

INCREASING POSITIVE SPORTSMANSHIP IN ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
USING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS

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## Abstract

This action research project report was conducted because students' lack of sportsmanship skills in elementary school physical education was negatively affecting the physical activity level of many students. The teacher was spending classroom time giving attention to conflicts dealing with negative sportsmanship issues and therefore losing classroom time for students to be physically active. The purpose of this research project was to increase positive sportsmanship behaviors in 54 fifth-grade students, between August 27<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Students' performance in physical education was being negatively affected by negative sportsmanship behaviors. Students would spend time arguing, yelling, and sometimes even physical violence would ensue. As a result students were losing time when they could be physically active. The teacher researcher collected data from a student survey, teacher survey, parent survey, and weekly observation behavior checklist. During pre-documentation the teacher researcher found through the parent survey that 55% (n=17) of parents feel that sportsmanship is a problem at school. Through the student survey, many students 70% (n=38) reported that they would always tell the truth even if it means that their team would not win. Through the observation behavior checklist, the teacher researcher found that the most common incidents of negative sportsmanship were participants blaming their teammates for poor play and arguing.

After reviewing the literature, the teacher researcher decided upon weekly interventions including creating classroom rules, role-playing, journaling, and class discussions. Creating classroom rules allowed students to have ownership. Role-playing allowed students to interact with their classmates while learning methods to handle themselves in class situations. Journaling allowed students to reflect on their current level of sportsmanship and how they can improve and set goals for the future. Class discussions were guided by the teacher researcher to facilitate good conversation, and hopefully allowed students to realize ways in which they could improve their sportsmanship behaviors in certain situations.

The teacher researcher found that the students' feelings about their sportsmanship behaviors decreased as evidenced by the student survey results. After compiling the post-documentation results from the student surveys, there was a decrease in students' feelings of their sportsmanship behaviors as students reported 57% (n=31) that they make decisions that are fair for everyone involved. This is compared to 80% (n=43) of students reporting this in the pre-survey. Students also reported 63% (n=34) would always tell the truth even if it means their team would not win the game after the intervention period. This is compared to 70% (n=38) of students reporting this during the pre-survey. Both scores decreased from the pre-documentation results, which may have been caused by an increased awareness of students' perceptions of their sportsmanship behaviors.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Problem Statement and Context**

#### **General Statement of the Problem**

The teacher researcher identified sportsmanship behaviors as a weakness for students in physical education, and used a fifth-grade physical education classroom to conduct the research. The teacher researcher used a student survey, teacher survey, an observational checklist, and a parent survey to gather information about unsportsmanlike behaviors.

#### **Immediate Context of the Problem**

The action research was conducted in a public elementary school located in a western suburb of Illinois. This area was near the city of Chicago. There was one physical education teacher for grades kindergarten through fifth-grade involved in this study. The following were statistics derived from the school's 2011 Illinois School Report Card (ISRC) and Illinois District Report Card (IDRC).

The school was a large elementary school with grades kindergarten through fifth. There were 433 students enrolled at this school during 2010-2011. The ethnic background (by percentage) and overall total enrollment is listed on Table 1, which is found below. Table 1 provides information about the school, its district, and the state of Illinois. Notice there was a considerably higher percentage of Caucasian students in this school as compared to the average percentage of Caucasian students in the state. There was a very small percentage of all other racial categories as compared to the State average.

Table 1

*Total Enrollment and Student Ethnicity by Percentage*

|          | Caucasian | African American | Hispanic | Asian | Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | American Indian | Two or More Races |
|----------|-----------|------------------|----------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| School   | 98.4      | 0.5              | 0.7      | 0.2   | 0.0                              | 0.0             | 0.2               |
| District | 96.2      | 0.1              | 1.5      | 1.0   | 0.2                              | 0.0             | 1.0               |
| State    | 51.4      | 18.3             | 23.0     | 4.1   | 0.1                              | 0.3             | 2.8               |

The Illinois State Report Card (ISRC), 2011, states that 0.0% of the school was classified as low-income. According to the ISRC, low-income students have families who are receiving public aid, live in homes for neglected or delinquent children, the students live in foster homes, that receive public aid, or they are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch (ISRC, 2011, p. 1). This school's percentage of families who were considered low-income was much lower than the state average of 48.1%. The Limited English Proficient Rate was determined to be 0.0%, which was considerably lower than the state average of 8.8%. This school and its district had a 0% Chronic Truancy Rate, which was cited in the ISRC, are those students who were unexcused from schools for "18 or more of the last 180 school days" (p. 1). The Mobility Rate (ISRC, 2011), "which is based on the number of times a student enrolls in or leaves a school during the year", for this school was 2.1% (p. 1). According to the ISRC, this number was much less than the state percentage of 12.8%.

The school was within a district employing 96 teachers; 96.9% (n=93) were Caucasian, 0% (n=0) were African American, 2.1% (n=2) were Hispanic, 1.0% (n=1) were Asian, and 0.0% (n=0) were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Two or More Races. Of those teachers, 89.4% were women, and 10.4% were men. According to the Family Taxpayers Foundation in 2010, 100% (n=37) of teachers at this school had their bachelor's degree, which can be compared to 31.7% of the teachers in the district having their bachelor's degree and 39.5% of teachers in Illinois who had their bachelor's degree. At this school, 63.8% (n=23) had obtained their master's degree and above (Family Taxpayers Foundation , 2010).

Within the district, the school had 37 teachers. Of those teachers 94% (n=35) were women, and 6% (n=2) were men. The teachers in this district had an average teaching experience of 11.6 years. This can be compared to the teaching experience of 13.2 years for the state average (ISRC, 2011). Of the 96 teachers working within the district, 68.3% of the teachers had received their master's degree and above which was higher than the state average of 60.4% (IDRC, 2011). The teachers who were employed at this school earn an average salary of \$51,430 (Family Taxpayers Foundation, 2011) much lower than the district average salary of \$58, 738, which was lower than the state average \$64,978 (IDRC 2011).

This school had a population of 433 students, with a student/teacher ratio of blank, as compared to the district (18.4:1), and state (18.8:1). The pupil/administrator ratio at this school was blank, as compared to the district (175.3:1), and the state (211.3 :1). The average size of a kindergarten classroom at this school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 22.3, higher than the district average of 21.1, and the state average of 20.9. The average size of a first grade classroom at this school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 24.0, higher than the district average of 23.0, and the state average of 21.6. The average size of a second grade classroom at this

school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 18.0, lower than the district average of 21.9, and the state average of 21.8. The average size of a third grade classroom at this school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 26.7, higher than the district average of 23.0, and the state average of 22.3. The average size of a fourth grade classroom at this school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 25.0, higher than the district average of 23.7, and the state average of 22.9. The average size of a fifth grade classroom at this school, as defined by the ISRC, 2011, was 22.3, lower than the district average of 23.7, and the state average of 23.3.

The teachers at this school were committed to teaching the core subjects during regular school day. The academic programs in this school consist of the core subjects: mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. Other subjects the students participated in were art, music, physical education, library skills, and technology (kindergarten students only participate in library skills and physical education). Table 2 describes the amount of time that was devoted to teaching the core subjects, as found in the ISRC, 2011. Note the amount of time that this school devotes to English/Language Arts instruction, as compared to other core subjects.

Table 2

*Time Devoted to Teaching Core Subjects by Minutes per day*

|          | Mathematics | Science | English/Language Arts | Social Science |
|----------|-------------|---------|-----------------------|----------------|
| School   | 55          | 30      | 145                   | 30             |
| District | 55          | 30      | 145                   | 30             |
| State    | 60          | 30      | 143                   | 30             |



All students in grades three, four, and five participated in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The school's performances on the ISATs were described in Table 3. The school scored a remarkably different average than the state in third, fourth, and fifth grade. The largest range of scores were in the third grade reading scores where the school scored 24.1 percentage points higher than the state average score. The smallest range in scores was again in third grade mathematics scores where the range was 12.2 percentage points. In each grade and assessed subject area this school scored considerably higher than those averages of the state. Notice the mathematics scores for third and fourth grade scores in mathematics, which were in the one-hundredth percentile for that test.

Table 3

*Performance of Students Who Met or Exceeded on ISAT by Percentage and Grade Level*

## Grade 3

|          | Reading | Mathematics | Science |
|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| School   | 98.8    | 100         | --      |
| District | 96.2    | 99.5        | --      |
| State    | 74.7    | 87.3        | --      |

## Grade 4

|          | Reading | Mathematics | Science |
|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| School   | 96.0    | 100         | 97.3    |
| District | 97.6    | 97.6        | 97.6    |
| State    | 74.7    | 87.7        | 79.3    |

## Grade 5

|          | Reading | Mathematics | Science |
|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| School   | 95.5    | 98.5        | --      |
| District | 95.9    | 97.6        | --      |
| State    | 76.4    | 84.0        | --      |

The staff at this school included one principal, one assistant principal who was also a classroom teacher, one social worker that split time at our school and another school in the district. The school staff consisted of 37 full time certified staff members, 9 of whom were part-time teachers at this school, but fulltime teachers within the district, 2 part-time certified staff

members, and 3 full-time non-certified staff members. This school had two kindergarten teachers, one who taught in the morning and afternoon and one that taught only in the morning, three first grade teachers, three second grade teachers, three third grade teachers, three fourth grade teachers, and three fifth grade teachers. The school employed one part-time advanced math teacher, two special education teachers, one enrichment teacher, two speech teachers, one early childhood education teacher, one band director, one library learning center teacher, one music teacher that traveled to each of the three elementary schools, one administrative assistant, one orchestra director, three full-time Spanish teachers that taught at all three schools, one reading specialist, one social worker, one art teacher that traveled to all three schools, one full-time physical education teacher, two part-time physical education teachers that taught one class at this school and the rest of the day they were at their home schools, and one technology specialist. Two part-time therapists were employed by the Lagrange Area Department of Special Education and had students that they work with on a regular basis in their case load, one custodian that worked during the daytime hours and one who worked during the evening hours, three nurses who travel between the three schools within the district. The school also used an outside bus service to transport students to and from school, and to and from field trips.

The school was known for its active Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) involvement and the extra-curricular clubs offered to meet the wide-range of interests of the students. The clubs included a technology club, running club, chess wizards, student council, band and orchestra, junior great books (a reading club for students), science club, and the paw print newspaper. The tremendous parent support and involvement was another great accomplishment of the school. The PTO did a great job of raising money during various events such as wrapping paper sales, spirit wear sales, and a yearly fundraiser. The money that they raise was then given

back to teachers in the form of a “wish list,” grants, and purchasing of classroom needs like smart boards in 2008. The school also receives grant funding from an organization where teachers can apply for grants and received funding if their grant was deemed educationally important. Funds were gathered by yearly activities like a golf outing, auction, and other yearly events. One last accomplishment of the school was above average test scores the students’ achieve to make this a proud school within the community.

The school was a two-story building, which was built in 1950. In 1995, the school underwent renovations and building enhancements. This included a new wing with two classrooms and a gymnasium. The old gym then became a library. This school had 17 regular education classes, four resource classrooms, a library, an up-to-date computer laboratory, and a gymnasium that also served as a cafeteria. The school had a large library media center (LMC), one speech room, a main office that included the nurse’s office, the principal’s office, secretary’s office, and a conference room. All classrooms were equipped with a smart board, computers, Internet, whiteboard and a DVD player. Kindergarten, first, and second grade were located on the first floor, along with one set of student restrooms and one set of staff washrooms, gymnasium, main school offices, three resource rooms, and the LMC and computer lab. Third, fourth, fifth grade classrooms, one set of student restrooms, one resource room, support staff offices, the art and music teachers offices were located on the second floor. The second floor of the school was wheelchair assessable when using the elevators located in the middle of the first floor. The school also had the availability of using wireless Internet through an airport in any part of the classroom, which made it possible for students to work on laptop computers in the classrooms. The grounds consisted of a parking lot, one playground across the street maintained by the local park district, a baseball field, and a black top area consisting of hopscotch, four

square and a basketball court. Located in the front of the school there were two flowerbeds, which were planted and maintained by a parent that lived across the street.

### **Local Context of the Problem**

The school was located in a western suburb of the Chicago area. The population of the village in 2010 was 12,975, with males accounting for 48.4% of the total population, and females accounting for 51.6% of the total population (American Fact Finder, 2010). From 2000 to 2009 the population had grown 1.2% (City-Data, 2003-2011). According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, the median age for residents in this village was 42.2 years old. The median household income in 2009 for this town was \$121,926 (City-Data, 2003-2011.). The percentage below the poverty level in 2009 was 1.1% (City-Data, 2003-2011.). The information in Table 4 shows that 34.3% of the total population was under 19 years old and 14% were over the age of 65 years old (American Fact Finder, 2010).

Table 4

*Number of Persons by Age in Village (in years) In Percentages*

| 5 and Under | 6-19 | 20-64 | 65 and Over |
|-------------|------|-------|-------------|
| 6.2         | 28.1 | 51.6  | 14.0        |

Table 5 shows that the majority of the population was Caucasian, representing 96.8%. The village had 97.2% of the population earning a high school degree and 66.4% had a bachelors degree or higher (City-Data, 2003-2011).

Table 5

*Ethnic Background Percentages of Village*

| African American | Asian/Pacific Islander | Caucasian | Hispanic | Native American |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| 0.4              | 1.4                    | 96.8      | 2.8      | 0.1             |

The village had an average household size of 2.95 people and the average family size was 3.32 (American Fact Finder, 2010). The unemployment rate for the village as recently as March 2011 was 8.9% as compared to the state of Illinois' unemployment rate, which was 9.1% (City-Data, 2003-2011.). The most common occupations in this village were management, professional, and related occupations, which employed 61% of the population (Simply Hired, Village, n.d.).

The crime rate in the community (43.6) for 2010 was markedly lower than the U.S. average (319.1). To see the crime break down for the village see Table 6 below, noting that the majority of crimes were thefts (n=81) (City-Data, 2003-2011).

Table 6

*Community Crime Frequency of Village (n=107)*

| Crime       | Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|
| Murders     | 0         |
| Rapes       | 0         |
| Robberies   | 0         |
| Assaults    | 1         |
| Burglaries  | 22        |
| Thefts      | 81        |
| Auto Thefts | 1         |
| Arson       | 2         |

The Village, incorporated in 1886, was just a part of the vast holdings of the Potawatomie Indians. In 1836, shortly after the Black Hawk Wars, the Potawatomie sold their lands for \$30,000 in trade goods. One of the main groups to settle in the town was the Quakers. The town became a quiet, sparsely populated Quaker community for many years until Thomas Clarkson Hill, a leader in the Quakers, convinced the Burlington railroad line to make regular stops. The development of the village might have been more rapid if the mineral springs, for which the town was named, had not disappeared. The village was home to a charming downtown business district and tree-lined streets.

The town was a quiet, affluent village with beautiful homes on various sized, meticulously maintained lots. Over the past few years, many of the smaller housing units had been replaced with modern and significantly larger housing units. The village housing stock

was made up of almost exclusively high quality, single family-detached units ranging in value from \$350,000 to \$2,000,000+.

A quaint downtown district featured such retailers as a local hardware store, boutiques, a gourmet grocer and butcher, and coffee and ice cream shops. Recent additions included a fine dining restaurant, an Italian restaurant, popular sandwich shop, two wine shops, fitness center and many small retailers.

Reinvestment in the village continued at an unprecedented pace. In 2008, the Board of Trustees funded an accelerated infrastructure program by issuing more than \$6.5 million in road improvement bonds. A new train station was completed in 2005, which was reminiscent of the historic station, which served the village for so many years. Also constructed was one pedestrian underpass of the railroad right-of-way.

The Tower, which was located in the middle of town at the Village Green, was the symbol of the town. The Tower was a museum and housed exhibits, photographs, and information relating to the history of the village. The Tower was also the site for a number of community events, including the annual Gathering on the Green and Tower Trot. Other community events included holiday walks, craft shows, sidewalk sales and the weekly French market. The village boasts many other amenities including a library, the theatre of the village, a senior club, a private pool, a recreation center, park district, parks and playgrounds (West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011).

The recreation department offered a full range of activities through its two recreation centers and numerous programs in the parks. Programs range from summer camps, tennis instruction, sports, after school activities, basketball classes, early childhood and toddler groups, dance, music, day care, science, adult fitness and leagues. The Park District had an



individual taxing entity independent of the Recreation Department, which maintains over 80 acres of parks and provides 10 neighborhood parks, 1 community park, 15 tennis courts, and several soccer and ball fields. Little League offered baseball programs and the American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO) organized soccer. The town theatre was an area highlight having received critical acclaim time and again. A community pool was available on a membership-fee basis. The Bemis Woods Forest Preserve was north of the village along Salt Creek, offering picnic areas, bike trails, toboggan runs, cross country skiing, and nature studies. Nearly a dozen golf and country clubs were within 5 miles of the community. Other recreational activities are offered by twenty-four civic, fraternal and neighborhood clubs (Village of Village, 2011).

The district was composed of three elementary schools that fed into a middle school. The mission statement for the district was “A Place Where Children Thrive.” The school administrators included a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, coordinator of special services, and an assistant of special services. Each school had a building principal and an assistant principal that also served as a building teacher. According to the 2011 Illinois District Report Card (IDRC), in 2008 the district’s tax rate was \$2.28 per \$100. In the 2009-10 school year the instructional expenditure per pupil was \$5,819 compared to the State average of \$6,773. The 2009-10 Operating Expenditure per pupil for the district was \$9,480, as compared to the State \$11,537 (IDRC, 2011).

During the past two years, the school had made it an initiative to provide teachers with the latest in technology. Teachers had their own personal laptop. The computer lab had thirty computers and the school lets teachers borrow from two carts of thirty laptop

computers. Each classroom had a smart board equipped with a digital reader and DVD/VCR player.

### **National Context of the Problem**

A current trend that has emerged in youth sports programs seems to be leading away from providing opportunities to learn developmental skills such as sportsmanship and fair play, toward an overemphasis on competition and winning at all costs (May, 2001, as cited in Arthur-Banning, Paisley, & Wells, 2007). From one perspective, the code of ethics which directs sportsmanship is being oppressed in athletics now more than ever (Hayford, 1987, as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999). When winning becomes so important, competition goes beyond the rules of fairness and becomes conflict (Green & Gabbard, 1999). As stated by Simon (1983), “When winning is everything the destination supersedes the journey, thus diminishing or negating intrinsic rewards of sport participation” (p. 25, as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

### **Reflection**

As I reviewed the demographic data, specifically the family structure of students, the high achievement of parents in terms of education and income may lead to student pressure on performance. This pressure is not only seen in the academic realm, but occurs in athletics. I am wondering if student pressure in athletics may lead them away from positive sportsmanship behaviors toward winning at all costs.

Based on the literature that was reviewed, poor sportsmanship seemed to be more of a problem now than ever. Through negative influences in media, and an increase in the mentality that winning is everything, positive sportsmanship has given way to winning at all

costs. If students can identify unsportsmanlike behaviors, and model positive sportsmanlike behaviors with reinforcement, the hope is that they will become better sports.

