*Increasing Teachers' Use of Behavior-Specific Praise with the Teacher vs. Student Game*

**Renée E. Lastrapes, Ph.D.**
**University of Houston-Clear Lake**

**Jennifer N. Fritz, Ph.D.**
**University of Houston-Clear Lake**

**Robert C. Hasson, Ed.D.**
**Concordia University-Texas**

In memory of Robert C. Hasson, Ed.D. who passed away much too soon on 20 October, 2017. We thank you for your work on this study and dedicate this manuscript to you and all of your students.

***Abstract***

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the use of a simplified version of the Good Behavior Game called the Teacher vs. Student Game, implemented as an interdependent group contingency, increased teachers' use of behavior-specific praise (BSP) statements. Two middle school resource teachers and their respective classes participated in the study. Both classes consisted of students with various disability classifications, including emotional and behavioral disorder. Using the group contingency as a way to manage student behaviors, teachers' rates of BSP statements, general praise statements, and corrective statements were scored. Results indicated that the game increased BSP statements but had little effect on general praise statements and corrective statements.

*Keywords:* behavioral game; classroom management; interdependent group contingency; behavior-specific praise; inclusion

*Increasing Teachers' Use of Behavior-Specific Praise with the Teacher vs. Student Game*

Teachers are under tremendous pressure to produce improved academic outcomes for both general and special education students, but this is far more difficult when teachers are presented with behavioral challenges in their classrooms. National laws such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001), Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA; 2004), and more recently the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015) brought the issue of utilizing strategies that were scientifically-based to national attention. Evidence-based practices (EBPs), both to improve academic performance and mitigate behavior problems, are those that are widely supported by empirical research (Spencer, Detrich, & Slocum, 2012; Cook, Tankersley, & Harjusola-Webb, 2008). Many evidence-based practices have been examined that pertain to behavior and classroom management. Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai, (2008) conducted a literature review and identified 20 EBPs in classroom management. However, a gap exists in education between strategies that are validated with research evidence and their use by practitioners (Cook & Odom, 2013). This research-to-practice gap has been explained by

researchers as teachers not having access to or understanding of the extant research, as well as by practitioners claiming that some strategies promoted by researchers are not feasible in the "real world" (Spencer et al., 2012). Of the many EBPs, one that requires relatively low effort has been referred to as contingent teacher attention (Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003), positive attending (Perle, 2016), or behavior-specific praise (Allday et al., 2012).

Behavior-specific praise (BSP) is defined as providing students with "favorable verbal or nonverbal attention directed toward a behavior or characteristic of the target children" (Jenkins, Floress, & Reinke, 2015, p. 464). Behavior-specific praise is operationalized as positive statements made by the teacher that describe the behavior being praised explicitly. Utilizing this type of praise increases desirable behavior in the classroom (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000; Brophy, 1981; Fullerton, Conroy, & Correa, 2009; Richardson & Shupe, 2003), as well as increases task engagement (Allday et al., 2012; Gorman-Smith, 2003; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000) and decreases off-task behavior (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Martin, 2007) for students with and without disabilities including emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Studies have shown, however, that teachers' use of behavior-specific praise is not frequent (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Jenkins, et al., 2015) and that teachers do not use this intervention frequently in inclusive settings (Alber & Heward, 2000; Musti-Rao & Haydon, 2011).

There is a growing body of research that explores ways to bring research to practice, specifically examining ways to improve teachers' use of praise (Jenkins et al., 2015). Researchers have sought to improve rates of teacher praise by utilizing individual teacher training (Fullerton et al., 2009) and training through professional development (Allday et al., 2012; Briere, Simonsen, Sugai, & Myers, 2015), as well as implementing different forms of performance feedback (e.g. video self-modeling and email) (Hawkins & Heflin, 2011; Rathel, Drasgow, Brown & Marshall, 2014) and using a response-to-intervention model (Myers, Simonsen, & Sugai, 2011). In the study conducted by Allday and colleagues (2012), it was reported in their social validity findings that teachers indicated that it was difficult to increase their rates of BSP. What isn't known is whether the importance of BSP as an evidence-based practice is recognized by classroom teachers. When teachers were asked their views on the usefulness of evidence-based practices in general, teachers indicated that they would be likely to use new evidence-based interventions if they were feasible, flexible (for multilevel classrooms), appropriate, and were accompanied by required materials and training support (Boardman, Argüelles, Vaughn, Hughes, & Klingner, 2005).

