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ABSTRACT
                This action research project sought to increase students'
time on task by decreasing the frequency of disruptive behaviors. The
targeted population consisted of first- and third-grade students in two
suburban communities. The types and frequency of disruptive behaviors that
affected time on task were documented by means of teacher, student, and
parent surveys; teacher checklists; and anecdotal records. Interventions
included a positive discipline program, a character education plan, the
teaching of social skills (using cooperative learning and conflict
resolution), and activities addressing multiple intelligences.
Post-intervention data indicated that the students increased their awareness
of appropriate classroom behavior and improved social interactions with
peers. There was also a decrease in the number of behavioral disruptions per
day. (Three appendices include the parent, teacher, and student survey forms.
Contains 49 references.) (EV)

DECREASING THE AMOUNT OF CLASSROOM DISRUPTIONS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME ON TASK IN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of

Educationin Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in

Teaching and Leadership

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TABLE OF CONTEXT

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program developed to increase students' time on task by decreasing the frequency of disruptive behaviors. The targeted population consisted of first and third grade students. The schools were located in two different suburban communities nestled between two major cities in the Midwest. The types and frequency of disruptive behaviors that affected time on task were documented with teacher, student, and parent surveys, teacher checklists, and anecdotal records.

Analysis of the probable causes indicated that there were a number of factors that contributed to disruptive behaviors. This high level of disruptive behaviors negatively affected time on task. Review of the research indicated that disruptive behavior in students is reflected by a decline in family structure, lack of social skills, medical issues, and the schooling process.

A review of the solution strategies presented by other researchers, in conjunction with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the development of a positive discipline program, a character education plan, and the teaching of social skills. The intervention included lessons in cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and multiple intelligences, as well as journals.

Post intervention data indicated that the students increased their awareness of appropriate classroom behavior and improved social interactions with peers. There was also a decrease in the number of behavioral disruptions per day.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted first and third grade classes exhibit disruptive behavior that interfere with their ability to stay on task. Disruptive behaviors include verbal (talking out of turn and making distracting noises) and nonverbal (lack of organization and frequent movement throughout the room) interruptions. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes anecdotal records, teacher checklists of disruptive behavior, and parent, teacher, and student surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

The description of the setting includes two neighboring elementary districts within one county. All information is taken from the 1998 school report cards.

Site A

Site A is part of an established elementary district which contains five schools servicing kindergarten through sixth grade students and one middle school servicing seventh through eighth grade students. The total enrollment is 356, of which 54 are first grade students. The average class size is 27 students. The two story brick building is located in a residential area. The site contains a music room, one gym that serves as a cafeteria, one library, and one computer lab. The first level of the building is kindergarten through second grade and the second level houses third through sixth. A female principal is responsible for managing student discipline and ensuring that teachers are meeting state standards. Teachers are required to teach math, reading, writing, grammar, spelling, science, and social studies. Teachers are responsible for classroom conduct. Site A is similar to Site B in that they are both elementary schools. However, Site B is substantially larger than Site A.

Site B

Site B is part of a rapidly growing elementary district consisting of three elementary buildings and one middle school. Each elementary building houses two grade levels and the middle school contains sixth through eighth grade students. The total enrollment is 1,169, of which 670 are third grade students. The average class size is 22 students. The two story building is located in a residential area. This site contains two gyms, a large library, one computer lab, and a lunchroom. Due to the over crowding, art and music classes are held in the classroom. The school divides students into houses to combat the large enrollment. Each hallway holds one house of second and third grade students. The number of classes depends on house size. The students remain in their house throughout their elementary education. Students are bused to school. A referendum for daily operations was passed by tax payers in February, 1999. A female principal works in conjunction with two assistant principals to oversee curriculum implementation, conduct day to day operations of the school, and manage student discipline. Teachers are required to teach math, spelling, reading, writing, science, social studies, health and grammar. This excludes physical education, music, and art. Teachers are responsible for classroom management and discipline.

Table 1 displays the racial/ethnic background of total student enrollment by site. The largest difference exists between the White and Black populations at Site A and Site B. Site A has a majority of Black students as opposed to Site B, which has a majority of White students. The Racial/ethnic backgrounds are more evenly distributed at Site A. Site B is predominately White with less than 10% of students in each of remaining racial/ethnic groups.

Table 2 displays low-income and limited-english-proficient students by site. Table 2 shows an overwhelming difference in the amount of Low-income families between the sites. Over half of the students at Site A come from low-income families while less than 7% of the students at Site B come from low-income families.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background of Total Student Enrollment

Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American
Site A	36.0%	45.8%	17.1%	0.8%	0.3%
Site B	78.7%	5.4%	8.0%	7.7%	0.3%

Table 2

Low-Income and Limited-English-Proficient Students

Location	Low-Income	Limited-English-Proficient
Site A	54.5%	6.5%
Site B	6.2%	6.3%

Table 3 displays the attendance and mobility rates as well as the number of chronic truants at each site. Both sites display a high attendance rate with no chronic truancy. A large difference in the mobility rate was found between the sites. The immediate problem context reflects the racial/ethnic background of the community.

Table 3

Attendance, Mobility, and Chronic Truancy

Location	Attendance	Mobility	Chronic Truancy
Site A	94.4%	27.9%	0.0%
Site B	96.1%	10.9%	0.0%

Surrounding Community

Both sites are located in the same county, approximately ten miles from one another. Established in the northern suburbs, these communities are found midway between two large

metropolitan areas. These Midwest communities are approximately 35 miles from a major airport and have immediate access to an interstate system, a large body of water, and a large theme park. The population of Site A consists of approximately 20,000 people housed in a mixture of starter homes and apartments. The community's housing value averages at approximately $68,000 as compared to the county average of $136,700. The average annual income is $11,813 with a poverty rate of 13.1%. This community holds the county's highest density of Section 8 Federally subsidized housing. The district and the surrounding community's primary source of revenue was eliminated in 1998 due to the closure of a nuclear power plant. The plant was responsible for generating $6.9 million of the districts local revenue.

Site B encompasses 30 square miles and is comprised of several unincorporated subdivisions and small villages. Within the last decade this community has transformed from a predominately rural setting to a growing suburban community. The population of this area is 35,000. This reflects a 54% increase within the past decade. Housing consists of single family attached and detached homes and apartments. The average household income for this area is $45,000 which is comparable to the county average of $46,000. A large regional shopping center and theme park make large contributions to the district's revenue. In February, 1999, the tax payers approved a tax increase to fund the daily operational expenses of the growing district.

The total enrollment at Site B is 6,408 students. The district population has grown 60% in the past decade. Although the population has increased, the demographic and economic make-up of the community has not changed. Site A has a student population of 2,613 students. This established district has remained relatively stable over the past decade. The demographic and economic composition of the community continues to be diverse with an increase in the Hispanic population. Table 4 displays the racial/ethnic background of each district which represents the community population. The drastic difference between the demographic population of each district reflects the diversity of the communities. The district demographics coincide with the make-up of the school sites.

Table 4

Racial/Ethnic Background of Total Student Enrollment

Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American
Site A	42.3%	43.6%	12.0%	1.8%	0.3%
Site B	81.4%	3.9%	7.8%	6.7%	0.2%

The certified staff population of Site A's district is 163. This creates a pupil-teacher ratio of 20.4:1. Female teachers comprise 81.5% of the total teacher population while male teachers represent 18.5%. The faculty characteristics for Site A are: 47.4% with Bachelor's degree and 52.6% with a Master's degree and above. Teachers have been employed by the district for an average 13.4 years with average salary of $49,186. Site B's district employs 337 certified staff members. The pupil-teacher ratio is 18.3:1. The distribution of female and male teachers is 87.3% female and 12.7% male. The faculty characteristics for Site B are: 59.1% with a Bachelor's degree and 40.9% with a Master's degree and above. Teachers have been employed by the district for an average of 8.7 years with an average salary of $35,104.

Table 5 shows the racial/ethnic characteristics of the certified staff at each district. The teacher population of the Site A school district does not mirror that of the student or community population. The teachers are predominantly White as opposed to the high black population found in the district and surrounding community. Site B's certified staff correlates with the demographic/ethnic background of the student enrollment and the community.

Site A's district administration includes one superintendent of schools, one assistant superintendent of business, one assistant superintendent for special services, six principals, and three assistant principals. The average administrator's salary is $70,561. The pupil-administrator ratio is 228.6:1. Site B's district administration consists of one superintendent of schools, one assistant superintendent of business, one full-time director of curriculum and instruction aided by two part-time directors of curriculum and instruction, one director of pupil personnel services,

one director of technology, one director of building grounds and transportation, five principals, and ten assistant principals. The average salary for administrators is $76,528. The pupil-administration ratio is 268:1.

Table 5

Racial/Ethnic Background of Total Student Enrollment

Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American
Site A	88.3%	8.6%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%
Site B	98.8%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%

The community at Site A is described by inactive parent involvement. A small Parent Teacher Organization exists which has developed and over sees a volunteer program. The community at Site B is characterized by active parent involvement. The most supportive groups are Parent Teacher Association, friends of the school, and volunteers of the school. The groups are actively involved in fund raising, supporting school needs, and linking the school to the community. Despite the difference between the sites, both have seen an increase in the amount of disruptive behavior in classrooms.

<div align="center">National Context of the Problem</div>

For the past several years, teachers have been observing a growing trend in student's behavior. Disruptive behavior in the classroom interferes with a student's ability to stay on task. Callison (1998) states, "...'time on task' is that period of time during which a student is actively engaged in a learning activity"(p. 32). An increase in disruptive behavior has limited the amount of "time on task" in the classroom. As stated by Lindmark (1996), concern for disruptive behavior in the classroom has been an ongoing issue at the local, state, and national level. Students are displaying more disruptive behaviors which are having an effect on the atmosphere of the classroom.

One result of these behaviors is a lack of cooperation among students. Students that behave appropriately are negatively affected by disruptive students. According to Charney (1998), disruptive behaviors can trample participation in the class:

> My reading group is attentive and prepared for discussion of a favorite novel. "What if Darry had called the police?" I ask. Jenny initiates a thoughtful reply, but Eric interrupts: "That's crazy! Darry would never do that!" My first thought is that Eric, a recalcitrant student, is finally excited. But Jenny is silenced. Eric's outburst has squelched the discussion. (p. 90)

Frequent outbursts in the class hinders a student's desire to work cooperatively with classmates. After being interrupted by disruptive students, a child feels his/her thoughts were not as important.

Outbursts also attract attention causing a loss of structure in the lesson, inevitably leading to a loss of structure in the classroom. As stated by Clough, Smasal, and Clough (1994), "These disruptions not only directly take away instructional time, but often make getting students back on track difficult" (p. 32). As disruptive behaviors persist, teacher and student attitudes change. For example, Cipani (1995) states, " Continued off-task behavior (and possibly more extreme forms of disruptive behavior) is likely to produce teacher attention in the form of reminders, comments, verbal lectures, scolding, or 'time out' for the student" (p. 36). When the teacher continually uses these methods to curve disruptive behavior, the classroom atmosphere changes. This alters the attitude of the teacher, the learning environment, and the students' attitudes.