## Chapter 2

### Problem Documentation

#### Evidence of the Problem

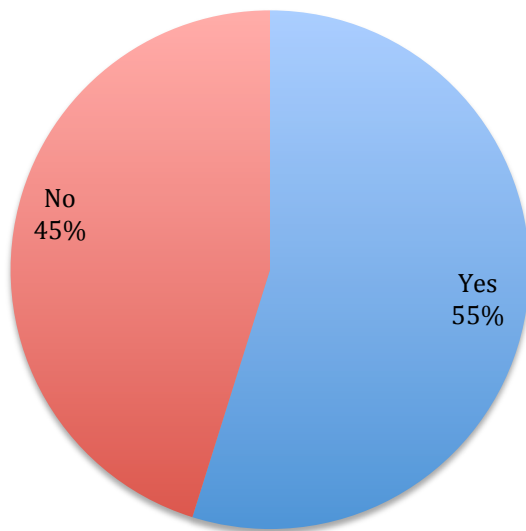
The purpose of this research project was to decrease negative sportsmanship behaviors in fifth-grade students during physical education. The teacher researcher collected data from a student survey, teacher survey, parent survey, and weekly observation behavior checklist. The teacher researcher collected data from 2 fifth-grade teachers, 54 student surveys, and 33 parent surveys. The teacher researcher then collapsed and analyzed the data. The pre-documentation data was collected from August 27, 2012 through September 14, 2012.

#### Parent Survey.

The purpose of the Parent Survey (Appendix A) was to establish the feelings of parents concerning their child's level of sportsmanship and reaction towards sportsmanship situations in physical education class. The Parent Survey was distributed to a total of 54 parents of the students in the teacher researcher's fifth-grade physical education class. Out of the 54 Parent Surveys distributed, the teacher researcher had a return rate of 61% (n=33). The survey contained four questions requiring parents to indicate their answers by circling their opinion on whether sportsmanship is a problem at school and if their child has reported a sportsmanship issue in physical education class, checking which behaviors they viewed as unsportsmanlike, and a likert scale rating their opinion on their child's level of sportsmanship. The Parent Surveys were given to the students to take home on September 10, 2012 with a return date of September 14, 2012.

The first question on the Parent Survey asked parents if they saw sportsmanship as a problem at school (n=31). They were given a choice of either yes or no, and asked to circle one

choice. The results in Figure 1 indicated that 55% (n=17) see sportsmanship as a problem at school and 45% (n=14) of the parents do not.



*Figure 1:* Parent survey question 1 (n = 31)

The second question on the Parent Survey asked parents if their child had ever reported an issue with sportsmanship in physical education class. They were given a choice of either yes or no and asked to circle one choice. The results in Figure 2 indicated that 52% (n=17) had their children report an issue with sportsmanship in physical education class and 48% (n=16) of the parents had not.

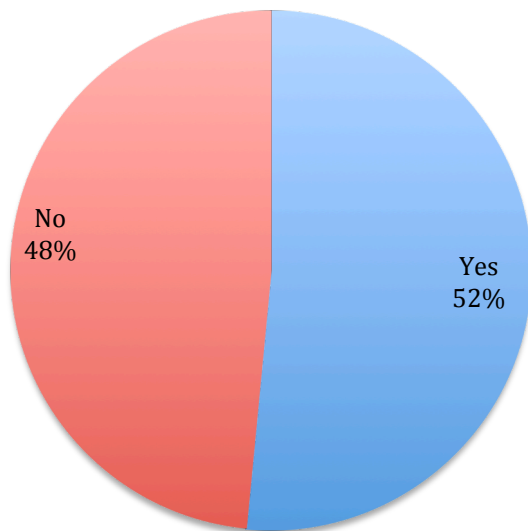
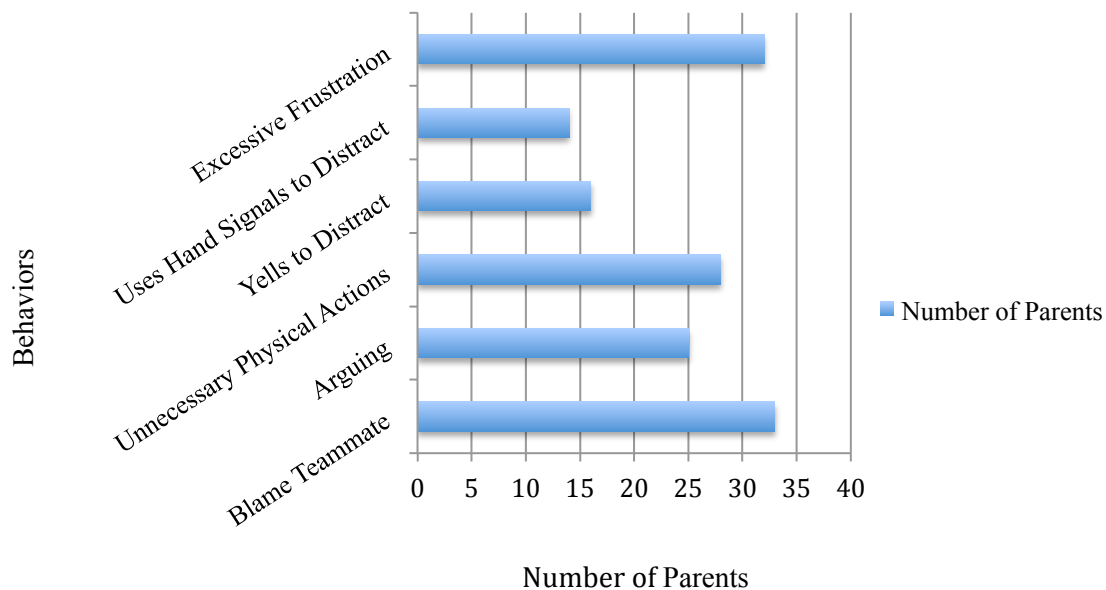


Figure 2: Parent survey question 2 (n = 33)

The third question on the Parent Survey asked parents which behaviors they viewed as unsportsmanlike and were asked to check all that apply. They were given the following choices: *Participant blames teammates for poor play*, *Participant argues with the opponent*, *Participants make unnecessary physical actions*, *Participant yells to distract an opponent*, *Participant uses hand signals or gestures to distract opponent*, *Participant shows excessive frustration with his/her teammates' performance(s)*, and *Participant demonstrates acts of aggression*. The results found in Figure 3 indicate the number of parents (n=33) that viewed each behavior as unsportsmanlike. The two most common behaviors that parents viewed as unsportsmanlike according to the Parent Survey were *Participant blames teammates for poor play* (n=32, 97%) and *Participant demonstrates acts of aggression* (n=32, 97%) followed by *Participants make unnecessary physical actions* (n=28, 85%).



*Figure 3: Parent survey question 3 (n = 33)*

The fourth question on the Parent Survey asked parents to rate their level of concern with their child's current level of sportsmanship. The parents were given a rating scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest level of concern. They were then asked to circle their level of concern. The results presented in Figure 4 show that most parents rated their level of concern as a 1 (n=16, 48%) followed by a rating of 2 (n=11, 33%). Only one parent rated their level of concern as a 5 (n=1, 3%) and 4 (n=1, 3%), respectively.

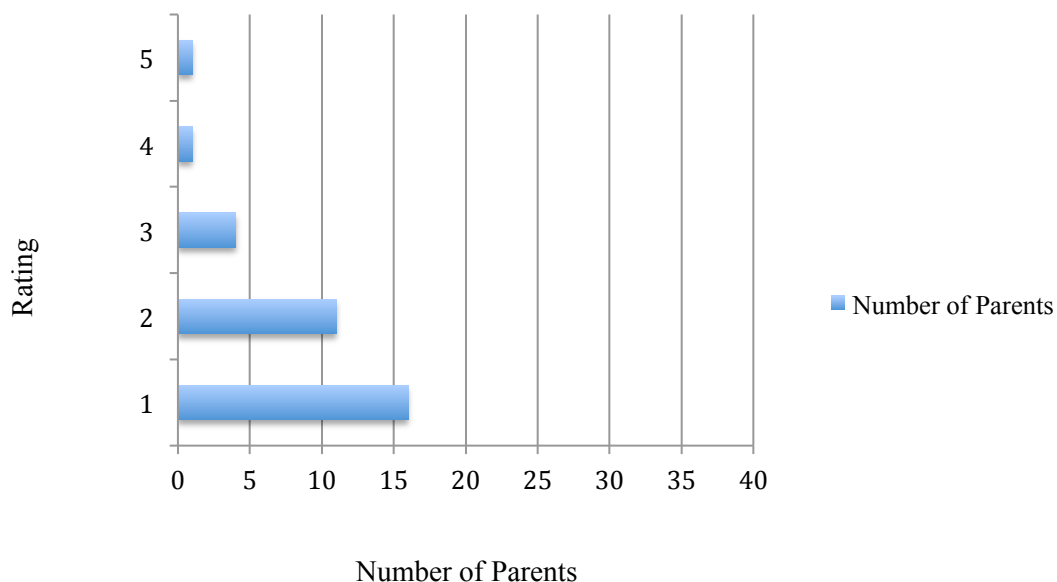


Figure 4: Parent survey question 4 (n = 33)

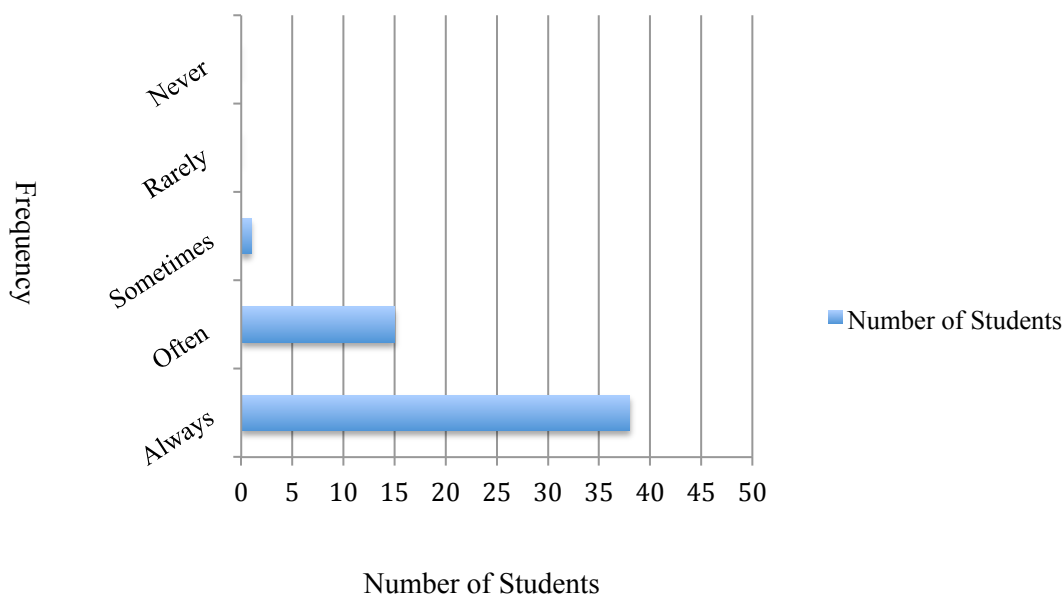
### Student Survey.

The purpose of the Student Survey (Appendix B) was to gain information about how often students engage in negative sportsmanship behaviors during physical education class. The student survey was distributed one time and collected the week of September 10, 2012 through September 14, 2012. The survey was given to 54 students in 2 fifth-grade physical education classes, all of whom completed surveys, therefore the return rate on the student survey was 100% (n=54). The survey contained seven questions, which addressed sportsmanship behaviors and asked students to rate how often they participate in each behavior on a likert scale with the choices: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*.

The first question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I tell the truth, even if it means my team might not win the game.” Students were asked to select one choice from the following: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Figure 5 below shows the majority of

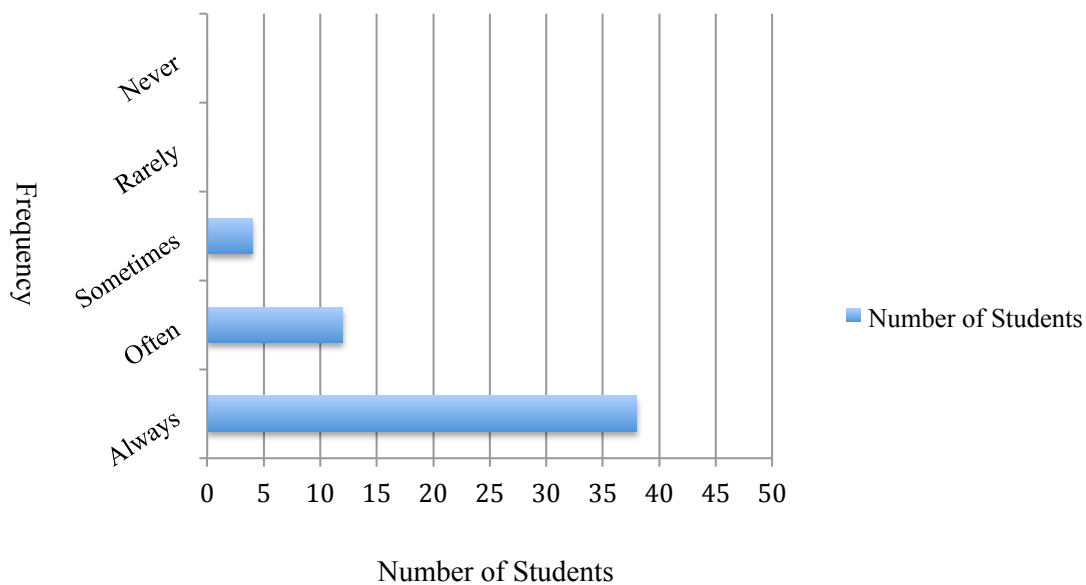


students (n=38, 70%) stated that they always tell the truth, while the next largest group of students (n=15, 28%) stated that they often tell the truth.



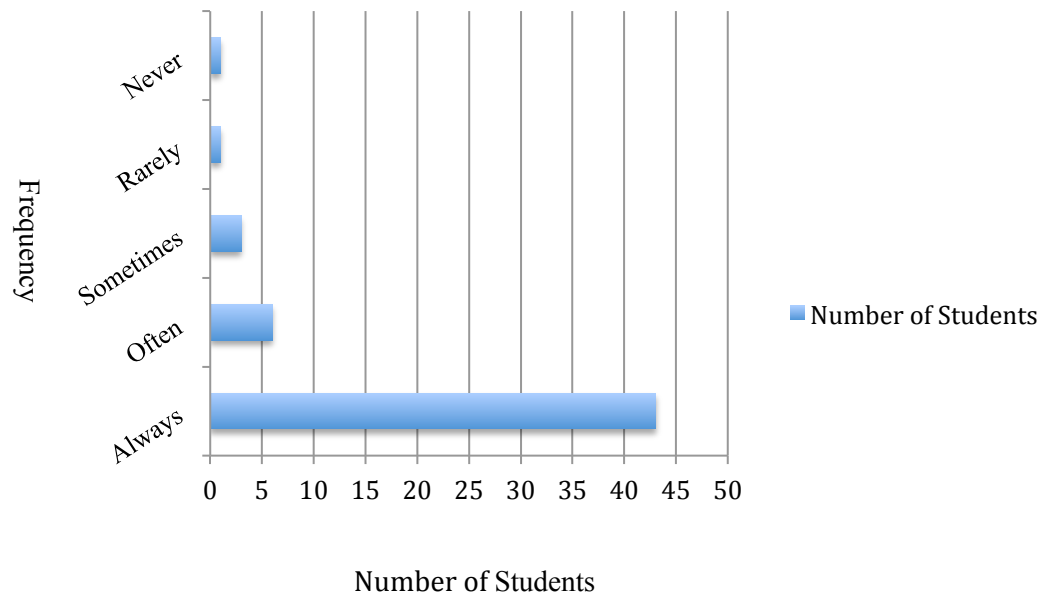
*Figure 5: Student survey question 1 (n = 54)*

The second question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I give my best effort to play by the rules.” Students were asked to select one choice from the following: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Figure 6 below shows the majority of students (n=38, 70%) stated that they always give their best effort to play by the rules, while the next largest group of students (n=12, 22%) stated that they often play by the rules.



*Figure 6:* Student survey question 2 (n=54)

The third question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I include or involve students on my team who are less athletically skilled than I am? Students were asked to select on choice from the following: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Figure 7 below shows the majority of students (n=43, 80%) stated that they always include everyone, while the next largest group of students (n=6, 11%) stated that they often include everyone.



*Figure 7: Student survey question 3 (n=54)*

The fourth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I take responsibility for my mistakes or “bad plays.” Students were asked to select on choice from the following:

*Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never.* Figure 8 below shows the majority of students (n=31, 57%) stated that they always take responsibility for their mistakes; while the next largest group of students (n=19, 35%) stated that they often take responsibility for their mistakes.