The Good Behavior Game (GBG; Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969) is an interdependent group-contingency technique that has been widely supported by empirical research and has a large research base showing its effectiveness (Tingstrom, Sterling-Turner, & Wilczynski, 2006). Two studies have examined the reciprocal effects of the Good Behavior Game on teacher behaviors. One showed an increase in on-task behaviors by students, but low levels of praise throughout all phases for the teachers (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007) while the other implemented a version of the GBG that is similar to the Teacher vs. Student game (Elswick & Casey, 2011). In their game, Elswick and Casey modified the GBG by having the teacher play against the students rather than divide the class into two or more teams, but retained the components of the GBG by having the teacher reward points and reinforce with BSP for three target areas. Elswick and Casey reported positive results for their study, with teachers increasing BSP and behaviors improving for the

students. A similar approach has been described as the Teacher-Student Learning Game (TSLG; Nelson, Benner, & Mooney, 2008), an instructional management technique for students with emotional and behavioral disorders to facilitate better classroom instruction but without the stipulation that teachers reinforce positive behaviors with BSP.

The TSLG has a small body of research that supports its effectiveness in classroom instruction. Harris, Oakes, Lane, and Rutherford (2009) evaluated the differences between internalizing and externalizing behavior and a reading intervention, reinforcing positive behavior with the TSLG. Results showed an increase in oral reading fluency as well as an improvement in student on-task behavior. Oakes, Mathur, and Lane (2010) used a modified version of the TSLG and the Teacher-Class game (Bursuck & Damer, 2007) to support a multi-dimensional secondary intervention package to support oral reading fluency with fourth graders. While the focus of the study was reading fluency and not behavior management, the researchers reported that students with behavioral difficulties responded to academic prompts at a greater rate after the implementation of the behavior supports (Oakes et al., 2010). To date, it is not known if there are empirical studies that focus on the TSLG exclusively to improve student behaviors. In light of the myriad ways researchers have attempted to increase teachers' use of BSP in the classroom, the present study sought to increase teachers' use of BSP by implementing a very feasible, flexible, and simple game that required minimal training called the Teacher vs. Student Game.

The Teacher vs. Student (TvS) game is a simplified version of the GBG and the TSLG that is implemented as an interdependent group-contingency for students with or at risk for EBD. This game can be used in self-contained settings or in inclusive settings with both students with and without disabilities. In the TvS game, the students "play" against the teacher and receive a pre-determined reward if they win. Although the TSLG and the TvS game are almost identical in rules (see Nelson et al., 2008, p. 159-169), the TvS differs in two ways. The TSLG has the teacher award 5 points every time she sees students exhibiting behavior in accordance with expectations or 5 to herself when they do not. The TvS simplifies this by having the teacher only dispense one point at a time, and the TvS differs in that it adds the rule that when the teacher gives the student the point, she does so by reinforcing the correct behavior being awarded the point with *behavior-specific praise*. Nelson and colleagues (2008) suggest that the game be introduced and played every day for the first three days of school, but the TvS game can be introduced at any time throughout the school year and can be used either in instructional or non-instructional time. Although the use of the interdependent group-contingency technique is to increase on-task and decrease off-task student behaviors, the rules of the game necessitate that the teachers utilize BSP while playing.

The purpose of this study was to determine if this simple game could increase teachers' use of BSP statements, as well as influence general praise statements and corrective statements, in two middle school resource classrooms. This is the first empirical study of the TvS game and whether it positively impacts teacher attention and BSP toward students.

