that students found the learning module lessons to be supportive and helpful, and they learned the construct skills to a great extent. These findings are supported by growth mindset research, which has found that growth mindset interventions have changed students' attitudes and behavior (Dweck & Yeager, 2019), and a growth mindset message delivered online to students brought about academic and behavioral improvement (Yeager et al., 2019).

Post-S.T.R.O.N.G. Program Student Intent to Be on Time

Pre- and postsurveys were utilized to capture data related to determining students' attitudes toward three skill constructs, which were taught in the learning module lessons. The theoretical framework used as the tool supporting the purpose and creation of the pre/postsurvey was Ajzen's (1985, 1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB). TPB posits

that the behavior of a person can be predicted by determining their intention regarding what they are planning to do, which was the purpose of the pre- and postsurvey in looking at the summed differences of the three skill constructs before and after the intervention. The goal of using TPB in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study was to measure any change in student answers to the pre- and postsurvey and determine whether that change was positive, evidencing a changed attitude toward the information participants were learning. Just as the pre- and postsurvey and student feedback form exit questionnaire were data sources used to predict a student's change in attitude toward what they learned and perceived intent, so TPB has been used by researchers as a tool to predict a student's behavioral intention to do something.

I created the learning module lessons with the objective of teaching students skills related to goal setting, punctuality, and organization. Student answers from the pre- to the postsurvey demonstrated increased positive attitudes and beliefs in finding importance in the questions related to the respective skills. Coupled with the data collected from the student feedback form exit questionnaire asking students about their intent to be on time to school, it was found that participants had the intent to be on time to school after going through the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. These results are supported by TPB research in schools (e.g., Martin, 2010; White et al., 2008) where TPB has been used both as a predictor of an action and to determine the behavioral intent of students to do an action.

Summary of Results

I used restorative practices and growth mindset as theoretical frameworks and TPB as a theoretical tool for the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program to determine students' ability to learn something new, have an intent to apply new learning, and view their abilities as

changeable. Results showed that students demonstrated the ability to learn something new, supported the intervention over the punitive model, and had the intent to come to school on time after completing the intervention. Research has supported the use of restorative practices as a theoretical framework to support students and growth mindset as a theoretical framework to construct learning module lessons (Dweck & Yeager, 2019; Gonzalez, 2016; Strang, 2001; Zehr, 2002; Zehr & Toews, 2004). Centeio et al. (2018) and Hollett et al. (2020) also supported the use of TPB as a theoretical concept to guide the construction of a measurement tool to evaluate students' attitudes toward a behavior, thereby predicting their intention to carry out that action.

Limitations

While the findings in this study demonstrated the strengths of a positive alternative tardy program in replacing a punitive tardy program, there are still important limitations to this study. The first limitation was the possibility of self-selection bias (Creswell, 2014). Self-selection bias occurs when the participants can choose to participate in the study and “select” themselves into the program or group (Creswell, 2014). Prior to the implementation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, 60 students at SHS had accrued enough tardies to receive one or more lunch detentions. All 60 students were emailed to inquire as to their interest in participating in the study, with 13 students showing interest by responding, opting in, and completing the study from start to finish. While the 13 students had lunch detentions and experienced student tardiness, they could have biased the study through their willingness to be a participant and engage in a study where they could critique the very punitive tardy program that punished them. Therefore,

the 13 student participants could have shown interest and favorability toward an alternative tardy program.

The second limitation in the study was the small total number of participants. The ideal participant was one of the 60 students out of 1,450 students in the school who had accrued tardy lunch detention(s). As the study required time to complete, I waited 6 weeks into the fall 2021 trimester to begin recruitment of student participants. Had I waited longer, I might have been able to grow the sample size to more than 60 students, thereby increasing my chances of a larger total number of participants. A larger number of participants would have provided a more robust student group with diverse experiences related to student tardiness. However, I was under time constraints to complete the study.

