



The Effectiveness of a Classroom Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting

by

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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled The Effectiveness of a Classroom Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting by Amanda Tuggle, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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The Effectiveness of a Classroom Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting

ABSTRACT

A classwide behavioral intervention was conducted in Lake Erie preschool to eliminate disruptive and negative behavior in the classroom. As a result of classroom dynamics constantly changing, the most important skill that a teacher must possess is effective classroom management. As a group, students were given an opportunity to earn 6 rewards throughout the day for maintaining positive behavior. Students who displayed disruptive, negative or distracted behaviors at any point during the day were given six opportunities to start over and correct their behaviors. Observational data was collected on the frequency of these behaviors during circle time and seat work time. Two independent observers recorded this data on students' behavior four separate times over a one month period. Anecdotal notes were also recorded to give the researcher insight on student behavior when a color change occurred due to undesired behaviors. In conclusion, it was determined that this intervention was an effective method in reducing disruptive, negative, and distracted behavior in the preschool classroom.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Knowledge of student behavior is considered to be critical in the effectiveness of a teacher (Stough, Montague, Landmark, & Williams-Diehm, 2015). Strategies that worked in a classroom only ten years ago may not be sufficient to meet the needs of today's students. As a result of this constant change, the most important skill that a teacher must possess is good classroom management skills. Current research indicates that classroom indiscipline is a serious problem in American classrooms. Friedman (2006) states that, "Poor classroom management often leads to misbehaviors which interfere with teaching and learning, and produces tremendous stress" (as cited in Rosas, 2009, p. 55). The Office for Standards in Education (2014) found that, "...pupils are potentially losing up to an hour of learning each day in English schools because of this kind of [low level] disruption in classrooms. This is equivalent to 38 days of teaching lost per year. A large number of pupils, therefore, are being denied a significant amount of valuable learning time" (pp. 4-5). Not managing everyday disruptions such as unnecessary talking to calling out can have a large effect on how much student learning happens during the day. Reddy, Fabiano, Dudek, and Hsu (2013) found that when a teacher practiced classroom management effectively students were more likely to exhibit positive behavior. Positive behavior in the classroom not only helps the individual student learn better, but allows the class as a whole to be successful learners.

One of the biggest challenges teachers face today is finding the right classroom management strategy for their classroom. Finding the most effective classroom management method can be daunting with so many options and opinions on what is the best strategy. Positive classroom management and successful classroom instruction go hand in hand when it comes to

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student learning (Stough, Montague, Landmark, & Williams-Diehm, 2015). Filcheck, McNeil, Greco, and Bernard (2004) stated, “Previous research has indicated that behavioral techniques (e.g., token economies, response costs, positive reinforcement) are effective in reducing the amount of inappropriate behavior exhibited by disruptive children in the elementary classroom setting” (p. 351). Two very common behavior management strategies for improving classroom behavior are a clip chart or color system. Though effective in some classrooms and some settings, they are not effective in every classroom across the board. Akman, Aydos, Akar and Sansal (2014) believe, “Behavioral management does not just involve changing problematic behaviors but includes designing environments that promote appropriate behaviors and discourage the formation of inappropriate behaviors” (p.274). When considering classroom management strategies the teacher should not be trying to stop inappropriate behaviors but eliminating them altogether in exchange for positive behavior.

Many classroom teachers, especially new or pre-service teachers use proactive strategies when it comes to routine and rule breaking behavior problems (Shook, 2012). However, when it comes to more severe behavior problems new and preservice teachers are more likely to use reactive classroom management strategies (Shook; Smart & Igo, 2010). The authors found that when teachers were inconsistent with the strategies they used rather than using proactive behavior management strategies the problem behaviors not only persisted but they increased. Two of the most reactive actions are time outs and removal from the classroom. Another discipline procedure, though uncommon, is recess withholding (Turner, Chriqui, & Chaloupka 2013). When recess is withheld from students they lose out on physical exercise. Getting out that energy can help students focus in the classroom and display more positive behavior.

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Classroom management is rarely something that teachers master without practice. Teachers want to be on the same page as their students in regards to rules and procedures so that the classroom can run smoothly (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Preservice teachers are taught effective classroom management strategies to use in the classroom but when severe behavioral problems arise they react instead of going back to their learned strategies (Shook, 2012; Smart & Igo, 2010). The question every teacher eventually asks is, “What is an effective classroom management strategy to eliminate noncompliance and other negative behavior in students?” Shook states that, “Proactive behavior management strategies can prevent the occurrence of problem behavior” (p. 129). When teachers turn to proactive behavior management strategies as opposed to reactive actions students are much less likely to repeat negative behaviors.

There are the practiced, researched strategies that most teachers use when rules and routines are broken. However, research has shown that praise is the most underused classroom management strategy and time-outs are the most common reactive strategy (Shook, 2012). When a teacher is acting reactively rather than proactively they are being inconsistent which just increases the noncompliance and negative behavior (Smart & Igo, 2010). When students are noncompliant and misbehaving they are not only taking out time for academia for themselves, but for their peers as well. With such a push for students to perform well on tests it is vital that teachers manage their classrooms as effectively as possible so that their students learn and perform better.

As a result of a need for more effective classroom management strategies recent research has turned the focus from individual behavior management to a classroom-wide system.

Filcheck, McNeil, Greco, & Bernard (2004) determined, “Because the number of children with

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behavior problems is increasing, whole-class interventions may be more time and cost efficient than developing specific behavioral plans for individual children” (p. 351). In classroom management strategies such as the Good Behavior Game (GBG) students are rewarded on a whole class basis or team basis (Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, & Colpin, 2010). Leflet et al., 2010 state “The GBG is a classroom preventive intervention providing elementary school teachers with tools to reduce children’s disruptive behavior, while promoting their prosocial behavior” (p. 870). Research on interventions similar to the GBG have all seen positive results in their settings. The similar factors between them all seems to be their focus on the positive behavior as opposed to the negative and the classroom-wide approach as opposed to individual.

The main purpose of my research is to investigate an effective classroom management strategy that eliminates non-compliance and negative behavior in the classroom. The change to a classroom wide system from individual based will result in more rewards throughout the day for positive behavior which could potentially improve whole classroom behavior. In this study each student will have four to five opportunities to get a time and cost effective reward, as opposed to an award once a week. I believe this is a useful topic for the field as it is something that every teacher needs. New and preservice teachers struggle the most with classroom management so finding a general strategy that would eliminate noncompliance in the classroom is important (Shook, 2012). This may be a solution to some of the problems that teachers are facing today when it comes to classroom management.

Noncompliance in students is not only a student problem, it is a teacher problem. The teacher has to look at their teaching strategies and determine what they can change to help improve student behavior. Through establishing an effective classroom management strategies

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teachers can have a more peaceful classroom environment that is more open to learning and encounters less behavior problems and noncompliance.

The research questions driving this study are:

- What is an effective classroom management strategy to eliminate noncompliance and other negative behaviors in students?
- Are classroom-wide management strategies more time and cost effective than individual incentive plans?

In the following chapter, I will review the relevant scholarship related to the issues of classroom management strategies in order to establish the parameters of my study.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Over the past 20 years studies have found that there is a positive correlation between self-management interventions and decreased disruptive behavior while also improving attention and student learning. Researchers Reddy, Fabiano, Dudek, & Hsu (2013) stated that “...effective teachers emphasize and make explicit lesson goals, frequently ask questions to monitor students’ progress, provide ample opportunities for practice, and give prompt feedback to students on their learning” (p. 319). Akman, Aydos, & Akar (2014) remarked that, “Behavioural management does not just involve changing problematic behaviours but includes designing environments that promote appropriate behaviours and discourage the formation of inappropriate behaviours” (p. 274). In order to have positive behavior changes a teacher must find an appropriate classroom management strategy, and that strategy may not be effective for every child. Once a teacher knows each child personally they can then find a classroom strategy that caters to that child’s specific needs. The following chapter will summarize the current research on classwide behavior interventions and their effectiveness in the classroom.