## *Method*

### Participants and Setting

After obtaining approval from both the school district and university institutional review boards, the researchers met with two teachers nominated by the school principal to explain the study and

determine if they were interested in participating. The teachers were nominated by the principal because they were both special educators who had students with or were in the process of being assessed for emotional and behavioral disorders in their classes. Ms. Matthews taught eighth grade resource, had a master's degree, and 15 years of teaching experience. Ms. Boyd taught seventh grade, had a bachelor's degree, and 3 years of teaching experience. Ms. Matthews' class consisted of six students (two males and four females), four of whom were Hispanic and two were African American, ranging in age from 14 to 15 years. Two of the six students were being monitored for behavioral issues. Ms. Boyd's class consisted of seven students (six males and one female), all of whom were Hispanic and ranged in age from 13 to 14 years. Two of the seven students were classified EBD and received support and monitoring from a behavioral specialist.

The middle school where the study took place is located in a large suburban district in the southwest that serves 55,000 students (TEA, 2016). Approximately 25% of the students in the district are English language learners and 9% have individualized education plans (IEPs). The school serves 620 students in seventh and eighth grade and is a Title I school that practices Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Eighty-four percent of the students are Hispanic, 47% at-risk, and 18% mobility rate is reported for the campus. The two participating classrooms were self-contained (pull-out) instruction for their students. The study took place in the middle of the day, during back-to-back periods where the researcher went from Ms. Matthews' class to Ms. Boyd's class.

**Research Design**

A multiple baseline across participants design (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968) was used to determine the efficacy of using the TvS game to increase teachers' behavior-specific praise statements. General praise and corrective statements were also investigated.

**Dependent Variables**

There were three dependent variables for this study: behavior-specific praise (BSP) statements, general praise (GP) statements, and corrective statements (CS). *Behavior-specific praise statements* were defined as statements delivered audibly that references a desirable behavior (e.g., "Thank you for being so quiet while taking your test," "You did a good job passing out the papers," "I like how you are sitting with your eyes facing forward."). *General praise statements* were defined as praise statements in response to student behavior but without a specific comment as to why the praise was being offered (e.g., "Good job," "Way to go," "Nice"). *Corrective statements* were defined as criticism of a certain behavior or verbal expression of disapproval by the teacher to a student(s) or class as a whole (e.g., "You need to stop," "Quit it," "I'm talking.") All statements were scored using a frequency measure.

**Interrater Reliability**

In order to assess the reliability of the observations, the first author scored teacher statements in the classroom and created audio recordings during the class period, and the second author collected data independently during at least 30% of baseline and treatment sessions for both teachers. Exact agreement was scored during 60-s intervals by dividing the number of agreement intervals by the total number of intervals and multiplying by 100. Reliability for BSP averaged 97.7% (range, 90.9% to 100%), GP averaged 98.5% (range, 90.9% to 100%), and CS averaged 92.4% (range, 81.8% to 100%).

**Treatment Fidelity**

The first author scored treatment fidelity using a checklist of the steps. If the steps were present then it was marked with a one, if not it was marked zero. Treatment integrity data were collected during 30% of the sessions for each teacher. Ms. Boyd implemented treatment with 100% integrity. Two steps in the fidelity checklist were explicitly ending the game, and announcing the winner, followed by disseminating the prize(s); in 83% of sessions, for Ms. Matthews, the end of the game wasn't explicit nor was the announcing of the winner, but each time the students did win and she disseminated prizes.

**Procedure**

The study was conducted in two consecutive class periods in the afternoon in the two participating classrooms, and the observation sessions consisted of 11 min time intervals. The baseline and intervention phases were conducted in the spring semester. The first author was the sole observer and sat in the same spot daily in the back of the room during baseline and treatment and audio recorded each session.