First graders have a difficult time remaining in their seats, raising their hands, and speaking at appropriate times. Also, at the third grade level, the students exhibit these same types of behaviors. This is having a large impact on the amount of material being covered by classroom teachers. For example, Charney states, "I cover only a fraction of the material I've planned and the cooperative class spirit I'd hoped for is stifled" (1998, p. 90). Disruptive behavior in the classroom leads to less time on task which affects the amount of curriculum teachers can cover.

There are several factors that can lead a child to be disruptive in the classroom. Through questionnaires and surveys, this problem was found to exist at both sites.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of disruptive behavior at both sites, during the first three weeks anecdotal records were kept, behavior checklists were compiled, and teacher, student, and parent surveys were distributed, collected, and analyzed. All data discussed regarding students was taken from a sample of 44 students. The data from the teacher surveys was taken from a sample of 30 teachers.

Anecdotal Records

Teachers at both sites kept a notebook for a period of three weeks to compile frequent disruptive behaviors in the class. These notebooks included a detailed description of disruptions that occurred throughout the day that were not already included on the checklist. Some examples of behaviors that were recorded over this period of time include students stomping on other students feet while in line, students wrapping shirts around their heads, students chewing gum in class, students making frequent trips to the bathroom, students sharpening pencils during instructional time, students attempting to be the authority in the classroom, students raising their hands without having a response, and students writing on school property. The first grade students exhibited all of the listed behaviors except sharpening pencils. The third grade students exhibited all the listed behaviors. Other recorded behaviors found in the third grade classroom included unsafe physical disruptions such as hitting desks and walls, throwing pencils or other school supplies, touching other students with force, and rough playing. The behaviors displayed by the first and third grade students provide evidence that disruptive behavior exists in classrooms. After comparing the two grade levels, an increase in aggressive behavior was found as students progressed through grade levels. The anecdotal records provided the researchers with evidence of disruptive behaviors that occurred in addition to the identified behaviors on the

checklist. In addition to the anecdotal records, the teachers kept behavior checklists for frequent disruptions in the classroom.

Behavior Checklist

The results of the behavior checklists for the first three weeks of implementation are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Teacher Checklist Results for Weeks 1-3

Behaviors	Site A			Site B		
	Wk. 1	Wk. 2	Wk. 3	Wk. 1	Wk. 2	Wk. 3
out of seat	9.9%	3.6%	2.6%	9.4%	3.0%	7.6%
tapping	2.3%	.5%	1.9%	8.8%	10.3%	4.3%
touching	1.5%	2.5%	2.6%	3.3%	.7%	1.4%
looking away	7.6%	15.7%	14.6%	3.7%	8.2%	4.7%
doodling	.8%	0%	0%	3.3%	0%	1.4%
playing	6.1%	4.6%	4.5%	1.8%	7.4%	2.1%
moving	0%	9.1%	9.6%	1.8%	8.2%	7.6%
not following directions	12.2%	9.1%	8.9%	2.5%	4.4%	3.5%
lost when called	0%	0%	.6%	1.3%	2.3%	2.1%
blurts out	8.4%	15.7%	8.9%	13.2%	9.6%	15.2%
making noises	2.3%	1.5%	1.9%	8.1%	5.9%	6.2%
talking to neighbor	41.2%	28.9%	31.2%	33.3%	32.5%	35.4%
gets off topic	0%	2.5%	1.3%	4.4%	3.0%	2.1%
inappropriate voice	3.1%	1.5%	3.8%	3.3%	1.5%	4.3%
inappropriate words	2.3%	1.0%	0%	1.8%	3.0%	2.1%
other	2.3%	3.8%	7.6%	0%	0%	0%

The data found in Table 6 was collected on a weekly spreadsheet that included all students in the class and the targeted behaviors. Each disruptive behavior that occurred in the classroom was represented by a tally mark. Students could receive unlimited tally marks in each targeted behavior. This data was then transferred into percentages. To do this the researchers added the total number of tally marks for each behavior individually. These totals were then divided by the total number of tally marks found for all the behaviors for that week. The data was then presented separately by site.

The results of the behavior checklists indicated that certain behaviors were more frequent than others in the classroom. Among the most frequently observed disruptive behaviors was talking to neighbors, blurting out answers, not following directions, making noises, looking away, and moving. Some of the less frequent behaviors that were observed in the classrooms included doodling, students getting out of their seats, touching other students, being lost when called on, and gets off the topic of study. After analyzing and comparing the first three weeks of behavior checklists, a difference was found between the types of behaviors produced in each class and which students exhibited these behaviors more frequently. The behavior checklist provided individualized evidence of disruptive behavior in each class. To further support the evidence of disruptive behavior in the classroom, a teacher survey was distributed and analyzed in order to determine if disruptive behavior occurred in other classrooms.

Teacher Surveys

The teacher surveys were distributed through teachers' mailboxes. They included a cover letter explaining that their responses would be used in our Action Research Project. There was no mention of our project objective in the attached letter. We did not want to influence their responses by providing our problem statement. There was a one week return time placed on the surveys, but we excepted late surveys. The completion of the surveys was not mandatory.

The teacher surveys consisted of one yes/no question and three open ended questions. They were distributed to a total of 47 teachers of which 67% were returned. The results of the surveys from each site were combined. Site A distributed surveys to 18 certified staff members at

the K-6 school. Site B distributed 29 surveys to only third grade classroom teachers. Due to the large enrollment at Site B, surveys were only distributed to the classroom teachers. Of the returned surveys, 100% of the teachers said that they observed disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

When answering yes to the initial question about disruptive behavior, teachers had to list behaviors that they have seen in their classroom. The responses were categorized into seven groups. The groups included Talking, Actions Towards Others, Out of Seat, Noises, Incomplete Work, Not Following Directions, and Playing. Figure 1 displays the percentage of disruptive behaviors observed by teachers.

Teacher Observed Behaviors

Playing (9.0%)
Noises (9.0%)
Talking (37.0%)
Out Of Seat (12.0%)
Not Following Directions (12.0%)
Incomplete Work (2.0%)
Actions Towards Others (19.0%)
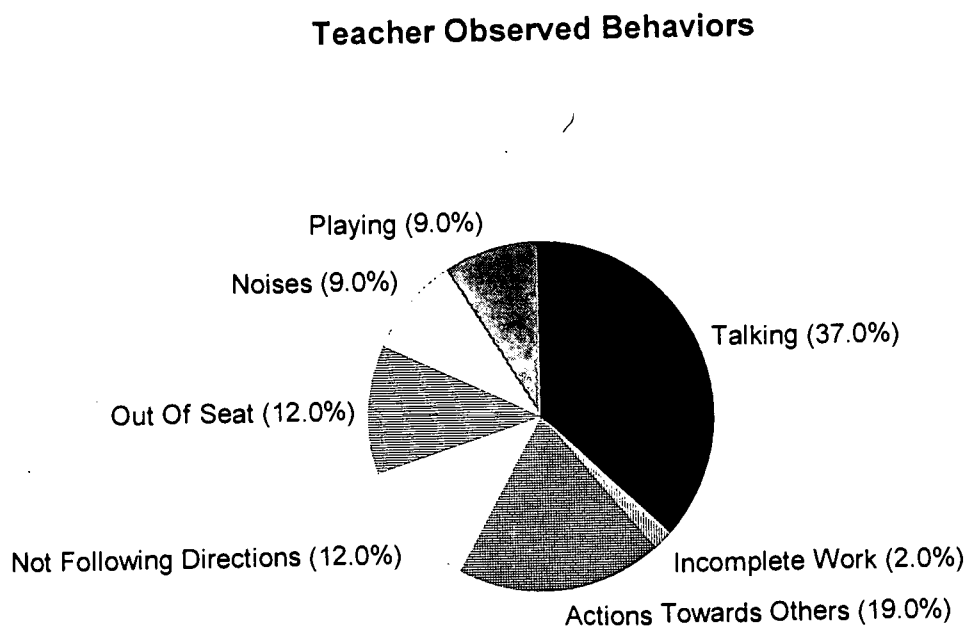
Figure 1. Percentage of disruptive behaviors observed by teachers.

Of the 30 surveys returned, a total of 81 behaviors were listed as disruptive by the teachers. Teachers identified Talking as the most frequently observed misbehavior in the classroom. The Talking category included not raising a hand or blurting out, talking out of turn,

and talking to neighbors. Actions Towards Others included behaviors such as, negative comments, name calling, and touching or pushing others. These two categories accounted for more than 50% of the behaviors identified. Talking was observed by most teachers despite the grade level in which they taught. Both Out of Seat and Not Following Directions were each accountable for approximately 25% of the responses. Out of Seat included moving about the room, frequent trips out of the room, pencil sharpening, and inappropriate seating. Not Following Rules and Not Listening comprised the not following directions category. The Playing group included behaviors like touching items in their desks, spinning rulers, making paper toys, and flipping materials on their desks. Noises included humming and tapping noises. The final group of Incomplete Work represented smallest percentage of disruptive behavior identified by teachers in the classroom.

The next question on the teacher survey asked teachers to list possible causes for why these behaviors exist. This information will be discussed in the probable cause section of this paper. Once a teacher has identified possible causes for disruptive behavior in the classroom then they must develop strategies to combat the unwanted behaviors. The last question on the teacher survey asked them to list strategies they use in their classroom. Of the 30 teachers surveyed a total of 97 strategies were given. The results for this question were broken into ten groups.

Teacher Behavior was the most frequent response given in the survey. This group included making eye contact with students, strategic placement of students in the classroom, ignoring unwanted behaviors, questioning the disruptive child about what they are learning, stopping teaching, and having a nonnegotiable policy. Positive reinforcement, Rewards, and Clear Expectations had the next highest response rates. Positive Reinforcement includes focusing on the positive instead of only the negative. Rewards included recognizing both individual students' behaviors and the class as a whole. Clear Expectations is defined as discussing what is expected from students and role playing alternative options for situations. Behavior Contracts holds 10% of the teacher responses. This category also included talking to students about their

behavior. A majority of the teachers surveyed that use this strategy commented that behavior contracts were used for individual students with extreme behavioral issues. It was not used for the entire class. Reprimanding, Taking Away Privileges, Home/School Communication, and Classroom Management each received less than 10% of the teacher responses. The Reprimanding group contained student warnings, time-outs, detentions, and taking or throwing away objects that students are playing with. Taking Away Privileges included following through with consequences and taking away a student's recess. The last category is Removing The Child. This category included 1% of the teacher responses. Through teacher experience, it is common to find a combination of all of these strategies within a classroom. In addition, the student interaction within a classroom could determine the extent to which each of these strategies is used. For example, a child with extreme anger may need to be removed from the surroundings after confrontation. This provides the child with an opportunity to regain self-control. Each individual class and child must be taken into account when using teacher strategies. The teacher surveys discussed above are examples of these strategies. The results are displayed in Figure2.
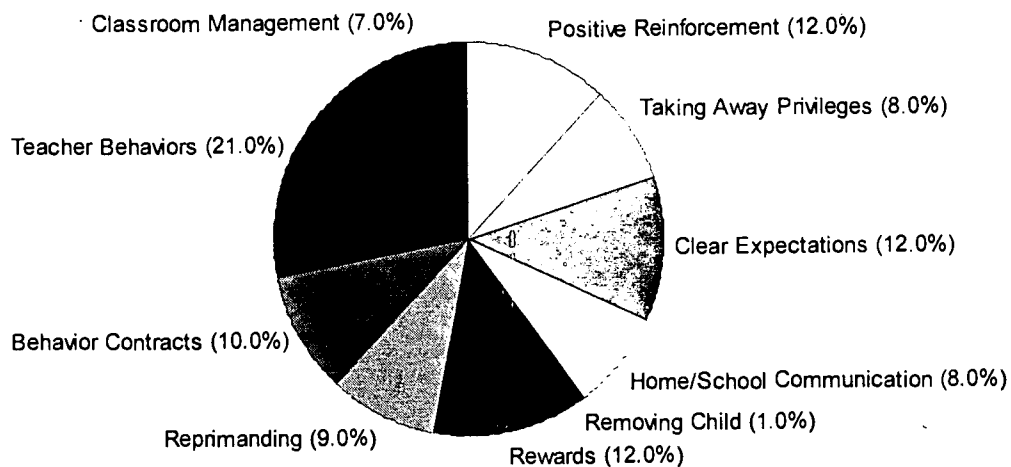
Teacher Strategies

Figure 2. The percentage of strategies used by teachers surveyed.

