

Masters Capstone Project


**A Points System and Its Impact on Student Behaviors**


Javone McClelland

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Submitted by  6/4/2020  
Javone McClelland Date

Approved by  6/4/2020  
Charlotte Cochran, Ph.D. Date

Approved by  6/4/2020  
Vicki Butler, Ed.D. Date

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**Abstract**

Negative classroom behaviors can affect not only the learning of the child exhibiting the behaviors, but they can disrupt the learning of other children in the classroom. Creating a points system to manage negative behaviors in class can contribute to a successful learning environment for all students. The participants included 24 students in third and fifth grades who received special education services in the school's resource room. The researcher found that introducing a points system decreased negative and unwanted behaviors and increased positive and wanted behaviors in the classroom.

### **Introduction**

Classroom management is an essential part of creating a successful learning environment for students, and an important part of maintaining a healthy environment for teachers. Evertson (2006) indicated that effective classroom management improves student behavior. Improved student behavior can allow for a classroom environment that promotes learning.

There are several ways to manage a classroom that can be as simple as a seating arrangement, and as complex as a reward system. Implementing a reward system takes time and knowledge of the students to increase the success of the system. This can only happen when a teacher connects with his or her students. Davis (2003) suggested that student-teacher relationships influence student's social and intellectual development throughout their entire school careers.

Reward systems require a reinforcer that motivates the students to change their current behaviors. Students will be rewarded for the positive behaviors, which then will encourage them to continue with these behaviors in order to receive more rewards and/or positive feedback. With this increase of positive behaviors, the idea is that negative behaviors will decrease.

### **Dilemma**

Ineffective classroom management can lead to disruptive behaviors such as students coming to class with an elevated voice, not getting immediately started on the work assigned to them, engaging in off task behaviors throughout the day and during work time, interjecting answers instead of raising a hand and waiting to be acknowledged, being disrespectful towards the teacher and/or classmates, and not completing assigned work. These problems manifested when students had a long period of time away from school during winter break. Disruptive

behaviors in a classroom are a problem because they take time away from academic learning for the entire class.

### **Rationale**

Properly managing a class is extremely important for the success of student learning. Learning is critical, of course, in an educational setting. However, if a teacher is not successful with classroom management, the ability to maximize academic learning will often be compromised. Teachers must use the connections and knowledge they have of their students to create an atmosphere within their classroom that promotes learning. To accomplish this, behaviors need to be managed so that the focus is primarily on academics. Higgs (2014) stated that when there are no physical luxuries, there are still bonds that can be shared with one another that bring joy to a child; to form this bond with students will allow the teacher to reach them forever.

### **Literature Review**

Classroom management may include class jobs, rules, routines, expectations, daily schedules, alphabetical line up practices, and group work. Classroom management can sometimes focus on behavior alone. Managing classroom behaviors can look different in each class. If a teacher cannot get his or her class to have good classroom behavior, the learning environment will be disrupted. Finding a strategy that works for the entire class can prove difficult. Children are all different in the way they learn and behave, so while a teaching strategy may work for some, that same strategy may not work for others (Braver, 2010). It's important for teachers to prepare their classrooms and their strategies to be as flexible and accommodating to the most difficult scenarios. If a teacher begins the school year with a negative outlook on his

or her class or specific students who may have behavioral challenges, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is no longer present (Aloe, 2013).

Aloe (2013) stated that TSE is the belief that a teacher is able to teach the most difficult, unmotivated students, and guide them to learn. Having this ability takes patience, effort, and confidence to not only believe in yourself, but to try new strategies when others do not work. The school year must begin with a clear plan on how the class will be managed. Although teachers cannot predict how every student is going to behave or react to certain environments and teaching strategies, they can control how they react to the behaviors.

Aloe (2013) mentioned, teachers must be strong leaders when managing behaviors, instruction and any student concerns that arise. Teachers must have effective classroom management strategies, classroom rules and routines, as well as procedures to deter inappropriate or off task behavior (Aloe, 2013). Many teachers take the approach of using positivity to manage classroom behaviors.

### **Positivity**

Positivity in a classroom setting can be anything from frequent verbal praise, kindness circles where students share something nice about the person next to them, and/or nonverbal praise. There are various strategies that can be used to keep a classroom positive, as well as areas outside of the classroom. Wheatley (2009), used differential reinforcement by a praise note system. The intervention focused on behaviors not only seen in the classroom but also the common areas such as, hallways, lunchrooms, playgrounds, and buses or bus lines. These areas are a concern for many schools because there are few adults supervising large groups of students.