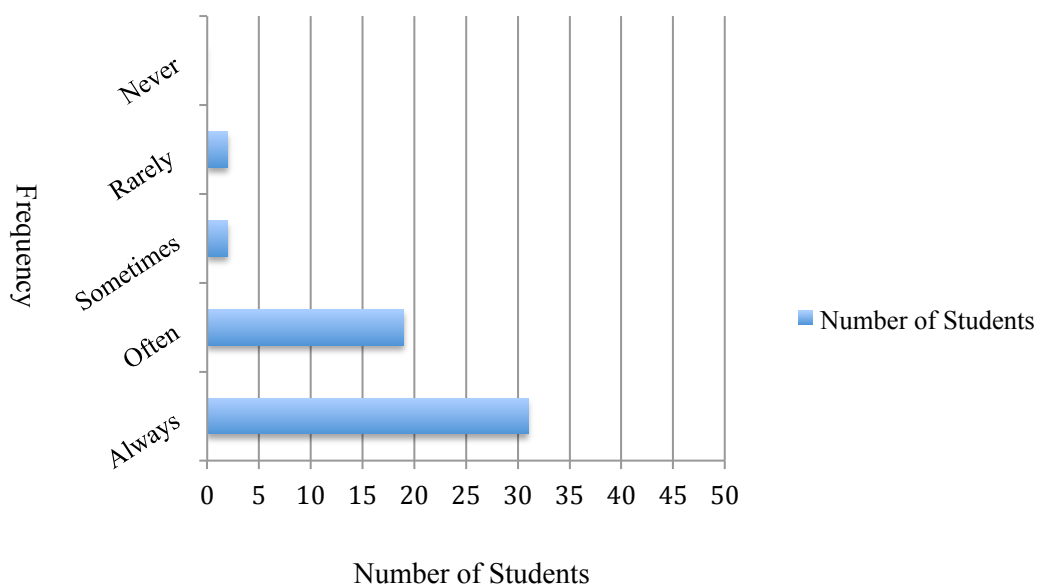
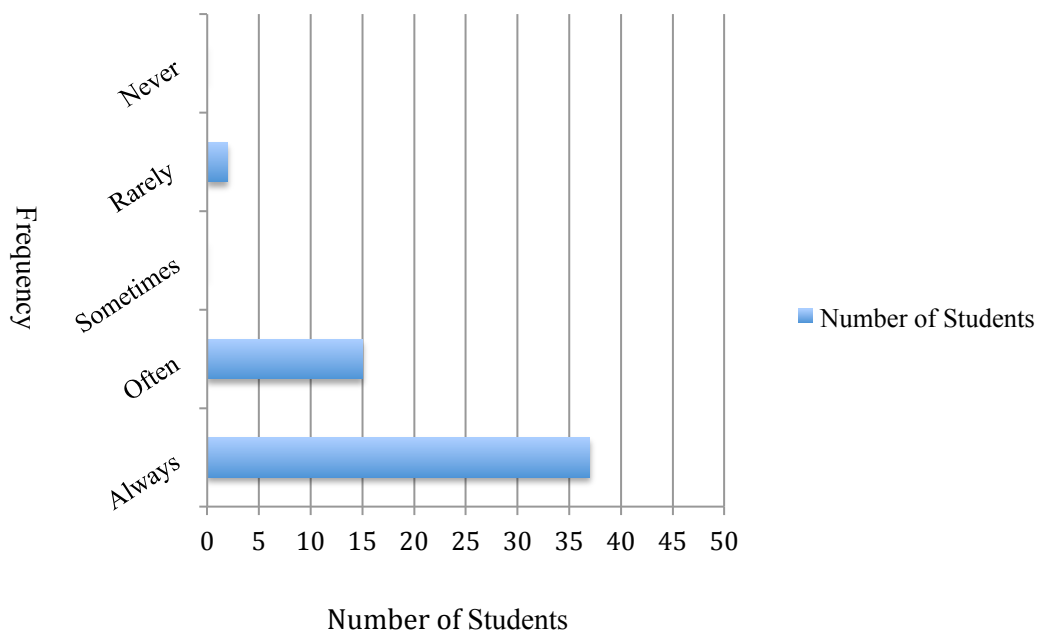


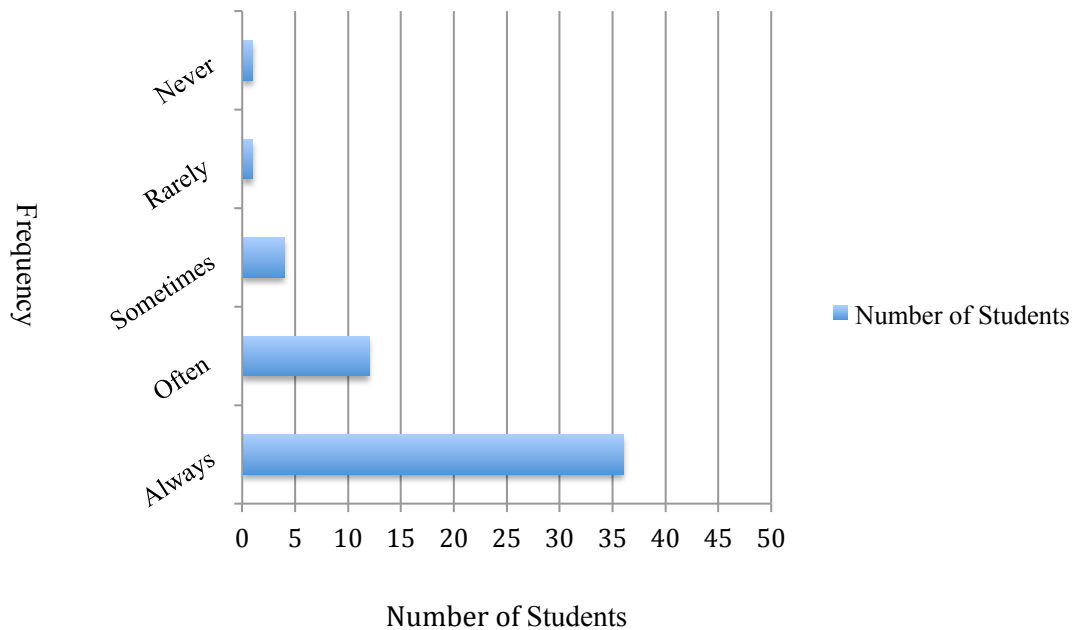
Figure 8: Student survey question 4 (n=54)

The fifth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I make decisions that are fair for everyone involved.” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Figure 9 below shows the majority of students (n=43, 80%) stated that they are always making decisions that are fair for everyone involved, while the next largest group of students (n=6, 11%) stated that they often make fair decisions for everyone involved.



*Figure 9:* Student survey question 5 (n=54)

The sixth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I take into consideration how other people might feel?” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: *Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never*. Figure 10 below shows the majority of students (n=36, 67%) stated that they always take into consideration how other people might feel, while the next largest group of students (n=12, 22%) stated that they often take into consideration how other people might feel.



*Figure 10: Student survey question 6 (n=54)*

The seventh question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I am willing to help fellow students who need assistance with their skills or abilities?” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Figure 11 below shows the majority of students (n=31, 57%) stated that they are always willing to help fellow students that need assistance, while the next largest group of students (n=15, 28%) stated that they often help fellow students that need assistance.

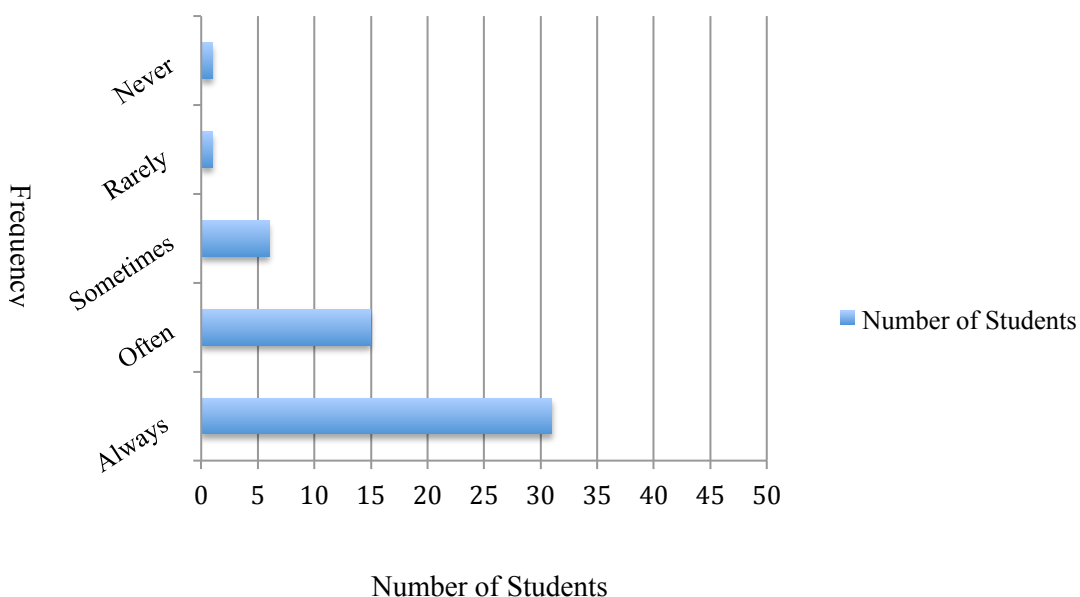


Figure 11: Student survey question 7 (n=54)

### Teacher Survey.

The purpose of the Teacher Survey (Appendix C) was to gain information about how acts of negative sportsmanship affect teachers' daily classroom routines. The teacher survey was distributed and collected the week of September 10, 2012 through September 14, 2012. The survey was given to 2 fifth-grade teachers, both of whom completed surveys with a return rate of 100% (n=2). The survey contained four questions, which addressed students' ability to handle conflict in class, unsportsmanlike behaviors they have observed, how much time is lost in class dealing with sportsmanship issues, and what strategies they use to resolved sportsmanship issues in class. Teachers were asked to check and circle their answers.

The first question on the Teacher Survey stated, "How often do you think your students use appropriate strategies to handle conflict in class?" Teachers were asked to select one choice from the following: *Always*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Both teachers (n=2, 100%) thought that sometimes students use appropriate strategies.

The second question on the Teacher Survey stated, “Please check unsportsmanlike behaviors that you have observed in class.” Teachers were asked to check all of the situations that apply from the following: *Pushing, hitting, tripping as a result of an argument, Yelling or arguing about the outcome of a game, Crying about the outcome of a game, Emotionally shutting down as the result of an outcome of a game, Blaming others for poor play, and Putting others down for poor play.* Both teachers (n=2, 100%) checked off *Yelling, Crying, Emotionally shutting down, and Blaming others.*

The third question on the Teacher Survey stated, “On average, how many minutes per week are lost dealing with sportsmanship issues from physical education in your classroom?” Teachers were asked to select one choice from the following: *0-5, 5-10, 11-15, 16+.* Both teachers (n=2, 100%) spend 0-5 minutes each week dealing with sportsmanship issues from physical education class.

The fourth question on the Teacher Survey stated, “What strategies do you use to resolve sportsmanship issues in class?” Teachers were asked to check all that apply from the following list: *Rock, paper, scissors, Walk away or ignore, Classroom discussion, Modeling appropriate behavior, Talking about the issue, and Other.* Both teachers (n=2, 100%) hold classroom discussions, model appropriate behaviors, and talk about the issue.

### **Observational Checklist.**

The purpose of the Observation Behavior Checklist (Appendix D) was to allow the teacher researcher to investigate the number of unsportsmanlike issues that occur during a physical education class. The Observation Behavior Checklist was utilized two class days per week during the weeks of September 17, 2012 through November 30, 2012 for all the students who participated (n=54). The teacher-researcher collected data from 2 fifth-grade classes in their



physical education class during soccer, football, speedway, and floor hockey gameplay. The teacher-researcher compiled the behaviors for the Observation Behavior Checklist based on previous experiences of student actions during gameplay. The checklist addressed behaviors and put them into five large categories including Excuses, Disrespect Opponent, Authority Disrespect, Fake or Deceive, and Shows Anger. The Excuses category included behaviors such as *Participant blamed teammates for poor play*. The Disrespect Opponent category included behaviors such as *Participant made actions/comments to run up the score*, *Participant argued with opponent*, *Participant made unnecessary physical actions*, and *Participant made comments to demean/taunt opponents*. The Authority Disrespect category included behaviors such as *Participant verbally argued with teacher's call*, *Participant made gestures consistent with disagreement toward teacher*; and *Participant ignored teacher's direction*. The Fake or Deceive category included behaviors such as *Participant yelled to distract opponent*, *Participant used hand gestures or motions to distract an opponent*. The final category Shows Anger included behaviors such as *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance*, and *Participant demonstrated acts of aggression*. See Appendix D for an example of the Observation Behavior Checklist.

The teacher-researcher observed a total of 212 negative sportsmanship behaviors from September 10 to November 12, 2012. From the negative sportsmanship behaviors 3% (n=7) of participants made excuses, 42% (n=90) disrespected opponents, 24% (n=51) of participants disrespected authority, 2% (n=4) of participants faked or deceived their opponent, 28% (n=59) of participants showed anger toward their opponent.

During week one of the Observation Behavior Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 24 incidents of poor sportsmanship behavior during two 30-minute class

periods. The two categories with the most incidents were *Participants showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance* with 9 incidents and *Participants argued with opponent* with 6 incidents. During week one of the Observation Behavior Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed 37 incidents of poor sportsmanship during two 30-minute class periods. The two categories with the most incidents were *Participant argued with opponent* with 8 incidents and *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates performance* with 4 incidents.

During week two of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 22 incidents of poor sportsmanship during three 30-minute classes. The two categories with the most incidents were the same as the previous week. In the category the *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance* the teacher-researcher observed 7 incidents. In the category the *Participant argued with opponent* there were 6 incidents. In week two of the Behavior Observation Checklist, in class two, the teacher-researcher observed 8 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior during two 30-minute class periods. The highest incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior were in the *Participant argued with opponent* with 4 incidents and in the category the *Participant verbally argued with referee's call* with 3 incidents.

During week three of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher researcher observed 14 incidents of negative sportsmanship. The most incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior occurred in the category *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance* with 5 incidents. In class two using the Behavior Observation Checklist there was 12 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior with the most incidents coming

from the category *Participants argued with opponent* and *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance* with 3 incidents.

During week four of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 12 incidents of poor sportsmanship. The categories with the most incidents was *Participant made comments or gestures to demean/taunt opponents* where the teacher-researcher observed 4 incidents. In week four of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed 8 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior. The highest incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior were in the *Participant argued with opponent* with 2 incidents.

During week five of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 17 incidents of poor sportsmanship. The categories with the most incidents was *Participant argued with opponent* with 5 incidents. In week five of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed 2 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior. The highest incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior were in the *Participant made comments or gestures to demean/taunt opponents* and *Participant showed excessive frustration at his/her teammates' performance* with 1 incident.

During week six of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 21 incidents of poor sportsmanship. The categories with the most incidents was *Participant argued with opponent* with 5 incidents. In week six of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed 4 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior. The highest incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior were in the *Participant argued with opponent* with 2 incidents.

During week seven of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 8 incidents of poor sportsmanship. The categories with the most incidents

was *Participant argued with opponent* with 2 incidents. In week seven of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed 2 incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior. The highest incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior were in the *Participant ignored referees' direction* with 2 incidents.

During week eight of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class one the teacher-researcher observed 21 incidents of poor sportsmanship. The categories with the most incidents were *Participant verbally argued with referee's call* with 4 incidents. In week eight of the Behavior Observation Checklist in class two the teacher-researcher observed no incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior. From week one to eight the total number of incidents decreased.

Figure 12 below shows the number of incidents that occurred in each class per week.

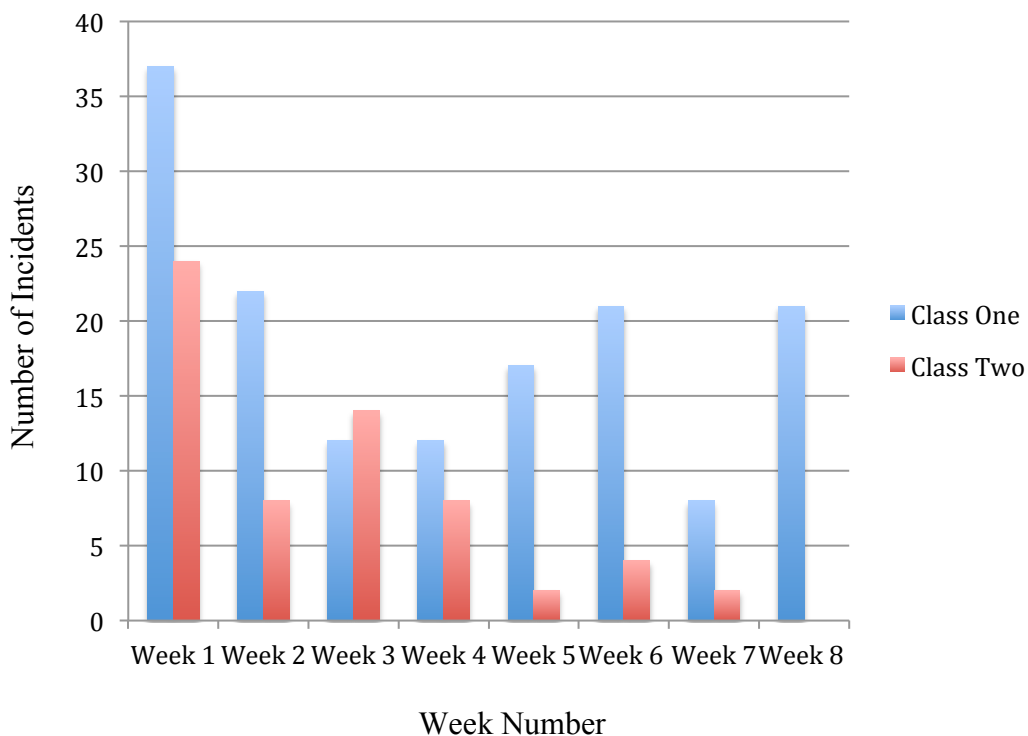


Figure 12: Observation behavior checklist (n =212)

## Summary

After reviewing the data from the Parent Survey the teacher researcher found that 55% of the parents (n=17) felt that sportsmanship was a problem at school and 52% of parents (n=17) have had their child report a problem with sportsmanship in physical education class. The most common behaviors that parents' viewed as unsportsmanlike were: *blaming teammates for poor play* (n=33, 100%), *participant showing excessive frustration with his/her teammates' performance* (n=32, 97%), *participant demonstrates acts of aggression* (n=30, 91%), *Participant makes unnecessary physical actions* (n=28, 85%), and *participant argues with opponent* (n=25, 76%). The last question of the Parent Survey asked parents to rate their level of concern with their child's current level of sportsmanship.

After reviewing the data from the Student Survey (n=54) many of the students (n=38, 70%) reported that they would always tell the truth even if it meant that their team would not win. The students (n=38, 70%) stated they would always give their best effort to play by the rules. They (n=43, 80%) answered that they would always include students on their team that are less athletically skilled than they are. The majority of students (n=31, 57%) also said they would always take responsibility for their mistakes. In physical education class the students (n=37, 69%) state that they always make decisions that are fair for everyone involved and always take into consideration how other people might feel (n=36, 67%). On the final question the students (n=31, 57%) answered that they always help fellow students that need help and/or assistance.

After reviewing the data from the Teacher Survey the teachers (n=2) both stated that students sometimes handle conflict appropriately in class. They have each observed one incident of students yelling in class, crying about a game, emotionally shutting down as the result of a

game, and blaming others for poor play. On average they lost between 0 and 5 minutes each week dealing with sportsmanship issues from physical education class. The methods that both classroom teachers used to solve sportsmanship problems were classroom discussion, modeling appropriate behavior, and talking about the issues as they came up.

After reviewing the information gathered from the Observational Behavior Checklist (n=212) most of the negative sportsmanship occurred at the beginning during weeks one and two with 29% and 14% respectively. The total incidents for both classes in week one was 61 (29%), while there was 30 (14%) incidents in week two, and 26 (12%) incidents in week three, 20 (9%) incidents in week four, 19 (9%) incidents in week five, 25 (12%) incidents in week six, 10 (5%) incidents in week seven, 21 (10%) incidents in week eight. The unusual finding is that while class one's total incidents went down from week to week class two's incidents went up at the midway point.

### **Reflection**

After reviewing the data from all three surveys I found the data important for me as a teacher because it allowed me to see the parents, students, and teachers viewpoints of sportsmanship issues specifically as they relate to physical education class. Fifty-two percent of the parents (n=17, 52%) that returned the survey (n=33) felt that sportsmanship was a problem in school. With that being said, I was able to see that the teachers that I collected data from lose less than five minutes per week dealing with sportsmanship issues. This may be a case of students holding the information inside until they get home. As a teacher it is important that I keep the doors to communication open so that I can listen to students who are having a difficult time with sportsmanship issues to alleviate them in class by discussing the issue with both parties involved.

After reviewing the Observational Behavior Checklist there was a marked difference in the behavior of the two fifth grade classes being observed. In class one there was 152 (72%) incidents of negative sportsmanship behaviors out of 212 total incidents. While in class two there was 60 (28%) incidents of negative sportsmanship behaviors out of 212 total incidents. As a teacher this information is important to me because it shows me which class needs more work on their sportsmanship behaviors and that I need to remind them more often about the behaviors they agreed to as a class in the beginning of the study. I also need to take more time during the intervention and use key teaching points during lessons when I see negative sportsmanship behaviors.

### **Probable Causes**

During a child's formative years their level of sportsmanship is affected by many factors. Among those factors are parents, coaches, peers, professional athletes, and the athlete's own sports orientation. These factors can be seen everywhere including at practice, on television, in the newspaper, or on the internet. Because these factors are so prevalent in impacting our youth's sportsmanship decisions it is important that these individuals set good examples and give reminders from time to time to create positive sportsmanship behaviors. Unfortunately, this does not always happen.