To identify if disruptive behavior occurred in the home environment, a parent survey was distributed to the parents of the students at Site A and Site B.

Parent Surveys

Parent surveys were distributed to 18 parents at Site A and 23 parents at Site B. The parents were aware of the Action Research Project due to the parental permission slip that was previously signed. The cover letter also explained the purpose of the research to the parents. Of the 18 surveys sent out at Site A, 72% were returned. At Site B, 70% of the 23 surveys were returned. Surveys were excepted up to three weeks after they were sent out.

The parent survey consisted of 13 close ended questions with the options of always, sometimes, and never. These questions concentrated on the children's' behaviors at home or outside of school. One question asked the parents to describe the activities that their child participated in outside of school. The final question allowed parents to list strategies that they used at home to eliminate disruptive or unwanted behaviors. Table 7 displays the results of the parent survey for questions 1-13. The Parent Survey is located in Appendix A.

After reviewing the results of the parent survey a relationship was found between behavior in school and out of school. Question 1 on the parent survey asked parents to describe their child's ability to follow directions. The results show that 69% of the students at Site A and 81% of the students at Site B follow directions sometimes. This supports the findings reported at Site A and Site B through the use of a teacher checklist, teacher anecdotal notes, and the teacher surveys. The majority of the students follow directions only sometimes. In question 3 parents were asked if their child spoke appropriately to them. Only 39% of the parents at Site A and 69% of the parents at Site B responded to this question as always. This supports the belief that students are disruptive. Question 4 asked parents if their child takes responsibility for his/her homework. The results show that most children are responsible for their homework. This is seen at both Site A and Site B based on the return of homework assignments, but the question still remains as to who initiates homework assignments being started and completed at home. If

students are not taking the initiative to complete their work then they are not developing proper study habits.

Table 7

Parent Survey Results for Questions 1-13

Question	Site A			Site B		
	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
follow directions...	23%	69%	8%	19%	81%	0%
clean room...	17%	75%	8%	38%	62%	0%
speak appropriately...	39%	53%	8%	69%	31%	0%
responsible for homework..	69%	23%	8%	69%	31%	0%
speak positively...	62%	38%	0%	81%	19%	0%
eat breakfast...	69%	31%	0%	94%	6%	0%
provide items promptly...	77%	23%	0%	69%	31%	0%
behave appropriately...	8%	77%	17%	50%	50%	0%
active at home...	85%	15%	0%	63%	37%	0%
sit still...	0%	77%	23%	13%	81%	6%
eat dinner together...	69%	31%	0%	25%	75%	0%
eat dinner at the same time...	17%	69%	17%	19%	75%	6%
family activities...	77%	23%	0%	69%	31%	0%

When analyzing the surveys and the anecdotal records a relationship was found between students' responsibilities to do their homework and complete classwork on time. Question 8 asked about the child's behavior in public places. Only 8% of the students at Site A and 50% of the students at Site B always behaved appropriately in public according to their parents. This also supports the belief that children display disruptive behavior. Each child's activeness at home was relatively high. In question 9, the parent responses show that 85% of Site A children and 63% of

Site B children remain active at home. The responses to question 10, does your child have an easy time sitting still, support the notion that disruptive behavior exists in classrooms and at home. There are certain behaviors that are expected of students in school which coincide with their ability to remain seated or sit still. As reported by the parent survey, 0% of the students at Site A and 13% of the students at Site B can remain still when seated. Question 12 asks parents if they eat dinner at the same time every evening. The purpose of this question was to identify structure or routine in the students' homes. Only 17% of the students at Site A and 19% of the students at Site B eat dinner at the same time every night. This demonstrates a lack of routine within the homelives of the students. The majority of behavior strategies used by the parents responding to this survey matched those used by the teachers that were surveyed. In conclusion, parents are also utilizing similar techniques as teachers when they want to eliminate disruptive behavior. In addition to asking parents about their opinions of their child's behavior and routines, another survey was given to the students to identify behavioral patterns in school.

Student Survey

Student surveys were administered to the students at Site A and Site B. The survey consisted of 16 close-ended questions that could be answered with the options always, sometimes, or never. Table 8 displays the results of the students survey. The Student Survey islocated in Appendix B.

After reviewing the results from the Student Survey, evidence for disruptive behavior was found. When comparing the results of the Student Survey to the results of the Parent Survey, a discrepancy was found between the parents and students at Site B. A higher percentage of parents said that their child always ate breakfast. Question 2 asked about the promptness of starting work in class. At Site A a majority of the students answered that they always started their work immediately while less than half of the students at Site B started their work right away. This is evidence that the students are off-task and are displaying some form of disruptive behavior because they are not starting their work. Question 3 asked students if they were turning in work on time. At both sites less than half of the students said that they were always turning in work on

time. This shows that class time is not being used appropriately or that the material is too difficult for the students. In Question 4 the students were asked if they listen to their teacher in class. At Site A most of the students responded that they always listen to their teacher while the Site B students responded with approximately half of them always listening to the teacher. The results from Site B show that they are not listening all the time in class. This is also observed by the teacher. Question 7 asked the students how quickly they could find their supplies in their desks. As reported by the Student Survey, a majority of the students at Site A and less than half of the students at Site B said they could always find their materials quickly. In relation to the promptness of beginning work and the ability of students to hand in work on time, a lack of organization could be causing their ability to be prepared. In addition, the results to Question 8, do you keep your desk clean, are similar to the responses in Question 7.

Question 11 and Question 13 were related questions. Question 11 involves a student asking for permission before getting out of their seat. Question 13 asks if it is bothersome when someone else is walking around the room. At Site B 39% of the students responded that they never ask before getting out of their seats. In turn, more than half of the students felt that they were never bothered by other students moving around the room. This shows that movement within the classroom does not disrupt the majority of the students. When looking at specific surveys the results showed that students who asked to leave their seats were always bothered by movement in the classroom while students that left their seats without permission were not bothered by movement within the room.

Questions 12, 14 and 16 each involve talking within the classroom. The responses from Site A show that many of the students who do not talk in class, are bothered when someone else interrupts them or is talking out of turn. This is the type of response the would be expected. On the other hand, opposite results were found at Site B. At Site B only a small percentage of the students said they were always quiet in class, but the majority of them found it bothersome when somebody else was talking out of turn. This shows that the students would like quiet while working, but they fail to display it. In addition, most of the students at Site B answered that they

were always bothered when someone interrupted them. By analyzing the results of the student surveys the researchers found that students were bothered by behaviors in the classroom. This shows that the students are being disrupted by behaviors in the classroom.

Table 8

Student Survey Results for Questions 1-16

| Question #	Site A			Site B		
	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
eat breakfast...	71%	29%	0%	61%	39%	0%
start work immediately...	76%	19%	5%	30%	57%	13%
turn work in promptly...	43%	52%	5%	43%	57%	0%
listen in class...	86%	14%	0%	48%	52%	0%
keep hands to yourself...	76%	19%	5%	74%	26%	0%
use quiet voices...	76%	24%	0%	39%	61%	0%
find supplies quickly...	86%	14%	0%	43%	48%	9%
keep desk clean...	90%	10%	0%	52%	30%	17%
sit appropriately...	71%	14%	10%	57%	39%	4%
raise your hand...	71%	24%	5%	61%	39%	0%
ask to get out of seat...	81%	14%	5%	9%	52%	39%
quiet in class...	86%	14%	0%	22%	74%	4%
bothered by walking...	57%	0%	43%	4%	30%	66%
bothered by talking...	81%	5%	14%	83%	17%	0%
bothered by touching...	71%	5%	24%	57%	30%	13%
bothered by interruptions...	71%	10%	19%	87%	13%	0%

The teachers that administered these surveys also believe that some responses were dishonest. According to anecdotal records and the behavior checklist, the teachers found some discrepancies in the results.

Through the use of anecdotal records, behavior checklists, and parent, teacher, and student surveys disruptive behavior has been found to exist within the classrooms. To support these findings, research has been done to show the problem exists and that there are several probable causes.

Probable Causes

In order to fully understand the probable causes of disruptive behavior in the classroom, it is important to comprehend why they occur. Many factors can increase or create disruptions in the classroom. These include physical factors, teacher behavior, family structure, social skills, curriculum, and instructional strategies. The Teacher Survey is located in Appendix C. Figure 3 displays the possible causes of disrupted behavior as suggested by the surveyed teachers.

Teacher Suggested Causes
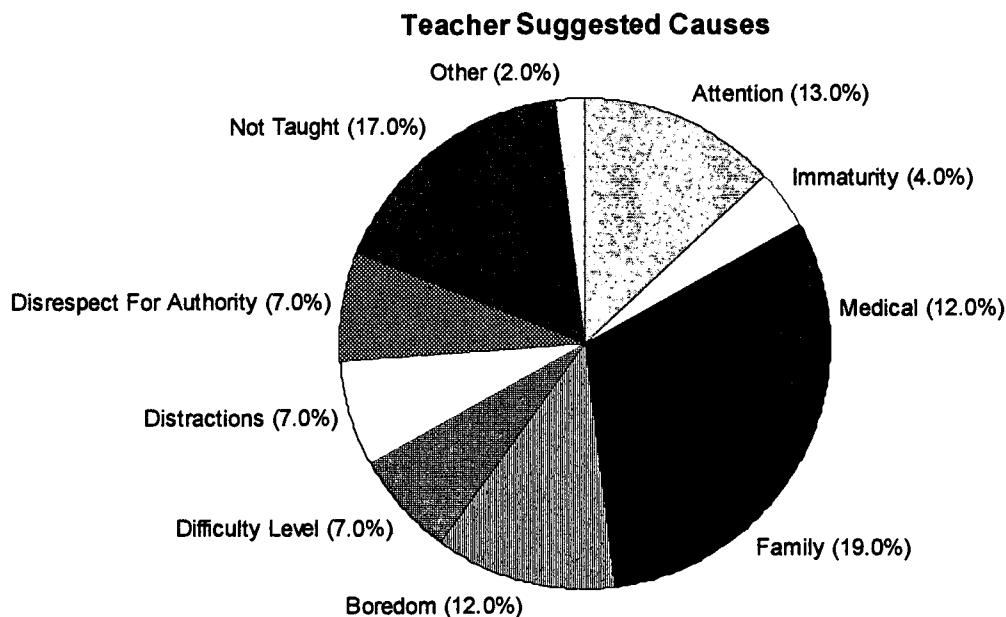
Figure 3. Percentage of teacher suggested causes for disruptive behavior.