Effective Classroom Management Strategies

An effective classroom management strategy must be put in place after the reason behind the problematic behavior is discovered and any prophylactic steps have been taken into consideration (Akman, Aydos, & Akar, 2014). Shook (2012) found in her study that problems with student behavior results in 20% of new teachers leaving the profession the first year and 42% leaving by the fifth year (p.129). First year teachers often have the knowledge needed to manage problematic behaviors, but do not have the experience to put this knowledge into practice. Smart and Igo (2010) stated that, “When confronting mild student misbehaviors,

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teachers perceived their behavior management strategies to be more effective and reported implementing such strategies with greater consistency. When facing more severe misbehaviors, novice teachers perceived their management strategies to be largely ineffective and reported implementing them inconsistently” (p. 567). For new teachers the task of managing a classroom, delivering effective instruction, and developing their teaching skills can result in ineffective classroom management strategies. The problem with this is that an effective classroom management strategy is what promotes a positive learning environment which then allows teaching skills to develop. The steps for improving teacher preparedness for classroom management are mentors who have provided guidance on classroom management strategies, general classroom experience, and discovering the function of the behavior (Shook). Classroom wide, self-management classroom management strategies as opposed to individual based classroom management strategies have proved to be effective in both general education and special education settings (Hoff & Ervin, 2013; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Bernard, Filcheck, Greco, and McNeal, 2004). Researchers believe that, “Targeting the classroom system to increase effective classroom management practices delivered to all students is more efficient than targeting individual students because it is likely to reduce current student behavioral and academic difficulties as well as prevent future student problems on a broader scale” (Lewis-Palmer, Merrell, and Reinke, 2008, p. 316).

The need for classroom management interventions are a result of research on behaviorism. In his pioneering work on behavior modification, B.F. Skinner (1953) stated, “We are concerned, then, with the causes of human behavior” (p. 23). Much of classroom management no longer focuses on why students behave the way they do, but instead result in the

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implementation of interventions that they believe will most positively manipulate student behavior. Skinner believed that, “Any condition or event which can be shown to have an effect upon behavior must be taken into account” (p. 23). Student behavior is displayed for a reason and it is the responsibility of the teacher to figure out the function of the behavior and find an intervention that encourages positive behavior from every student.

Classwide Behavior Incentive Programs

Class-wide behavior incentive programs come as a result of the current classroom management strategy being deemed ineffective. This was seen in an initial study conducted by Bernard, Filcheck, Greco, and McNeal (2004) on an incentive program known as the Level System. The researchers studied 17 students in a preschool classroom that was labeled as “out of control” (p. 3). The Level System had 7 levels containing three positive, three negative, and one neutral starting point (Bernard et al., 2004). Three to four times a day the student whose shape is on a positive level received a small cost effective or free reward that does not require much time. Students whose shape is on a negative level moved onto the next activity (p. 355). After the initial experiment researchers concluded that, “Specifically, the amount of inappropriate behavior exhibited in the classroom decreased with implementation of the Level System” (p. 359). Despite the positive results the teacher rated the manageability of the classroom at about the same as when the Level System was not implemented.

Other researchers have found similar results. In a similar study, 22 students in a general education first grade classroom participated in a classroom management intervention called the Good Behavior Game (aka, the Game) to prevent disruptive behavior in the urban classroom (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007). The researchers believe that it is essential that teachers be taught

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effective intervention strategies that can be implemented to eliminate negative behavior as quickly as possible. The Game first saw success in a fourth grade classroom that often displayed negative behaviors such as calling out and frequently leaving their seats. Since this initial study this intervention has proved to be effective in both general and special education classrooms. The Game was implemented during a 30 minute math session and observations were taken at 10 minute intervals during various times throughout the session. Researchers instructed teachers, “During each occasion of disruptive behavior, the teacher made a tick mark on the recording sheet under the team to which the student belonged. At the end of the period, the teacher tallied the tick marks and revealed the criterion. The team(s) with tick marks falling at or below the criterion earned a reward” (p. 90). As students displayed disruptive behavior their team would get a tally on their recording sheet. A previously determined number would be hidden from the students. If the number of tallies on a team’s recording sheet was less than the predetermined number then students would receive an award. Teams could also earn a weekly award based on their results. The researchers concluded that, “The results of the study suggest that the Game was effective in increasing student on-task behavior and reducing disruptive behavior” (p. 93).

Educators must use strategies in the classroom that motivate, focus, and reduce disruptions. A study conducted by Hoff and Ervin (2013) showed another class-wide incentive program whose purpose was to increase self-management while also decreasing disruptive behavior in, “...three at-risk-second grade students” (p. 151). In this study one target student from each second grade class was chosen based on teacher preference, notable disruptive behavior, and more than two discipline referrals. All three students who were chosen were male, were academically proficient, and did not receive special education services. Once the system

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was introduced, "...students were informed of the classroom rules and told the classroom teacher would be rating the class' behavior at the end of the academic period using a 1- to 5-point rating scale, where 1 = totally unacceptable (i.e., broke one or more rules during the entire interval) and 5 = excellent" (p. 156). Depending on the group's behavior the class would receive an award if appropriate. Along with a teacher rating, students monitored their own behavior and their class' behavior during these intervals. The teacher and students then compared their ratings for each category and if there were, then students received no points. The results of this intervention resulted in a significant decrease in disruptive behavior from each target student and researchers stated, "...teachers perceived the intervention as acceptable and effective for children's problem behavior. In addition to a decrease in disruptive behavior from the target students, there was also a decrease in the whole classes disruptive behavior" (p. 159). This data proved that the intervention supports the use of self-management strategies in a classwide setting to reduce disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the literature regarding classroom management strategies revealed that novice teachers feel underprepared in regards to classroom management and therefore either leave their profession or have problem behaviors increase resulting in a less conducive classroom environment. To improve behavior in the classroom, and also improve academics a classroom wide incentive program is a positive alternative. The literature also determined that classroom wide incentive strategies can result in self management skills that stem disruptive behavior. Research has found an abundance of classroom wide incentive strategies that are effective when compared with individual based incentive strategies. Though all the research reviewed here in

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regards to classroom wide incentive programs were effective, it is believed by this researcher that a modified version of the level system would be the most effective in this preschool classroom. The intervention that will be put into place will have three levels, 2 positive and one negative. The levels reset approximately six times throughout the day and four different dice are rolled throughout the day to determine the reward. If the same reward is rolled twice the die was re-rolled. The purpose of resetting the system six times was to allow for students to have a reset on their past behavior. As a result of this reset and these cost and time effective rewards, as well as the inclusion of praise, the goal was for students to learn to self-manage their behavior and decrease their negative and disruptive behavior.

In the following chapter the outline and details of the methodology used to form the classwide behavior intervention system will be discussed.

Chapter 3 – Methods

The previously stated research revealed that class-wide management intervention plans help to promote self-management and at the same time lessen disruptive behavior in a variety of settings. The research showed that there are an increasing number of preschool students displaying negative and disruptive behavior and that as the numbers rise an effective classroom management intervention must be implemented. The focus on a class-wide intervention plan as opposed to an individual-based intervention plan comes as a direct result of an individual-based classroom management plan being unsuccessful at decreasing these behaviors. In the following chapter I will outline my methods for a class-wide intervention to eliminate negative and disruptive behavior in the preschool classroom.

Research Frameworks

This research study was based on mixed methods approaches. The reason behind utilizing a mixed methods research approach was, "...to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both [quantitative and qualitative] in single research studies and across studies" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp 14-15). This mixed research study set out to understand how often negative and disruptive behavior occurred in the classroom while also identifying the type of behavior occurring (e.g. calling out, temper tantrums, etc.). This research study used an interrupted time-series design. Data was collected on the student behavior before the intervention, also known as A or the baseline phase, and then collected again multiple times after the intervention was put into place, known as B or the treatment phase (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 363). A visual inspection of the data took place to help rule out any

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potential confounding variables and to show whether or not the intervention was effective (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 365).