### **Definition of Sportsmanship.**

The line between sportsmanship and winning at all costs has recently become very blurry. Athletes are taught to win at all costs, which puts sportsmanship in the back seat. According to Freezel (1986), often the positive accounts of sportsmanship are "fuzzy... a picture whose edges are blurred, but the complexity of the attitudes retained." This natural ambiguity illuminates the need for a clear determination of what is meant by sportsmanship

(as cited in Stewart, 1996). Unfortunately, in today's sports this is all too true. To clear up this ambiguity Joyner and Mummery (2005) defined sportspersonship to be comprised of five dimensions: 1) respect for the social conventions of sport, 2) respect for the rules and officials, 3) respect for one's full commitment to participation, 4) respect and concern for the opponent, and 5) the absence of a negative approach to sports. With a clear working definition of sportsmanship lets examine the effects of negative sportsmanship.

### **Negative Influences on Sportsmanship.**

A current trend that has emerged in youth sports programs seems to be leading them away from the notion of providing opportunities to learn developmental skills such as sportsmanship and fair play, toward an overemphasis on competition and winning at all costs (May, 2001, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). From one perspective, this code of ethics, which directs sportsmanship, is being oppressed in athletics now more than ever (Hayford, 1987, as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999). However, when winning becomes so important, competition goes beyond the rules of fairness and becomes conflict (Green & Gabbard, 1999). As stated by Simon (1983, as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999), "When winning is everything the destination supersedes the journey, thus diminishing or negating the intrinsic rewards of sport participation" (p. 25).

Potter and Wandzilak (1981) found a negative relationship between the length of participation and sportsmanship behavior in studies examining elementary and junior high school athletes (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999). However, other studies indicate that sports activities may also relate to negative outcomes such as aggression and cheating (Smoll & Smith, 2002, Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, & Bostrom, 1995, as cited in Lodl, 2005). Almost half of all youth sports participants (45.3%) report they have been yelled at or



insulted; 21% have been pressured to play while injured; 17.5% have been hit, kicked, or slapped; and 8% have been pressured to intentionally harm another player (Engh, 2002, as cited in Wells, Ellis, Paisley, & Arthur-Banning, 2005).

Stephens (2001) found that one of the major predictions of an individual's likelihood to aggress against the opponent is their subjective belief of the team norm towards that behavior (as cited in Joyner & Mummery, 2005). When this social pressure is apparent, the pressure to win may be more persuasive than the individual's morals (Joyner & Mummery, 2005). One study, for example, found that 84 % of teenage soccer players reported that they would deliberately foul an opponent to keep her or him from scoring (Raspberry, 1998, as cited in Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). Thus group pressure and perception of team norms may influence participants from a team sport to act and orientate themselves in a manner less sportspersonlike in order to ensure the team reaches its goals (Joyner & Mummery, 2005).

Martin (1976) supported the contention that competitive sport generates either catharsis or increased aggression, depending upon the outcome of the game (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005). Research has supported these propositions, as variations in moral constructs have been found by gender (Bredemeier 1985, 1994, & Kavussanu & Roberts 2001, as cited in Joyner & Mummery, 2005), sport participation (Bredemeier & Shields 1984, 1986, Stoll, 1995, as cited in Joyner & Mummery, 2005), sport type (Bredemeier & Shields 1986, Rudd 1998, as cited in Joyner & Mummery, 2005) and motivational orientation (Duda, Olson & Templin 1991, Dunn & Causgrove Dunn 1999, Kavussanu & Roberts 2001, as cited in Joyner & Mummery, 2005). Anecdotal evidence suggests that sportsmanship and friendly rivalries are easier for girls than boys (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006).

### **Parents Pushing Athletes Too Far.**

According to Engh (2002), youth sports programs that once helped children stay busy and avoid trouble have developed into highly competitive leagues featuring a “win-at-all-costs” atmosphere. Children are specializing in sports earlier, playing all year long, and experiencing significant pressure from parents and coaches to perform at elite levels (Cary, 2004, & Engh, 2002, as cited in Wells, et al. 2005). The whirlwind of youth sports does not appear to be slowing down. There is more specialization and more elite club teams than ever before. Parents build their schedules and vacations around club team tournaments (Neddenriep, 2012). "In essence, it's consumerism," said Mark Britner, who has coached elite club volleyball in Central Indiana for 24 years (as cited in Neddenriep, 2012). Neddenreip (2012) states, "Now it's, 'I'll take my kids somewhere else' if an issue arises. There are so many more club programs now, it's amazing..." (p. 2).

In the exploding world of "elite" club sports, parents are investing more time and money to develop their children into athletes. A season can cost a family \$5,000 in assorted expenses and as many as 50 days on the road (Neddenriep, 2012). Unlike an A on a math test, little Jimmy's five goals are on display for the public. Insecure parents are comforted when Jimmy plays well (Neddenriep, 2012). Warning signs of overbearing parents affecting their children include putting great amounts of pressure on a child to succeed; the child frequently arguing with coaches and officials; the child not enjoying practice; and an emphasis on winning trophies, say Sean Cumming and Martha Ewing of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports (as cited in Neddenriep, 2012).

The race for college scholarships plays a part, as does the gratification of living vicariously through a son or daughter and the ever-increasing investment in time and money

(Neddenriep, 2012). "They see the wins and losses -- or the college scholarship -- as a reflection of their parenting skills," Gould said. "They get seduced by that because that's the scorecard. Parents aren't really trained to see all the other things -- the skill development, the fitness, the life skills and learning how to set goals" (Neddenriep, 2012, p. 1). Another no-no: Looking at youth sports as a means to a college scholarship or pro career instead of a fun and healthy activity, warns the Rutgers Youth Sports Research Council. The odds are simply against the athlete. For every 10,000 high school athletes, three will reach the NBA, and nine will play in the NFL (as cited in Neddenriep, 2012).

### **The Influence Adults Have on Sportsmanship.**

Bandura, Ross, and Ross' (1961) investigation of children aged 37 to 69 months sought to determine whether aggressive behaviors are learned and reinforced through adult modeling. They found that aggression is learned in that the children who were exposed to an adult model of aggressive behavior (such as kicking and punching a "Bobo" doll) displayed an increase in physical and verbal aggressive behaviors. In contrast, the children who observed non-aggressive models did not behave like their counterparts during later play. Clearly, social learning theory supports the contention that human beings are greatly influenced by their environments and role models (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005). The behaviors demonstrated by the significant individuals in a person's life (such as a parent or a coach) have a great impact on that person's behavior (Arthur-Banning, Wells, Baker, & Hegreness, 2009).

Children who observe coaches berating other teams or refusing to shake the hand of another coach are likely to assume that sportsmanship is not a valued quality, no matter what the coach claims (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2009). According to Nelson, Gelfand, and

Hartmann (1969), "...the bulk of the evidence supports the ... view that in a permissive setting in which aggression is either actively encouraged or simply not punished, modeled aggressive stimulation such as that provided by competition tends to increase subsequent aggression" (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005, p. 1095). Needless to say, positive reinforcement should be given when players show sportsmanlike behaviors (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005).

Unfortunately, lack of sportsmanship is not only tolerated, but, at times is encouraged by coaches and parents who want their child to stand out by any means necessary (May, 2001, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Adults with power to manipulate social and physical environments surrounding sport, such as referees, could be responsible for generating the outcomes attributed to the activity (Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Strong (1992) reported that too often coaches would not follow through with specific goals related to sportsmanship. He found that some coaches deemphasized fair play, fun, and skill development in the course of a regular season as winning became more important (as cited in Stewart, 1996).

### **Professional Athletes and Their Influence on Sportsmanship Behaviors.**

It is common that children prior to the age of 10 or 11 are influenced more by adults and peers, whereas individuals older than this are beginning to emulate professional athletes' negative behavior (professionalism) and can be influenced much less by referees or administrators (Wolff & Menez, 2003, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). In addition, older participants may have witnessed more poor sportsmanship on TV or in person than younger children and were willing to emulate that behavior in an effort to establish themselves as "good players." Children may begin to hold professional athletes as role models and

regardless of which referees were in charge of the game, due to pressures to emulate professionals, older participants might exhibit more negative behaviors (Stewart, 1996, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

### **Bad Sportsmanship and Inactivity.**

When participants experience negative acts of sportsmanship it often leads to inactivity. Negative experiences can lead children to minimize their involvement level in that sport or even stop playing completely (Engh, 2002, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). This could be contributing to the current trend of children becoming less physically active (Wells, et al., 2008). Young children are often very involved in a variety of sporting endeavors. However, an overwhelming majority of those young athletes will no longer be involved in youth sports by the time they reach age 13 (Engh, 2002, Wells, et al., 2008). By the time children reach age 13, approximately 70% will have stopped participating in youth sport completely (Engh, 2002, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

The majority of youth who have dropped out of organized sports stated that the reasons they were no longer involved included lack of playing time, the competitive emphasis in the program, an over-emphasis on winning, or negative experiences related to sportsmanship (Kimiecik & Harris, 1996, Lindner, Johns, & Butcher, 1991, & Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Unfortunately, once these individuals have ceased participation, they may not engage in any form of organized sports until well into adulthood, if ever, leading them toward a myriad of associated health and socialization problems (NIH, n.d., as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

### **Ego- Versus Task-Orientation in Athletics.**

Psychologists distinguish between two “orientations” that people have toward competition: ego orientation and task orientation. Individuals driven by ego orientation choose to compete in order to beat their opponents (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). People with high ego orientations look to accomplishments such as defeating a competitor or scoring more points than the other players (either teammates or opponents) to achieve success (Wells, et al., 2006). When ego orientation is dominant, sportsmanship takes a back seat (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). The influence of socialization in ego- orientation development begins as children become older (Nicholls, 1984, as cited in Wells, et al., 2006).

“Task-orientated” participants focus on their intra-individual growth and development in sports and tend to be much less involved in aggression and poor sportsmanship. Competitors with strong task orientation concentrate their energies not on winning, but on the task at hand. These individuals choose to enter into competition in order to continually improve their skills (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). In contrast, “Ego-orientated” participants judge success in terms of displays of superiority over opponents, frequently giving rise to incidents of aggression and poor sportsmanship (Wells, et al., 2006, p. 64). It was found that a low task, high ego orientation was associated with the endorsement of unsportsmanlike or cheating behaviors (Joyner & Mummery, 2005). It should be noted that this line of research has demonstrated that both constructs exist simultaneously in individuals; however, the relative degree of each construct will vary (Sleek, 1996, as cited in Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006).

## Chapter 3

### The Solution Strategy

#### Review of the Literature

The literature on positive sportsmanship behaviors points to creating an environment supporting prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behaviors are those intended to help other people. Prosocial behavior is characterized by a concern about the rights, feelings and welfare of other people. Behaviors that can be described as prosocial include feeling empathy and concern for others and behaving in ways to help or benefit other people. There are many methods of reinforcing prosocial behaviors to increase positive sportsmanship such as implementing referees to coach players, educating coaches and parents, and reinforcing the athlete's positive sportsmanship behaviors. The literature indicates several programs being used throughout the country that have successfully increased positive sportsmanship behaviors.

#### **Benefits Based Programming.**

The environment in which youth sports games are played today can be easily designed to promote prosocial behavior. This can be done by altering the general atmosphere of the league (Ellis, Henderson, Paisley, Silverberg, & Wells, 2004, Wells, Ellis, Paisley, & Arthur-Banning, 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). This process may include generating a focus on personalization of teammates, opponents, and officials, cooperation with teammates, and increased levels of fun (Ellis, et al., 2004, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). Previous studies have demonstrated that prosocial behavior based techniques that influence the overall atmosphere, including team introductions, posters, postgame socials, and the liberal use of technical fouls, have successfully been used to increase sportsmanship (Arthur –Banning, 2005; Wells et al., 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008).

Engaging in prosocial behaviors is highly congruent with fostering sportsmanship within the youth sport environment (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). In a sportsmanship context, this means that individuals recognize that certain behaviors governing the sport are appropriate and, by following those norms, they are engaging in actions that are more acceptable within the sport environment (Arthur-Banning, Paisley, et al., 2007). Prosocial behaviors are likely to occur when norms of social responsibility and reciprocity are activated, when personal relationships are developed, when similarities between individuals are emphasized, and when social reinforcement is provided (Bar-Tal, 1976; Bierhoff, 2002; Reykowski, 1982; as cited in Wells, et al., 2005).

Benefits-based programming is one method professionals use to address the issues of negative sportsmanship in their youth leagues (Wells, et al., 2008). Benefits based programming was established with the idea of identifying the desired benefits of a program and structuring programs to maximize these benefits (Allen, Stevens, Hurtes, & Harwell, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). Parks and recreation professionals hoping to employ benefits based programming in their youth sport leagues should follow the four steps found in the benefits based programming model: identifying target issues and goals; developing programs to specifically address goals; measuring benefit outcomes; and realizing the impacts and communicating success (Wells, et al., 2008).

Recent studies of benefits based programs show they have successfully employed prosocial behavior techniques as a means of improving the sportsmanship atmosphere in youth leagues (Wells, et al., 2008). Prosocial behavior refers to positive forms of social behavior that are voluntary, not motivated by personal obligations, and that have positive social results (Bar-Tal, 1976; Beirhoff, 2002, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). Prosocial behavior can be employed to



reactivate positive norms (Schwartz, 1968; as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007), which refer to social norms in that they are acceptable behaviors within the athletic realm.

The method employed in one study included following the benefits-based programming model (Allen, et al., 1998, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008) where they identified target issues and target goals. The study was completed in conjunction with the treatment site. Staff members approached the researchers with the specific intention of redesigning their youth sport program to increase sportsmanship. The target issue was the sportsmanship atmosphere of the game. More specifically, the target goals were to increase the number of positive sportsmanship behaviors and decrease negative sportsmanship behaviors engaged in by players, coaches, and spectators each quarter. The goal of the researchers and staff was to improve the level of fun for the players (Wells, et al., 2008).

The second step of developing the program was to specifically address the goal of the players having more fun (Allen, et al., 1998, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). Based on the previous research, the researchers and community center staff decided to approach this issue using the prosocial behavior theory. Results from prior studies have suggested that specific techniques based on this theory can successfully increase sportsmanship in youth sports (Arthur-Banning, 2005; Ellis, et al., 2004; Wells, et al., 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). The researchers and staff, consequently, designed the program to implement similar techniques (Wells, et al., 2008). At least one observer was present at every game to keep track of demonstrated behaviors by players, coaches, and spectators.

Specific positive sportsmanship behaviors included, but were not limited to, admitting infractions, checking on injured players, and encouraging teammates and opponents. Negative sportsmanship behaviors include blaming referees for poor play, taunting opponents, and

demonstrating acts of aggression (Wells, et al., 2008). For example, located at the entrance of the gym, was a large petition was posted defining sportsmanship and providing several examples of how to be a good sports. Participants passed by this sign and were reminded of the sportsmanship emphasis each time they entered and exited the gym. Also, posted immediately outside the gym door was a chart with results from previous weeks. This allowed participants to see each week that positive sportsmanship levels and fun were increasing, while negative sportsmanship levels were decreasing. Posters were also located within the gym itself with the league motto (“play hard, play fair, play fun”) and stickers were passed out to participants prior to the beginning of the games (Ellis, et al., 2004, & Wells, et al., 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008).

Players, coaches, and spectators also attended a quick (approximately 5-10 minutes) social (Wells, et al., 2008). During the social, members of each team selected the player on the opposite team who they believed best demonstrated during the game, and both players received a certificate and award (Ellis, et al., 2004, & Wells, et al., 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008). If this is the case, it stands to reason that by promoting benefits-based programs that emphasize positive sportsmanship and decrease negative sportsmanship behaviors, children would have more fun and would therefore are more likely to continue participation in the future (Wells, et al., 2008). Game outcome was also a significant predictor of fun scores ( $t = 2.15, p = .03$ ) (Wells, et al., 2008). This result implies that participants who win have more fun, a seemingly expected finding (Wells, et al., 2008).

As the results of this study demonstrate, intentional programming can be successfully employed to increase sportsmanship in youth sports (Wells, et al., 2008). There is considerable evidence to suggest that individuals will act in accordance with what is expected of them

(Arthur-Banning, 2005; as cited in Wells, et al., 2008), and perhaps by following prosocial behavior theory and simply determining that appropriate positive behaviors were expected and enforced, individuals were more likely to act accordingly. Furthermore, in promoting their plan to the participants, coaches, and parents, there was greater amount of “buy in” to the program, and this resulted in more positive sportsmanship behaviors and fewer negative sportsmanship behaviors (Wells, et al., 2008). As this study demonstrates the sportsmanship atmosphere of a league can easily become more positive through the use of benefits based programming. Spending time determining the goals of the program and implementing a program based on these goals led to the desired result (Wells, et al., 2008).

With regard to both the positive and negative sportsmanship behaviors, the older age group responded much more favorably. This is likely the result of the age at which professionalism begins to take hold of a young athlete (Wells, et al., 2008).

### **Using Referees to Improve Sportsmanship.**

As the attraction to professional sport and college scholarships becomes more and more prominent, competition and winning at all costs in youth games is beginning to replace the development of skills and values, building friendships, and respecting the sportsmanship aspects of the game. Leagues focusing on building values such as sportsmanship, rather than simply on elite competition can help in this process. One underutilized resource in developing sportsmanship is the officials who oversee the game environment (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Referees can use prosocial behavior to reactivate positive norms in an attempt to combat the growing lack of sportsmanship seen in youth sport (Kipper & Yinon, 1978, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

Referees appear to be the most appropriate for initiating norm-activating behaviors in the participants, coaches, and spectators of a league (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). To begin, officials model behaviors that are consistent with sportsmanship. For example, they can encourage players to check on injured player's or help them up after a fall, and this will lead other players in the game to know that behaving prosocially is not only acceptable, but it is expected (Duda, Olson, & Templin, 1991, & Dunn & Dunn, 1999, & May, 2001, & Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard & Provencher, 1997, as cited in Wells, et al., 2008).