Wheatley (2009), stated that misbehaviors in common areas account for approximately one-half of all problem behaviors in schools. If in class behavior is only part of the problem,

students need a behavior system that can also apply to them when they are out of the class.

Scott (2017) mentioned a similar strategy of differential reinforcement; one without Praise Notes. Teachers can use this strategy to acknowledge students when they behave correctly, and ignore them when they do not. Much like the Praise Note System where teachers were instructed to reward students who displayed appropriate behaviors by presenting them with a Praise Note, accompanied by specific, verbal praise; negative behaviors were not acknowledged (Wheatley, 2009). Differential reinforcement uses the application of reinforcement and extinction to gear the student toward the desired behavior with reinforcements, while the undesired behavior diminishes.

Mah (2007) made an important point, “without praise as a reward, why should a child continue to make good choices?” (p.76). Children must be taught to understand the importance of making good choices both when a teacher is watching, and when they are on their own outside of the classroom (Mah, 2007). In a similar study, Marshall (1998) said recognition, acknowledgements, and validations are more satisfying rewards to children than a praise. Wheatley (2009), used the Praise Note system to offer specific praises that recognize a desired behavior, as well as acknowledge these students by displaying their achievements in the main hallway.

Understanding why children behave a certain way, is an important part of managing behavior in class. Piaget’s four stages of cognitive development thoroughly discuss children in every stage of their life (Cherry, 2009). To diminish behaviors that cannot be dealt with by praising or acknowledgement, you must first understand why the behaviors are occurring.

## **What Causes Behavior**

According to Piaget, child development occurs in four stages: The Sensorimotor stage is birth through ages 18-24 months, the Preoperational stage is toddlerhood (18-24 months) through early childhood (age 7), the Concrete Operational stage is ages 7 to 12, and the Formal Operational stage is adolescence through adulthood (as cited in Cherry, 2009). It is important for teachers to know and understand these stages, so they can comprehend the way students are thinking, the way they are, and how these stages are developing behaviorally.

One way to determine why a behavior is occurring, is to find the antecedent of the behavior. The antecedent of a behavior is the act that comes prior to the behavior (Dunlap, 2010); for example: before a child runs out of the classroom, he first clenches his fists and grunts out of anger. A teacher now can see the clenched fists and hear the grunt, and know that eloping is precedent. These interventions can vary from giving choices, pre-session attention, and enriching the environment (Hansen, 2015).

Scott (2017) explained the intervention of giving choices: providing students with two equal options, one being the original task they were asked to do, and the other being of different, yet equally important, qualities allows for the student to feel in control of their choices while still fulfilling the requirements of the original task. Aside from what precedes the behaviors, there is also the concern of how trauma, violence, cultural and racial differences, and low-income affects behaviors.

## **Socioeconomic Status**

Qi (2003) stated that children coming from low socioeconomic status (SES) are found to have higher incidences of behavior problems. Hinze-Pifer (2017) stated that one in four Chicago Public School student's experiences murder within a few blocks from their home. These same

students begin to have an extreme decline in their attendance from schools that are lacking safety (Hinze-Pifer, 2017).

Unfortunately, low-income families that are living in poverty have more than violence in common. “Thirty-Nine percent of African-American children and 33 percent of Latino children are living in poverty, which is more than double the poverty rate for non-Latino, White, and Asian children” (Casey, 2019, p. 1). These statistics represent a correlation between poverty, race, and behavior problems (Casey, 2019).

Dealing with behavior in children who come from low SES, have experienced trauma or violence, or who are culturally and racially different than the majority, can prove difficult. Brown (2008) listed three important steps for children recovering from severe trauma, one of the steps pertains to establishing a safe environment for the child. Hinze-Pifer (2017) said the same for children who have witnessed or experienced violence in their life; when they feel that their school is a safe environment their attendance rises.