Of the 30 surveys returned, there were 75 suggested reasons for disruptive behavior that were grouped into 10 categories. Teachers believed that the Family category had the largest influence on student behavior. The Family category included problems at home, no parental support, lack of discipline, lack of role models, and failure to enforce rules in the home. The group Not Taught included lack of organizational skills, irresponsibility, lack of patience in students, inconsistencies between school and home, lack of education in following rules and the consequences received, and poor modeling at school. Both, Medical and Boredom, received 12% of teacher responses. The Medical category is comprised of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and other emotional problems that a child may have. The Boredom group included lack of interest in material, subject, or lesson design, motivation, and unstructured time. Difficulty Level, Distractions, and Disrespect for Authority each depict 7% of the total responses. Difficulty level includes material that is too hard or too easy and lack of support services. The Distractions group represents distractions by other students, class size, and room size. Disrespect for Authority involves both verbal and nonverbal actions towards authority. Teachers suggests that immaturity can also be a factor of disruptive behavior in the classroom. The Other category included students excitement, high rate of television watching, and too much sugar. Many of the teacher suggested causes are supported by research.

Physical Factors

The physical factors that can affect behavior in the classroom are medical, nutritional, and biological. One of the most common psychiatric conditions in school aged children is Attention Deficit Disorders. Burke states "Currently, between 3% and 5% of U.S. students (1.35 million to 2.25 million children) have been diagnosed as having ADD" (1999a, p. 2). Teacher observations of children diagnosed with ADD or ADHD identified behaviors such as inattentiveness, impulsivity, and possibly, hyperactivity within the children. According to Logan, "Children with ADHD have difficulty at school, home, and with peers" (1996, p. 2).

Another important physical factor affecting the behavior of school children is nutrition. Numerous studies confirm that students perform better in the classroom when they eat breakfast. As stated by Bro, Shank, McLaughlin, and Williams (1996), hunger affects the performance level of students:

> The consequences of hunger may interfere with the learning process and well-being of children. Skipping breakfast will likely have a negative effect on children's performance in the classroom. According to Pauk (1983), this deficiency cannot be made up later in the day. (p. 111)

In question 6 of the parent survey the parents were asked if their child ate breakfast in the morning. According to the parents, a majority of the children eat breakfast everyday. Lack of nutrition was believed to be a source of disruptive behavior. When analyzing the data from the parent survey about the frequency in which students eat breakfast, the researchers found that the children that do not eat always eat breakfast were not disruptive students. Although the surveys support eating breakfast as a probable cause, the researchers feel that it does not have a major influence on student behavior.

With technological advances, scientists can see into the mind of a child to identify what motivates him and how he is using his brain. These advances allow researchers to understand the biological effects on learning. Burke states, "Researchers have documented some evidence that students today are more violent, stressed, and unfocused because of a variety of biological and social reasons" (1999b, p. 1). The stated physical factors can affect the behavior of other students and the teacher in the classroom. At times, teacher behavior is a reflection of the disruptive behavior that is displayed by students in a classroom.

Teacher Behavior

Teacher behavior also has a great impact over the behavior of students in the classroom. Unwanted behaviors can occur when a teacher has inconsistent expectations and consequences, a lack of awareness of what is happening in the classroom, poor modeling skills, and emotional reactions to situations. McDaniel states, "Teachers who are courteous, prompt, enthusiastic, in

control, patient, and organized provide examples for their students through their own behavior. The "do as I say, not as I say" teachers send mixed messages that confuse students and invite misbehavior" (1986 p.3). According to Phelan, "...if a student is doing something you don't like and you get upset, chances are you'll see this behavior again" (1998 p. 31). Reinforcing negative behavior will increase the likelihood of its reoccurrence. Teachers that fail to have a behavior management program that focuses on the positive will see an increase of the negative behaviors that are being corrected. For example, Fitzsimmons states, "Many of today's students need more than just sound and consistent discipline policies they also need positive behavioral instruction" (1998 p. 1). The majority of teachers at Site A and Site B use some type of positive discipline. This could be in the form of rewards or praise for individual behavior or whole class behavior. Despite a teacher's attempts to diminish disruptive behavior, the decline of family structure in today's society can have an overwhelming effect on students.

Family Structures

Family structure can affect the behavior seen in school children. There has been a great decline in the family structure. As stated by Albright, "Analysis of data revealed that students inability to act appropriately in a classroom maybe due to a decline of the family structure..." (1995 p. 27). The decline of family structure indicated by this researcher included an increase in single parent homes and unmarried parents. Eitzen (1992) says that "Children from single-parent families are less likely to be high achievers; they are consistently more likely to be late, truant, and subject to disciplinary action; and they are more than twice as likely to drop out of school" (p. 588). Children have a basic need for love and belonging. When these needs are not being met a child will seek attention in other ways. Burke agrees by stating, " As long as students' needs for love, belonging, caring, and sharing are not being met, they will continue to act out these frustrations" (1992, p. xvi). According to the Teacher Survey distributed by the teacher researchers, most teachers believe that behavior problems stem from home. Good behavior is not stressed enough by parents. As seen in the Parent Survey, a low percentage of children that always speak and act appropriately towards their parents. This shows that children are behaving

inappropriately at home. This behavior is transferred into the classroom. The lack of family structure contributes to underdeveloped social skills in children.

Social Skills

A lack of social skills adds to the disruptive behavior that is found in classrooms. Students that lack social skills usually have difficulty resolving conflict, struggle to work with other students, have less regard for rules, and fail to internalize the repercussions felt by others when they break a rule. Kohn states, " ...along with nurturance and warmth, someone to model altruism, opportunities to practice caring for others, and so forth is not to be found in all homes" (1991, p. 499). The inability to practice basic acts of kindness and to follow rules that have been emphasized by a child's caregiver will lead to similar practices by the child in a school setting. According to Black, "Students need to develop a "moral compass" so they can choose actions that are right over those that are wrong" (1994, p. 45). She continues to stress that, "...good behavior is not stressed by parents at home" (Black, 1994, p. 45). Students need to learn how to interact with each other, recognize their feelings and others' feelings, respect differences, cooperate, manage their emotions, listen to others ideas and opinions respectfully, and communicate their feelings and ideas effectively. In lacking these skills, students are more apt to disrupt the class. For example, a student that has difficulty managing their emotions could have an outburst of sadness or anger in school. Excessive outbursts will disturb other students in the class, and at times, interrupt a lesson in progress. These basic social skills can be absent in homes and in a school's curriculum, but they are an essential part of intellectual and emotional development. In turn, lack of these social skills will affect a child's successfulness as a student and as an adult.

Curriculum

A school's curriculum could also be the cause of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Many times the material that is taught is not at the appropriate level for the child. "A lot of students' misbehaviors occur when they are bored (the material is too easy) or confused (the material is too hard)" (Prater, 1992, p. 25). In addition, many spiral curriculums could create

boredom in students due to the repetition of certain material. At times, a curriculum may fail to have a direct link to a child's life which makes the information being taught less meaningful. Tracking could also negatively affect a child's behavior. Although it was designed to provide the appropriate level of instruction, it can label children. Black says, "... the real problem is that students who land in the lowest tracks almost invariably start on a downward spiral" (1994, p. 46). In addition to the curriculum, the way in which material is presented can have a large impact on student behavior.

Instructional Strategies

A teacher's instructional strategies could also cause disruptive behavior in the classroom. The difficulty level, lesson design, and the pacing of lessons could create disruptive behavior. "If students are restless, then the teacher should evaluate the difficulty level of the material and the amount of time spent in group instruction" (Prater, 1992, p. 46). A child may avoid completing an instructional task through disruptive behavior. Cipani confirms this by stating, "...students often use these behaviors to escape or avoid an instructional task. The off-task behavior serves as a useful way to postpone dealing with the task" (1995, p. 36). In addition, a long session of teacher directed instruction can cause off-task and disruptive behavior. According to Mulryan, "Findings show that students generally spent more time on-task, and especially more quality time on-task, in groups than in the whole-class setting" (1995, p. 297). More specifically, Prater states, "If the group activity was too long, or the pacing was too slow, students may become restless and ready to move on" (1992, p. 25). By not planning lessons according to the needs of the students, disruptive behavior could result.

There are many factors that can cause disruptive behavior in the classroom. At times, disruptive behavior is caused by the culmination of many factors that are intertwined. Physical factors such as medical, nutritional, and biological have an impact on a child's behavior. It is possible that teacher behavior, instructional strategies, and the curriculum can produce disruptive behavior in children. A lack of family structure and support can lead to a decline in positive behaviors. The absence of social skills being taught at home and in school cause disruptive

behavior. Disruptive behavior can have a devastating impact on students' educations. Disruptive students can interrupt the learning of others, decrease the amount of instructional time in the classroom, and can cause drastic changes in teacher behavior. Due to the negative effects that disruptive behavior has on learning, teachers must search for solutions. These solutions must be flexible and applicable to the classroom. Like the causes of disruptive behavior, many solutions must be used together to reach the desired atmosphere that a teacher feels is appropriate for his or her classroom. A variety of approaches are given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

There are several tools and procedures that can be used to diminish disruptive behaviors.

Some possible solutions to lessen disruptive behavior in the classroom are physical factors,

teacher behavior, social skills, character building, and curriculum and instructional strategies.

Physical Factors

To increase positive behavior in the classroom and decrease the amount of disruptive

behaviors, physical factors, such as, medical and nutritional influence should be determined.

Students that have been diagnosed with an Attention Deficit Disorder can be medicated.

Medication will decrease the impulsivity of their behavior and increase their ability to focus

which can improve academic performance. Rabiner states, " It has been shown in numerous

studies that stimulant medication provides significant benefit to between 70% to 80% of children

with ADHD"(Rabiner, 1999, paragraph 4). He continues to add, " Available evidence suggests

that stimulants work by correcting a biochemical condition in the brain that interferes with

attention and impulse control"(Rabiner, 1999, paragraph 4). In addition to medication, teachers

need to implement behavior modification programs.

By understanding the learning characteristics of their students, teachers can create an

individualized program that can help a child become more successful in the classroom.

Rosenshine (1983) lists some strategies that have proven to be successful with ADD and ADHD

students as giving detailed and redundant instructions and explanations, providing many

examples, focusing on successful areas, targeting a few unacceptable behaviors with consistent

consequences, and providing praise for completion of tasks. For example, when a teacher gives a

list of multiple instructions an ADHD child should be given fewer instructions at a time with

repetition. As the child completes each given task, the teacher should provide praise for the completion of the specific task and focus on the child's strengths. In addition, the teacher should focus on a few, attainable behaviors. For example, a teacher should concentrate on one small behavior at a time such as, remaining in their seat. When successfully completing the task, the child should be given specific praise for their success.