When considering the type of intervention to put into place the first major decision was whether to do an individual token economy or whole-class token economy. Ultimately the whole-class token economy was chosen because the classroom already has an individual token economy and it was not effective for everyone. There are multiple types of whole-class token economies which was part of the reason why not just one was chosen. A combination of multiple strategies allowed for some consistency with the old strategy, but also made it so the students' behavior status "reset" multiple times a day. This allowed students to not get stuck in a rut of negative behavior where they felt as though they could not fix their day.

One overlooked strategy that was employed by the teacher is praise (Shook, 2012). Students received a desired reward if they were on a positive color at the end of a time interval, but the teacher also used praise as a main classroom management strategy to encourage positive behavior. One example of praise that students received was getting their pin moved up to blue. This pin placement came with no additional reward, but intrinsically motivated all students to consistently improve their behavior. Despite praise being such a positive motivator it was not believed that praise could fully regulate student behavior. As a result of this, the formal intervention was put into place to extrinsically motivate the students. Also, due to the nature of this study there could not be a control group and a test group. Therefore, an interrupted time-series design was chosen to include all students in the class in the intervention.

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Research Setting

This research study occurred in a diverse preschool classroom at a small private school located on Lake Erie. For the purpose of this research the school will be referred to as Lake Erie Private School. Participants were purposively sampled based on the needs of the classroom teacher. Criteria that had to be met by the students were that they were:

- Attending Lake Erie Private School full-time
- In the pre-kindergarten class
- Between the ages of four and five

The school has a school population of 59 students in grades Nursery-3 (three year old) through 12Th grade. The fourth-twelfth grades are all in one classroom. Among this school population 81% of students are Caucasian, 8% are Hispanic, 6% of students are Black or African American, and 5% are Asian. In the preschool classroom used in this study there are 14 students, 10 girls and four boys. The race/ethnicity of the students in the class are 81% Caucasian, 9% Hispanic, 2% Black (not African American), and 8% Asian. The classroom management system previously used was a color system with warning cards in place, but it proved ineffective for all students. Oftentimes teachers struggle to find a classroom management strategy that is effective among heterogeneous populations. My study examined the effectiveness of multiple class-wide intervention management strategies turned into one. The classroom strategy implemented was a combination of the color system, level system, and class token economy.

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Data Collection Procedures

The implementation of a positive classroom management strategy sets the groundwork for future success. The intervention that was implemented was reward based as students in the preschool classroom, like most preschoolers, were reward motivated. The planned strategy for implementation was a modified version of the color system that is already in place. Students started with their clothespin on green. During each scheduled subject (morning work, rug activities, independent work, free play/center time, read aloud, lunch/recess, afternoon activity) the students had the opportunity to have their pins moved up to a more positive color (blue), stay on green, or get their pins moved down to yellow. If the students kept their pins on green or had it moved up to blue they received a desired reward. Once the desired reward was given students pins reset to green. The day prior to the class-wide intervention being implemented the classroom teacher recorded data using a behavioral monitoring tracking chart that recorded when disruptive or negative behavior occurred during a time interval. All data for this classroom management intervention was acquired through observation. Once the intervention was implemented two non-classroom teachers observed multiple time intervals using a behavioral monitoring tracking chart and anecdotal notes. The anecdotal notes were used by the researcher-teacher to understand what types of activities or discussion was going on when students displayed a certain behavior. For example, when Student 1 was observed as not doing her work it was noted by the observers how many warnings she had received before she was moved to yellow. The behavioral monitoring tracking charts and anecdotal notes recorded data when disruptive, distracted, or negative behavior occurred as well as positive or negative color changes. All data were taken through unbiased observation. Sets of data were taken the day

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following the implementation of the intervention, one week after the intervention was in place, and one month after the intervention was in place. The intention of the data was to show whether or not the class-wide intervention was effective for all students and whether it was consistent over time.

Data were collected multiple times to show the effectiveness of the intervention compared to the previous classroom management strategy in effect. I assigned each student a number (1-14) to keep their identity confidential. On the data sheet the numbers were listed along with the three behavior categories being tracked as well as a category indicating whether or not a color change was received. If a student displayed disruptive behavior, negative, or distracted behavior or received a color change a tally was recorded in the appropriate column next to their name. The data would be compiled to show how often disruptive, negative, or distracted behavior occurred during an activity interval. Once the data was compiled for all four sessions a visual graph was created to show any patterns. During this intervention some students were absent during observation times. These absences were noted in the tables located in the results section of this thesis.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to reveal what was happening when the behavior was occurring, I used the anecdotal field notes that I recorded during observations. Researchers believe that, "...the open-ended nature of anecdotal records allows teachers to record the rich detail available in most observations" (Nathenson-Mejia and Rhodes, 1992, p. 502). The anecdotal notes allowed detailed data to be taken on the various behaviors occurring in the classroom such as whether the disruptive behavior was calling out with an unrelated topic or interrupting the teacher or

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other classmates. This data was used to better analyze the types of behavior that caused disruption in the classroom and how the teacher reacted to the disruptions. Therefore, the researcher was able to make minor adjustments to the intervention to make it more effective. One of these adjustments was generate a three warning limit about a behavior before a student received a color change.

Conclusions

Positive, effective classroom management strategies must be tried and implemented to ensure that new teachers stay in the field. Voke states in his research that, “Difficulties with student discipline are one of the reasons up to 20% of new teachers leave the teaching profession within 1 year and 42% within the first 5 years” (as cited in Shook, 2012, p. 129). An effective classroom management strategy allows for positive classroom discipline and allows students the chance to focus and succeed not only cognitively, but socially and emotionally as well. In the following chapter I will report the significant results from my mixed methods research study on the effectiveness of a classwide intervention strategy to eliminate negative and disruptive behavior in the preschool classroom.

Chapter 4 – Results

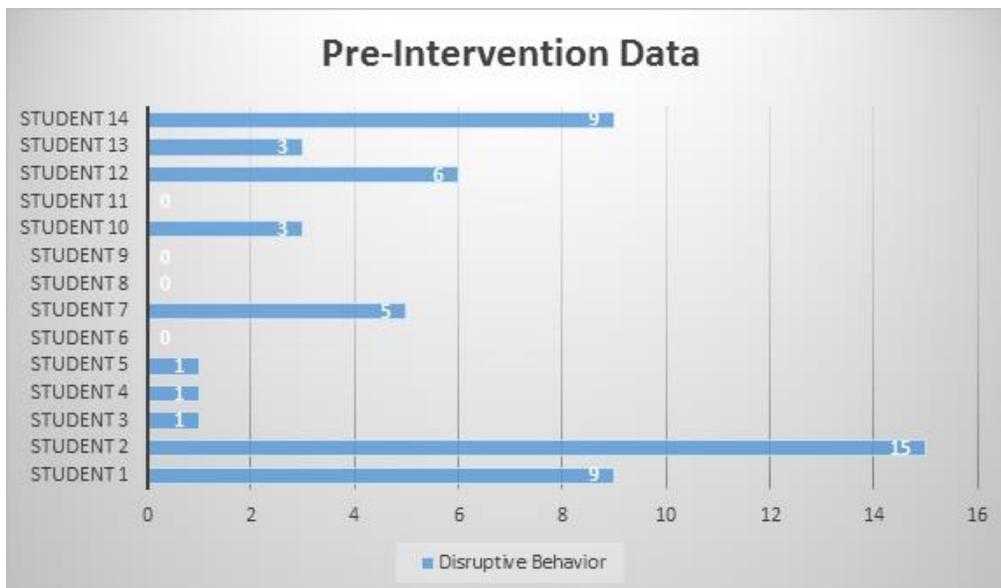
In the previous chapter the methods used to conduct this intervention were discussed. The results of this intervention are stated hereafter. This intervention came about as a result of extremely negative and disruptive behaviors in this particular preschool classroom. The teacher reported that the students often engaged in disruptive, negative, or distracted behavior, especially during their circle time and seatwork. Prior to this intervention the teacher had a color system in place that reset at the beginning of each day. Students remained on green (a positive color) or have their color moved to yellow, orange, or blue. Each color had a more extreme consequence associated with it such as loss of recess, note/call home, or sent to the principal's office. Students were able to earn their way back to a positive color if they changed their behavior and then displayed continuous positive behavior. The students also had three warning cards and once these were gone they could not be earned back. The teacher felt that a behavioral plan intervention was necessary in order for students to learn to regulate their behavior as the current system in place was not effective. In the following chapter I will detail the significant results from this intervention and its effectiveness in this preschool classroom.

