The Effects of Using a Retake Ticket in the Ninth Grade Science Classroom

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Background

- The state of Vermont recently adopted Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR's).
- In order to allow students to demonstrate this proficiency, many teachers are using retakes and revisions.
- Retakes involve time and effort on the part of both students and teachers, and students were not always showing improvement.
- In my action research project, I will examine the use of a retake ticket.

Research Questions

Does the use of a retake ticket help students make the most of their opportunities to retake and revise assessments?

How do retake tickets affect student learning?

How is student attitude and motivation to do retakes affected by retake tickets?

How does the use of a retake ticket affect my teaching?

Student Learning:

Overall, more students completed retakes during the treatment period than the non-treatment period, suggesting that the retake ticket did not discourage students from accessing retakes. Twenty-five students completed retakes during the treatment period, while only 11 students completed retakes during the non-treatment period. The students completing retakes at each level of achievement varied, however, as seen in Figure 2.

Student Motivation:

Overall, data showed a slight decrease in student learning on retakes during the treatment period. While the average retake score was very similar for both groups, the non-treatment group showed greater learning gains. During the non-treatment period, the average score on retakes was 82.5% compared to the original average score of 65.1% (N=11). For the treatment period, the average score on retakes was 81.6% compared to the original average score of 72.0% (N=25).

Student Attitude:

Students responded most favorably to the statement “The retake ticket helped me improve my score on the retake.” To this statement, 13% of students responded “strongly agree” and 30% of students responded “agree.” Students responded the most negatively to the statement “I like using the retake ticket.” Seventeen percent of students strongly disagreed with this statement, while 30% disagreed (Figure 3). Overall, the majority of students responded “neutral” in reference to statements about the retake ticket.

Conclusions

Overall, the use of a retake ticket did not show improvement in student learning and there were not clear trends of increasing student motivation. Student attitudes varied widely and many students seemed impartial to its use. While these results may suggest that the retake ticket failed in its goal, individual effort scores show that self-reflection may improve leaning. Moving forward, I am interested to see if I can improve the effectiveness of the retake ticket by making changes in the implementation. Most notably:

- In the future I plan to dedicate class time to modeling what a good retake ticket looks like to make sure students understand how to self-reflect on their original performance.
- I also will require students to complete the retake ticket during our call-back period so that I can give immediate feedback on their process.

Value

For the past three years, I have made changes to the way in which I implement retakes and I plan to continue to make changes in the future to find the most effective way forward for both the students and teacher. This study has reinforced the importance of using data and student input in deciding what works in my classroom.