An additional feature of training referees to use prosocial behavior can then be added for even greater results. By intentionally focusing their efforts on improving sportsmanship, both through increasing positive behaviors and decreasing negative ones, youth sports programs can be more fun for participants, which lead to better overall experiences and hopefully help these youth to maintain participation in the future (Wells, et al., 2008). One method of maintaining participation in youth sport can be to influence levels of sportsmanship in these programs. Sportsmanship, which features prosocial or antisocial behaviors that occur in a sport setting, clearly have an impact on the overall experience a child has in a youth sports program (Brady, 2004, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Referees can also implement certain techniques into their the training agenda, such as explaining infractions to players and how to correct them, or showing staff how to improve the sportsmanship of the league (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007)

Moral development literature suggests that individuals embrace socially accepted values and behaviors, which could be positive or negative (Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Results of the analysis revealed that treatment referees had a significant ( $t = 4.33, p < .01$ ) impact on the positive sportsmanship behaviors that were exhibited during each quarter. This is consistent with literature on moral development, which suggests that when

a positive environment is created, individuals will respond in a similarly positive manner (Guivernau & Duda, 2002, & Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

In youth sport it is paramount to focus attention away from competition and winning. A program designed to train referees to utilize prosocial behavior may assist in reactivating sportsmanship norms in youth activities (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Improving positive sportsmanship behaviors are more likely to occur when the environment, including the people within that environment, is structured and controlled (Weiss, 1991, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). This means that influential people in the environment, such as parents, teammates, and coaches, must recognize that they have the potential to impact young athletes either negatively or positively through their own attitudes and behaviors (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

The greater the number of prosocial behaviors that were exhibited by the referees in the game, the more each individual likely recognized the behaviors as positive and, thus, was more willing to emulate the referees in their approach to the game (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Prosocial behaviors are likely to manifest themselves when norms of social responsibility are triggered (Bar-Tal, 1976, & Bierhoff, 2002, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). For example, technical fouls were called liberally for behavior not consistent with positive norms (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

### **Play Hard, Play Fun, Play Fair Program.**

The “Play Hard, Play Fair, Play Fun” (PHPPF) youth basketball program incorporates elements of prosocial behavior theory to shift the focus from competition to an atmosphere of sportsmanship (Wells, et al., 2005). Examples of these techniques included pre-game introductions among the players and referees, a signed petition on a large poster board in support of sportsmanship posted prominently outside the gym, awards to players for good sportsmanship,

re-setting the score to zero when the score discrepancy between the two teams became too large, a post-game social event for the players and coaches, and a league website featuring photographs of each team's weekly sportsmanship award winner (Wells, et al., 2005). Evaluation data showed that such techniques led to positive feeling from the parents about their children's sportsmanship attitudes and provided insight into relationships among fun, age, game outcome, and similarity of ability levels of opposing teams (Wells, et al., 2005).

The Play Hard, Play Fun, Play Fair program focuses on social norms because they can be internalized through the social learning process (Wells, et al., 2005). A second reason people follow norms results when others with whom an individual strongly identifies with are also following the norm, even if the individual is not completely morally committed to the norm (Wells, et al., 2005). The final reason individuals follow norms is because they wish to comply with them as a means of obtaining a possible reward or avoiding a possible punishment (Vander Stoep & Gramann, 1987, as cited in Wells, et al., 2005).

Two specific types of norms are typically addressed: social responsibility norms and reciprocity norms (Bar-Tal, 1976, & Bierhoff, 2002, & Reykowski, 1982, as cited in Wells, et al., 2005). A basketball league might attempt to establish social responsibility norm by requiring all parents and participants to sign a sportsmanship pledge. This lets the participants know exactly what behaviors are expected and what ones will not be tolerated (Wells, et al., 2005). The norm of reciprocity suggests that individuals are more likely to act prosocially toward individuals who have done so to them (Bar-Tal, 1976, & Bierhoff, 2002, & Reykowski, 1982, as cited in Wells, et al., 2005). Coaches and referees could point out when members from the other team engage in sportsmanship behaviors this would encourage members of their own team to then respond in a similar manner (Wells, et al., 2005). Simple changes such as displaying posters

to create a norm of sportsmanship in the facility, engineering opportunities for members of different teams to get to know each other, or limiting unsportsmanlike influences of spectators will likely lead to increased sportsmanship, and consequently, an increased intention to continue participation in the league (Wells, et al., 2005).

### **Building Sportsmanship Through Moral Character Building**

Research indicates that competition can be an important context whereby youth gain positive outcomes such as intrinsic motivation and engagement in the environment (Larson, 2000, as cited in Lodl, 2005). Noted experts in character development surmise that to be effective, ethical development must be a systemic, community-wide effort that encompasses how we teach in schools, conduct extracurricular activities, operate businesses, run community organizations, and as individuals function on a day-to-day basis (Urban, 2000, as cited in Lodl, 2005). Josephson (2005) surmises that through extracurricular activities, young people can be taught the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (as cited in Lodl, 2005).

“Great Fans. Great Sports.” is a program designed to develop these character traits in all areas of competition (Lodl, 2005). In most successful settings, codes of sportsmanship are developed and signed by participants, parents, and coaches. This creates a sense of ownership for the outcomes of the season and a clear vision of operating principles (Lodl, 2005).

The following research studies revealed a positive correlation between sportsmanlike behavior and moral growth when both quality leadership environments that support such behavior and growth were guaranteed. Giebink and McKenzie (1985) used three intervention strategies (instruction and praise, modeling, and a point system) to investigate the effects on children's sportsmanship through a 22-day recreational basketball class (as cited in Lodl, 2005).

They found that with each strategy, un-sportsmanlike behavior (e.g., fighting, cheating) was reduced yet there was little increase in sportsmanship (e.g., congratulating opponent winners). The point system with contingent reinforcers was most effective in producing positive changes.

Wandzilak, Carroll, and Ansoorge (1988) conducted a study with 20 male junior high school basketball players during a 9-week season and found improved moral reasoning and sportsmanship among half the group who were positively reinforced for all sportsmanlike behaviors and negatively sanctioned for unsportsmanlike behavior (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005).

The coach is perhaps the most significant person influencing the amount of aggressive or sportsmanlike behaviors displayed in the competitive sport context (Conan, 1980, Cratty, 1983, King, 1990, & Terry & Jackson, 1985, as cited in Nucci & Young Shim, 2005). Smith (1983) reported that nine percent of hockey players (N=166) between the ages of 12 to 13 perceived their coaches as approvers of hockey violence. The role of referees has also been identified as a significant factor affecting athletes' subsequent behaviors (Lefebve, et al., 1980). Failure of referees to correct an athlete's aggressive behavior may reinforce and increase the probability of reoccurrence (Lefebve, et al., 1980, as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005).

Coaches, teachers, and parents should serve as positive role models of moral reasoning and sportsmanship and provide playful and healthy environments for young athletes. In addition, the rules and structure of sports should be modified to satisfy each young athlete's developmental needs and growth. The media and referees should encourage, facilitate, and highlight sportsmanlike behaviors and negatively sanction inappropriate behaviors. Young athletes must be encouraged to join in the classes of the academic with the same enthusiasm as competitive sport. Coaches must not be evaluated (and often promoted or fired) solely on the basis of their



win-loss record. We need to help each athlete develop more advanced levels of moral reasoning as well as sport-related strategies and skills in the educational system (as cited in Nucci & Young-Shim, 2005).

In order for sportsmanship to exist both competition and cooperation are deemed a necessity (Green & Gabbard, 1999). The idea of sportsmanship maintains that when athletes participate in sports they enter with an agreement to follow the laws set forth by that particular sport. These athletes realize that sport symbolizes tradition and its continuance is dependent upon the players who play the game. They accept responsibility for maintaining or enhancing sports and realize that any negative behavior that deviates from the aspect of sport could be tremendous detriment to the survival of sportsmanship (Arnold, 1984, as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

Sabock (1985) supported the idea of athletics being in a position to teach moral development. His reasoning was that children are not born with ethical behavior, rather they must be taught right from wrong (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999). Giebink and Mckenzie (1985) used instructions and praise, and a point system as teaching strategies to examine their effects on children's sportsmanship behavior (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

Sharpe, Brown, and Crider (1995) directed a study to determine the effects of a sportsmanship curriculum intervention on positive social behavior of urban elementary school students. Their findings revealed that leadership behaviors as well as independent conflict resolution increased while off task behaviors decreased in two groups receiving an implemented social curriculum (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

Romance, Weiss, and Bockoven (1986) also conducted a study to investigate the effects of a sportsmanship intervention program on physical education students. The subjects consisted

of two fifth grade classes containing 32 students each with one group serving as the experimental group and the other as the control group. While both participated in equivalent activities during an eight week physical education program, the experimental group received moral teaching strategies in an attempt to improve moral reasoning (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

Romance, Weiss, and Bockoven (1986) examined the effects of an eight-week structural development curriculum on life and sport moral reasoning. The experimental group discussed issues related to moral dilemmas, stressing the rights and responsibilities of the students in the group. The results indicated a significant improvement in both types of moral reasoning for the experimental group, while the control group had a slight decline in their ability to morally reason (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006).

In another prominent study, Gibbons, Ebbeck, and Weiss (1995) investigated the use of educational activities to promote moral growth in elementary school children. Using activities from the Fair Play for Kids (1990) manual, the researchers introduced experimental protocol to elementary school physical education classes and regular classroom subjects (as cited in Green & Gabbard, 1999).

According to Beller (2002), individuals are challenged to reflect upon moral issues, values, and principles in relationship to others and society, translating those reflections into good moral action. “The formal process of character education is a direct and purposeful intent to affect character development” (Stoll & Beller, 1999, as cited in Beller, 2002).

A workbook program, *Winning in Life: A Team Life Skills Program*, challenges athletes to reason morally by examining moral and social issues in sport in discussion sessions (Stoll & Herman, 2002; as cited in Beller, 2002). The *Fair Play Everyday* video, using three commonly

occurring sport scenarios, challenges athletes and coaches to answer three questions of right conduct when addressing fair play issues on the field: Is it honest? Is it Fair? And does it promote cooperation (Hansen, Stoll, & Beller, 1999, Hansen, Stoll, & Beller, 2002, as cited in Beller, 2002).

Coaches and school psychologists can introduce student-athletes to many concepts that will help them not only with sport performance but transfer as well to general "life skills." The most useful skills to be learned by student-athletes include: goal-setting, imagery, relaxation, self-talk, attention/concentration, and commitment to rigorous practice (Zaichkowsky, 2007).

The West Point Fair Play Project (Butler, 2000), a four-year long longitudinal study, required participants attend a fair play workshop that focused on issues of respect and used observed scenarios to stimulate group discussions. In addition, during their games, teams were awarded bonus points depending on their fair-play behaviors. These bonus points were combined with points accumulated from the teams' win loss record to create a composite score (as cited in Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). This type of moral educational program and behavior-based, incentive scoring system could easily be replicated in most recreational sport leagues (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006). To create a better environment for youth sports, the authors of this article suggest that providers of youth sports adopt the following practices: philosophy, measurable standards, education, and evaluation (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006).

This study demonstrates that using the essence of fair play and incorporating moral developmental initiatives (from either a social learning or structural –developmental perspective) within the physical education setting can be beneficial, regardless of age (Goldstein & Iso-Aloha, 2006).

### **Creating Positive Sportsmanship with Modeling.**

It is important to reactivate behavior-related norms in sport that are already activated in other environments. Several techniques such as modeling (Lipscomb, Bregman, & McAlister, 1983, Owens & Ascione, 1991, & Smith & Smoll, 1997, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007), or helping the participant take another's perspective (Eisenberg, Carlo, Murphy, & Van Court, 1995, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007) could be used to reactivate behavior-related norms in a sport setting to place greater emphasis on aspects of sportsmanship.

Along with making efforts to reactivate positive norm behaviors, it is important to deactivate norm behaviors deemed to be aggressive or opposite of prosocial behavior that may have been reinforced in other environments (Boxer, Tisak, & Goldstein, 2004, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Deactivating norms can be accomplished by placing greater emphasis on the prosocial behaviors, while encouraging participants to be morally engaged in their decisions (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

This suggests that aggression learned in other environments will decrease prosocial behaviors and makes individuals more responsible for their anti-social behaviors (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Further, age played a significant role in the sportsmanship behaviors of the participants (Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). Older participants seemed to display more negative sportsmanship behaviors. The age groups were utilized because research has suggested that younger children tend to view and react to prosocial behaviors differently than older adolescents (Carlo & Randall, 2002, & Jackson & Tiask, 2001, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007). According to Beller (2002), individuals are challenged to reflect upon moral issues, values, and principles in relationship to others and society, translating those reflections into good

moral action. Beller states, “The formal process of character education is a direct and purposeful intent to affect character development” (as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007).

### **Task Orientation.**

Results support the position that a task-orientated motivational climate during practice sessions facilitates development of sportsmanship attitudes in youth basketball players (Wells, Ellis, Arthur-Banning, & Roark, 2006). Practitioners should also be careful to minimize the exposure of participants to environments that promote an ego orientation by limiting elimination tournaments, win/loss records, and other aspects of programs that focus on comparative success (Wells, et al., 2006). Positive youth sports experiences could thus be expected to reinforce habits of active living among significant numbers of youth, ultimately promoting healthier children. One variable that offers great potential for increasing sportsmanship among youth is goal orientation (Duda, 1989, 1993, 1994, 1996, & 2001, Duda & Nicholls, 1992, & Nicholls, 1978, 1984, as cited in Wells, et al., 2006). Athletes should be encouraged by their coaches to perform regular goal setting sessions and evaluations several times during a season.

Task orientation may be promoted though carefully staging physical activity experiences. Mastery climates that heighten task-orientation have been successfully implemented in physical education environments. Digelidis, Papaioannou, Lapardis, and Christodoulidis (2003) promoted task-orientation in physical education classes by including in the curriculum individual goal setting, small group work, and emphasis on activities that minimize a socially competitive environment (as cited in Wells, et al., 2006). Simply ending in a tie reduces these problems and, more importantly, sends the message that performance during the game is more important than the final outcome (Wells, et al., 2006).

### **Systems Perspective.**

Most systems are composed of four basic parts: elements, interrelationships, boundaries, and functional utility (Wells, Ruddell, & Paisley, 2006). Elements are the variables being studied in a system (Wells, et al., 2006). As with elements, two kinds of interrelationships are most frequently modeled: “flows” and “connectors” (Wells, et al., 2006). Bounding the system simply means making a judgment about which elements should and should not be included in the model (Wells, et al., 2006). Functional utility refers to the idea that the behavior of a system is synergistic, or greater than the sum of its parts (Wells, et al., 2006).

Systems modeling is particularly useful because outcomes such as sportsmanship are influenced by more than one attribute of the program, and it is, therefore, important to analyze them in the context of the entire system (Wells, et al., 2006). The example provided in this article suggests that implementation techniques based on prosocial behavior theory – including personalization, rewards, punishments, and promoting a positive attitude (Ellis, et al., 2004, & Wells et al., 2005, as cited in Wells, et al., 2006) – can improve sportsmanship in the youth sport environment by reducing critical incidents and increasing fun and intent to continue participation in the future.

In physical education classes, when team sports are played, it might be useful to ensure that groups of friends are split, creating an instant connection among opponents (Wells, et al., 2006). In physical education setting, semester-long classes could provide an award for the individual who demonstrated the best sportsmanship throughout the term (Wells, et al., 2006). Posting positive sportsmanship signs in gymnasiums could serve as a reminder in youth sports leagues, as well as physical education classes. Further, contracts can be signed on the first day of practice or class so that players or students know the expectations they have agreed to live up to,

and posting the contracts in a prominent area of the gymnasiums or field can serve as a frequent reminder of this commitment (Wells, et al., 2006). Teams in physical education courses could be created in a similar manner, or even rearranged on a daily basis, in order to make sure they are similar in ability (Wells, et al., 2006).

### **Tools for Recording Acts of Sportsmanship.**

The Justplay Behavior Management Program is a tool that can help administrators achieve that goal of bringing together individuals to form teams of engaged citizens, and in fact, communities (Raakman, 2006). Justplay was designed to help youth sport administrators (volunteer and otherwise) bridge the gap between research and application (Raakman, 2006). Reports generated by the program empower administrators to make data-driven staffing and policy decisions regarding any action or inaction that may be necessary to anticipate, respond to, or avoid problematic behavior from spectators, coaches, and players (Raakman, 2006).

### **Project Objective and Processing Statements**

As a result of the implemented of pro-social sportsmanship behaviors during the period of September 4, 2012, through December 14, 2012, the students of the researcher's physical education class were to decrease negative sportsmanlike behaviors.

The teacher researcher completed the following tasks prior to the implementation of the research project:

- Teacher researcher created sportsmanship rules with student input.
- Teacher researcher reinforced sportsmanship rules with weekly activities.
- Teacher researcher created student survey and observational checklists to assess students.

## **Project Action Plan**

The proceeding project action plan provided a weekly timeline to guide the teacher researcher in implementing pro-social sportsmanship behaviors.

### **Pre-week: August 27-August 31, 2012**

- Made copies of parent letter and consent form
- Made copies of parent survey
- Made copies of student survey
- Made copies of teacher survey
- Set up positive and negative observational checklist for each fifth grade class

### **Week 1: September 4-7, 2012**

- Sent home parent letter and consent form and student assent letter (if applicable) with student on September 4<sup>th</sup>
- Collected parent consent form by September 7<sup>th</sup>
- Discussed and received input with students the Sportsmanship rules for current grade level/subject area

### **Week 2: September 10-14, 2012**

- Teacher researcher distributed student survey to the students
- Analyzed student survey
- Sent out parent survey September 10<sup>th</sup>
- Parent survey returned by September 14<sup>th</sup>
- Analyzed parent survey
- Teacher researcher distributed teacher survey
- Teacher survey returned by September 14<sup>th</sup>
- Analyzed teacher survey

### **Week 3-13: September 17-November 30, 2012**

- Teacher researcher created weekly learning reinforcements for the sportsmanship rules
- Teacher researcher recorded student behaviors in observational checklists

### **Week 14: December 3-7, 2012**

- Made copies of student survey



**Week 15: December 10-14, 2012**

- Teacher researcher distributed student survey to the students
- Completed student survey analysis

**Methods of Assessment**

The first method of pre and post-assessment was an observational behavior checklist. This tool was used two days per week from September 17 to November 30, 2012, and assessed 54 fifth-grade physical education students and their sportsmanship behaviors in class. The data gained from this tool allowed the researcher to observe possible decrease in negative sportsmanship behaviors.

The second method used for pre and post-assessment was a student survey designed to gain student input on their sportsmanship behaviors. The pre-assessment survey was handed out the week of September 10, 2012 and returned on the same day. The post-assessment survey was handed out in class on December 10, 2012 and returned on the same day. The survey was given to 54 students in two fifth-grade physical education classes. The data from the survey will be analyzed to assess any changes on positive behaviors in sportsmanship based upon weekly interventions.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Project Results**

The teacher researcher identified a lack of positive sportsmanship behaviors in kindergarten through fifth-grade physical education classes. The students displayed the inability to solve sportsmanship related issues during class time which led to the use of class time to review sportsmanship rules and problem solving skills and the loss of time spent being physically active. The teacher researcher decided to implement weekly interventions and problem solving skills while students participated in physical education to help improve positive sportsmanship behaviors. There were a total of 54 students participating in the research. All of the students were in fifth-grade. Pre-documentation took place from August 27, 2012, through September 10, 2012. The intervention was implemented from September 10, through November 2, 2012. Post documentation was collected starting December 10-14, 2012.

#### **Historical Description of the Intervention**

In the first week of pre-documentation, August 27th to the 31st, the teacher researcher printed all of the materials needed to complete pre-documentation. Students brainstormed a list of sportsmanship rules. From the list that the students came up with I took the main themes and created a list of sportsmanship rules (Appendix E) and had students create poster boards (Appendix F) featuring those rules to be hung up around the gym for curriculum night on September 4, 2012. Parent surveys and consent forms were sent home during the week of August 27th. The two fifth-grade teachers were also given sportsmanship surveys.

In week one students did a great job creating posters featuring the sportsmanship rules. They were very colorful and creative and students worked together as a squad to create them. This allowed them to further rehearse the rules that they created. Unfortunately, there were

some posters with incomplete thoughts or sentences that did not make complete sense.

In week one, 54 parent consent forms and 54 parent surveys were sent home with students. I found two things interesting in the parent survey. The first was the parent's view of unsportsmanlike behavior. They seemed to have a high tolerance for behaviors that are considered unsportsmanlike. The second is that all parents seemed to have a favorable view of their child's sportsmanship behavior by scoring them either a one or two out of five on a scale of one to five.