**Baseline.** Prior to the start of the study, the teacher met with the teachers to obtain their consent and to explain the procedures. The consent form indicated that the purpose of the study was to determine whether the game increased on task behaviors by students and increased teachers' use of praise. Teachers were told that their classes would be observed for several periods, after which they would then be taught the game and then the classes would again be observed during the game. During the baseline phase, the teacher was not provided with any instruction on how to manage classroom behavior and conducted the class as she would normally do so.

**TvS Game.** Prior to treatment phase, the researcher met individually for 30 minutes with each teacher before school. The teachers were informed that they were going to play the TvS game and were given the rules (see Table 1). The researcher modeled how to play the game with the teachers and had the teachers give examples of praise statements they could use. In rule numbers 5 and 6, it was made clear that the teachers should provide BSP when delivering points to the students. The teacher explained the game and made clear the behavioral expectations. As she taught, she would notice appropriate behaviors, give students points, and reinforce the behavior with BSP. If students engaged in disruptive or off-task behavior, the teacher awarded herself a point; however, if the students corrected their behavior, the teacher provided BSP and gave the students a point. The teachers were given demonstrations to differentiate behavior-specific from general praise, and were told that, if possible, they should ignore negative behavior and try to avoid corrections, which could reinforce those behaviors.

Table 1

*Rules for the Teacher vs. Student Game*

| **Teacher vs. Student Game: Rules of Play** |
|---|
| 1. Prior to playing the game with students, review behavioral expectations required for the instructional mode you are about to use (group work, individual work, etc.). |
| 2. Tell the class you are going to play the Teacher vs. Student Game. |
| 3. Students will earn a point for on-task behavior, and teacher will earn a point if she sees a student demonstrating off-task behavior. |

4. Draw a T chart on the board and begin teaching.
5. When the students are behaving appropriately, give them points as you reinforce the behavior with behavior-specific praise.
6. When they are off-task, give yourself a point, and then state the specific activity you would like to see that would all the students to earn points. If they correct their behavior, immediately give the students a point while reinforcing with BSP.
7. At the end of the period, the team (teacher or students) with the most points wins.
8. Reward the winner with a pre-selected prize (e.g., game time, early release to break/recess etc.)

**Social Validity.** Each teacher was asked to complete a modified version of the Intervention Rating Profile (IRP-15; Martens, Witt, Elliott, & Darveaux, 1985) to assess the social acceptability and validity of the TvS game. The IRP-15 is a 15-item scale that assesses acceptability of interventions. The Likert-type scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) with an overall possible score ranging from 15 to 90 with higher scores indicating higher levels of acceptance of the intervention. Two qualitative prompts were included in the instrument, "Please tell me any pros or cons of this intervention" and "Please share anything else you would like about this intervention."

## *Results*

Figure 1 displays the number of BSP statements both teachers made during baseline and treatment phases. Both teachers provided very few BSP statements during baseline (i.e., BSP statements were only provided in three sessions by each teacher). The TvS game resulted in an initial increase in BSP that gradually decreased across sessions but maintained at higher levels than baseline. While the trematment phase is variable for both teachers in terms of BSP, it can be said that a functional relationship was evident in that the two teachers went from producing little to no BSP statements during baseline to using them regularly during the treatment phase.