Making a child feel safe at school can constitute many different strategies, Evertson (2006) listed some helpful basic behavioral operations that can be used as discipline tactics for teachers, positive reinforcement (PR) being one. PR encourages good behavior by giving a stimulus (reward) to the student when they do something that was asked of them. Ryan (2018), stated that the use of positive reinforcement has been effective in increasing appropriate behavior.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

According to Ackerman (2020), positive reinforcement refers to the introduction of a desired stimulus after the desired behavior is seen. The idea is that the stimulus will reinforce the desired behavior to assure that it will occur more often. With the desired behavior increasing

with reinforcement, the undesired behavior will eventually diminish (Ackerman, 2020). There are many types of positive reinforcements that can be used with children.

Ryan (2018) stated that teachers in elementary and/or special education schools have used the classroom point system as a positive reinforcement, which consists of expectations for desired student behavior. Schappe (1997) said there are many studies and child psychologists that tell us for the best results in student behavior, we need to communicate to children what is expected of them and then reward them when they do it. Rewarding a child for a desired behavior, encourages them to continue on with this behavior (Schappe, 1997). A points system rewards children for their positive behaviors, and allows them to earn their points individually (Ryan, 2018).

Students are unique both academically and socially. Because of this, students behave differently and are driven by different reinforcers and rewards. "It is a ubiquitous fact that individuals differ from each other both psychologically and biologically" (Braver, 2010, p. 1). Offering students a chance to individually earn rewards gives them the opportunity to be responsible for their own behaviors. The rewards should encourage them to avoid behaviors that are not conducive to learning.

According to Reppe (2013) positive reinforcement has not only shown improvement in children's problem behaviors in the classroom, but it has also encouraged them to learn. Reppe (2013) also made a valid point that a teacher's praise should be individualized per student, since each child is different. A teacher needs to know his or her students well enough to give effective praise and appropriate positive reinforcers (Higgs, 2014).

As discussed above, behavior is a large part of classroom management, and along with this behavior, sometimes comes discipline (Rethinking Discipline, 2019). Various teachers

result to discipline when other strategies have failed. Especially when the behaviors they are seeing have become violent or disrupted the learning environment greatly.

### **Punishment and Consequences**

Kupchik (2016) said that over the past twenty years, schools have been punishing students in increasingly harsh ways which is pushing schools to be more like prisons rather than a safe environment for children. Perry (2014) argued that excessive exclusionary punishment has collateral consequences for the academic success of all students. For the children living in violent neighborhoods, witnessing murder a few blocks from their home, harsh punishment may be a trigger (Hinze-Pifer, 2017).

Schools now have police officers, security guards, cameras, and metal detectors; “The criminal justice system is now a real part of our educational system” (Kupchik, 2016, p. 5). A school in Birmingham, Alabama, uses pepper spray as a deterrent for negative behavior (Kupchik, 2016). Perry (2014) said that these extreme punishments will increase the likelihood that misbehaving students will be removed from school, whether it be via expulsion, suspension, or juvenile detention.

Owen (2005) mentioned, corporal punishment is the use of physical force so that the child experiences pain but is not injured. The purpose is to correct or control a child’s behavior. The most common form of this punishment is to use a wooden paddle to spank a child (Owen, 2005). Although corporal punishment was banned in 31 states between the years of 1974 and 1994, it is still legal in 19 of our states (Gershoff, 2016).

Middleton (2008) mentioned that educators once believed that children would be motivated and interested in their work with the threat of punishment. If children were scared to be hit, they would behave in and out of class, simply out of fear. Much like Hinze-Pifer (2017)

said, students need to think of school as a safe place; especially if they are lacking the feeling of safety in their everyday lives. If children are scared to go home, and scared to go to school, that does not leave many options for them to rely on.

Owen (2005) linked childhood punishment and adult behavior. "...being abused as a child was associated with a heightened risk of committing crime as an adult" (Owen, 2005, p. 3). Piaget mentions in his stages of development how susceptible children can be to their environments. Some of these children grow up around violence, are punished at school and at home, and then are expected to behave afterwards, or be threatened with more violence. Adding in the overwhelming statistic of the majority of low SES families being Hispanic and African American (Hinze-Pifer, 2017); along with the statistic of African Americans making up 12% of the US population, and yet 33% of our prison population (Gramlich, 2019). As well as Hispanics making up 16% of our US population and yet 23% of our prison population (Gramlich, 2019). The options for these children drastically diminish.