Students also need to be properly nourished and educated about nutrition. Several studies have shown that hunger can greatly affect a child's academic performance. Pollitt, Leibel, & Greenfield state, " A test of speed and accuracy of response on problem-solving tasks given to children who did or did not eat breakfast found the skipping breakfast had an adverse influence on their performance on tests" (1991, p 1532). By eating a nutritional breakfast, students are more apt to stay focused and maintain a positive attitude during the morning hours. When being interviewed by Nicolai, Rees states, "They learn better, are more alert and attentive, and are more likely to participate in activities" (1999, p. 47). In 1966, Congress passed The School Breakfast Bill. This bill was designed to ensure that children from low-income families were provided with a nutritional breakfast. The implementation of food programs in schools have great benefits. In favor of a breakfast program, Bro, Shank, MaLaughlin, and Williams state, "Cooney and Heitman credited the school breakfast program with increased educational achievement, improved child health, increased school attendance, and decreased classroom disruptions" (1996, p. 111).

Educating children on proper nutrition will lead to healthier lifestyles by encouraging them to make healthy decisions. Health education should begin in kindergarten and continue throughout a child's school career. Triccoli (1993) concludes that educating children on proper eating habits and a balanced diet will lead students to make better decisions about the food they eat. In turn, many of the problems caused by lack of nutrition will be corrected if the students use the information learned and eat properly. Students will perform more accurately and maintain

concentration and focus. In addition to teachers educating children about proper nutrition, a teacher's behavior can reduce disruptive behavior.

<u>Teacher Behavior</u>

Teacher behaviors can have a great impact on student behavior and academic success. As stated by Walker, Audette, and Algozzine, " The success of each management level is dependent almost completely on how well they are managed by those above them" (1998, p. 12). There are many behaviors that a teacher can exhibit in the classroom. These include the establishment of classroom rules, modeling, positive discipline, praise, and a behavior management system. Teachers are responsible for setting the classroom climate and initiating a preventative program that eliminates the need for reprimanding poor behavior. Prater states, "Teachers should spend as little time as possible reprimanding students for misbehavior" (1992, p. 22). Instead, teachers should use preventative discipline by establishing classroom rules, modeling wanted behaviors, using positive discipline, and offering praise for good behavior. "The teacher must establish a warm and caring classroom climate and then work with the students to set the conditions under which they can develop their own sense of responsibility" (Burke, 1992, p. xxv). The first thing a teacher must do to create a caring classroom climate is to establish classroom rules to provide a sense of safety for the students.

<u>Classroom Rules</u>. The creation of classroom rules is the first step in decreasing disruptive behavior in a classroom. Taking into consideration the rules designed by the district, a teacher needs to ensure that each rule describes a specific behavior. The development of classroom rules is a job that should be done together by the teacher and the students. Heneley supports this by stating, "Develop classroom rules together so that the rules are initiated by students rather than forced upon them" (1997a, p. 44). Rules should be stated positively, clearly, and behaviorally. Petrie, Lindauer, Bennet, and Gibson agrees by stating, "The rules should be short, simple, and consistently enforced" (1998, p. 35). By stating rules positively, the atmosphere of the class remains positive. Clear statements that identify wanted behaviors will define the expectations of

the class and individual behavior. The following is a sample of possible classroom rules that fit the criteria discussed above: raise your hand to speak, keep your hands and feet to yourself, listen when others speak, always try your best, and speak with an appropriate voice. Once the class has established a list of rules, it is important that they are discussed. The students must understand the rules and the rationale behind them. After the rules are discussed and agreed upon, the next step is to come to a consensus about the consequences for violating a rule. The consequences should be consistent and relate directly to the rule they have broken. Possible consequences for breaking rules could include: verbal warnings, loss of recess or free time, phone calls home, letters home, and student journaling. Student journaling allows students to reflect on their past behavior while identifying better ways to have dealt with a situation. In addition, journaling should be done during a time when other students are at recess or enjoying free time. Each child should receive the same consequence for breaking the same rule. The teacher must also abide by the established classroom rules to set an example for the students.

Modeling. Modeling can be one of the most effective and devastating components on a child's behavior. After completing over 40 studies, Evertson and Harris (1992) found that a teacher's actions have the greatest impact on students' behavior and students' learning in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for modeling behavior and setting an expectation level towards learning. This includes actions and attitudes that are displayed in the classroom. A teacher should promote the classroom rules, but also have genuine interest in the material being covered and display a positive attitude towards learning. According to Black, "Effective teacher/managers weave their instructional and discipline strategies together" (1994, p. 45). Teachers must avoid power struggles with students by using a firm but compassionate tone of voice. Bowers and Flinders (1990) feel that the proper use of prosody can convey caring, empathy, and warmth, as well as a love for teaching and learning while disciplining students. Teachers that model responsibility, compassion, respect, and empathy seem to transfer these qualities to their students. Teachers can model responsibility by explaining that they too need to

bring work home and complete it for the next day. Teachers model compassion and empathy by listening closely to their students when they are expressing their feelings. Respect is also modeled by listening to students when they speak and accepting their opinions and ideas. In addition, a teacher that models a positive attitude and focuses on positive behaviors will encourage the students to do the same.

Positive discipline. The use of positive discipline in the classroom will promote positive behavior. Positive discipline focuses on the wanted behaviors and ignores the unwanted behaviors. LePain discusses a teachers job when using positive discipline, " My job? To be ever alert for opportunities to reinforce the desired behaviors! I ignore most negative behavior, and praise the child who makes the right choices" (1998, p. 23). Shandler (1996) reminds educators that positive discipline requires immense teacher discipline because focusing on negative or unwanted behaviors is more natural than focusing on the positive and ignoring the negative. In order to effectively utilize a positive discipline program, a teacher must reinforce the positive behaviors and ignore the negative behaviors. In addition, a teacher must do this consistently. Camp states, "Consistency is the key to success- finding time to reward positive behavior and follow through with consequences for negative behavior" (1998, p. 24). Although a teacher must focus on positive behavior, any violation of classroom rules must receive a consequence.

Positive discipline programs can be in the form of a token economy. This type of program lets the students earn tokens for positive behavior. After earning the tokens, they can trade them in for a reward. This can be done in many ways. The key is to give the students a reward for positive behavior. Once a reward is earned it cannot be taken away in spite of any negative behavior. Positive discipline can be a very effective strategy in diminishing disruptive behavior in a classroom. It can also help in creating a positive atmosphere. A key component to positive discipline is praise.

Praise. In relation to positive discipline, a teacher must praise students. According to Dinneen (1998), praise is the best approach:

After thirty years of teaching, I have tried many discipline approaches. The most

successful one I found is also the simplest: give appropriate praise for good behavior. Tell

students how wonderful they are when they are wonderful, and you'll have children eager

to learn. (p. 25)

Focusing on positive behaviors sets a positive tone in the classroom. Warian (1998) agrees with

this strategy by explaining how children are used to hearing complaints instead of positive

affirmations. One strategy used by Hewlett (1998) in the classroom is to write the names of

children on the board who have displayed positive behavior instead of those that have showed

negative behavior. This serves as a visual reminder that the teacher is looking for students that

are behaving well not poorly. At times, praise is not sufficient. A behavior management system

must be used to ensure that students are following the rules.

Management system. Although classroom rules have been established, the teacher models

wanted behavior, positive discipline is used, and the teacher praises students, rules will still be

broken. In these cases, a teacher must have a management system that will clearly state the

consequences for breaking rules. For example, using the 1,2,3...Take 5-Not Negotiable

management system provides students with a warning and a nonnegotiable consequence. Phelan,

the creator of this system, states," This method is simple, yet effective-and it's easy for you and

your students to learn" (1998, p. 32). All students begin with a zero. When using this method

students are given a number when displaying unwanted behaviors or when they break a rule. The

numbers increase to three if the behavior continues. When a student reaches a three they must

take a five minute time-out away from the other students. This process can be done nonverbally

or verbally, but firmly. In using this method Phelan explains the benefits, "There is no extra

talking and no extra emotion as a result, you stay calmer, and the kids see that your authority is

not negotiable" (1998, p. 32). This method does not allow for rebuttals from students. It is

efficient and has several benefits. Some of the benefits listed by Phelan (1998) are a decrease in

the amount of wasted time on disciplining students, it does not wear the teacher out, and discipline is dignified.

One problem with this system is that students are not allowed to explain their behavior. For example, a teacher hears a child talking in class and gives that child a number. The child has been nonnegotiably disciplined, but that child could have been helping another student find a page in the textbook, sharing their supplies, or asking another student to stop talking. The teacher has unfairly disciplined a child. In turn, this child will not want to help other students in fear of being disciplined. In some situations a child should be allowed to defend their behavior. Another problem with this approach is teacher bias. A teacher may have different expectations for different students. For example, a child that constantly talks in class may receive a number immediately as opposed to a child that rarely talks in class, or vice versa. Another example of a teacher making a biased decision could involve a child that has a medical condition. Their behavior may be overlooked due to their diagnosis. A management system will provide students with boundaries and consistency when they are being disruptive in class. If the system is not implemented properly it could create greater problems. A teacher must emphasize consistency of consequences with all students while maintaining a position of authority. In addition to providing a behavior program that emphasizes positive behavior and strives to eliminate unwanted behaviors, teaching social skills in the classroom is important.

Social Skills

Through the teaching of social skills, student responsibility is increased. This allows students to stay on-task, have increased focus, and display greater concentration while working in academic areas. Burke supports this by stating, "Teaching cooperative social skills to students will help them develop interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and an internal locus of control" (1992, p. 41). Cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and problem solving skills can be used to teach social skills in the classroom.

Cooperative Learning

This type of student grouping is when one or more students work together to obtain an academic and a social goal. " This model incorporates team work, higher order thinking, social skills, leadership roles, and active learning in the classroom" (Burke, 1992, p.xv). The teacher is responsible for creating role cards for the students. These cards include various jobs such as recorder, presenter, material manager, encourager, time keeper, and illustrator. A recorder is responsible for any written portion of the project. The presenter will share the groups completed work with the rest of the class. The material manager is the only person in the group that can move around the room to get supplies that are needed. The encourager supports the group through praise and positive reinforcement. The time-keeper is responsible for watching the clock and keeping the group on task. The illustrator draws and colors all the pictures needed for the group's presentation. The jobs are defined by the teacher prior to grouping, and every child in the group has their own job. This eliminates any arguing over jobs and ensures that each child is responsible for a certain portion of the project. It teaches the child that everyone must participate in order to complete the work and that each of them play an important role.