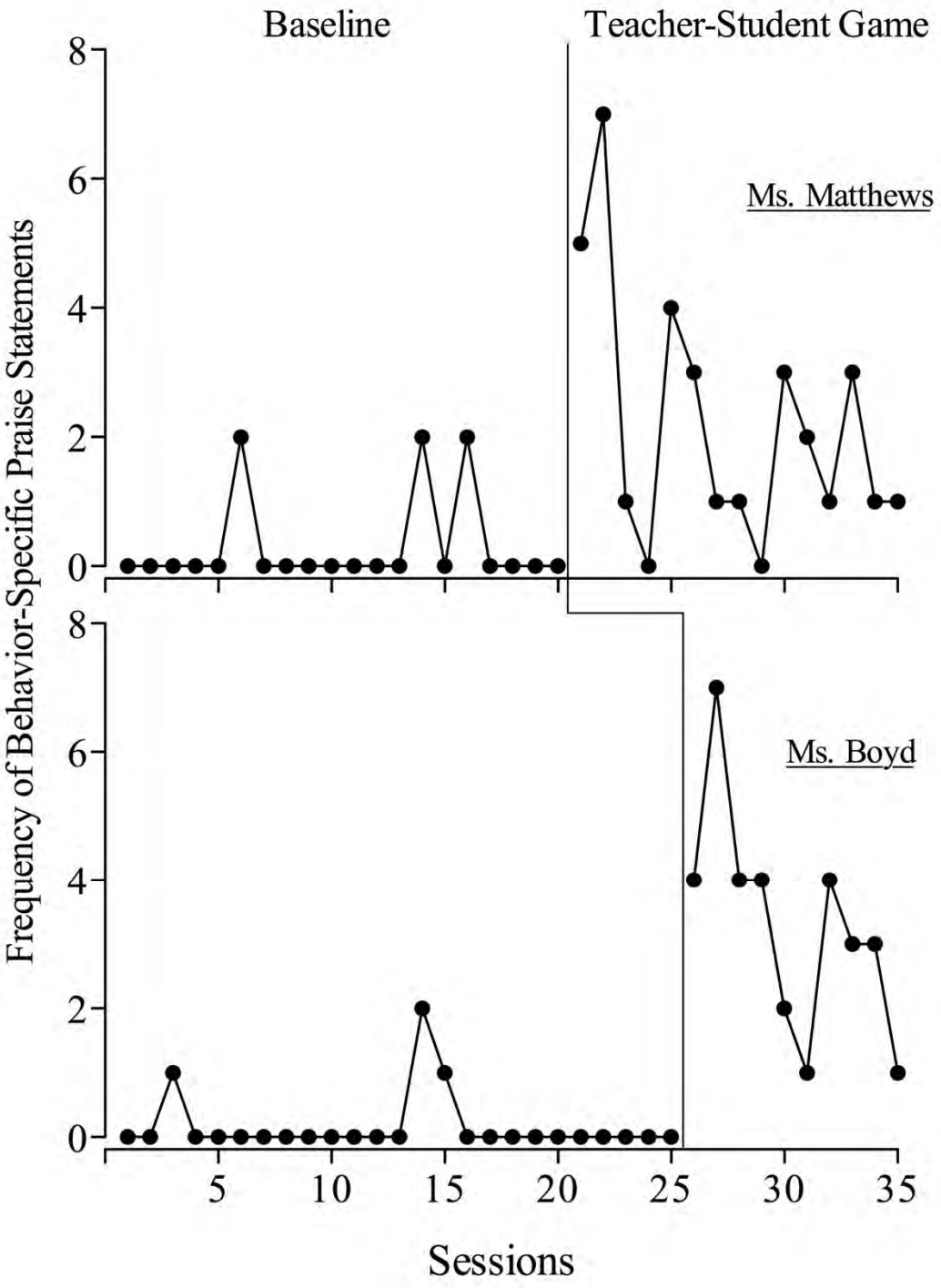


Figure 1. Number of behavior-specific praise statements across both classrooms. Intervention phase shows an increase but declining trend in BSP statements.

Figure 2 displays the number of general praise statements across both classrooms. Ms. Matthews shows higher levels of praise across the two phases, while Ms. Boyd shows a decrease during the intervention phase. The number of corrective statements across both classrooms are shown in Figure 3. Ms. Boyd shows a decrease of corrective statements during the intervention while Ms. Matthews shows an increase in corrective statements in the intervention phase, which correspond to the inverse of her BSP statements. Both teachers provided few GP statements and numerous CS statements during baseline. Table 2 shows the mean totals for each type of statement for both teachers during baseline and treatment phases.