Another limitation was the grade level representation of students related to the small *N* of 13. Out of 13 participants, three were in Grade 11 (juniors) and 10 were in Grade 12 (seniors). As students were recruited and opted in on their own, there were no students in Grade 9 (freshmen) or 10 (sophomores) who desired to participate. A more diverse student grade level representation could have added to the study by providing a unique perspective related to their experience and time at SHS. However, it must be also noted that, due to Covid-19 school closures in 2020 and 2021, Grade 11 and Grade 12 students were the only groups who had previously been on campus and possibly experienced the SHS punitive tardy lunch detention program. The Grade 9 and 10 students had not been to SHS in an official on-campus capacity prior to fall 2021; therefore, they had no experience in receiving a tardy lunch detention. As the fall 2021 trimester was the first official full school year since Covid-19 school closures and the

hybrid programs that were implemented between 2019 and 2020, it is not surprising that only juniors and seniors reached out and expressed an interest in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study, as these students had experienced tardies and the resulting detentions.

A unique limitation and interesting challenge to the study was introduced at the beginning of this fall trimester, when I was first introducing and implementing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. This challenge was the introduction of State Bill (California) 328, making it law for California high schools to begin at 8:30 a.m. beginning in July 2022. The school district of SHS unanimously approved the early adoption of SB 328 with full implementation in fall 2021, moving the start of SHS from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., thus allowing students to have more time in the morning to get to school. While no specific data had been compiled by the school district and school as of this writing, it should be noted that anecdotal opinions of SHS staff members observed fewer students being tardy with the later start time.

As with any school between spring 2020 and 2022 (as of this writing), Covid-19 has provided a challenging experience for all stakeholders. It should be noted that SHS had been in a hybrid school program up through the spring of 2021, with a decision made in summer 2021 to return to school as normal in fall 2021. However, students were allowed to opt out of in-person school in favor of a separate, district-created online school, allowing SHS students to attend an alternative setting. As I had curated and created the material and development of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program over the course of 2 years, I did, for a time, feel that my efforts were in vain, and I would need to give serious consideration to making a shift in my study due to the impact of Covid-19. Covid-19 also affected the implementation of student tardies at the beginning of the fall 2021 school

year, as it was agreed upon by school administration to relax tardy policies for the first 3 weeks, delaying my timeline and temporarily preventing the capture of any tardy data. Along with Covid-19, the city bus schedule experienced challenges due to both Covid-19 protocols and the new school start time, causing students to be late to school on a number of occasions and school staff to excuse all tardies for a period of time.

Implications for Practice

Utilizing a positive approach to support student tardy struggles made the most sense after two cycles of initial action research demonstrated low tardy lunch detention compliance. As related to prior research on punitive disciplinary practices, the current SHS model for punishing students for tardiness seemed counterproductive to any goal of holding a student accountable and trying to change their behavior (Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; Tyre et al., 2011). Data collected from the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program indicated several implications for practice: (a) the need to replace the school's punitive tardy program with a positive tardy program, as findings showed that students preferred a positive tardy accountability program to the current punitive tardy practice and student data indicated positive feelings regarding the usefulness of the intervention; (b) the need for student-centered learning module lessons to support student growth and training on life skills to support on-time behavior, as evidenced by positive student feedback data and results collected from the learning module lessons; and (c) the scaling-up challenge posed by holding individual and group restorative conversations with participants.

All 13 participants supported using the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention instead of the school's punitive tardy program, with student data suggesting the positive nature of the intervention and its focus on teaching students life skills related to goal

setting, punctuality, and organization. Participants further shared that they were interested in their own self-improvement, which is interesting as it relates to the punitive tardy detention program. Conceptually, the idea of punishing a student for something that may or may not be out of their control and not providing them with any learning or corrective opportunity defeats the very purpose of learning. The 13 participants may have recognized the futile nature of the current punitive tardy detention program, causing their positive and supportive response for the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention. Regardless, the data support continuing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention, as it replaces a punitive program that students contested and had no support for.