By using cooperative learning, the focus on one social skill is emphasized. The importance of selecting, defining, monitoring, and reflecting on one social skill when working in cooperative groups was highlighted by Cheryl Carper during the fall course of Cooperative Learning at St. Xavier University. The social skill is clearly defined before entering groups. While the students are working, the teacher or a student monitors the class looking for good examples of the social skill amongst the students. When the lesson is finished, the monitor shares what they saw and heard during the group work. This makes students more aware of their behavior, and in turn allows them to make changes where needed. While researching cooperative learning, Tinzmann, et al (1990) reviewed work done by Johnson & Johnson which stated, "Students continually need to reflect on their interactions and evaluate their cooperative work" (p. 6). By discussing and highlighting positive examples of the social skill, students are more

inclined to change their negative behavior. For example, when providing a list of students that were successful with the chosen social skill these children are being given public praise for their behavior. According to Bellanca and Fogarty (1991) a key component to cooperative learning is the processing of the social skill as a class. Processing the social skill makes the students think about how they did behaviorally and socially. In addition, the teacher could list interactions that were examples of the social skill the students were working on. Processing can be done with a simple thumbs up or thumbs down or could be as advanced as student journaling about how their group worked. Cooperative learning can then be applied to different situations. Bellanca & Fogarty stress this by stating, "The primary means for resolving behavior difficulties is to teach students how to apply the social skill in new and different situations" (1991, p. 62). Cooperative learning can be more meaningful for students because they take more responsibility for their behavior and accomplishing a common goal. Like cooperative learning, conflict resolution places the responsibility of behavior management on the students.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is presenting a problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and reaching the best solution for all members involved. Inger defines it as, " ...a constructive approach to interpersonal and intergroup conflicts that helps people with opposing positions work together to arrive at mutually acceptable compromise solution" (1991, p. 1). This can be done as a class or student to student. It allows the teacher to step back and let the students reach a plausible solution on their own. It is also a learning experience for the children. This is supported by Inger who states, "The programs emphasize learning from experience, with teachers serving as facilitators or coaches" (1991, p. 1). When conflict resolution is used within a classroom, lessons are designed to promote problem solving skills and positive ways to resolve problems among students. As an entire class, these lessons can be integrated into the acting curriculum. For example, reading aloud and discussing stories about conflict and resolution to younger children will introduce them to the skills needed to resolve conflict. By allowing the students to discuss

possible solutions to the characters' problems, it allows them to internalize the effects of their decisions. Students in the elementary years of education could identify ways to resolve conflict when reading folk tales, fairy tales, and any self-esteem book. This literature can be implemented into any curriculum. Conflict resolution can also be applied in peer mediation programs.

Peer Mediation

Another form of conflict resolution is peer mediation. Peer mediation is when two students with a conflict try to reach a solution through the use of a mediator. This mediator is a peer that has been trained by a staff member in a school district to help fellow students work through problems and disagreements. A peer mediation program can be successful at all ages, but they become increasing successful as the mediators mature. For example, Site B has implemented a peer mediation program in which students can become peer mediators only after they reach fourth grade. In addition, peer mediators from the fourth grade or above are used to mediate with younger grade levels. In addition, Trevaskis states, "At the elementary school level, mediators generally work in teams on the playground, in the lunchroom, or in the classroom" (1994, p. 1). Students in younger grades are usually trained to work in teams instead of individually. When a problem occurs between two students, the first step is for them to sit down together with a mediator to discuss the situation. Each child explains what happened, how it made them feel, and offers possible solutions to the initial problem. The students must then agree on a solution to the problem. This process helps children internalize the repercussions of their behaviors. Meyers emphasizes this when commenting on Carl F. Shuler's mediation program as stated in Lundstrom's article (1999):

> Just by sitting through the process of listening to someone else tell his or her story, they learn. Because they come up with the solution themselves and agree to it, they have to keep their word. They then take that process outside the mediation. (p. 26)

Once again an emphasis is placed on student responsibility. Marshall supports the concept of conflict resolution. He feels, "An effective discipline program has the student acknowledge

inappropriate behavior, self-evaluate, take ownership, and develop a plan for improvement"
(Marshall,1998, p. 38). Conflict resolution can be included in a school's curriculum. Conflict
resolution is an essential skill needed throughout life. It transfers from school to home and
eventually into the work place. Another component of conflict resolution is problem solving.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is a necessity in the classroom and in life. It poses as the foundation to
all decision making. Britz emphasizes the importance of problem solving by stating "...including
problem solving in the early childhood classroom, we equip children with a life-long skill that is
useful in all areas of learning" (1993, p. 1). Problem solving is a skill that is taught in class as an
academic skill, but can transfer over and affect a child's social development. Britz (1993)
identifies the four sequenced steps of problem solving as identifying a problem, brainstorming
solutions, selecting and testing a method for solution, and evaluating what happened. It is
important to remember that not all problems have a single solution, and at times, there may be no
solution at all. When students are problem solving it is important for them to respect other
students' ideas and opinions. Problem solving is used in all stages of life. For example, when
children learn to solve story problems in math they must identify the problem/question, decide
which information is important, select the appropriate computational method, use the information
and method to reach a possible solution, check their solution, and repeat the process if the
solution does not make sense. Problem solving extends beyond the classroom into the social lives
and family lives of students and adults. When people are confronted with problems in life they
use the same process to reach a plausible solution. For example, a mother that must pick up her
children from school and take children to after school activities must follow problem solving
steps. First, she must identify the problem. Next, she must develop a plan in order to pick up and
drop off all her children. Then she needs to test the plan, to see if it properly and efficiently
works. After she has tested the plan she will make changes in the plan based on where it failed.
Successful problem solvers tend to have a positive self-image which relates closely to a person's

self-esteem, self-discipline, and motivation. These qualities of a person are the focus of character education.

<u>Character Building</u>

As social skills are taught to help a student or person interact with other individuals in a positive and fair way, character building teaches individuals positive traits that society would like them to have. For example, character building focuses on self-esteem, self-discipline, and motivation. These are inseparable parts of a child's expectations of themselves that minimize risk behaviors, improve achievement, and develop overall morals.

Knoblock (1997) has developed a program, for kindergarten through eighth grade students, to help promote the six building blocks of character. These building blocks include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Knoblock believes, "[students] need to develop a set of core values that they can call on throughout their lives to guide their attitudes and behavior" (1997, p.3). In her program, she provides ideas, activities, and reproducibles for each trait. For example, she provides discussion starters for each trait which teaches the students the meaning of the word. Literature that will reinforce the traits are also included in the resource book. Other activities included are role playing suggestions, pledges for different traits, individual reflection ideas for the students, and worksheets that emphasize each trait. It also includes motivational cartoons and awards, open-ended discussion cards, and a bibliography of references for teachers to use. Letters to parents and ideas for them to use at home encourages a link between the school and home. This program provides many resources to the teacher. This is very beneficial because it is broken into the six sections. It is also very easily implemented into the curriculum of kindergarten through eighth grade. Despite the many resources, the same character traits are used throughout all younger years in school. There could be conflict over the most appropriate traits to use, especially as the children age and face different problems. In addition, establishing parent support may be difficult. This type of program should be reinforced at home.

Many character building programs can be part of a school's curriculum. For example Lundstrom (1999) discusses The Hartwood Ethics Curriculum for Children. This program uses multicultural literature to present seven universal values to younger students. Through the use of award winning books, activity guides, and a teacher's guide, the students learn core values which will help them in life. The program is implemented through all areas of the curriculum. The universal values are introduced through literature, but then can be emphasized in all subject areas. For example, when discussing the value of courage, the students might have to select a courageous character and provide an explanation for their choice. Courage will also be discussed if a child feels anxiety towards a new skill (Lundstrom, 1999).

Self-esteem, self-discipline, and motivation all focus on a child's feelings and responsibilities. To diminish unwanted behaviors in the classroom all children must feel a sense of self-worth. This can be reached by combining self-discipline and motivation. Ornstein states, "Research into motivation and concepts of students' aptitudes and attitudes emphasize the importance of encouraging students to take responsibility for their own performance" (1994, p. 27). A great emphasis is placed on student responsibility by Thompson (1994) also. He reminds teachers that all discipline approaches have two goals: to preserve an environment devoted to learning and to develop self-discipline in all students (Thompson, 1994). Again, an emphasis is placed on student responsibility and the development of life long skills. The use of any character building program must be supported throughout the entire curriculum of kindergarten through eighth grade.

Curriculum & Instructional Strategies

Curriculum and instructional strategies are linked to the development of a child's self-esteem. The material being covered in a classroom must be relevant to a child's life, challenging but not frustrating, and purposeful. The child must feel successful in the classroom. Small (1997) highlights these ideals through the ARCS Model of Motivation in Instructional Design. The ARCS Model has four components for motivating instruction which include

attention, relevance, confidence to ensure success, and satisfaction (Small,1998). Ornstein states, "If tasks are too difficult, students will quickly become frustrated and lose self-confidence" (1994, p. 30). A teacher must first find a comfortable pace for students. This can be done by using assessment techniques. Rudner states, "Systematic data-gathering and recordkeeping can result in better classroom grouping, better decisions about individual students, and better pacing of instruction" (1991, p. 1). Some examples of student assessments include interviews, essay questions, informal observations, and formal observations. Also, information can be provided through parents, past teachers, and student files. Using many of the same techniques, a teacher can identify what types of learning a child prefers. For example, a child that excels in writing may also be a strong reader. A teacher should recognize this and provide the student options that are linked to writing and reading skills for final evaluations. This is important because teachers need to provide the best education to children.

In addition to providing proper pacing and strategies for students to learn, a teacher must consider individual differences among students. For example, the researcher at Site A found a large difference in her new students' reading abilities. When the first graders entered school in August, a few could read sentences while some were unable to identify letters in the alphabet. These differences can make a reasonably simple task for one student difficult for another. Through teaching experience the researchers have found that it is important to consider the various ability levels in a classroom and the different learning modes. A teacher must individualize instruction. For example, when a child struggles with a skill like long division, a teacher should modify the practice lessons. This will decrease the amount of frustration felt by the student. The use of multiple intelligence lessons will also help individualize learning. Multiple intelligence is a theory that suggests that all people possess eight different intelligences. These intelligences are verbal/linguistic, mathematical/logical, spatial/bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist (Lazear 1999). Howard Gardner created this theory in 1983. He believes that each individual has all eight intelligences, but they are not

equally developed. Teachers need to provide activities that include all the intelligences. This will allow students to feel a greater level of success due to their comfort level with the various intelligences. Students should be given options when creating a product for assessment. For example, as a final assessment of a biography unit a teacher may offer the following choices for students: a time-line of a person's life (Mathematical/Logical), a written report (Verbal/Linguistic), a presentation (Interpersonal & Verbal/Linguistic), a song to highlight their life (Musical), writing a reaction journal to the biography (Intrapersonal), or creating a poster about the person (Visual/Spatial). They also need to strengthen their other intelligences by exploring them.

After reviewing possible solutions, we decided to implement character education into our curriculums, utilize a positive discipline program, increase the use of cooperative learning in lessons, and create activities using all the multiple intelligences. Character education and cooperative learning were chosen because they promote positive self-esteem in students. They also strengthen student responsibility, morals, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills. Multiple intelligences were chosen to ensure that curriculum instruction appeals to all students. This will strengthen self-confidence and provide students with greater options. A positive discipline program will be implemented as a preventative means of curbing unwanted behaviors. We chose not to focus on physical factors or the curriculum because they are not areas that we can control. These areas must be remedied by the school district or legal guardians. The teacher behaviors of modeling and praise were not a focus because they are things that we are already doing in the classroom. We were looking to add possible solutions or amend our current classroom strategies to promote positive behavior.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of character building and teaching social skills through cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, and positive discipline during September, 1999 through December, 1999, the first and third grade targeted classes will increase time on task through decreasing disruptive

behavior. This will be measured by teacher anecdotal records, teacher checklists, student journals, and student, parent, and teacher surveys.

In order to accomplish the targeted objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Development and implementation of a character education plan that promotes positive self-esteem.