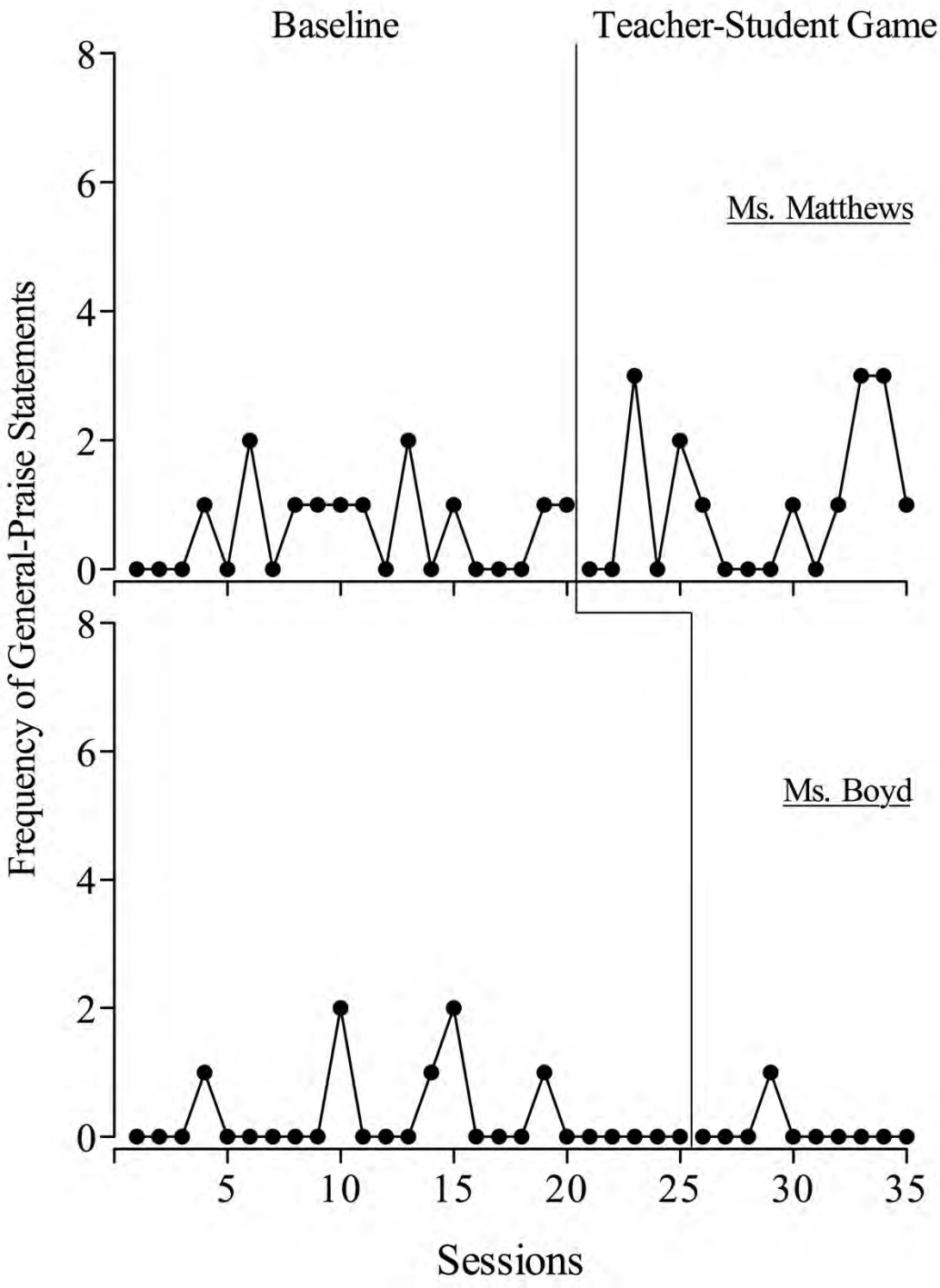


Figure 2. Number of general praise statements across both classrooms. Ms. Matthews shows higher levels of praise across the two phases, while Ms. Boyd shows a decrease in the intervention phase.