Corporal Punishment was banned after it was realized how ineffective, and traumatizing it can be for children. Without it, school staff had to find other ways to manage their classrooms and their students without being physical. Teachers found ways to motivate their students, not by fear, but by what drives them.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is either intrinsic or extrinsic (Gordeeva, 2018). Intrinsic motivation is internal; it is what engages a child purely out of interest and enjoyment. Extrinsic motivation is external; what will children receive if they participate? Rewards, avoiding consequences, reaching personal goals and boosting your own self-worth all qualify for extrinsic motivators (Gordeeva, 2018, p. 20).

Gordeeva (2018) stated that both school climate and student motivation are associated with academic achievement. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) says “motivation refers to the reasons that underlie behavior” (Gordeeva, 2018. p. 20). If a teacher can find what motivates his/her students as individuals, or the class as a whole, academic achievement will occur.

Motivation can look different in children with disabilities.

Kim (2015) discussed children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), saying they may experience low levels of reward from social stimulants. Extrinsic motivation would not work well for these children; they need to feel reward from non-social stimuli (Kim, 2015, p. 2).

Łodygowska (2017) discovered that children with dyslexia have a constant feeling of failure at school. Motivation for these children solely relied on their support system at school, and their bonds with different staff members. Their motivation was driven by their success, and their success came from assistance from “principles of general didactics, methodology of teaching, special education–orthodidactics, and revalidation” (Łodygowska, 2017, p. 578). Teachers, who form bonds with their students, have a better chance of implementing effective classroom management strategies, and finding a motivator that works (Higgs, 2014).

### **Question**

How does creating a points system impact behavioral issues in class?

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to determine how creating a points system affects student behaviors. By offering students the opportunity to earn daily points, and to be able to turn these points in for rewards, students are encouraged to be responsible for their own behaviors.

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

The design for this study was qualitative action research. The researcher planned to implement a different classroom management strategy than the previous one used in the class. Then, track the behavior of the students to assess if they had improved from previous methods. The hope was for students undesired behaviors to decrease, while desired behaviors increased. Students were tracked daily for six specific behaviors, including: coming to group quietly, getting started immediately on assignments, remaining on task while working through the group, not interjecting answers but instead raising a hand and waiting to be acknowledged, being respectful (kind to others, listening to teacher), and completing work.

### **Context**

Participating students came from their general education classrooms into the resource room where they received special education services from the researcher. They came in small groups of 4-7 students, varying from 2nd to 5th grade. The school was an urban area located in the Pacific Northwest (PNW); it was a Title 1 school with 70% of students receiving free and reduced lunch. The participants came from a variety of demographic backgrounds to include age, race, ethnicity, and gender.

### **Participants**

Participants were chosen because they received academic and behavioral support from the researcher during her student teaching. The researcher worked with four groups of students throughout the day; however, the same 12 students rotated through the groups. One of the groups consisted of six 5th graders; two of who had one on one para-educators and the other who was on a check in-check out with the behavior technician. The student was required to meet with

the behavior tech three times a day to assure they were on track with their behavior plan; if they were not, then the behavior tech and the general education teacher of the student would collaborate on a plan about where the child would remain for the rest of the day until the behavior improved. There was only one student in the group who was not considered to have behavioral challenges and she had the most severe academic challenges.

The group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders the researcher worked with included an 11 year old, Caucasian female, who was deaf in her right ear. She was diagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) but was not on medication; she was also diagnosed as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and had severe behavioral challenges. This group also included an 11-year-old Hispanic boy, who was also diagnosed with ADHD, and ODD. From an academic perspective, he was the highest performing student in the group. Another student in the group was an 11-year-old Caucasian girl who struggled the most academically. Additional students included two more 11-year-old boys, both with ADHD who struggled the most with staying on task. Finally, the group included an 11-year-old African American boy, who was diagnosed as ODD, and was on the Autism spectrum.

The next group the researcher worked with included six 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. One of the students was an 8-year old boy who had a hearing disability and was dyslexic. Another student was an 8-year old girl with no behavioral challenges, but was an ELL student. The group also included two more 8-year-old boys, both of whom were both diagnosed as ADHD. Lastly, there was one 8-year-old boy who was on the Autism spectrum and one 8-year-old boy who had no appreciable unwanted behaviors.

All participants' confidentiality was protected. No names or identifying information was used or shared about the participants. Special care was taken to prevent data from being

released. All data was stored in a locked file cabinet that was only accessible to the researcher. There was no other adult assistance of any kind that was used or required in the study.