2. Development and implementation of a positive discipline program that promotes more appropriate classroom behavior.

3. Use of cooperative learning activities that promote and reinforce positive social skills.

4. Creation of activities from the multiple intelligences to increase students engagement in lessons.

Action Plan

I. Develop and implement a character education plan that promotes positive self-esteem.

    A. Every two weeks students will be introduced to a new theme word from Knoblock's character education program.

        1. Introduction of theme- 30 minutes

        2. Daily- 10 minutes

    B. Theme Words/Activities

        1. The theme words and possible activities will include:

            a. Respect: define, Role Playing Cards

            b. Responsibility: define, Create A Pet

            c. Caring/Kindness: define, Paper Plate Activities

            d. Trustworthiness: define, Team Building Activities

            e. Fairness: define, Discussion Cards

            f. Citizenship: define, Interview

            g. Acceptance: define, Pride Medals

    C. Assessments

1. Teacher observation

2. Student journal

3. PMI

4. Products from activities (business cards, paper plates, etc.)

II. Develop and implement a positive discipline program that promotes more appropriate classroom behavior.

   A. This program will be introduced on the second day of school and will be used throughout the year.

   B. Activities- 45 minutes

   1. Discuss importance of rules

   2. Generate list of rules

      a. positive wording

      b. student created

   3. Rules are posted

   4. Student contracts

   5. Discuss and generate consequences

   6. Introduce three step discipline program

      a. label three steps

      b. behavior journal

      c. parental sharing

   C. Assessment

   1. Teacher checklist

   2. Teacher observation

   3. Behavior journal

III. Use of cooperative learning activities that promote and reinforce positive social skills.

   A. These activities will be used in Math and Language Arts

1. Introduced once a week in Math and Language Arts

    a. Math- 45 minutes

    b. Language Arts- 45 minutes

2. Progressively increase number of lessons throughout the year.

B. Social Skills

    1. Use quiet voices

    2. Accept ideas of others

    3. Stay with your group

    4. Listening to others

    5. Encouraging

    6. Compromising

    7. Staying on task

C. Group Roles

    1. Recorder

    2. Presenter

    3. Encourager

    4. Material Manager

    5. Time Keeper

    6. Illustrator

D. Strategies to promote cooperation

    1. Thumbs up/thumbs down

    2. Student journaling

E. Graphic Organizers

    1. KWL

    2. Venn Diagram

    3. Webs

4. Sequence Chart

F. Assessments

    1. Group projects/presentations

    2. PMI

    3. Anecdotal notes from teacher

IV. Create activities from the multiple intelligences to increase student engagement in lessons.

    A. The lessons will begin in September

        1. Three intelligences each week- 30 minutes

        2. Vary intelligences used

    B. Activities

        1. Interpersonal- Cooperative learning activities

            a. role playing

            b. interviews

            c. business cards

            d. buddy reading

        2. Intrapersonal

            a. journal entries

            b. daily rating of behavior

        3. Verbal/Linguistic

            a. create a book

            b. write a folk tale

            c. reading trade books

            d. poetry

        4. Logical/Mathematical

            a. venn diagram

b. sequencing

c. patterning

5. Visual/Spatial

a. grid map

b. patterning

c. comic strips

d. portraits

6. Bodily Kinesthetic

a. role playing

b. manipulatives

7. Musical/ Rhythmic

a. writing to music

b. math songs

c. memorization chants

C. Assessment

1. Teacher observation

2. Anecdotal notes

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effectiveness of these interventions, the teachers will analyze students journals, teacher checklist, and anecdotal records to see if there has been a decline in the number of disruptions and an increase in appropriate behavior. In addition, students will complete pre and post surveys to determine if a change in behavior has occurred.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase time on task by decreasing disruptive behavior. The implementation of character education, a positive discipline program, cooperative grouping, and multiple intelligence lessons were selected to meet the project objectives.

A character education program was introduced and reviewed throughout the intervention. The theme words introduced to the students included respect, responsibility, caring/kindness, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship, and acceptance. The introduction of the theme words was done in 30 minute lessons. During this lesson the words were defined and posted in the classrooms. Introduction lessons included role playing and discussions. The original plan was to introduce a theme word every two weeks, but it was found that certain themes needed greater emphasis at the different grade levels. In addition to the introduction of theme words, we also implemented activities that focused and reviewed the theme word. Originally, the plan called for ten minute daily review lessons, but varying the amount of time spent on the theme words was decided by the individual needs of each class. The needs of the classes were supported by fluctuating the amount of time spent reviewing each theme word. Review consisted of lessons such as Buddy the Bear, Paper Plate Compliments, Team Building, Food Fair Share, Community Clean-Up, and Pride Medals.

A positive discipline program was developed by the researchers to promote appropriate classroom behavior. This program encompassed the establishment of classroom rules and consequences for breaking the rules and the three step discipline plan. When creating classroom rules the students at each site were responsible for

brainstorming a list of possibilities. The researchers prompted the students to use positive language when offering suggestions for the future classroom rules. Once the list was generated, the researchers narrowed the possibilities by grouping similar rules together. The class then prioritized the rules by voting on their importance. The rules were then posted in the classrooms. Students were also asked to sign a behavior contract that identified the rules and possible consequences for breaking them. The three step plan was also introduced to the students during the first week of school. This plan was used for circumstances that needed immediate termination. A visual was created and posted in both classrooms. At Site A the teacher used green, yellow, and red apples to identify the steps in this behavior plan. Green symbolized good behavior. The first yellow apple represented step one and was a verbal warning for disruptive behavior. The second yellow apple represented step two and the consequence of one lost recess. The red apple represented step three and signified that there would be a note or phone call home. The students at this site were also responsible for completing a behavior sheet when their clip moved to red. This sheet identified what they did wrong and how they planned to correct the behavior. The teacher at Site B used a similar approach. This teacher used a stop sign that was on the chalkboard. Students would write their names on the green light when they received a warning for their behavior. The would write their name on the yellow light for step two, and they would have to stay in for a recess. The red light was step three and it signified a note or phone call home. The students would have to write a note to their parents to identify what they did during the day to receive a three. In this note they had to list ways in which they could improve their behavior. In addition to using the three step program, students were asked to reflect on their behavior at the end of each day. The students at Site A completed a smiley face chart. The students at Site B wrote in a behavior journal.

Cooperative grouping was used by the researchers to promote positive classroom behavior. These activities were supposed to be done in language arts and math. The

researchers at each site found this model of teaching to be affective for all subject areas. The students were introduced to cooperative lessons during the second week of school. Included in this introduction was an explanation of why cooperative grouping was being used and how to work in groups. During this time students were introduced to social skills, group roles, and strategies to promote cooperation. An emphasis was placed on the processing of the social skill and the importance of cooperation. The researchers completed two or more cooperative lessons a week, but the subject areas varied by week. For example, one week the researchers taught cooperative lessons in math and language arts, and following week the researchers taught cooperative lessons in social studies and science. Each of the researchers used cooperative learning where it seemed most appropriate. At both sites, partner reading was used as a weekly cooperative activity. These cooperative lessons usually included the use of a graphic organizer to display the final product. Some graphic organizers used by the researchers were KWLs, venn diagrams, comic strips, story maps, and webs. In most cases, a final project needed to be presented to the class. The cooperative lessons were assessed by the final project/presentation, student and teacher PMIs, and anecdotal notes by the teacher.

Multiple intelligence lessons were used by the researchers to promote positive behavior by increasing student engagement in activities. The students were introduced to multiple intelligence lessons during the first week of school. The teacher researchers were suppose to implement different multiple intelligence lessons three times a week, but this occurred more often. Multiple intelligence lessons were used three or more times per day. For example, students thought metacognitively through daily journals, communicated through reading and writing, and logically used strategies to problem solve. The researchers only included seven of the eight intelligences in the action plan. The final intelligence, naturalist, was introduced in the classrooms through science activities. This was done through integrated thematic units. For example, the researcher at Site B had the students complete a nature walk in search of spiders and spider webs. This was done in

connection to a language arts unit on spiders. The students then had to write a paragraph to describe what they saw. In most cases, the researchers used more than one single intelligence per lesson. It was common to find two or more intelligences interwoven into one lesson. Another reason this intelligence was not included in the original action plan was due to the alternating cirriculum found at each site. Due to time constraints in the day, the researchers alternated between the science and social studies curriculums at each site. The multiple intelligence lessons were assessed by observations made by the teacher and anecdotal records.

The researchers followed the initial action plan except for the deviations mentioned above. There were several additional multiple intelligence lessons used throughout the intervention. Through the use of the action plan the researchers found the following results.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, the researchers used a checklist that included specific disruptive behaviors, anecdotal records of student behavior, a student pre-survey and post-survey, and student journaling or self-evaluation of behavior. To determine if a change in behavior had occurred due to the intervention, a second survey was given to the students at the end of the intervention period. This allowed the researchers to determine if the students had become more aware of their behavior in the classroom and what affects their behavior. The researcher's largest data collection was the behavior checklists. This checklist identified commonly observed behaviors. For extreme behaviors the researchers used anecdotal records to document the data. In addition, students at Site A completed a self-assessment of their day based on behavior and feelings. The students at Site B completed daily behavior journals in which the teacher commented on the students' reflections for the day.

Student Surveys

The results from the post-survey were compared to the initial survey that preceded the intervention. The results for Site A are displayed in Table 9 and the results for Site B are displayed in Table 10.

Table 9

Student Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Results For Site A

Question #	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
eat breakfast...	71%	59%	29%	35%	0%	6%
start work immediately...	76%	76%	19%	24%	5%	0%
turn work in promptly...	43%	65%	52%	35%	5%	0%
listen in class...	86%	82%	14%	18%	0%	0%
keep hands to yourself...	76%	71%	19%	29%	5%	0%
use quiet voices...	76%	59%	24%	41%	0%	0%
find supplies quickly...	86%	76%	14%	25%	0%	0%
keep desk clean...	90%	47%	10%	47%	0%	6%
sit appropriately...	71%	41%	14%	59%	10%	0%
raise your hand...	71%	71%	24%	29%	5%	0%
ask to get out of seat...	81%	82%	14%	18%	5%	0%
quiet in class...	86%	47%	14%	53%	0%	0%
bothered by walking...	57%	47%	0%	29%	43%	24%
bothered by talking...	81%	100%	5%	0%	14%	0%
bothered by touching...	71%	71%	5%	18%	24%	11%
bothered by interruptions..	71%	88%	10%	6%	19%	6%

The pre-survey was distributed to 21 students while the post-survey was only given to17 students. There was also a change in the class enrollment in which two original students left the district and three new students entered the class.

Table 10

Students Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Results For Site B

Question#	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
eat breakfast...	61%	70%	39%	30%	0%	0%
start work immediately...	30%	35%	57%	61%	13%	4%
turn in work promptly...	43%	17%	57%	83%	0%	0%
listen in class...	48%	61%	52%	39%	0%	0%
keep hand to yourself..	74%	83%	26%	17%	0%	0%
use quiet voices...	39%	48%	61%	52%	0%	0%
finds supplies quickly...	43%	56%	48%	44%	9%	0%
keep desks clean...	52%	52%	30%	44%	17%	4%
sit appropriately...	57%	61%	39%	30%	4%	9%
ask to get out of seat...	9%	13%	52%	65%	39%	22%
quiet in class...	22%	44%	74%	56%	4%	0%
bothered by walking...	4%	26%	30%	22%	66%	52%
bothered by talking...	83%	78%	17%	18%	0%	4%
bothered by touching...	57%	57%	33%	9%	13%	4%
bothered by interruptions..	87%	100%	13%	0%	0%	0%

The pre-surveys and post-surveys were completed by 23 students at Site B. Overall, there was an increase in the Always response category. The only questions that did not reflect an increase were turn work in promptly and bothered by talking. The Never category experienced a decrease in percentages.