Positive data were also collected showing unanimous support for the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention's learning module lessons. Participants shared they felt it was both useful and helpful in teaching them important skills and described the positive impact that the intervention had on their attitude, evidencing their intent to be on time to school. As the purpose of the intervention was to be a positive alternative to the punitive tardy program, the conceptual idea was to create something that was restorative, utilized the concept of growth mindset to provide students with focused learning on skills that could support their on-time behavior, and was ultimately supportive of students. The goal was to change their attitude toward being on time to school, such that they would have the intent to be on time. The learning module lessons were created to serve as the step in the intervention where students could learn some supportive information related to growth mindset and important life skills and grow from this learning. Ideally, the information they would be learning in the lessons would have a positive impact on their

attitude to be on time to school and provide them with some skill-based and growth-based learning.

Ultimately, the growth of this program would require following students through the school year to track their tardy data and continuing the conversation with them to assess the intervention's effectiveness. However, from the standpoint of comparing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program as an alternative to the current punitive tardy detention program, it would seem foolish not to entertain this intervention even if a school also wanted to continue its punitive tardy program. The S.T.R.O.N.G. Program could serve as a positive opt-in option for students who have built up some detentions and prefer an alternative to lunch detentions or are refusing to go to lunch detention.

Finally, another implication of the study that should be noted for future practice is the challenge of scaling up the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program's Phase 2 practice of individual student restorative conversations and a group restorative conversation. While the individual restorative conversation is an essential step of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention and necessary to build trust and mentorship in a restorative fashion with the students, one person would most likely not be able to serve a large number of students, and this phase would require multiple people to support. This would also be the case with facilitation of the group restorative conversation, which would be challenging if the number of tardy students were significantly larger than the *N* of 13 in this study. Additionally, the logistics involved in pulling students out of class to have the individual restorative conversation, as well as arranging the group restorative conversation at lunchtime so as not to interfere with their learning, were challenging.

Based on these outcomes, I plan to streamline the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention and continue to use it for students who wish to sign up for it over the current punitive tardy practice, which is still in place at the school. In order for me to continue to refine the intervention, I still want to implement it for students and gather further feedback. It is also important to carry on the study to gather longitudinal data on student participants to further assess the impact.

Recommendations for Future Research

Results from this study suggested three main areas of future research: (a) continued longitudinal exploration of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention with tardy students as a cycle of action research; (b) an exploration of utilizing the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program in other school contexts (struggling students, social-emotional learning, incoming Grade 9 success, and study-skills programs); and (c) a whole school/staff exploration and development of a school-wide S.T.R.O.N.G. Program for tardy students.

Because the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program was limited in scope and time, the study did not follow through with the next steps. The next steps in this case would be to follow the 13 participants, or others, with another cycle of action research through a school year and continue their growth and follow-up as ex-participants in the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program. The continuation of the study would then be to exit the students from the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention; follow their progress in being on time to school, noting their challenges, growth, and experiences as they progress through a trimester of school; and seek their feedback. Questions would need to be asked, such as: Do students think the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program continues to support their intent to be on time? Would they recommend ongoing learning or revisiting the learning from time to time to support them

as they transition away from the intervention? A more thorough longitudinal study would be ideal to determine the impact the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program had in time and space and note challenges and opportunities for growth and adjustment.