In the second week of pre-documentation, September 3rd to 7th, 54 students took the student survey. I found it interesting that student survey answers seem to reflect the behaviors that they want me to see instead of the behaviors that they do with regards to sportsmanship. On a positive note students are still in the honeymoon period and seem to be good sports because it is the beginning of the year and everyone likes each other. One negative in terms of the timing is that because there are no sportsmanship issues at this time students do not have much of a reference for sportsmanship issues.

After students took the survey I then explained the behavior checklist that I will be using to assess positive sportsmanship behaviors starting the next week. With the shortened week I was not able to start the behavior checklist. We had two classes this week and I wanted to get students started with soccer gameplay. When they are playing games it will be much easier to observe them using the behavior checklist.

This week we did a small intervention in which students were asked to shake hands at the end of their scrimmages this week. I thought this went well with only one clear instance of unsportsmanlike behavior. Students were complaining about teams being unfair. We talked about the fact that teams may not always be fair and they may not always be on the winning team

before going inside to line up.

In the first week of the intervention, September 10th to September 14th, student behaviors were tracked for both fifth-grade classes using a behavior checklist. I found it interesting that the most commonly observed negative sportsmanship behaviors were showing aggression towards the opponent and arguing with teammates. There were a lot of incidents of unsportsmanlike behaviors during the soccer scrimmages. I corrected students only when someone was in danger, but otherwise let them play on in order to collect my data.

For the first official intervention students filled out a roleplaying activity accompanied by a worksheet on Friday. The students were given one of four scenarios to act out in front of the class and then answer four questions based on the roleplaying. I found it positive that students were able to answer the questions with a high level of insight into how others might feel. I found it both interesting and negative that students can verbalize the correct answers to the scenarios but when playing games they seem to forget the positive sportsmanship behaviors.

In the second week of intervention, September 17th to September 21st, students filled out a worksheet where they were asked to recall three instances of good sportsmanship, three instances of poor sportsmanship, and how those behaviors could have been improved. I found it positive that students came up with great solutions that involved outside the box thinking. I found it interesting the vividness with which students recalled both sportsmanlike and unsportsmanlike behaviors that happened during soccer games, sporting events, and in there out of school leagues. We then had a discussion about proper sportsmanship and how things happen during the course of a game or activity. In professional sports the actions are much more severe because the stakes are higher. In physical education the stakes are much lower and we should not have as many instances of poor sportsmanship. Games should be played for fun. I found it

positive that the instances of negative sportsmanship as observed by the behavior checklist have gone down since I started recording them. We have also continued to end each game with hand shakes. I found it negative that some students would refuse to shake hands but recorded that in my observation checklist.

In the third week of the intervention, September 24th to September 28th, students watched a video clip entitled “Unbelievable” Act of Sportsmanship from the Today Show (Curry, 2008). I found it interesting that before we watched the video several students told me that they have seen a noticeable difference in positive sportsmanship behaviors. The clip was of a softball player who was injured at first base during a championship game. She had hit a home run but was not able to run the bases. An opponent decided that the right thing to do was to help her around the bases so she could score the game-winning run. After the video we had a positive class discussion and talked about ways that students have witnessed good sportsmanship. They recalled instances that happened during outside activities where they had witnessed good and bad sportsmanship. Students agreed that the video clip and their experiences remind them that during physical education class they should be able to find ways to be more positive sports. I found it sad that students have had so many bad experiences with poor sportsmanship at such a young age in their youth sports leagues.

In the fourth week of the intervention, October 1st to October 5th, students were asked to create a sportsmanship poster with either a picture displaying positive sportsmanship or a slogan. I found it positive that the posters were really creative and colorful with great messages. Some posters had writing only while others told a story of good sportsmanship. I found it interesting that students’ behavior seems to really be improving with weekly sportsmanship interventions. I found it frustrating that students seemed to sigh each time they hear that we have an intervention.

They would rather be active which I understand, but the interventions do seem to be working. This past week there were very few reports and observations of poor sportsmanship with the observational behavior checklist.

In the fifth week of the intervention, October 8th to October 12th, student behavior was recorded using the observation checklist. I found it positive that students' behavior seems to really be improving with weekly sportsmanship interventions. I found it interesting that this past week there were very few reports and observations of poor sportsmanship. The only negative aspect is that when I do see negative sportsmanship behaviors they seem to be the same ones, arguing with opponents and teammates. During this week students participated in a roleplaying activity and then the class participated in a discussion. The guided questions that came with the role playing activity really made the discussion more productive and thought provoking. Student answers were of a higher level of thinking.

In the sixth week of the intervention, October 15th to October 19th, student behavior was recorded using the observation checklist. Students participated in a classroom discussion based on three sportsmanship scenarios. After reading each scenario in groups students were asked to come up with the answers to questions posed at the end of the scenarios, and based on the scenario develop a list of five rules for good sportsmanship. I found it positive that students did a great job with the discussion coming up with five rules pertinent to their scenario. I found it interesting that each time we do an intervention students "sigh," as I think they just think they want to be active during this time. I found it negative that the students who always seem to be poor sports did not always take this task seriously.

In the seventh week of the intervention, October 22nd to October 26th, students journaled incidents of positive or negative sportsmanship on a notecard. I read the notecards privately but

found a high incidence of positive sportsmanship. The positive sportsmanship behaviors that I saw with some frequency were helping someone up when they fell, cheering on the other team when they scored, shaking hands at the end of the game, and helping teammates if they did not know what to do. The negative sportsmanship behaviors I saw with some frequency were arguing with teammates and opponents, complaining about calls, bragging, and not following the rules. The answers did not surprise me but I was happy that most of the responses were positive. I found it interesting that the journaling shows that the weekly interventions seem to be working and students are at least aware of what positive sportsmanship looks like.

In the eight-week of the intervention, October 28th to November 2nd, students did not receive an intervention this week as we chose to focus more on respectful, responsible, and safe behavior. I figured it would be more positive to review what these behaviors look like in physical education class and I modeled the behaviors for them with the help of students. I found it negative that this week we had a lot of disrespectful behavior across the board in both fifth-grade classes so I thought this would be an appropriate topic instead of focusing predominantly on sportsmanship. I found it interesting that students can again tell me what I want to hear but do not practice the rules when in a competitive setting.

During the first week of post-documentation, December 10th to December 14th, I administered and collected 54 student surveys from two fifth-grade classes in the gymnasium. The purpose of the post-survey was to gain information about how often students engage in negative sportsmanship behaviors during physical education class after receiving interventions. The survey contained the same seven questions as the pre-test, which addressed sportsmanship behaviors and asked students to rate how often they participate in each behavior on a likert scale with the choices: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. I found it interesting that

student answers were pretty similar to the pre-test with some students being more honest with their answers. I found it positive that students' answers seem to gravitate towards more sportsmanship attitudes. I found it negative that the students seemed to answer the questions pretty quickly without putting a lot of thought into answering them.

### **Interventions.**

For the first intervention, I chose a student contract. Students from both fifth-grade classes brainstormed ideas and I chose 10 from that list that were the most pertinent for our class. The rules were: celebrate, don't brag, fighting is not allowed, help others, encourage others, If you don't have anything nice to say don't say it, be positive, get everyone involved, don't purposely hurt, and follow the rules of the game. After reading the new list of rules students created colorful posters to be seen by their parents on curriculum night. Students then signed their posters entering into a contract of agreement that they would try their best to follow the rules that they created. This gave the student ownership as well as a clear set of expectations. According to studies on sportsmanship, contracts can be signed on the first day of practice or class so that players or students know the expectations they have agreed to live up to, and posting the contracts in a prominent area of the gymnasiums or field can serve as a frequent reminder of this commitment (Wells, et al., 2006).

For the second intervention, the teacher researcher chose roleplaying. After reviewing the research, the teacher researcher recognized that his students would benefit from role-playing, or modeling, to assist with reinforcing what positive sportsmanship looks like. Several techniques such as modeling (Lipscomb, Bregman, & McAlister, 1983, Owens & Ascione, 1991, & Smith & Smoll, 1997, as cited in Arthur-Banning, et al., 2007), or helping the participant take another's perspective (Eisenberg, Carlo, Murphy, & Van Court, 1995, as cited in Arthur-



Banning, et al., 2007) could be used to reactivate behavior-related norms in a sport setting to place greater emphasis on aspects of sportsmanship. I thought that with the new set of rules it would benefit the students to see some of them in action.

Students received a worksheet entitled Sportsmanship Scenarios (Appendix G) (kidshealth.org, 2009). Students were put into three groups where they received one of the three scenarios. Scenario number 1 reads, “It’s the bottom of the 9th inning, the bases are loaded, and your teammate Keith comes up to bat. You know that if Keith gets a hit, your team will win. Keith strikes out. Your team loses” (kidshealth.org, 2009). Scenario number 2 reads, “You’re playing basketball with neighborhood friends. The other team makes a basket that you think shouldn’t count. The other team insists it does” (kidshealth.org, 2009). The final scenario reads, “Your soccer team made it to the semi-finals. You’re playing the toughest team in the league and you’re down by four goals. There are 3 minutes left in the game. The coach takes you out so one of your teammates who rarely plays can get on the field” (kidshealth.org, 2009).

After reading the scenarios with their groups and discussing them students acted them out in front of the class. After they were done role playing the class answered the following questions together: What would a good sport do?, What might happen next?, What would a sore loser do?, What might happen next? The classroom discussion went well. Some of the answers students came up with for what a good sport would do were: I would shake their hand and say good game, I would settle an argument with rock, paper, scissors, Its fine Keith we will win the next one. The simple task of seeing a scenario played out before them and making a decision about what actions a good sport would take and what actions a poor sport would take allowed them to see both perspectives of the situation and realize exactly what steps they can take to have good sportsmanship.

The students later did another roleplaying activity. The roleplaying activity was from Do the Write Thing Texas Challenge: A Youth anti-violence and academic program (2013). The worksheet was entitled Athletes – Sportsmanship Key Question: What does it mean to have “Good Sportsmanship”? The worksheet can be seen on Appendix H. This time there was one situation in which a girl made a volleyball team but was not friends with any of her teammates. They were not her friends and they did not think she should have made the team. The roleplaying climaxes when the girl makes a mistake and her teammates jump all over her. She runs off of the court in tears. After students performed the roleplaying skit we answered the discussion questions together. The questions were: What should Monica do now?, Why did this conflict happen?, What/who could have prevented this conflict?, and Should athletes be held to a higher level of conduct? Students again were very thorough in their responses and it showed that they were empathetic to the situation and hopefully could handle a similar situation without anyone feeling left out.

For the third intervention I chose to have students come up with instances where they have experienced both positive and negative sportsmanship. Each student individually filled out a worksheet, which can be seen on Appendix I. The worksheet was entitled Being a Good Sport (kidshealth.org, 2009). Students were asked to give three examples of good sportsmanship they have experienced as a teammate, opponent, coach, or fan. Then they were asked to give three examples for unsportsmanlike behavior they have experienced or witnessed. Then, for each unsportsmanlike behavior they were asked to explain how each person could have improved his or her behavior and been a better sport.

The answers were a variety of examples from sports leagues, professional leagues, and acts that happened in class. Student accounts were vivid and clearly written. The main focus of

this intervention was for students to realize how the acts of poor sportsmanship could have been avoided or handled better. According to Beller (2002), individuals are challenged to reflect upon moral issues, values, and principles in relationship to others and society, translating those reflections into good moral action.

In sports, we do not always get a second chance so it is important to think about things before they happen because many times they happen so fast we have little time to react. Reciting possible outcomes can make an athlete more adept at handling issues of poor sportsmanship or steering clear of them all together.

For the fourth intervention, I chose to have students watch a video clip from the Today show entitled “Unbelievable” Act of Sportsmanship (Curry, 2008). The video describes a situation in which a softball player who was injured at first base during a championship game. She had hit a home run but was not able to run the bases. An opponent decided that the right thing to do was to help her around the bases so she could score the game-winning run. After the video we had a positive class discussion and talked about ways that students have witnessed good sportsmanship. They recalled instances that happened during outside activities where they had witnessed good and bad sportsmanship. Students agreed that the video clip and their experiences remind them that during physical education class they should be able to find ways to be more positive sports.

For the fifth intervention, I chose to have students create positive sportsmanship signs or posters for the gym. We would not normally take a break from being active to create posters but I thought it would be a helpful reminder of the rules they created at the beginning of the year. Students worked individually or in pairs to create these posters. Students would use these as constant reminders while in the gym to remember to practice positive sportsmanship. The

posters were creative and spanned from positive slogans like “there is no I in team” to posters that featured a “sportsmanship tree” which had rules and examples of good sportsmanship as its branches. I thought the posters were well done and all had very positive messages.

For my sixth intervention, I chose to have a classroom discussion based on sportsmanship scenarios that students would read in groups. After reading each scenario in groups students were asked to come up with the answers to questions posed at the end of the scenarios, and based on the scenario develop a list of 5 rules for good sportsmanship. The worksheet can be seen in Appendix J (Dovers-Hebron High School, 2010). The scenarios were a little more advanced as they were created for high school students but students were able to follow the scenarios and answer the questions at the end. The situations were less cut and dry and more controversial which in my opinion is more realistic. This intervention lead to more higher-level thinking and responses.

For my seventh intervention, I chose to have students journal. Journaling is a great way to reflect on previous experiences or actions and record them for future reference. In this journaling activity students were asked to write an instance in class where they, or one of their classmates, showed an act of good or bad sportsmanship. They were to also journal how this made them feel. The positive sportsmanship behaviors that I saw with some frequency were helping someone up when they fell, cheering on the other team when they scored, shaking hands at the end of the game, and helping teammates if they didn’t know what to do. The negative sportsmanship behaviors I saw with some frequency were arguing with teammates and opponents, complaining about calls, bragging, and not following the rules. The answers did not surprise me but I was happy that most often the responses were positive. The students that wrote negative sportsmanship situations felt badly that they happened in most cases and would

like to have avoided them.

### **Reflection**

Conducting this action research project and implementing the interventions to assist my students with their positive sportsmanship behaviors has been a rewarding experience. Having been a part of this opportunity has built upon my own leadership as a teacher. In the beginning I felt very excited about how my students would respond to the interventions and the outcome of their success. As a physical education teacher, I am always looking for strategies that can help my students remember important skills to help them improve their social emotional learning. The interventions that I decided on also worked very nicely with our physical education curriculum. If anything, it helped to advance my program. One thing I was apprehensive about was how many students would respond to the interventions. A lot of the research was done in youth sports leagues through park districts and not particularly in an education setting where classes meet for 90 minutes a week. I was not sure if I would have enough time to make the changes in behavior with such short interventions, because I also wanted students to be active which is another goal of our physical education program. During implementation, at first students went along with interventions and cooperated very easily. As the interventions went on students began to fight them a little as they saw their activity time diminish. I would have liked to possibly implement interventions that were more seamless and possibly more active. Through these bumps, my classes and I learned to work with one another, encourage their peers and embrace success as it pertained to prosocial behaviors. As the weeks progressed, I was floored with how my students caught onto the classroom expectations. They took ownership of their behaviors and held their classmates accountable as well. I think having more positive sportsmanship allowed them to enjoy playing team sports. There was less arguing and

disrespectful behavior.

Throughout the 12 weeks of intervention, my students impressed me with their high level of awareness for sportsmanship behaviors and ideas for becoming better sports in class. During documentation, I was impressed to see my students make progress in their sportsmanship behaviors and attitudes. Even though the data collection is done, my class and I are still working on continued improvement through constant reminders until the end of the year to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable time playing team sports. For future years, I plan on revising a few of the interventions and adding others that I read about in the research but was not able to try because of time. I feel that this project has helped me grow more as a teacher than just gaining experience alone. Having the knowledge of conducting research has opened the doors for future needs.

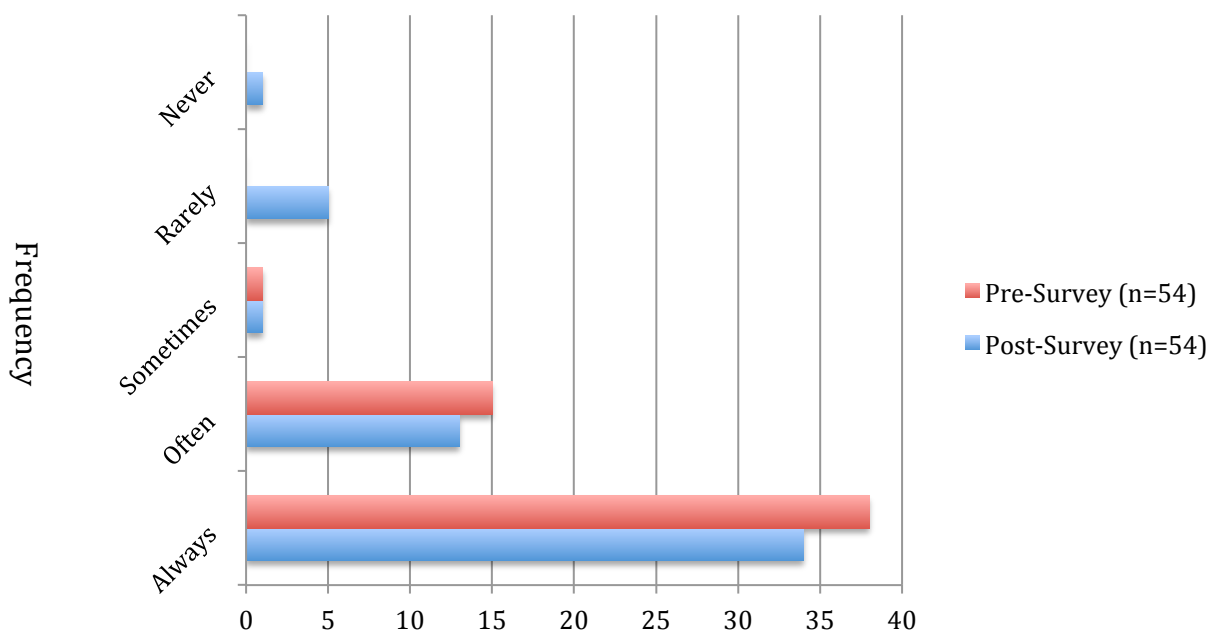
### **Presentation and Analysis of Results**

The purpose of this research project was to increase positive sportsmanship behaviors in two fifth-grade physical education classes. The teacher researcher collected data from a student survey. The teacher researcher collected data from 54 fifth-grade students. The post documentation was collected from December 10th to December 14th , 2012.

The purpose of the Student Survey (Appendix B) was to gain information about how often students engage in negative sportsmanship behaviors during physical education class. The student survey was distributed one time and collected the week of December 10, 2012 through December 14, 2012. The survey was given to 54 students in 2 fifth-grade physical education classes, all of whom completed surveys, therefore the return rate on the student survey was 100% (n=54). The survey contained seven questions, which addressed sportsmanship behaviors and asked students to rate how often they participate in each behavior on a likert scale with the

choices: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Please refer to Appendix B for a copy of the Student Survey.

The first question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I tell the truth, even if it means my team might not win the game.” Students were asked to select one choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 14 below shows the majority of students (n=34, 63%) stated that they always tell the truth, while the next largest group of students (n=13, 24%) stated that they often tell the truth.