For this study I decided that data would be taken on the disruptive behavior, negative behavior, and distracted behavior that students displayed during their circle time and seat work. Data was also recorded when a student received a positive or negative color change. The students all began with their pins on green and during an allotted time period such as circle time or seat work they could have their pin moved up to blue, stay on green, or move down to yellow, depending on their exhibited behaviors. When students' pins were on blue or green, they received a class-wide reward. The intervention had every student reset to green 6 times

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throughout the day. The reason behind the reset was that the previous system had revealed that students rarely earned their way back to a positive color.

The day prior to the beginning of the intervention, the teacher-researcher took data on any disruptive behavior, negative behavior, or distracted behavior that was displayed during circle time. The day prior to the start of the intervention the teacher recorded that the students displayed 57 instances of disruptive behavior in a 30-minute time period. The teacher-researcher did not note any instances of negative or distracted behavior during this time period. Disruptive behavior is students calling out or interrupting and being generally disruptive. Negative behavior is classified as throwing a temper tantrum. Distracted behavior focused on whether or not the student was engaged in the lesson. Out of the 14 students in the class, four students did not display any disruptive, negative, or distracted behavior and had their pins moved up. During the 30-minute circle time period Student 1 and Student 14 both were marked as displaying disruptive behavior 9 times each, and Student 2 was marked as displaying disruptive behavior 15 times. Table One shows the pre-intervention data recorded by the classroom teacher-researcher.



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Upon the implementation of the intervention, two independent observers came to record behavioral data the day following the implementation of the new intervention plan, one week following the implementation of the behavior plan, and one month following the implementation of the intervention plan. The teacher-researcher was also present. Data was recorded during the students' circle time and seat-work portions of the day. The data showed that students' disruptive behavior decreased by approximately 91% during circle time and 63% during seat-work. There were also no negative color changes during these time periods on this day. Tables 1-4 show the data for Day 1 following the intervention implementation.

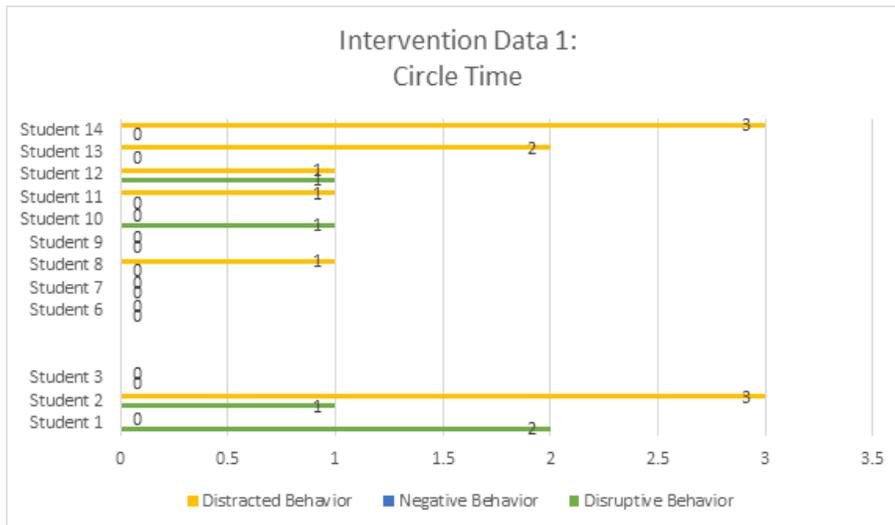


Table One; Students 4 & 5 absent

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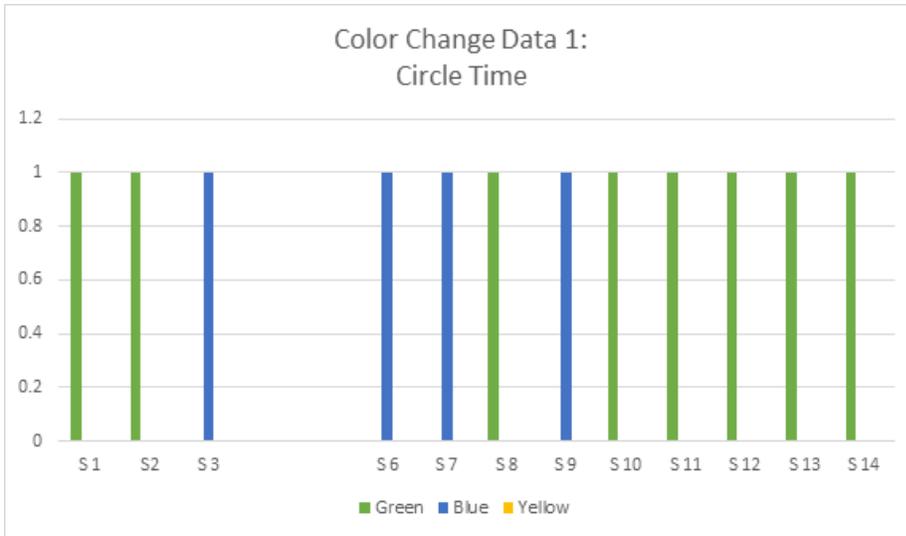


Table Two; Students 4 & 5 absent

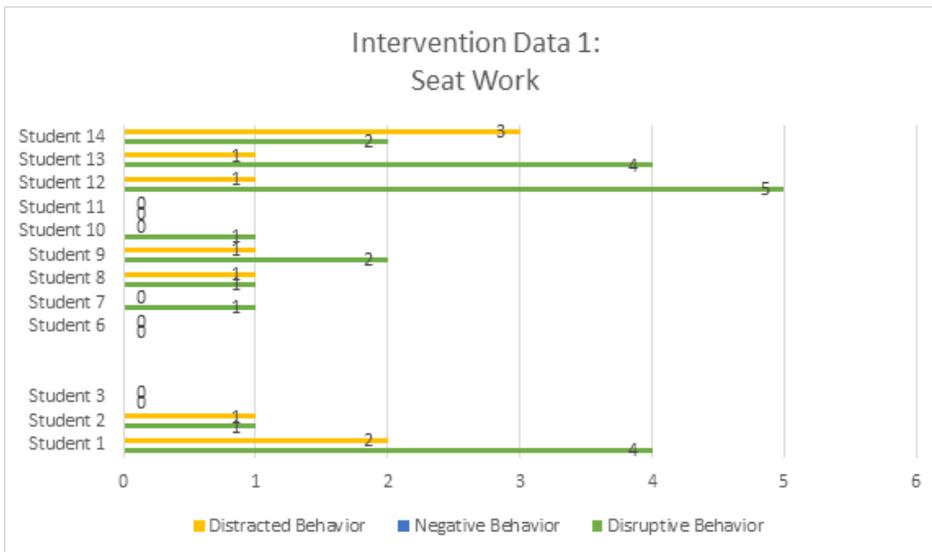


Table Three; Students 4 & 5 absent

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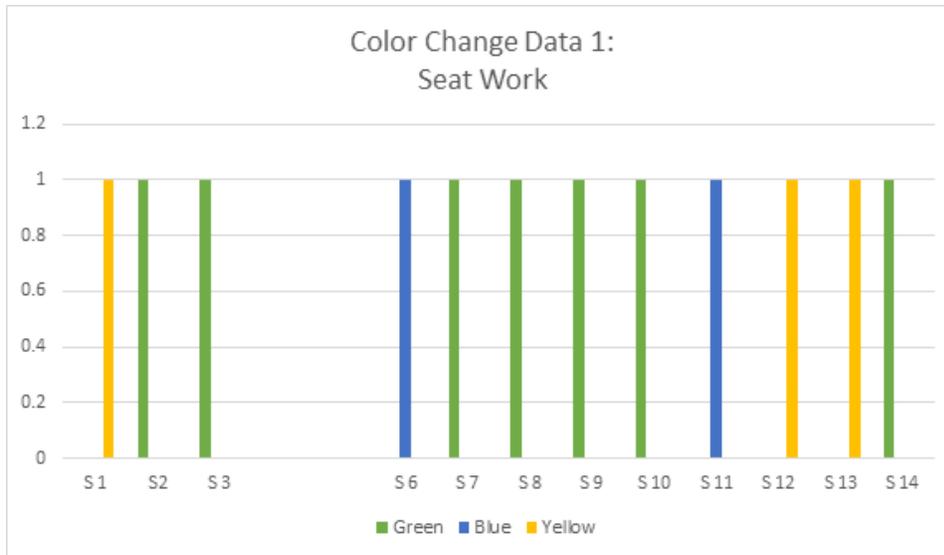