Something that became very apparent early in the pandemic, and during the creation of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, was the necessity for targeted interventions for struggling students who were experiencing social-emotional, academic, and attendance challenges at school, whether they were experiencing hybrid learning, at home, or physically present. Covid-19 exposed a multitude of learning challenges and at-home student physical and psychological challenges that prevented students from accessing the curriculum. I experienced this firsthand during the long spell of fully online school, where students refused to participate, did not attend, or became depressed from the isolated nature of the pandemic. As I focused the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention on skills and lessons that I considered to support on-time behavior, positive attitudes, and a growth mindset to build the module platform, I also noticed the far-reaching possibility of this intervention for tackling other challenges. Therefore, my second recommendation is for future researchers or school practitioners to explore the possibility of using the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention in other school contexts, as it could easily be adapted to working with struggling students, incoming Grade 9 success classes and study-skills programs, and even working with students who have social-emotional challenges. The framework of the learning module lessons is built upon a growth mindset belief that you can learn something new and apply it to yourself. Thus, it would make sense that the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program could be applied in these various other school contexts.

Similarly, it should also be noted that prior research has supported schools using School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) as a whole-school framework for school staff to implement as the practice to curtail student tardiness (Johnson-Gros et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2014; Nocera et al., 2014; Tyre et al., 2011). While the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program intervention has not been adopted school-wide, the framework is there for it to be utilized by school staff members as another cycle of action research and pushed out to affected students, as it exists in an online format for students to complete the learning module lessons and restorative journals on their computer. Ultimately, like SWPBIS, which is adopted by a school and practiced by its staff, the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program could be adapted in this same way and practiced by staff members dedicated to working with students who are struggling with being on time to school.

Reflections

I was beginning my 19th year in public education as I entered the fall of 2021, with the previous 2 years being my most challenging. Now, halfway through the 2021–2022 school year, I can say with certainty that this is in fact my most challenging year. Covid-19 and the resulting global, state, and local impacts it has had on public education and the day-to-day operations of a comprehensive high school have significantly limited my own practice as an educator and leader as new duties have been tasked and ascribed to school administrators. Overnight, we became contact tracers, online facilitators, medical data gurus, and Covid testing facility experts. My focus and motivation to implement and follow through with my S.T.R.O.N.G. Program study waned and faced challenges as I navigated a world of public education that I never could have imagined. There was the very real possibility that my study would never be completed when the

school board had to decide if school would return in person, as normal, or continue in a hybrid model. What I have come to realize through this pandemic, however, is that nothing has been normal, and my own personal fortitude and will to push on and make something out of what had become just about nothing needed to show resolve and persistence. So, I pushed on and stayed the course, as I have had to learn to do these days, and put my head down and gutted it out. The previous version of me, in my teens and 20s, might have given up. However, the current version of me became the leader I know I am and did not let the current state of affairs faze me.

The question that my peers in the ASU doctoral program asked me all the time was, “So why tardies?” I never really thought of the answer to that question, but I had always had an interest in student tardiness as a result of my focus on being a punctual person and someone who was raised with strict family members who critiqued tardiness and praised punctuality. As I dug into the subject matter and learned of the impact that truancy causes in public-school systems across the United States, I realized that while chronic absenteeism receives a lot of publicity and review, student tardiness takes a back seat. It seemed appropriate for me to bring together my personal belief that being on time breeds success in yourself and others around you, with the current state of practice at my school, which punished teenagers for being late.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Covid-19 pandemic related to public education was the impact it has had on students, academically, and social-emotionally and in the crushing blow we have seen with student absences. Out of these challenges, and with school districts focusing on doing what they can to support students and families, came many an intervention and hyper-focus on struggling students. SHS created

the Students of Concern list and committee, comprising counselors, an intervention counselor, and administrators. The list tasks teachers, counselors, and administrators with populating a Google form document with students they have in their class or notice at school whom they are concerned about for several reasons (academic, social-emotional, absence, tardy). I mention this here because as the pandemic hit, it became very clear that schools need systems in place for staff to populate, curate, and discuss students of concern and target interventions and next steps for supporting these students. If I were to zoom out, transport myself back to the spring of 2019, and realize that the world would be plunged into a pandemic that would transform educational institutions, I would have likely created a study project focused on the Students of Concern document and team that we ended up forming at SHS. While I am deeply focused on the challenges that student absences, tardies, and the overall truancy problem pose to students and families, the impact of this pandemic has shed light on so many other challenges that affect students' abilities to get to school and be present, both physically and social-emotionally. So it is with this new knowledge that I move forward and onward as a leader, focusing on the bright spots that we create in education for our students and teachers, and fine-tuning our intervention practices so that they are positive, growth oriented, restorative, and learner centered.