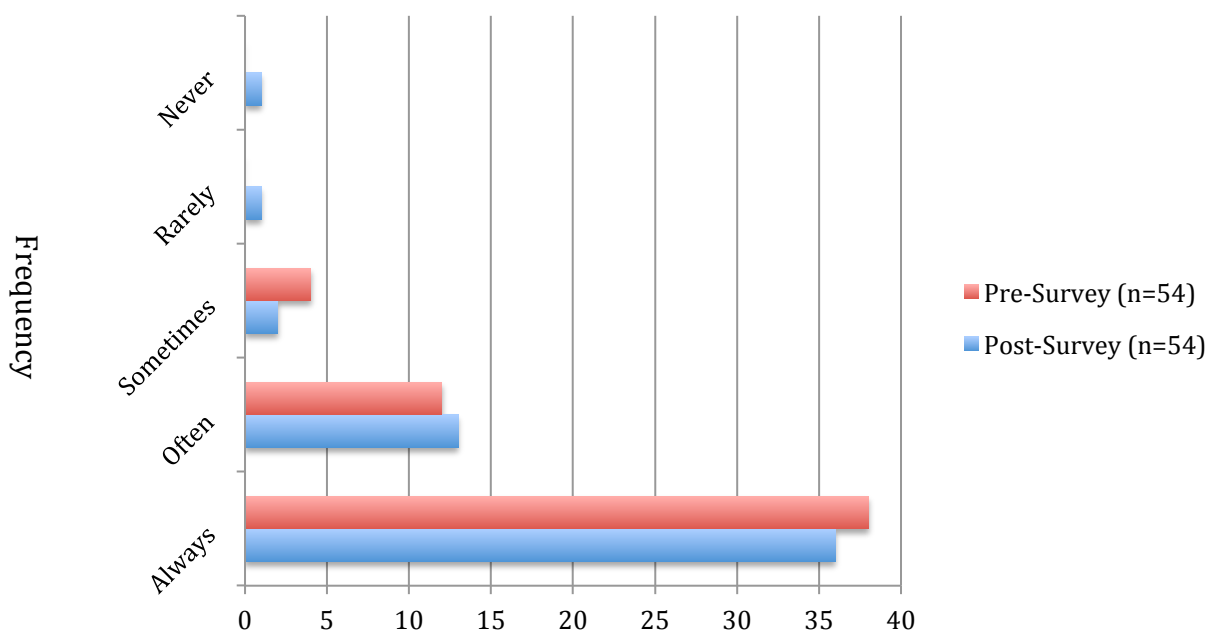
Number of Students

Figure 14: Student survey question 1 (n = 108)

The number of students that chose always for the question “In PE games, I give my best effort to play by the rules” dropped very slightly from 38 in the pre-survey to 34 in the post survey. The number of students that chose they would often play by the rules slightly decreased from 15 in the pre-survey to 13 in the post-survey. There was a pretty significant increase in

students that chose rarely for this question as it rose from 0 in the pre-survey to 5 in the post-survey. Please refer to Figure 14 to see the comparison of pre and post documentation for the student survey question 1.

The second question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I give my best effort to play by the rules.” Students were asked to select one choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 15 below shows the majority of students (n=43, 80%) stated that they always give their best effort to play by the rules, while the next largest group of students (n=6, 11%) stated that they often play by the rules.



Number of Students

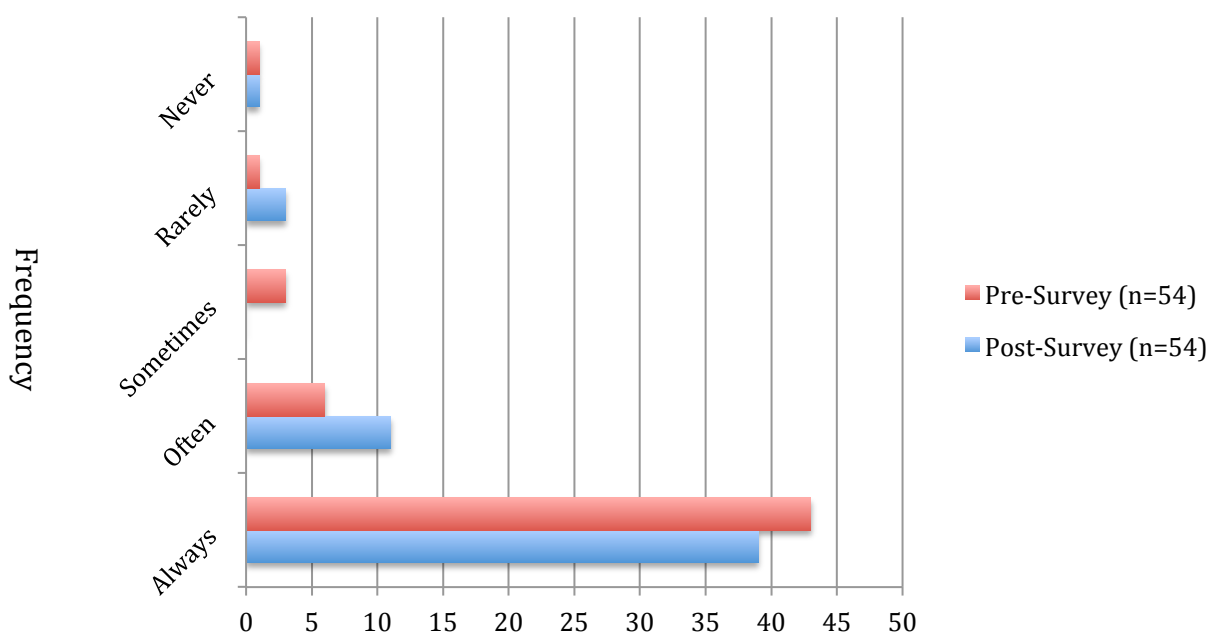
*Figure 15: Student survey question 2 (n=108)*

The number of students that answered always to the question “In PE games, I give my best effort to play by the rules” increased slightly from 38 in the pre-survey to 43 in the post-survey. The students that answered they would often “play by the rules” slightly decreased from



the pre-survey where 12 students chose this answer as opposed to 6 in the post-survey. Please refer to Figure 15.

The third question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I include or involve students on my team who are less athletically skilled than I am? Students were asked to select on choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 16 below shows the majority of students (n=39, 72%) stated that they always include everyone, while the next largest group of students (n=11, 20%) stated that they often include everyone.

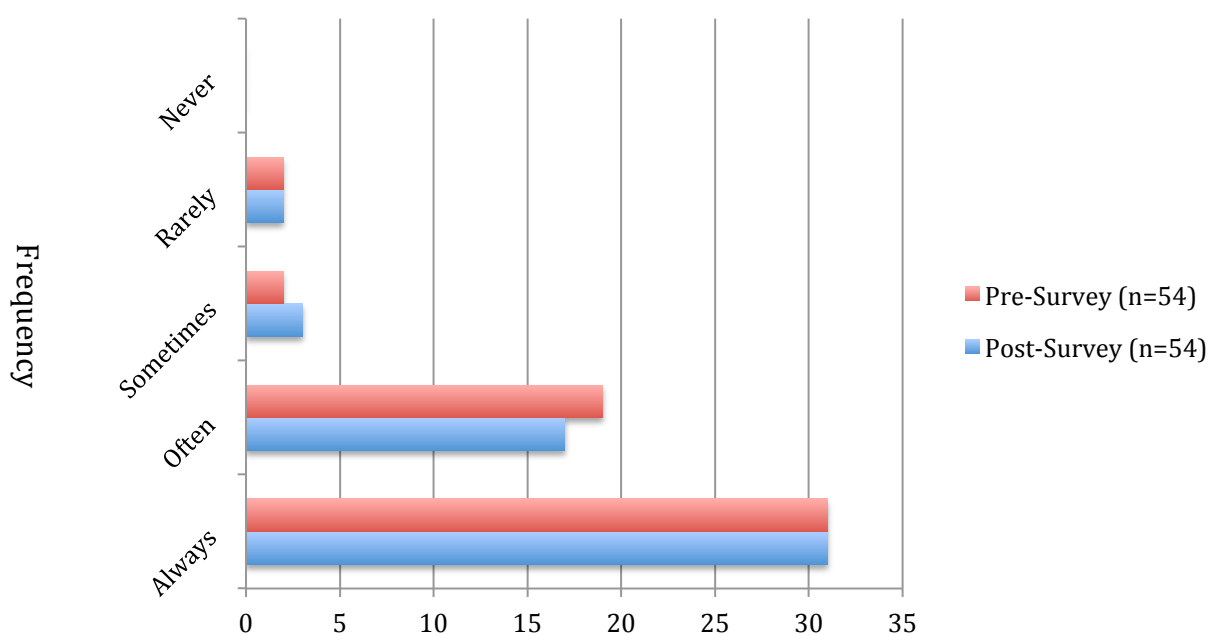


Number of Students

Figure 16: Student survey question 3 (n=108)

According to Figure 16, there is a slight decrease from 43 students always “including their less skilled peers” in pre-documentation to 39 students in post-documentation. The figure also shows an increase from 6 students who often “include their less skilled peers” in pre-documentation to 11 students in post-documentation.

The fourth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I take responsibility for my mistakes or “bad plays.” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 17 below shows the majority of students (n=31, 57%) stated that they always take responsibility for their mistakes; while the next largest group of students (n=17, 31%) stated that they often take responsibility for their mistakes.

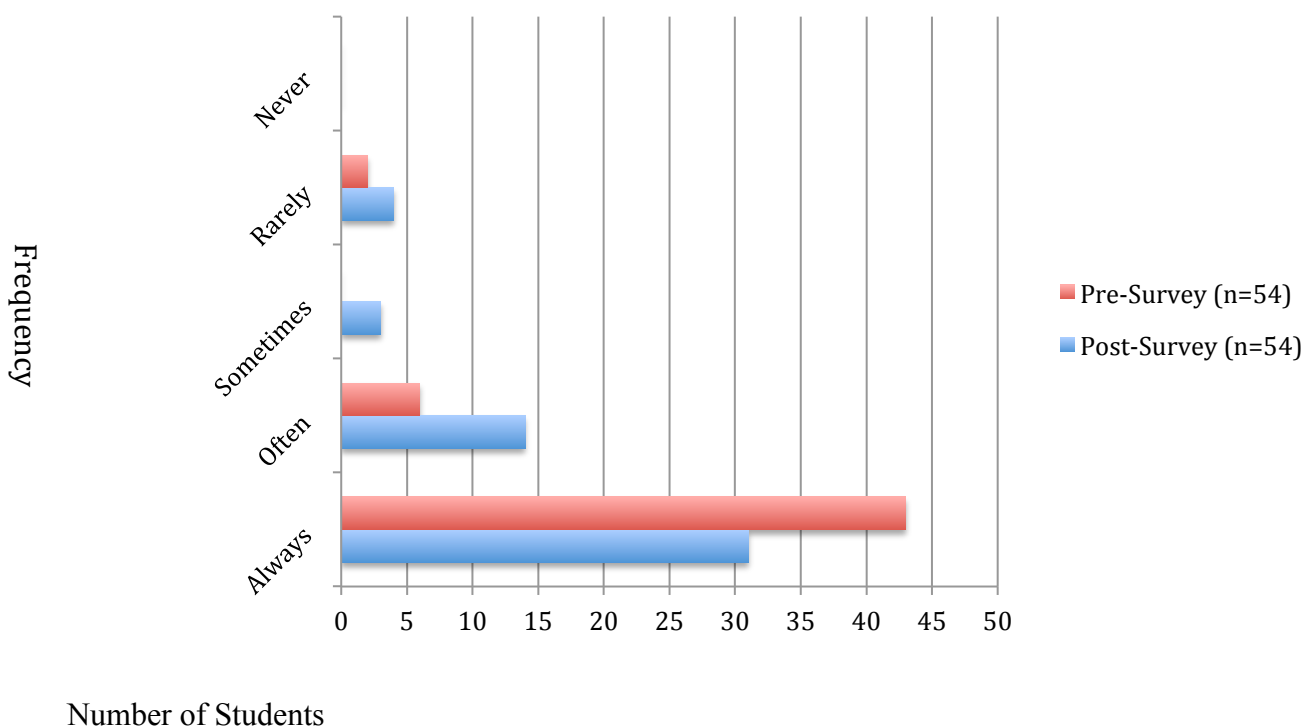


Number of Students

*Figure 17:* Student survey question 4 (n=108)

The number of students who answered always to the question “In PE games, I take responsibility for my mistakes or “bad plays “ was the same in pre- and post-documentation with 36. The number of students that answered they would often take responsibility decreased from 19 in the pre-survey to 17 in the post-survey. Refer to Figure 17 to see the complete results of question number 4.

The fifth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I make decisions that are fair for everyone involved.” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 18 below shows the majority of students (n=31, 57%) stated that they are always making decisions that are fair for everyone involved, while the next largest group of students (n=14, 26%) stated that they often make fair decisions for everyone involved.

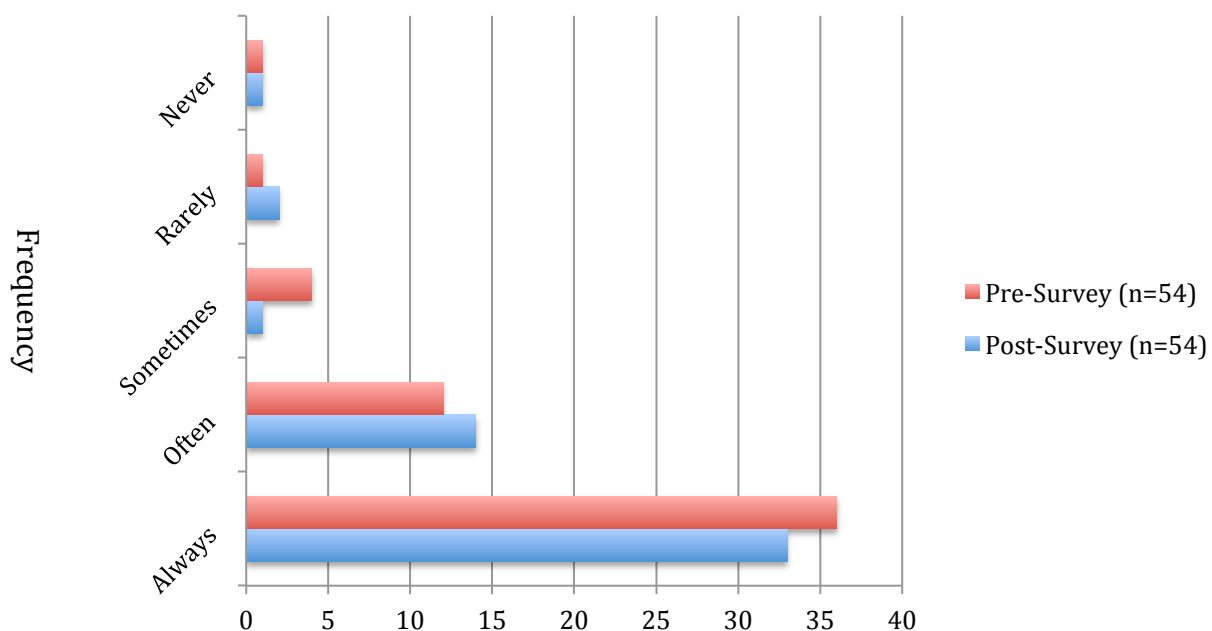


*Figure 18:* Student survey question 5 (n=108)

The number of students that answered they would always “make decisions that are fair for everyone involved” decreased greatly with 43 students in the pre-survey and 31 in the post-survey. This was one of the largest decreases in the number of students who answered always from pre- to post-survey. Another question that showed a significant increase from pre-to post-survey results was that 6 students said they would often “make decisions that are fair for

everyone involved” in the pre-survey compared to 14 in the post-survey. Please refer to Figure 18 for the results of question 5.

The sixth question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I take into consideration how other people might feel?” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 19 below shows the majority of students (n=33, 61%) stated that they always take into consideration how other people might feel, while the next largest group of students (n=14, 26%) stated that they often take into consideration how other people might feel.



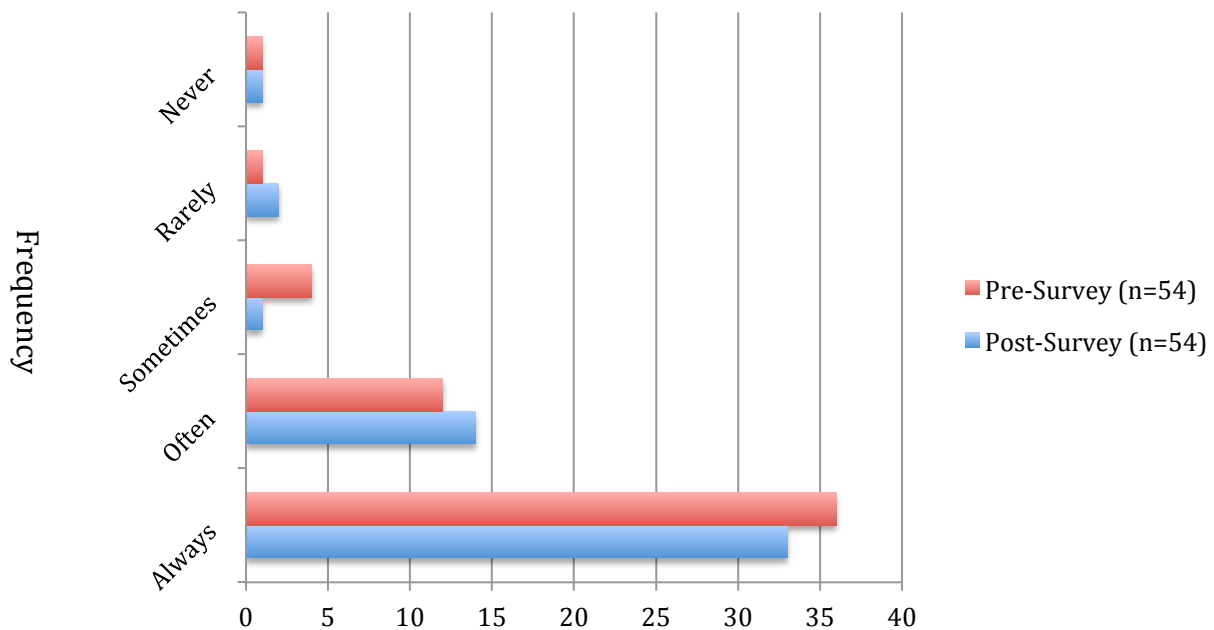
Number of Students

*Figure 19: Student survey question 6 (n=108)*

The number of students that answered always to the question “In PE games, I take into consideration how other people might feel?” decreased slightly with 36 students in the pre-survey to 33 in the post-survey. A slight increase occurred with the answer often as the number

of students that answered this went from 12 in the pre-survey to 14 in the post-survey. The students that answered sometimes decreased from 4 in the pre-survey to 1 in the post survey. Please refer to Figure 19 for the results of question 6.

The seventh question on the Student Survey stated, “In PE games, I am willing to help fellow students who need assistance with their skills or abilities?” Students were asked to select on choice from the following: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Figure 20 below shows the majority of students (n=30, 56%) stated that they are always willing to help fellow students that need assistance, while the next largest group of students (n=18, 33%) stated that they often help fellow students that need assistance.