### **Intervention**

The researcher created a points system that offered students a chance to earn a points for positive behaviors, that included: coming to group quietly, getting started immediately on assignments, remaining on task while working through the group, not interjecting answers but instead raising a hand and waiting to be acknowledged, being respectful (kind to others, listening to teacher), and timely completion of work. These six categories of behaviors gave each student the possibility to earn six points per group session.

Students earned a point for each observed positive behavior (Appendix A). In addition to earning points, students could also lose points for negative behaviors (Appendix B). These negative behaviors consisted of, arriving at the group with elevated voices, not starting on work immediately when arriving, being off task, interjecting answers or comments without raising a hand, being disrespectful (not being kind to one another, not listening to teacher), and not completing work. Losing points sometimes resulted in no rewards, referrals, extra time owed at the end of group to finish incomplete work, and/or a loss of recess minutes depending on how much work students had to complete.

During the study, students were working to earn points and they were encouraged to do so by earning rewards for those points. Students were also encouraged to have positive behavior by the negative reinforcement element of the points system. Students would not lose points they had already earned, but they would not get a point for exhibiting negative behaviors. For example, if a student came to group with an elevated voice, they did not receive a point for that day in that category of behavior.

As noted previously, the points system resulted in rewards. Accrual of 15 points results in earning a piece of gum or pencil, 25 points for a prize box option, 30 for a pack of gum, 40 for computer time, and 50 points would get them extra recess time. However, some students had two groups with the researcher; for those students, points were all doubled, meaning, they would need 30 for a piece of gum or pencil, etc. Students could save the points daily or turn them in at the end of their group to get a prize. If students choose to save their points for another day, they could turn them in any day at the end of their group. Saving points allowed for bigger rewards.

The researcher tracked how many points each student accrued to assess whether there was a pattern. For example, if a student was accruing fewer points in successive weeks, then the reinforcers would need to change, or a conversation would need to happen with the student. The researcher also had a jar for teacher earned points per student. Since students did not lose points they had already earned, if they exhibited negative behaviors then one of the six points they would have received would accrue to the teacher. For every point the teacher earned, that resulted in a minute of extra work time owed by that student for the end of group. After five accrued teacher points, recess minutes were owed by the student (Payne, 2013).

Expectations were explained to students, as well as the behaviors that were going to be tracked. Groups did not change; students were receiving points for good behavior. The intervention was meant to fit in with the researcher's group as it was, not change the setting. The researcher reminded students daily about the expectations of the new intervention, while reinforcing good behavior with rewards given for points.

The research began with gathering baseline data by observing the kids throughout group sessions and using the data sheets created by the researcher (Appendices A and B). During week three the researcher began and continued implementation of the intervention through week four.

Baseline data and data after the intervention was compared and analyzed by combining the amount of participants that exhibited each behavior for each week.

### **Data Gathering Instruments/Assessments**

**Assessment #1: Observations.** Observational data was collected during scheduled groups and behaviors were tracked as they diminished or increased throughout the process. This assessment measured how frequent students were exhibiting behaviors, what behaviors they were exhibiting, and why.

**Assessment #2: Positive Behavior Data Sheet.** The six positive behaviors were tracked on the data sheet (Appendix A) created by the researcher. This data sheet contained a list of the students in the group, days of the week, and the positive behaviors the researcher tracked. There was also a column to track how many points the students acquired daily. This data sheet measured how frequently throughout the week each student was exhibiting the positive behaviors listed on the data sheet.

**Assessment #3: Negative Behavior Data Sheet.** The six negative behaviors were also tracked on a data sheet (Appendix B) created by the researcher. The data sheet was the exact layout as the previous, however this sheet tracked how many of the negative behaviors a student exhibited. This data sheet measured how frequently throughout the week each student was exhibiting the negative behaviors listed on the data sheet.

Data for behaviors were compared and analyzed with the baseline data and with data from the intervention. The researcher also analyzed the amount of points each student earned daily and weekly to check for patterns suggesting a need for change. For example, a student consistently losing points every Monday. The researcher would need to analyze the data to figure out why that was happening. Observational data was collected during scheduled groups.

The analyzed data verified if the intervention increased desired behaviors and decreased undesired behaviors.