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APPENDIX A
STUDENT INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

What is your year in school? (please select one)

9th grade 10th grade 11th grade 12th grade

1. Gender: Please mark one

Male Female Transgender Prefer not to answer

2. What is your primary method of getting to school in the morning? Please select only one

I drive myself

I carpool with another student

I carpool with a family and am dropped off

I walk or ride my bike to school

I take the bus to school

Short Answer: Please answer the following questions by typing your responses in the space provided

3. What is your opinion of the current tardy lunch detention practice which punishes students with a detention for every tardy over five?
4. Do you have any prior knowledge of or have you had any experience learning about growth mindset practices?
5. Have you ever received training or educational instruction regarding on-time arrival, being punctual, and managing your time?
6. Have you ever received training or educational instruction on practices to help you stay organized?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

1. What are some of the reasons you or other students are late to school (Why do you think you are late to class)? Do you blame yourself for being late?
2. What are some of the feelings or emotions you have when you are tardy to class? How does being tardy make you feel when you walk into a classroom late or stand in line to get a pass to class?
3. Do you blame yourself or blame others for being late?
4. Talk to me about whether you are interested in improving your on-time behavior to class?
5. Talk to me about whether you believe you can learn new concepts which could help you be on time to class
6. Please talk to me about what your feelings are towards having a tardy program that eliminates blame through student detentions and instead works on improving on time student behavior through learning some concepts
7. Talk to me about whether you would be interested in a program that focuses on self improvement and learning concepts to support you in being on time to class.
8. Do you have anything that you want to ask me? Do you have anything that you would like to add?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

1. Has anyone ever talked with you about being tardy in a way that is helpful or where they wanted to support you?
2. Have you ever felt blamed for being late to school and class? How has that made you feel? Have you told anyone about this or explained your side of the story?
3. Have you ever come into class late, and wanted to explain to the teacher why you were late? What was that like?
4. Do you think that punishing someone for being late to school is the right thing to do?
5. What are some of the things you would want to change about the current tardy practice?
6. For this question, you can reference yourself or speak broadly about changes you'd like to make for the tardy system: Can you talk about anything you would like to change about being late to school?
7. In your opinion what are some concepts or practices which could support you in being to school on time?
8. Do you have anything that you want to ask me? Do you have anything that you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

STUDENT REFLECTION JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Restorative Practices: What are your thoughts on helping someone with a challenge by supporting them through it by having a positive relationship with them and allowing them to problem solve it together?

2. Growth Mindset: What are your thoughts on punishing someone for breaking a rule versus having someone learn some alternative information which helps them to grow and learn?

3. Goal Setting: What are your thoughts on how goal setting can help you?

4. Punctuality: What are your thoughts on the importance of being punctual and arriving on time to school? After your response to the first question, please write out two goals that you would like to have for punctuality as it relates to being on time to school.

5. Organization: What are your thoughts on the role being organized and prepared plays in your success? After your response to the first question, please write out two goals that you would like to have for organization and being organized as it relates to being on time to school.

APPENDIX E
PRE/POSTSURVEY

Survey Scale Instructions: *The following statements are related to goal setting, punctuality (being on-time), and organization. Please select only one response that indicates your current attitude toward practicing the behavior.*

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Not important at all | Not important | Slightly Important | Important | Very important |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Pre-Intervention Survey / Post-Intervention Survey (Both will be used)

Goal Setting

- Creating personal goals for myself which you want to achieve
- Setting academic and behavior goals to motivate myself
- Setting academic and behavior goals to help me plan for the future
- Writing down or typing out academic and behavior goals for myself
- Telling a friend, family member, or other trusted person about the academic or behavior goals that I have set for myself.