Table Four; Students 4 & 5 absent

After approximately one week, the two independent observers returned to the classroom to record data during circle time and seat work. The data revealed that students' disruptive behavior increased during the circle time portion, but that their distracted behavior decreased. During the seat-work portion of the day the students' disruptive behavior decreased significantly; however, their distracted behavior increased slightly. Compared to their pre-intervention numbers, students distracted behavior decreased by 84% during circle time and 87% during seat work. Tables 5-8 show the data for one week following the implementation of the intervention.

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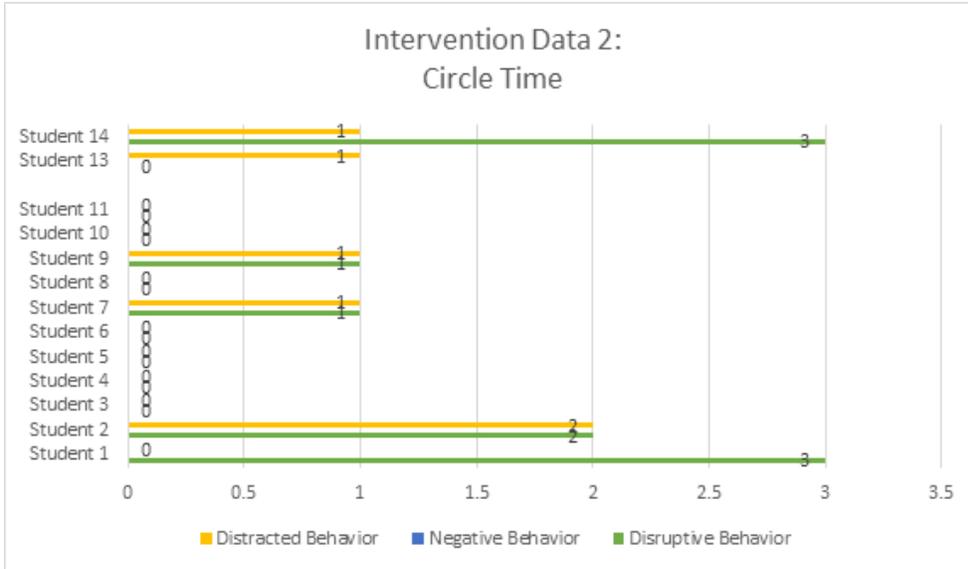


Table 5; Student 12 absent

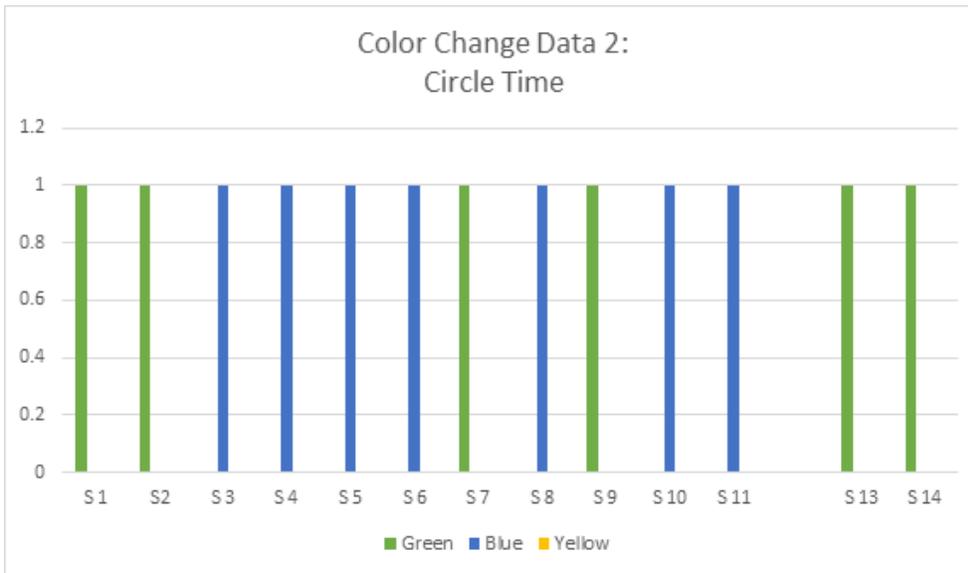


Table 6; Student 12 absent

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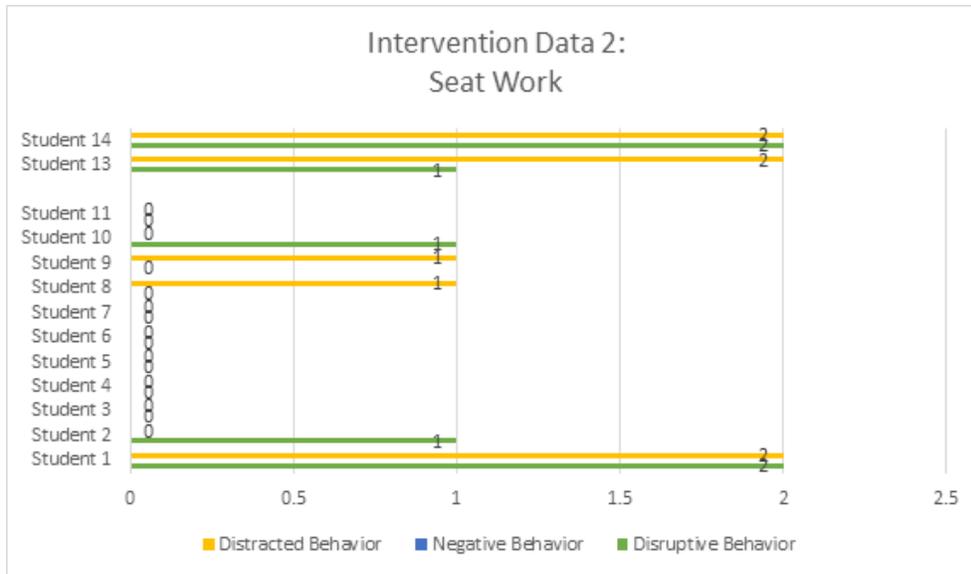


