ABSTRACT

Educators use numerous strategies to manage classrooms better. Their goal is to apply the majority of their time toward teaching to help the pupils maximize their academic potentials. In an attempt to address classroom management Kim Berg and Shilts (2004) adapted Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT; Berg, 1994; de Shazer, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994) to create a method of classroom intervention titled “Working On What Works” (WOWW). The WOWW program was designed to enhance the quality of education for students and teachers by assisting teachers and students in building a respectful and collaborative classroom environment with the intent to increase students’ school attendance, to promote learning, to increase school performance, to improve teachers’ and students’ interactions, to help promote safe school environment, and to show a decrease in acting out behavior in school environment (Berg & Shilts). The WOWW program has been in operation at New River Middle School in Broward County, Florida for five consecutive years. Previous research conducted on the program indicated positive outcomes regarding student performance (Liscio, 2007), but did not incorporate the participants’ perspectives on how the program helped to produce positive effects. In this grounded theory study, the researchers explored perceptions of teachers who had participated in WOWW. The lead investigator conducted individual, open-ended interviews with six WOWW teachers. This study brings forth new understanding about what make the WOWW classroom intervention effective. The findings suggest the teachers found the WOWW program provided them with the tools they needed to gain control of their classrooms. By adopting positive attitudes and using positive language, the teachers were able to observe positive changes in the students, which triggered a positive change in relationships between students and teachers resulting in more positive classroom environments. These results support the goals and
objectives of the WOWW program and are in line with previous research regarding participants’ experiences in other school-based SFBT programs and SFBT itself.