Punctuality (Being on Time)

- Using an alarm clock to help me wake up for school.
- Avoiding distractions so that I can get to school on time.
- Having a family member or trusted person who helps me prepare to leave home and arrive at school on time.
- Having a set time when I leave my home to arrive at school with at least five/ten minutes before the final tardy bell rings.
- Having specific habits which help me be efficient with my time in the morning.

Organization

- Using a paper planner or organizer to help me stay organized
- Using a calendar app or online organization app on my phone or computer to help me stay organized.
- Writing out a daily task list to complete in order to help me stay organized.
- Preparing and organizing my school materials so they are ready to go the night before a school day.
- Dividing larger projects into smaller tasks in order to help me make progress and be efficient with my time.

APPENDIX F

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To what extent do you feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention taught you goal setting skills?:
 To a Great Extent Somewhat Very Little Not at All

2. To what extent do you feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention taught you time management skills (punctuality)?:
 To a Great Extent Somewhat Very Little Not at All

3. To what extent do you feel the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention taught you organizational skills:
 To a Great Extent Somewhat Very Little Not at All

4. Would you recommend students who are struggling with being on time to school take the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention?
 YES NO

5. Would you prefer that a school use the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention as a tardy program or would you prefer that a school provide students who are tardy with lunch detentions once a threshold is reached (example: five or more tardies)?
 - I prefer a school use the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention for tardy students
 - I prefer a school use lunch detentions for tardy students
 - I prefer not to answer

Free Response: Please answer the following questions by writing your responses in the space provided

6. What, if anything, did you find effective (you liked) about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention?

7. What, if anything, did you find ineffective (did not like) about the S.T.R.O.N.G. Mindset and Motivation Intervention?

8. Please explain whether the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program changed your attitude about being to school on time?

9. Please explain your answer to this statement: As a result of the S.T.R.O.N.G. Program, do you intend to be at school on time?

APPENDIX G
IRB APPROVAL

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

[Lauren Harris](#)
[Division of Teacher Preparation - West Campus](#)
 480/965-6692
Lauren.Harris.1@asu.edu

Dear [Lauren Harris](#):

On 8/23/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title: | S.T.R.O.N.G. MINDSET and MOTIVATION INTERVENTION: Student Training for a Restorative Outlook for Needed Growth to Decrease Student Tardiness |
| Investigator: | Lauren Harris |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00014358 |
| Category of review: | (7)(a) Behavioral research |
| Funding: | None |
| Grant Title: | None |
| Grant ID: | None |
| Documents Reviewed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Conversation Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Individual Conversation Questions (Interview), Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • IRB Social Behavioral Form, Category: IRB Protocol; • Learning Module Lessons Outline, Category: Resource list; • Parent Letter of Permission and Google Consent Form, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Pre-Post Survey Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Approval Letter, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Recruitment Email Student and Parent, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Reflective Journal Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Research Questions Procedures and Protocol, Category: Resource list; • Student Feedback Form Exit Questionnaire, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Student Intake Form Questionnaire, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Written Child Assent Form Age 14-17, Category: Consent Form; |
|--|--|

The IRB approved the protocol from 8/23/2021 to 8/22/2022 inclusive. Three weeks before 8/22/2022 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 8/22/2022 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the “Documents” tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

REMINDER - All in-person interactions with human subjects require the completion of the ASU Daily Health Check by the ASU members prior to the interaction and the use of face coverings by researchers, research teams and research participants during the interaction. These requirements will minimize risk, protect health and support a safe research environment. These requirements apply both on- and off-campus.

The above change is effective as of July 29th 2021 until further notice and replaces all previously published guidance. Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring a healthy and productive ASU community.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Christopher Robertson

Christopher Robertson
Lauren Harris