The original intent for the pre-survey and post-survey was to see an increase in the Always category. At Site A this did not occur as frequently as wanted. Instead, the Sometimes category showed increase while the Always category showed decrease. The student responses in the Never category decreased also. In addition to student self-evaluation, the teachers kept behavior checklists throughout the intervention.

Behavior Checklists

The teachers at Site A and Site B kept a behavior checklist for each week during the intervention. When a student was observed disrupting the atmosphere, a tally mark was placed on the checklist. The original checklist included 15 disruptive behaviors that occur frequently in the classroom. After the baseline was completed, the checklist was condensed into nine categories. To identify any patterns or trends in the checklist, the researchers added the total number of disruptions per week and combined them into months. The total number of marks per month was then divided by the total number of days the teacher and students were present in the classroom. This was done because of teacher absence and school holidays. The results are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Average Number of Disruptions Per Day By Month

Month	Site A	Site B
September	34.6	31.3
October	23.5	34.0
November	12.1	28.5
December	14.5	23.5

A decrease in disruptive behaviors was found at Site A and Site B. Site A showed a slight increase in disruptive behaviors from November to December. This reflects the use of less structured activities and an increase of excitement for winter break. Due to the great number of disruptive behaviors found at Site B, the teacher researcher implemented

an additional management system. The students that received a tally for disruptive behavior were required to have a guardian sign a behavior sheet. This decreased the amount of disruptive behaviors from October to November. The researchers also documented behavior through the use of anecdotal records.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records were compiled based on need. The researchers used this documentation only in extreme cases. For example, a student at Site B had to be physically removed from the classroom after kicking his chair during a lesson. Many of the behaviors that were documented in this section include specific examples of disruptive behavior. Some of the behaviors observed by the teacher at Site A were stealing, burping in another child's face, poor behavior at an assembly, dancing in class, stomping on each others feet in line, and playing after the whistle blows at recess. Some of the behaviors observed by the teacher at Site B included kicking and hitting school materials, punching the wall, writing on desks, arguing with the teacher, swearing in class, yelling at other students in class, fighting, and teasing other students.

The anecdotal records identified extreme cases of disruptive behavior. The researchers found that the majority of these extreme behaviors were being performed by the same students in each class. They occurred inconsistantly throughout the intervention, but a pattern was found as to when they occurred during the day. For example, students at Site A exhibited more extreme behaviors during the afternoon hours. The students at Site B commonly displayed extreme behaviors after unstructured times of the day, such as after recess, lunch, and special periods.

The researchers found a decrease of extreme disruptions throughout the intervention. For the few students that continued to exhibit extreme disruptions, a consistancy of behavior was found when comparing the anecdotal records to the behavioral checklists. The students that were displaying extreme behaviors were usually the same students receiving a great percentage of disruptive behavior tallys. In addition to

behavioral checklists and anecdotal records, the researchers used daily self-reflections to identify changes in behavior.

Student Self-Reflections

The students at Site A completed a form at the end of the day that asked how the student felt and how they thought they behaved that day. The students were given a choice of good, okay, and not good through the use of a happy face, flat face, and grumpy face. This was done to encourage the students to reflect upon their behavior during the day. At the beginning of the intervention many students were circling the happy face despite their behavior. As the intervention preceeded, the students were aware of their behavior in the classroom due to the visual presence of the behavior checklist and the three step discipline plan. This helped them increase their awareness and reflect on their behavior more accurately. The researchers found that there was an increase in flat and grumpy faces due to an increase in behavior awareness.

At Site B, students completed a daily behavioral journal. They were given no restrictions as to what they could write. The students used this journal as a communication tool between themselves and the teacher. The journal also provided the students with a chance to assess their day. The teacher at Site B communicated with the students weekly on their progress in the class. This was done by writing in the students' journals. As the students began journaling many entries concentrated on the behavior of other students in the class. Any disruptive behaviors they exhibited were not discussed in their journal entries. The students gradually discussed their own behavior and ways to improve it. This was reinforced by the researchers weekly responses in the journals. Many of the students were consistently identifying there own disruptive behaviors as the interventions proceeded. They were also more apt to discuss their feelings freely due to confidentiality. The journal entries were very consistent with behavior checklists and the discipline program. The students would always discuss their feelings of remorse through their journaling after receiving a behavior number or a tally on the checklist. The

researcher at Site A had to use a form instead of a journal due to the young age of the students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers felt that the interventions were quite successful. Many of the students at both sites showed a decrease in the amount of disruptive behaviors displayed in the classroom. Although the students at Site A did not improve greatly on the Always category on the survey, the researchers felt there was an increase in their awarness of their personal feelings about behavior and the teacher's expectations. Student self-awareness could explain the decrease in the Always category because first grade students lack experience with self-assessment and behavior awareness. Through the intervention the students were taught how to reflect on their behavior. These daily reflections of behavior helped the students become more aware of their behavior in relationship to the teacher's expectations. The students' increasing awareness of behavior could be the cause for the decrease in the Always category at Site A. The survey results from Site B show improvement in the students' self-assessment of their behavior. Many of the behaviors in the Always category increased. Again, the researchers feel that the students developed a greater awareness of their behaviors and the teacher's expectations.

In addition, the researchers felt that the checklists showed the success of the interventions. The data clearly displays a decrease in the amount of disruptions per day. The decreasing amount of disruptions supports the success of the intervention. The anecdotal records highlighted the few students in each class that consistantly disrupted the class. A relationship was found between the behavior checklist and the anecdotal records. Students identified through anecdotal records were the students receiving the majority of behavioral tally marks.

The self-assessments showed that the students were reflecting on their day. It allowed them to think about their affect on the classroom's atmosphere. As the

interventions progressed, the researchers found that students were better able to describe their days accurately. They increased their awareness of their behavior.

The researchers feel that the intervention had sucessful and unsuccessful components. Some of the positive portions of the intervention were the use of behavioral journals, introducing a character education program, using cooperative learning and multiple intelligence lessons, using an individualized behavioral checklist, and the visual reminders of positive discipline program. In combination with clear rules, the positive discipline program provided recognition for positive behavior while having clear behavioral expectations. The cooperative learning lessons focused on social skills that are needed throughout a person's life. The multiple intelligence lessons allowed the students choices. The journaling made the students accountable for their own actions and provided a channel for communication with the teachers. The character education was a very important component. It was beneficial to all students. It reemphasizes or teaches basic morals and human quality. Character education promotes a caring and empathizing atmosphere which forces students to think about their actions and the effects they have on others.

Some areas that would need to be changed in this intervention include a simplification of the checklist, exclusion of extreme behaviorally challenged students, having easier access to the checklist, and providing a more fully developed character eduaction program that incorporates more literature. The checklist had too many behaviors listed. The researchers would eliminate the individual behaviors. For example, the researchers would not categorize the behaviors. They would mark disruptions per student and not by specific behaviors displayed. The researchers would also increase the use of anecdotal records to document more isolated behaviors. Excluding students that have been legally identified with behavioral disorders would cause less skewing of the results. Another suggestion would be to have multiple copies of the checklist in the classroom to promote easier access. For example, the checklists could be kept on the

chalkboard, at the teacher's desk, and on a traveling clipboard. Lastly, the character eduaction program should be spread throughout an entire year. It should include more activities that focus around pieces of literature. This can then be expanded on through independent activities. In addition, it should be implemented across the curriculum. The students should be applying the character traits during the entire day. This will reinforce the traits in the students.

The purpose of this research project was to decrease the amount of disruptive behavior in the classroom in order to increase time on task. We found that a combination of strategies were needed to successfully accomplish the objectives. The use of multiple intelligence lessons and cooperative learning lessons kept the students actively involved in their learning. In addition, a well developed and implemented character eduaction program is needed. We discovered that many students were unfamiliar with charcteristics that are beneficial to being a good citizen in the classroom and the world. Providing clear rules and expectations for students from the beginning of the year offers them structure, guidelines, and limitations. The use of all these strategies were found to impact student behavior in first and third grade. We feel that this type of intervention would have a positive influence on students of all ages. Through the research presented in Chapter 2, an increase of disruptive behavior was found. This type of intervention could help eliminate the disruptions occurring in classrooms. By reducing disruptions, one can increase the amount of time on task. In turn, this will create more time for the students to be actively engaged in learning. The ultimate goal of this action research project was trying to increase the amount of learning in the classrooms. By using a combination of charcter education, multiple intelligence lessons, cooperative learning lessons, and clear expectations this goal can be reached by all educators.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT SURVEY

Parent Survey

Directions: Please read the following questions and circle your answer.

Does your child:

1. follow directions?	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. have a clean room?	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. speak appropriately to you?	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. take responsibility for homework?	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. speak positively about school?	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. eat breakfast?	Always	Sometimes	Never
7. give school items to you on time?	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. behave appropriately in public places?	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. remain active at home?	Always	Sometimes	Never
10. have an easy time sitting still?	Always	Sometimes	Never
11. Does your family eat dinner together?	Always	Sometimes	Never
12. Do you eat dinner at the same time everyday?	Always	Sometimes	Never
13. Do you do things as a family?	Always	Sometimes	Never

14. Would your child rather watch T.V./play video games or play outside?

15. Please list any strategies you use to help your child behave.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY

Name_____

Student Survey

Directions: Please read the questions and circle your answer.

1. Do you eat breakfast?	Always	Sometimes	Never
2. Do you start your work right away?	Always	Sometimes	Never
3. Do you turn your work in on time?	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. Do you listen to your teacher in class?	Always	Sometimes	Never
5. Do you keep your hands to yourself?	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. Do you use quiet voices?	Always	Sometimes	Never
7. Can you find your supplies quickly?	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. Do you keep your desk clean?	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. Do you sit in your desk correctly?	Always	Sometimes	Never
10. Do you raise your hand?	Always	Sometimes	Never
11. Do you ask before getting out of your seat?	Always	Sometimes	Never
12. Are you quiet in class?	Always	Sometimes	Never

13. Does it bother you when someone

   is walking around the room?   Always   Sometimes   Never

14. Does it bother you when someone

   is talking out of turn?   Always   Sometimes   Never

15. Does it bother you when someone

   touches your desk?   Always   Sometimes   Never

16. Does it bother you when someone

   interrupts you?   Always   Sometimes   Never

17. Do you think school is: Easy   Just Right   Hard

18. What subjects don't you like in school?

APPENDIX C

TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher Survey

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

1. Do you observe disruptive behaviors in your classroom?   yes   no

2. If yes, please list the most common behaviors that you observe.

3. What do you think are some causes of disruptive behavior in the classroom?

4. What strategies do you use to reduce or prevent these disruptive behaviors from occurring?

Name: _____

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