Table 7; Student 12 absent

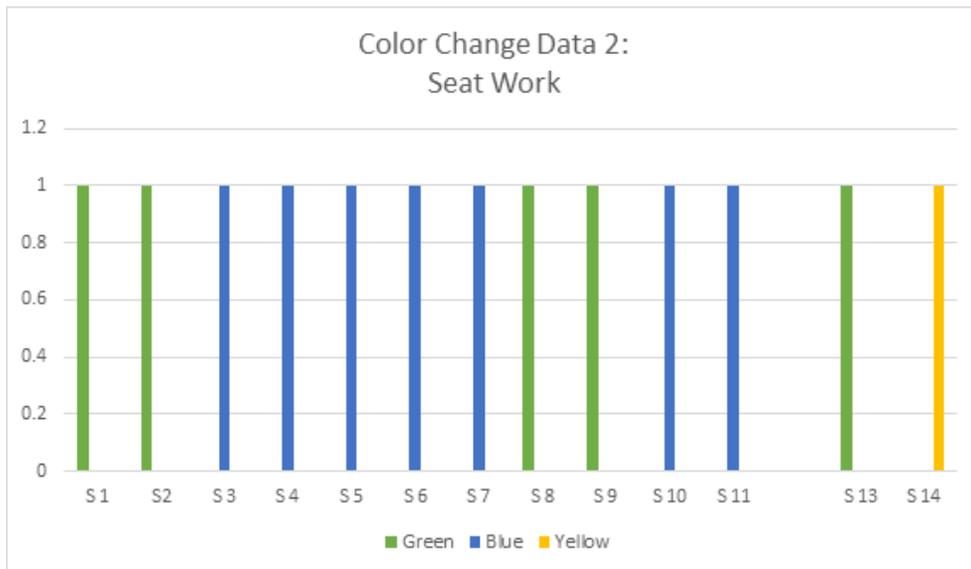


Table 8; Student 12 absent

One month after the implementation of the intervention, the two independent observers came in one last time to record data on disruptive, negative, and distracted behavior as well as any color changes that occurred. The data revealed that the total amount of disruptive and distracted behavior displayed by students decreased during both circle time and seat-work. Compared with their pre-intervention numbers, students' disruptive behavior decreased by 93%

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during circle time and 98% during seat-work. Tables 9-12 show the data for one month following the implementation of the intervention.

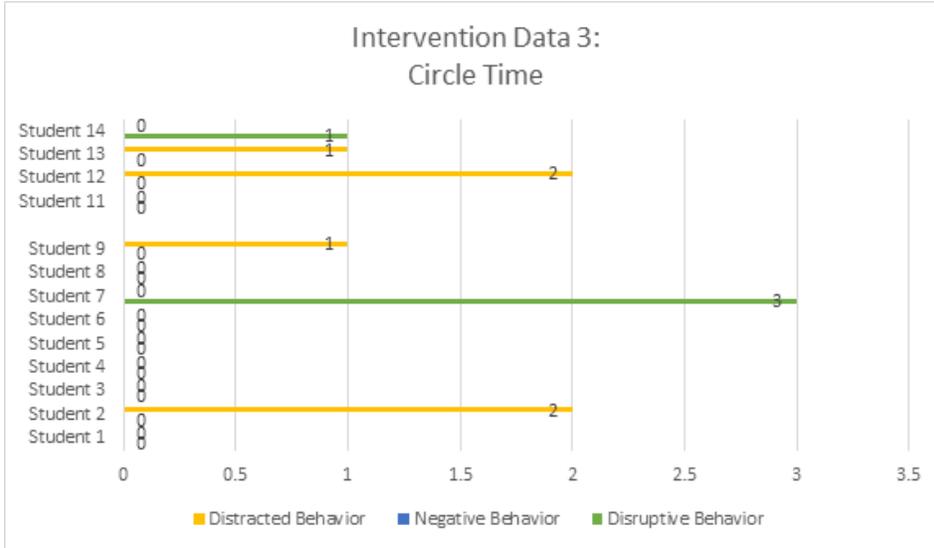


Table 9; Student 10 absent

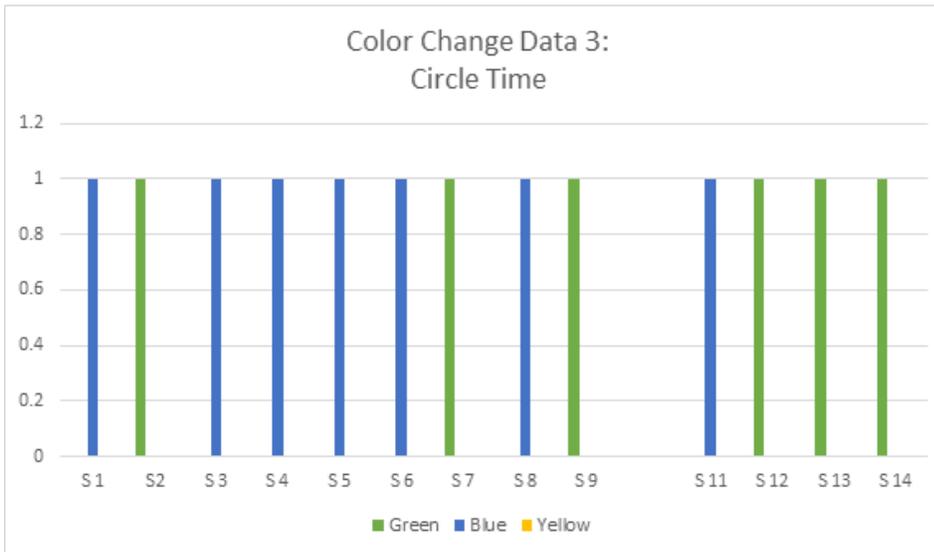


Table 10; Student 10 absent

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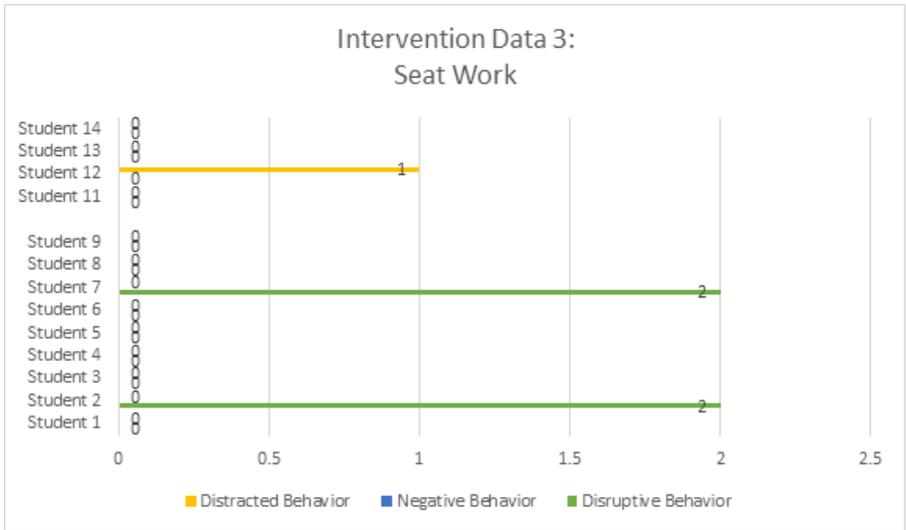


Table 11; Student 10 absent

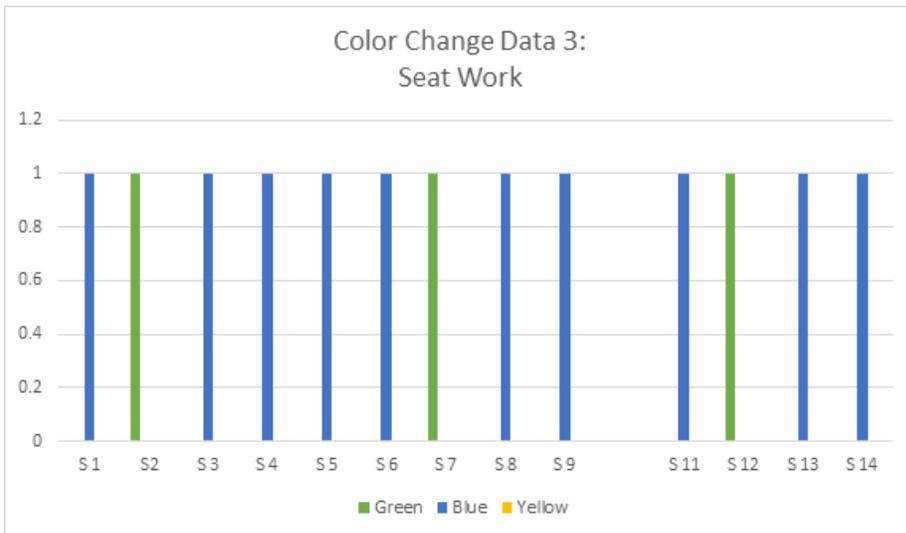


Table 12; Student 10 absent

When comparing the pre-intervention data with the data from one month following the implementation of the intervention, the results show that students went from displaying disruptive behavior 57 times in a 30-minute period to two separate instances of four counts of disruptive behavior in 30 minute time periods. It is the belief of this researcher that based on this data the class-wide intervention to eliminate disruptive and negative behavior in the preschool classroom was a success.