Validity was increased in this study as the researcher focused on 12 different students all receiving the same services. Hendricks (2017) stated that credibility was an important part of research. To assure the research was credible, it was conducted in the same room for every group, the rewards were kept the same for all groups, and the expectations were the same for all students. All students were tracked for the same behaviors; negative: coming to group loudly, not getting started on work, being off task, blurting out, being disrespectful (not being kind to one another, not listening to teacher), and not completing work.

### **Results**

The research began Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 and was completed on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2020; a period of slightly more than four weeks. For the first two weeks, the researcher did not implement a points system and baseline data was gathered. Students had recently returned from their winter break and the group sessions, were taught and administered, per normal practice. During this initial two week period, the researcher employed standard classroom management techniques, however, the techniques were a school wide requirement. For example, students received warnings for undesired behaviors, referrals, and/or a loss of recesses.

Table 1

Days of the Week	Loud	Not getting started on work	Off task	Blurting out	Disrespect	Incomplete work
Monday	13	13	14	9	3	6
Tuesday	11	12	12	9	2	6
Thursday	11	11	12	7	2	5
Friday	13	12	12	8	3	5

In Table 1, the research shows students' undesired behaviors being a frequent issue in the first week. For example, on Monday of week one, thirteen of 14 students came to group with elevated voices, 13 of 14 students did not immediately get started on their work when arriving to group, all students at some point in the 30 minute groups were off task, nine of 14 students blurted out instead of raising their hand, three of 14 students were disrespectful, and six of 14 students did not complete their work during group. The data indicated similarly negative results through the entire first week, with a fluctuation of two students.

Table 2

Days of the Week	Loud	Not getting started on work	Off task	Blurting out	Disrespect	Incomplete work
Monday	11	10	11	10	6	8
Tuesday	11	10	12	11	6	7
Thursday	10	10	10	11	5	8
Friday	11	10	10	10	6	8

Table 2 reflects the number of negative student behaviors during week two of the research and indicates results similar to those of Table 1; however, the negative behaviors decreased slightly. The slight decrease may be explained by the fact that the researcher reminded students of expectations more frequently, and because students received consequences

for their negative behaviors throughout week one. However, during week two the points system had not been implemented yet.

Table 3

Days of the Week	Loud	Not getting started on work	Off task	Blurting out	Disrespect	Incomplete work
Monday	8	6	6	7	4	3
Tuesday	4	1	8	10	4	2
Thursday	2	3	6	6	1	4
Friday	2	2	6	6	1	3

Table 3 reflects the number of negative student behaviors during week three of the research, during which time the points system intervention was introduced. On Monday, the number of students arriving at the group session with elevated voices decreased by 35% from week one to three. Students not timely starting their assigned work decreased by 50%. Students being off task decreased by 58%; students verbally interjecting inappropriately decreased by 14%. Students being disrespectful increased by 7%, while students not completing work decreased by 21%.

These encouraging results, while certainly noteworthy, should be viewed with some caution because they compare behaviors from week one of the research (when students had just returned to school from a long break and, as such, are typically less sensitized to expected classroom behavior) with week three (when the points system had just been introduced and had not yet realized full results).

The researcher noticed an increase of “disrespect” as shown in Table 3. As the consequences increased, students became upset and acted out in a way that fit under the category of “disrespect.” Disrespect included: not being kind to one another, as well as getting frustrated

enough to destroy assignments. The numbers increased by 7% meaning four of 14 students had a moment where they came across as disrespectful.

Table 4

Days of the Week	Loud	Not getting started on work	Off task	Blurting out	Disrespect	Incomplete work
Monday	5	0	1	2	0	1
Tuesday	4	0	2	2	0	1
Thursday	3	0	3	3	0	1
Friday	2	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4 identifies the number of negative student behaviors during week four of the research. The negative behaviors decreased dramatically, not only compared to week one, but to week two and three as well. Appendix C shows the actual data from a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student for week 4 of the intervention, data was tracked on a positive behavior sheet (Appendix A) as students were showing almost no negative behaviors. Appendix D explains what each symbol means on the data sheet.

As the points system intervention continued to be applied, students began to more fully understand and expect the consequences that followed negative behaviors and understood the rewards that followed positive behaviors. During week four, students regularly began turning in points and receiving rewards, although some continued to save and accrue points for larger rewards. Because of negative behaviors, some students also owed extra minutes, lost recess time, and lost some privileges like being able to sit by friends in group session.