Number of Students

*Figure 20:* Student survey question 7 (n=108)

The number of students, according to Figure 20, that answered always to the question “In PE games, I am willing to help fellow students who need assistance with their skills or abilities?”

decreased slightly from 31 in the pre-survey to 30 in the post-survey. The number of students that answered often increased slightly from 15 in the pre-survey to 18 in the post-survey. The number of students that answered sometimes decreased from 6 in the pre-survey to 3 in the post-survey.

### **Summary**

The teacher researcher found that the students' attitudes about their sportsmanship behaviors slightly decreased after the intervention period in most of the aspects identified on the student survey. After compiling the post-documentation results from the student surveys, there was a slight decrease in students' attitudes towards positive sportsmanship from pre-documentation. In Figure 16 there is a great example of this as 43 students indicated that they always "include their less skilled peers" in pre-documentation compared to 39 students in post-documentation. Another example can be seen in Figure 18, where students' answers decreased slightly with 36 students in the pre-survey indicating that they always "take into consideration how other people might feel" compared to 33 in the post-survey. However, the teacher researcher did note a noticeable decrease in student answers from pre-documentation compared to post-documentation in Figure 17 as 43 students answered that they would always "make decisions that are fair for everyone involved" in the pre-survey compared to 31 students in the post-survey.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Conclusions.**

Reflecting upon the data and observations over the past few months, the teacher researcher found his research to have mixed results. The teacher researcher was pleased with the positive impact of the interventions on the students. The researcher felt as though weekly

reminders of good sportsmanship, modeling, and reflecting were beneficial to most of the students, particularly in class two. Class one was much calmer and the ability level of the student athletes was average. Students were not as worried about winning and losing and showed more positive sportsmanship behaviors as a result.

During the post documentation period, the teacher researchers observed a decrease in total incidents of poor sportsmanship incidents for both fifth-grade classes based on the behavior observation checklist. However, after looking at the student surveys the number of students that always show good sportsmanship did decrease slightly. This could be due to a better knowledge of sportsmanship or a more realistic opinion of his or her sportsmanship behaviors.

In conclusion, weekly interventions including role-playing, modeling, creation of classroom rules, and journaling did improve positive sportsmanship behaviors in my opinion. Students used less time arguing, celebrating, and putting others down and played more. All in all, I think that this study was a success.

### **Recommendations.**

When reviewing the data, the teacher researcher would recommend a modified version of some interventions for future use. For example, I would use more active interventions during game play like ending the game in a tie or resetting the score if it gets one sided, or changing teams if the competition is not fair. I think this would be more beneficial as it does not take away activity time and based on the research these methods were shown as effective in improving positive sportsmanship behaviors. With limited class time having students sit while we discuss is important but misses the point of physical education. Students must be active during this time as they may not always be active outside of school especially in the winter months. One intervention that the teacher researcher needed some modifications was the

observation behavior checklist and taking data pre- and post-intervention. The data obtained would have been more beneficial to determine with certainty, which interventions were working and which ones did not work so well. I would also in addition to the checklist monitor time lost due to negative sportsmanship behaviors to see if this would become smaller as the interventions continued.

The classes observed also make conducting the study very different. The demeanor of class two was more hyperactive, athletic, and seemed to have more trouble with positive sportsmanship behaviors. The teacher researcher observed more negative behavior in class two and some of the students needed to be closely monitored during gameplay so that they stayed on-task and participated in a positive manner. Knowing the class beforehand and preparing interventions for their possible deficiencies would also serve the researcher well in conducting this research in the future.



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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Parent Survey

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

- |  |     |       |
|--|-----|-------|
| 1. Do you see sportsmanship as a problem at school?  | Yes | No    |
| 2. Has your child ever reported an issue with sportsman-<br>ship in physical education class?  | Yes | No    |
| 3. Which of the following behaviors do you view as unsportsmanlike, please check all that apply.   |     |       |
| A. Participant blames teammates for poor play  |     | _____ |
| B. Participant argues with the opponent  |     | _____ |
| C. Participants makes unnecessary physical actions<br>(pushing, hitting, tripping, etc.)   |     | _____ |
| D. Participant yells to distract an opponent   |     | _____ |
| E. Participant uses hand signals or gestures to distract opponent  |     | _____ |
| F. Participant shows excessive frustration with his/her teammates' performance(s).   |     | _____ |
| G. Participant demonstrates acts of aggression<br>(throwing the ball away, kicking the ball, etc.)   |     | _____ |
| 4. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being a low level of concern and 5 being the highest level of concern, to what level are you concerned with your child's current level of sportsmanship? |     |       |
| 1  | 2   | 3     |
|  |     | 4     |
|  |     | 5     |

## Appendix B

### Student Survey

Directions: Please complete the following questions.

**Always**= you see or do this behavior every day

**Often**= you see or do this behavior at least a couple times a week

**Sometimes**= you see or do this behavior at least once a week

**Rarely**=you see or do this behavior once a month

**Never**=this is not something you see or do in your physical education class

1. In PE games, I tell the truth, even if it means my team might not win the game.
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
2. In PE games, I give my best effort to play by the rules.
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
3. In PE games, I include or involve students on my team who are less athletically skilled than I am?
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
4. In PE games, I follow the equipment rules even when it is difficult or unpleasant.
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
5. In PE games, I demonstrate self-control with my body by doing what I should do even when it is difficult or unpleasant.
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
6. In PE games, I take responsibility for my mistakes or "bad plays."
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
7. In PE games, I make decisions that are fair for everyone involved.
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
8. In PE games, I take into consideration how other people might feel?
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
  
9. In PE games, I am willing to help fellow students who need assistance with their skills or abilities?
 

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|

## Appendix C

### Teacher Survey

Directions: Please circle your response to the following questions.

1. How often do you think your students use appropriate strategies to handle conflict in class?

Always                      Sometimes                      Rarely                      Never

2. Please check unsportsmanlike behaviors that you have observed in class.

A. Pushing, hitting, tripping as a result of an argument \_\_\_\_\_

B. Yelling or arguing about the outcome of a game \_\_\_\_\_

C. Crying about the outcome of a game \_\_\_\_\_

D. Emotionally shutting down as the result of an outcome of a game \_\_\_\_\_

E. Blaming others for poor play \_\_\_\_\_

F. Putting others down for poor play \_\_\_\_\_

3. On average, how many minutes per week are lost dealing with sportsmanship issues from physical education class in your classroom? (Circle one).

0-5                      5-10                      11-15                      16+

4. What strategies do you use to resolve sportsmanship issues in class? (Check all that apply).

Rock, paper, scissors \_\_\_\_\_

Walk away or ignore \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom discussion \_\_\_\_\_

Modeling appropriate behavior \_\_\_\_\_

Talking about the issue \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Have not dealt with \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D

### Observation Behavior Checklist

| Category             | Behavior   | Players |
|----------------------|--|---------|
| Excuses              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant blamed teammates for poor play</li> </ul>                                 |         |
| Disrespect Opponent  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant made actions/comments to run up the score</li> </ul>                      |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant argued with opponent</li> </ul>   |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant made unnecessary physical actions</li> </ul>                              |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant made comments or gestures to demean/taunt opponents (brag)</li> </ul>     |         |
| Authority Disrespect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant verbally argued with teacher's call</li> </ul>                            |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant made gestures consistent with disagreement toward teacher</li> </ul>      |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant ignored teachers' direction</li> </ul>                                    |         |
| Fake or Deceive      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant yelled to distract opponent</li> </ul>                                    |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant used hand gestures or motions to distract an opponent (silent)</li> </ul> |         |
| Shows Anger          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant showed excessive frustration at teammates' performance</li> </ul>         |         |
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant demonstrated acts of aggression</li> </ul>                                |         |

**Appendix E****CLASSROOM SPORTSMANSHIP RULES**

1. Celebrate
2. Don't brag
3. Fighting is not allowed
4. Help others
5. Encourage others
6. If you don't have anything nice to say don't say it
7. Be positive
8. Get everyone involved
9. Don't purposely hurt
10. Follow the rules of the game

Appendix F

Pictures of Students Poster Boards with Sportsmanship Rules



Winning isn't everything!

# SPORTSMANSHIP

Help others & encourage them!!!!

Celebrate!

Don't Brag

No ball Hogs!!

Don't Harm/Hurt others!

Most of all have fun!

## RULES!

Treat everyone the way you want to be treated - GOLDEN RULE

Follow the Rules

Don't touch each other.

Don't say anything if it will hurt someone

Try your hardest

Include everyone

G+M if okay



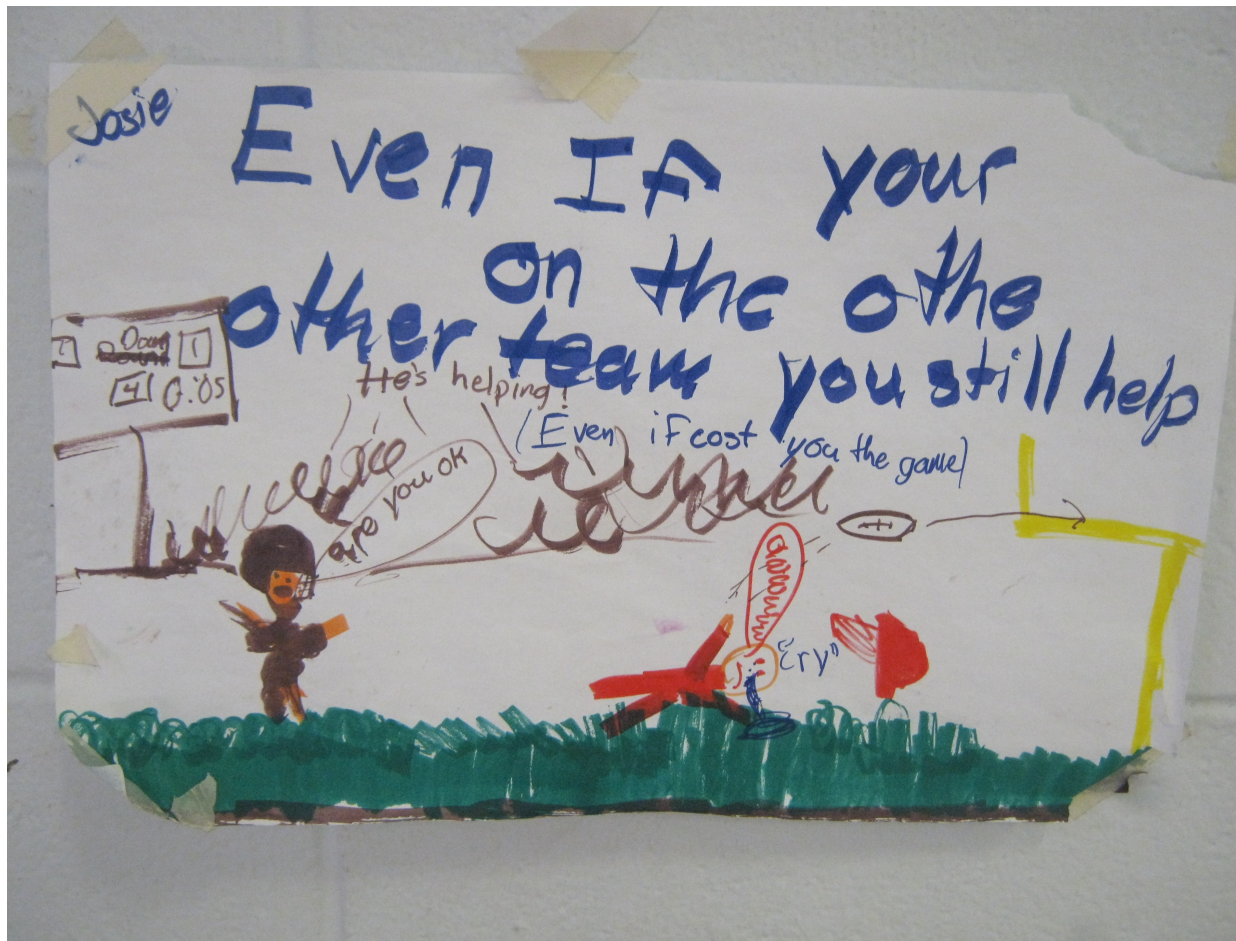
R A T O y H e S

The Way You Want to be  
**TREATED**

Élla SaPañu  
Brigid Peri











## Appendix G



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sportsmanship Scenarios

Instructions: Choose one of these three scenarios, then write what a good sport would do and what a sore loser would do, as well as what would happen as a result those actions.

**Scenario 1:** It's the bottom of the 9th inning, the bases are loaded, and your teammate Keith comes up to bat. You know that if Keith gets a hit, your team will win. Keith strikes out. Your team loses.

**Scenario 2:** You're playing basketball with neighborhood friends. The other team makes a basket that you think shouldn't count. The other team insists it does.

**Scenario 3:** Your soccer team made it to the semi-finals. You're playing the toughest team in the league and you're down by four goals. There are 3 minutes left in the game. The coach takes you out so one of your teammates who rarely plays can get on the field.

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <p><b>What would a good sport do?</b></p> | <p><b>What might happen next:</b></p> |
| <p><b>What would a sore loser do?</b></p> | <p><b>What might happen next:</b></p> |

## Appendix H

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**Topic: Athletes - Sportsmanship**

**Key Question:**

**What does it mean to have “Good Sportsmanship”?**

This scenario was contributed by the teachers comprising the DrWTeX Educational Advisory Committee at the 2012 Do the Write Thing Texas Leadership Summit.

**Scenario:**

Monica was excited to begin her 7<sup>th</sup> grade year because she was going to be able to play sports in school. She had been active in kickball since she was very young, but now she had the opportunity to participate in other sports.

Although she had never played volleyball before, she was excited to try out for the volleyball team. Several of the girls in her class, including Veronica, Stephanie, and Melissa had been playing volleyball since elementary, so she knew her chances of making the team were slim. However, not only did she make the team, she made the “A” team.

Soon after making the team, Monica noticed that some of the other girls on the team were avoiding her in class and in the hallways.

One day during morning practice, Monica heard Veronica and Melissa laugh after she missed a serve.

“Yeah, and she’s on the “A” team?” Veronica laughed.

“I know, right? She shouldn’t even be on the “C” team,” Melissa responded.

Monica tried to ignore the comments, but throughout the day she kept replaying the scene over and over in her mind.

Later, during afternoon practice, when Monica was ready to bump the volleyball, Veronica ran in front of her and hit the ball.

Monica exploded! “That was my ball! Why did you hit it?”

Stephanie jumped in and said, “She didn’t think you could handle it.”

Stephanie then turned around and high-fived Melissa and Veronica.

“Are you kidding? What are you talking about?”

Melissa said, “You! You keep acting like you’re something. You haven’t even been playing that long, and you’re acting like you’re all that.”

Monica walked off the court in tears.

**Discussion questions:**

1. What should Monica do now?
2. Why did this conflict happen?
3. What/who could have prevented this conflict?
4. Should athletes be held to a higher level of conduct?

**Correlated TEKS:**

ELAR 14A: Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea.

ELAR 14 B: Develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare/contrast,) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

ELAR 14C: Revise drafts to ensure precise word choice and vivid images, consistent point of view, use of simple, compound and complex sentences, internal and external coherence, and the use of effective transitions after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed.

ELAR 17Aiii: Write a multi-paragraph essay to convey information about a topic that is logically organized with appropriate facts and details and includes no extraneous information or inconsistencies.

**There are two ways to use the Scenarios:**

1. Teacher Centered:
  - Read the scenarios.
  - Choose 3 based on the topics presented.
  - Present one scenario for the students to solve together and scribe for them on the board, overhead or Smartboard™. Consider the possible solutions and discuss why one could be considered a better solution over another.
2. Student Centered:
  - Scenarios are copied and given to students to review on their own.
  - Students are placed into groups.
  - They prepare their scenario to share with their peers (probing or open-ended questions).
  - After they become “experts” they move to another group to discuss and listen to the next group’s presentation.
  - At the end of the session, the class comes to summarize what they have learned during the experience.

## Appendix I



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Being a Good Sport**

Instructions: Read the KidsHealth articles related to sportsmanship, then answer these questions.

Give three examples of **good sportsmanship** you've experienced or witnessed. The good sport could be you, a teammate, an opponent, a coach, a parent, or a fan. The examples could be from games you've played in or watched.

1:

2:

3:

Give three examples of **unsportsmanlike behavior** you've experienced or witnessed. The person could be you, a teammate, an opponent, a coach, a parent, or a fan. The examples could be from games you've played in or watched.

1:

2:

3:

For each example of **unsportsmanlike behavior** you wrote, explain how each person could have improved his or her behavior and been a better sport.

1:

2:

3:



## Appendix J

### Sportsmanship Situations

**Group Assignment:** The superintendent has asked a group of high school students to come to the middle school to discuss sportsmanship with the middle school. There have been many problems during middle school sporting events and the superintendent wants to put a stop to this. He has asked a group of bright young freshman to help these middle school students with their bad sportsmanship problem. In your group of about 5, read and discuss the scenarios I have given to you. As a group, come up with answers to the questions that are asked. After developing your ideas regarding these scenarios, I want you to develop a list of 5 rules for good sportsmanship. You will be use these scenarios and provide your 5 rules to help educate the middle school students with their problem.

#### Scenario 1:

Medfield and Dover have a longstanding basketball rivalry. The boys all come from neighboring towns. Every year they play each other in the last game of the season for the high school championship. All the boys know each other. They know who the best shooters and scorers are on each team. Medfield's leading scorer is the center, a much bigger and taller player than anyone on the court. He scores most of his points inside on lay-ups. His biggest issue as a player is his inability to shoot free throws. The Dover coach decides to foul the Medfield center every time he attempts to shoot. The strategy is to make the center shoot two free throws instead of an easy lay-up. The strategy works as the center misses 15 out of 18 free throws during the game. Dover wins the game and the title by two points. Is this a fair tactic or poor sportsmanship?

#### Scenario 2:

Dover was playing Norton in lacrosse. At one point in the game, a Dover midfielder crosschecks Norton's best attack man flattening him to the ground and knocking the wind out of the player. The referee decides not to call the penalty on Dover. Norton's captain becomes agitated with the call and runs up the field to complain the call with the referee. The referee tells the captain to resume play. The Norton captain angry about the "no call" blatantly slashes one of Dover's best attacker's across the arm badly injuring the player. The referee blows the whistle and calls a penalty on the Dover player. The Dover player who was injured has been removed from the game and play continues. Was the Norton player right in his actions? Was the referee to blame? Do "two wrongs" ever make a right? Does Dover now have the right to get back at the opponent for injuring one of their players?

#### Scenario 3:

Dover took on Medway in a soccer game one day in September. The game was tied at 1 and the teams were very evenly matched. One of Dover's best strikers has the ball and is being chased by a Medway defender who is running right beside him. As the Dover player approaches the penalty box, he intentionally gets tangled up with the defender purposely crossing his legs and tripping

over the opponent. The Dover player falls to the ground and grabs at his right ankle blatantly faking an injury. The referee who is trailing the play calls a penalty on the defender and provides Dover with a penalty kick. The defender is also given a red card and ejected from the game. The Medway team now has to play a man down for the rest of the game. Dover goes on to easily beat Medway in a game that would have been close if not for the faked penalty. Is this a fair tactic in soccer? Is this an example of “do whatever it takes to win attitude”? Should the Dover team feel honorable or good about this victory?