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In the following chapter the results and limitations of this study will be discussed in more detail.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

In the previous chapters of this thesis, the research behind classwide intervention was discussed as well as the methodology and results of the intervention that was implemented by this researcher. The results in the previous chapter showed significant positive change to students' disruptive and distracted behavior. In this chapter, I will discuss these results in more detail and go over any limitations to this research study.

Implications

The current results of this intervention showed that a classwide behavior incentive program was an effective way to reduce and in some cases eliminate disruptive and negative behavior in the preschool classroom. Prior to the implementation of the classwide behavior intervention, the classroom teacher reported that students frequently displayed disruptive behavior in the form of interrupting, talking over one another, and calling out. The teacher also reported that it was not uncommon for students to display negative behaviors in the form of temper tantrums.

When the classwide incentive intervention replaced the individual incentive the students' number of disruptive behaviors decreased from 57 instances to four instances. These numbers showed a 93% reduction in disruptive behavior in a 30 minute time period. These findings were very consistent with previous research that found that, when classwide intervention approaches were implemented, they can: (a) reduce inappropriate behaviors (Bernard, et al., 2004; Unlu, et al., 2014; Carter & Norman, 2010; Camacho, et al., 2014), (b) prevent disruptive behaviors (Cihak, Kirk, & Boon, 2009; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Lewis-Palmer, Merrell, & Reinke, 2008; , and (c) increase self-management (Bernard, et al., 2004; Hoff & Ervin, 2013; Kern &

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Dunlap, 1994). Throughout this intervention the teacher felt as though it was somewhat time consuming to reward the students 6 times a day, but that it was an effective intervention at reducing negative and disruptive behaviors. Students seemed to be very motivated by the reward system and the data showed that the student's behavior greatly improved.

Prior to the implementation of this intervention, students were given the opportunity to choose a prize from the prize box after approximately a week of displaying positive behaviors. The positive behavior was determined by a consistent performance on the "green" level as opposed to moving to a negative color level (e.g., "yellow," "blue," or "red"). The colors reset at the start of each day, and students could earn their way back to a positive color. However, this rarely occurred.

After the implementation of the classwide behavior intervention plan, students were able to receive a desired reward up to 6 times a day. The students were also able to move up to a positive color level ("blue") if their behavior was especially great, or get their pins moved to "yellow" level if they needed to fix their behavior. Unlike the previous behavior intervention plan, students' colors were reset multiple times a day to allow for optimal behavior improvement and therefore students were able to stay out of the negative behavior rut. Furthermore, the teacher found that even though this system is somewhat intrusive on the day, once she had established a routine of giving out class rewards, she found that the benefits outweighed the inconvenience.

Limitations

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The results of the study were very positive and showed that a classwide approach to behavior management was an effective way to eliminate negative and disruptive behavior in the preschool classroom. However, there were some limitations to this study that need to be considered when interpreting these results. The first limitation in this study was that this intervention was only conducted with one group of 14 students. Though this intervention was successful with this particular group of students, that does not mean it will be successful with all preschool students. This study was also conducted in one geographic location and was not implemented in various locations. The data collected for this intervention allowed for results for the first month of this intervention. It is possible that the results could change as time moves forward.

Future Research

There is a lot more that can be done with this classwide behavioral intervention. Further research on this topic should include other geographic locations and classes. The data from the intervention should also be collected over an extended period of time. First, it would be beneficial to assess whether this intervention would be as successful with other grade levels and a more diverse population of students. It would also be beneficial to know whether or not the teacher chose to continue using this intervention after it was no longer a part of this principal investigation. Considering that students were receiving the same rewards almost daily it would also be important to learn whether students get bored with this system over time. Though this intervention was successful for this group of students, the questions that are unable to be answered at this time allow for other researchers to look further into this type of intervention and examine how it works across the board. Second, there were some absences during this

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intervention that could have resulted in different results had all of the students been present. Further research might choose to only focus on students who are present for 100% of the intervention on data collection days.

Conclusions

This study added to previous research on a classwide approach to behavioral interventions. The present study looked at the effect of a classwide approach to behavioral interventions to eliminate negative and disruptive behavior in the preschool classroom. The classroom research setting was in a small, urban school off of Lake Erie. The present results of this intervention were that a classwide behavior intervention was successful in eliminating much of the negative and disruptive behavior in some students and also reduced the amount of negative and disruptive behavior that some students displayed. As a result of this intervention, the students overall behavior improved which also improved the overall class environment and made it more positive. Students genuinely enjoyed the opportunities they were given to earn rewards and began to attempt to earn their pin onto the blue “Doing Great!” option though there was no additional reward.

Due to the success of this intervention it is believed by this researcher that a classwide behavioral intervention plan is an effective addition to the educational field. In this researcher’s experience, a classwide approach to behavior management is rarely instituted. Students are often working toward individual goals and/or are not given enough opportunities to be motivated to change their behavior. In this specific classwide intervention, students were automatically reset to a positive color multiple times throughout the day to give them the optimal positive learning environment. The positive effects of this system were seen in the classwide intervention plan

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that was implemented by this researcher-teacher. The previously implemented individual behavior plan did not have students improving their behavior throughout the day and was not motivating enough for students to want to change their behavior. With a classwide system students are not only more motivated for themselves, but they are motivated for their peers as well because they are aware of how one another is doing. Further research on classwide interventions is incredibly necessary and I believe classwide interventions should be taught as a positive alternative to individual behavior systems in higher education settings. The results of the implementation of classwide systems were dramatic in the case of this intervention and I believe only positive results can come from implementing this type of system in other classrooms as well.

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Appendix A

Behavior Tracking Chart

Date: _____ Time: _____

	Disruptive Behavior	Negative Behavior	Distracted Behavior	CC
1.				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

Distracted Behavior: Not paying attention but not disrupting. Has to be redirected.

Disruptive Behavior: Calling out off topic, interrupting, out of seat (without permission), etc.

Negative Behavior: Hurting others, defiance, temper tantrum

Directions: During each time interval put a check in the column of the student's number every time they display that behavior. If behavior is displayed after color change then circle the check marks.

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Appendix B

Dear Families,

As many of you know I am in the graduate study program at SUNY Fredonia. I am writing my thesis on “The Effectiveness of a Classroom-Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting”. Currently we have an individual-based classroom incentive program in place. Each child is rewarded individually once every couple of weeks to encourage positive behavior. After MUCH research on the best classroom management plan I truly believe a classroom-wide incentive program is the way to go.

The way this program would work is that each child would start the day on green. If positive behavior is displayed they would keep their color on green or get it moved up to blue (blue is a **positive color**). If disruptive or negative behavior is displayed they would move their color to yellow and would not be able to participate in the class reward. The day would be split into six time intervals and each child would have the opportunity to get rewarded for positive behavior seven times throughout the day. Previously your child would choose from the prize box. Instead of giving them an item reward they may instead be rewarded with a GoNoodle dance, first choice of a center, sticker, etc. Once that reward is given everybody’s color resets to green for the next portion of the day.

It is my strong belief that this incentive program will help to almost eliminate negative and disruptive behavior in the classroom which will result in a more peaceful, productive work environment for every student. If you have any questions about this change please feel free to contact me or see me before and after school.

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As a result of this being my thesis project data will be taken on the amount of negative or disruptive behavior that is displayed by students during a certain time period. All of this data will be kept confidential and no student name or the school's name will be used in the writing of this research project. Please sign the consent form and return it to school as soon as possible.

Once again, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you!