Table 4 results indicate students arriving at group session with elevated voices decreased by 43% from week two to four, students not timely beginning their assigned work decreased 71%, students losing focus and going off task decreased 77%, students interjecting comments

instead of raising their hands decreased 57%, students being disrespectful decreased 42% and students not completing their work decreased 56%.

Overall, the research demonstrated that the intervention of the points system decreased negative behaviors and increased positive behaviors. Apart from the quantifiable behavioral changes, the researcher observed a distinct qualitative change in the classroom environment. Students generally entered quietly, began their work in a timely manner, remained on-task, and demonstrated more respectful behavior toward each other and toward the researcher. This change allowed time for the researcher to dedicate more personal attention to students, which allowed for better rapport between the researcher and the students and contributed to a more productive learning environment.

## **Discussion**

### **Conclusions**

The data supported the effectiveness of the intervention and the idea that classroom management allowed for a better learning environment for students by decreasing undesired behaviors. Students are much more successful in an environment that is made to promote healthy learning. Children need rules and routines, and they need structure; giving them this in the classroom will allow for them to live up to their full potential in their academic careers. The results supported the research that positive behavior interventions increased positive behaviors. All negative behaviors decreased by week three after the implementation of the intervention.

### **Implications**

The findings supported the idea that creating a points system in a classroom environment allowed for more teacher instruction by decreasing negative behaviors in class. The findings

also supported the idea of good classroom management changing a classroom environment to support student learning with children ages 8-11 in a special education resource room.

Based on the results, teachers should create a classroom behavior management system, such as a points system. This should include the development of a rewards system for positive behaviors. Developing a behavior intervention early in the school year may prevent negative behaviors from being an ongoing issue in the classroom.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study were time and data collection. Two weeks prior to adding in the intervention was enough to have baseline data on student behaviors. However, two weeks post intervention offers very little time for consistent change. Although results showed dramatic drops in negative behaviors after two weeks, would this intervention work well in a long term setting? Two weeks or more of intervention implementation would have been helpful to see if the results continued to drop/diminish completely, or if they would have increased.

The data collection in this study was observational and tracked on two data sheets created by the researcher. The data showed results for a decrease in behaviors, but was limited to six specific behaviors. Although the behaviors chosen for this research were behaviors most frequently seen in class, other behaviors were present as well. The data collection was limited to tally marks indicating what behaviors were exhibited by each student, with no explanation why, no space for an antecedent of behavior, and no space for improvement after an accommodation or warning was given to a child.

### **Recommendations**

There are three recommendations for this study. The first recommendation would be to make a change in the areas of rewards and points. Adding a new rule that required students to

have a “perfect” group score to be able to turn in their points may be helpful. Meaning, if students had enough points to turn in for a prize, they must have had no points taken from them during the group session. They would have had to earn all six points for the day to receive their prize.

Second, aside from the behaviors that were of primary focus during the research, more behaviors became noticeable. Clearly identifying the behaviors in the category of disrespect would clarify the parameters of disrespect. Beginning the points system at the start of the school year, instead of after winter break, would also be helpful. Children need rules and routines, and they need structure; introducing the intervention at the beginning of the school year will allow for immediate instruction.

Third, additional data should be taken on student behaviors. The system would need to continue working throughout the school year, so additional data using the points system would be helpful to see if negative behaviors would continue to decrease. If not, changes would need to be made as necessary.

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**Appendix A***Positive Behaviors*

Days	Coming to group quietly	Getting started on work when arriving	On task	Not blurting out, raising hand	Respectful	Completing work	Points Total
Monday							
Tuesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

**Appendix B***Negative Behaviors*

Days	Coming to group loudly	Not getting started on work when arriving	Off task	Blurting out	Disrespect	Not completing work	Points Total
Monday							
Tuesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

**Appendix C**

*The data taken from one student using the positive behavior chart*

Days	Coming to group quietly	Getting started on work when arriving	On task	Not blurting out, raising hand	Respectful	Completing work	Points Total
Monday	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	6.0
Tuesday	✗△✗✗	✗△✗✗	✗△✗✗	✗△✗	✗△✗✗	✗	4.0
Thursday	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Friday	□□	□□	□	□□	□□	□□	0

### Appendix D

*A key for the symbols used for the different days and weeks*