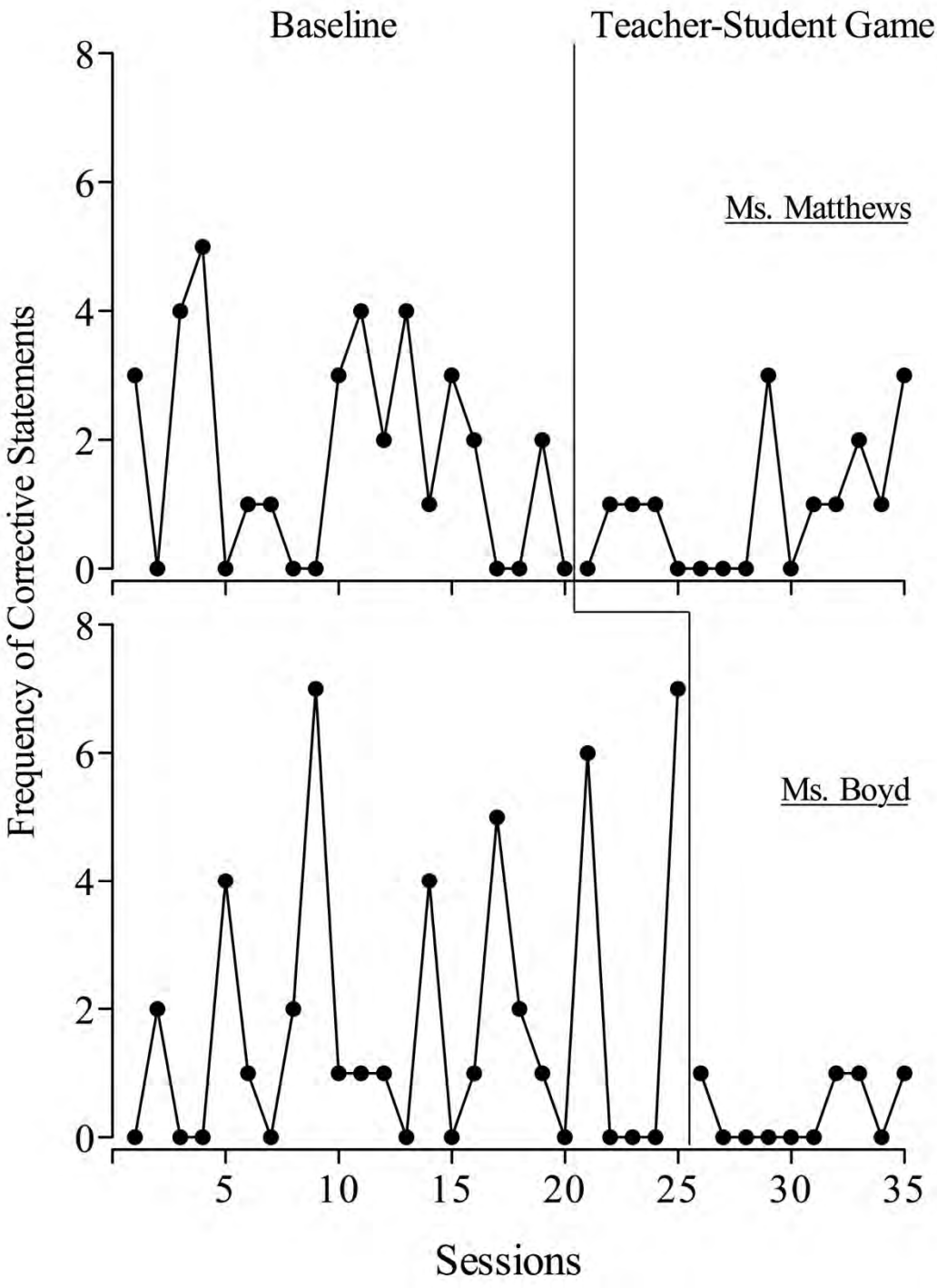


Figure 3. Number of corrective statements across both classrooms. Ms. Boyd shows a decrease of correction in the intervention phase while Ms. Matthews shows an increase in corrective statements in the intervention phase, which correspond to the inverse of her BSP statements.