Amanda Tuggle

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: The Effectiveness of a Classroom-Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

To study the effectiveness of a classroom-wide incentive plan to eliminate disruptive behavior and noncompliance in the preschool classroom.

What your child be asked to do in the study:

To participate in a classroom management plan that is slightly different from the color system that they currently have in place.

Time Required:

Time required to participate in this study is at the discretion of the classroom teacher based on the effectiveness of the classroom management plan.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality:

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Your child's identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law.

Participant data will not be associated with the specific student by name.

Voluntary participation:

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time without consequence.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

This investigation will help to add to research on the effectiveness of a classroom-wide incentive plan to help eliminate disruptive and non-compliant behavior in the classroom. Your child's participation could improve their quality of learning. There are minimal risks associated with this study.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Amanda Tuggle

Email: amanda.tuggle@dunkirkcca.org

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

Dr. Judith Horowitz

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Research and Faculty Development

Maytum Hall 805

Judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu

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(716) 673-4708

**I have read the procedure outlined above. I voluntarily agree to
participate**

in this study and have received a copy of this description.

Participant's signature

Date

Principal investigator's signatures

Date

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Appendix C

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- Name: Amanda Tuggle (ID: 4385556)
- Email: tugg2317@fredonia.edu
- Institution Affiliation: SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- Institution Unit: Education- Curriculum and Instruction
- Phone: 7166798039

- Curriculum Group: Human Research
- Course Learner Group: Group 1
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

- Report ID: 14021454
- Completion Date: 11/25/2014
- Expiration Date: 11/25/2016
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score*: 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED
Introduction (ID: 757)	09/13/14
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	09/13/14
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	09/13/14
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	09/13/14
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	09/20/14
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	09/20/14
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	11/25/14
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	11/25/14
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	11/25/14
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	11/25/14
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	11/25/14
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	11/26/14
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives (ID: 14060)	11/26/14
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	11/26/14
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	11/26/14
SUNY Fredonia State College (ID: 587)	11/26/14

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citisupport@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citi-program.org>

Appendix D

Project Name – The Effectiveness of a Classroom-Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting

Requested Information

A. Purpose, Research Variables, and Population:

1. Principal Investigator – Amanda Tuggle

- Central Christian Academy: Preschool Teacher
- B.S. in Education
- Current Curriculum & Instruction graduate student studying at the State

University of

New York at Fredonia

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Robert L. Dahlgren

- Chair/Associate Professor - Social Studies Education (Curriculum & Instruction)
- Ph.D. (2008) Social Studies Education (University of Florida)
- M.A.T. (1997) Social Studies Education (Simmons College)
- M.A. (1990) History (Boston University)
 - B.S. Journalism (1986) Minor in History (Boston University)

(see attached cv)

1. Purpose of the study –

The proposed study combines multiple classroom management strategies into one classroom management behavior plan. This study will examine the effectiveness of a classroom-wide management plan to eliminate non-compliance and negative behavior in the preschool classroom. Research has shown that classroom-wide behavior incentive programs are just as effective as individual-incentive behavior programs (Hoff and Ervin, 2013). As a result of classroom-wide incentive programs student's on-task behavior increased and while disruptive behavior decreased (Lannie and McCurdy, 2007). These programs can also be more cost effective for the teacher (Filcheck, McNeal, Greco, & Bernard, 2004).

3. Characteristics of the Study Participants -

- a. **Age Range** - Respondents will range in age from 4 to 5.
- b. **Sex** - The study will include both male and female respondents.
- c. **Number** - The study will include approximately fourteen participants.
- d. **Inclusion Criteria** - All preschool students will participate in this classroom management study.
- e. **Exclusion Criteria** - No preschool students will be excluded from participating

in the

classroom management study.

- f. **Vulnerable Subjects** – All participants in this study are considered vulnerable subjects because they are below the age of 18.

B. Methods and Procedures:

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1. Methods of Subject Selection -The investigator of this study will focus on findings from a purposeful sample of 14 preschool students. This diverse group of students is aimed to represent the larger pool of preschool students in classrooms across the United States. This sample includes both male and female participants with ages ranged between four and five. All participants are in the preschool class at Central Christian Academy in Dunkirk, NY. The criteria for participation in the study is:
 1. subjects must currently be enrolled in this specific preschool classroom
 2. subjects include male and female students
 3. subjects must agree to be part of the study
 4. subjects parents must sign a consent form

2. Study Site –

The students will participate in this classroom management behavior intervention in their preschool classroom at Central Christian Academy.

3. Methods and Procedures Applied to Human Subjects -

This research study will be a quantitative study. It is believed by this researcher that a quantitative study is the most effective way show whether or not this intervention is effective through the collection of data and a pre-determined survey. A teacher will observe during one of the five scheduled times and record data on any disruptive behavior that is observed during that time. The observational data will track student calling out, student off task behavior, and student non-participation. Another set of data will be taken the day after the intervention is put into a place, a week after it is put into place, and a month after it is put into place to examine its effectiveness. This data will show whether or not the classroom management intervention is effective for all students and whether it is consistent over time. All data for this classroom management intervention will be acquired through observation. The classroom teacher will also complete a survey detailing whether or not they felt the classroom management intervention was effective. All questions and answer options will be pre-determined.

C. Risks/Benefits:

1. Potential Risks –

Participation in this study has minimal risk.

2. Protection Against Risks –

The data recorded on student behavior will not detail specific student information. Any data on negative behavior that is exhibited will be specified under their assigned letter name not their legal name to protect confidentiality.

3. Potential Benefits -

This investigation will add to the growing research on effective classroom management strategies and the effectiveness of a classroom-wide incentive system as opposed to an individual incentive system, thus improving the educational field's resources for classroom management. This investigation has the potential to provide classroom teachers with a cost-effective behavior management plan. This investigation also has the potential to allow for more optimal learning by students without distraction by disruptive behavior.

4. Compensation for Participation –

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Participation in this study is completely voluntary and no means of compensation will be given.

5. Alternatives to Participation -

Participation in the proposed study is on a voluntary basis. Thus, there are no alternatives to participation in the study that would be advantageous to those participating in the proposed study.

6. Information Withheld -

There is no information within the proposed study that will be withheld from the study participants.

7. Debriefing -

There is no plan within the proposed study for debriefing, however participants will have the opportunity to go over the data in an age-appropriate way with the classroom teacher.

D. Confidentiality:

The researcher is committed to the ethical requirements common to the field of social research, including the protection of study participants' confidentiality. Students will never be referred to by name, but instead by an assigned letter (i.e. Student A, Student B, etc).

E. Copy of Consent Form:

The attached informed consent form will be provided to participants at the time the questionnaires are distributed. Participation is entire voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any point. (See attached informed consent form.)

Principal Investigator's Signature

I approve this protocol for submission to the Research Foundation:

Department Chair

Date

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: The Effectiveness of a Classroom-Wide Incentive Program to Eliminate Disruptive and Negative Behavior in the Preschool Setting

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

To study the effectiveness of a classroom-wide incentive plan to eliminate disruptive behavior and noncompliance in the preschool classroom.

What your child be asked to do in the study:

To participate in a classroom management plan that is slightly different from the color system that they currently have in place.

Time Required:

CLASSWIDE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION

Time required to participate in this study is at the discretion of the classroom teacher based on the effectiveness of the classroom management plan.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality:

Your child's identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law. Participant data will not be associated with the specific student by name.

Voluntary participation:

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time without consequence.

Potential Benefits and Risks:

This investigation will help to add to research on the effectiveness of a classroom-wide incentive plan to help eliminate disruptive and non-compliant behavior in the classroom. Your child's participation could improve their quality of learning. There are minimal risks associated with this study.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Amanda Tuggle
Email: amanda.tuggle@dunkirkcca.org

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

Dr. Judith Horowitz

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Research and Faculty Development
Maytum Hall 805
Judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu
(716) 673-4708

I have read the procedure outlined above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this description.

Participant's signature

Date

Principal investigator's signatures

Date