Table 2
*Mean Number of BSP, CS, and GP per teacher during baseline and treatment phases*

| | Baseline | Treatment | Baseline | Treatment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ms. Matthews | | Ms. Boyd | |
| Behavior-Specific Praise | 0.32 | 2.07 | 0.17 | 3.0 |
| Generic Praise | 0.58 | 1.0 | 0.29 | 1.0 |
| Corrective Statement | 1.84 | 0.88 | 1.58 | 0.09 |

Regarding social validity, overall results on the IRP were positive. Ms. Matthews rated the intervention a 79 of 90, which is 88% favorable, and Ms. Boyd rated the intervention 86 of 90 which is 96% favorable. Ms. Matthews responded to the first prompt with "some teachers and/or students might feel it [the TvS game] is 'elementary.'" Ms. Boyd responded to the first prompt, "The students like to compete against the teacher and they are extremely motivated," and to the second prompt she stated a modification she made to the game, "If they [the students] beat their score from yesterday then they get an extra point." In a verbal comment to the researcher, Ms. Boyd said she made the modification to the game to further motivate her students and that she was surprised that the class responded as well and as quickly as they did to the game.

## *Discussion*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the TvS game on statements made by teachers in two resource classrooms at the middle school level. Although the interdependent group-contingency technique was used for the students, the rules of the game necessitate that in order to play, teachers must use behavior-specific praise. The results suggest that the teachers did increase their use of praise while playing the game; however, both teachers gradually decreased their use of BSP over time. It is unknown whether BSP would have persisted over an extended period of time. These findings resemble those of Elswick and Casey (2011) who reported that teachers' use of BSP increased as a result of an alteration of the rules of their game, in order for students to earn back lost points, teachers had to notice "unprompted appropriate behavior and verbalize that specific behavior prior to giving the students a point" (p. 43). The teacher in their study initially had unfavorable view of research in the classroom but had a generally positive opinion of the game. The reciprocal effect of the game in the current study had an impact on participating teachers' use of BSP as it was embedded in the rules of the game.

There appears to be a somewhat inverse relationship between BSP and CS, especially for Ms. Boyd. When her BSP increased (M = 0.2 to M = 3), her CS decreased to nearly zero (M = 1.6 to M = 0.1). Similar decreases in Ms. Matthews use of CS decreased initially; however, CS gradually increased to baseline levels over time. Future research should examine this relationship with additional teachers to determine whether the TvS game decreases corrective statements made by teachers.

This study is promising in that it extended the praise literature by adding the implementation of a simple game to the more time-resource intensive strategies that have been employed by researchers to increase teachers' use of BSP. When an evidence-based practice is easy to use, teachers are more likely to use it (Boardman et al., 2005). One issue to consider, however, is the impact of the number of years of teacher experience has on her willingness to adopt new

behavior management strategies. Ms. Matthews was in her fifteenth year of teaching, and although she tried the intervention and showed positive results, she did so with less treatment integrity than Ms. Boyd, who had only 3 years of experience. This tendency for more experienced teachers to be more inclined to resist change has been documented, with one barrier described as past experiences (Zimmerman, 2006). Teachers with more years in the classroom have had more experiences with different techniques and professional development, which may hinder rather than promote their own behavior change in the classroom.

### *Limitations*

There are several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study consisted of two resource teachers at the same school and only addressed their attention toward students. It is unknown whether a more diverse teacher population would benefit from the use of this game. In addition, the school district did not allow video recording in the classrooms; therefore, student behavior was not evaluated, and it is unknown whether the game would positively impact their behavior. Furthermore, social validity findings were limited to teacher impressions, not the students, and it is unknown whether the students viewed the game favorably.

### *Implications for Future Research*

Future studies should be implemented with additional teachers in more varied settings (general education, inclusive settings, large group settings). Future studies should consider the impact of the intervention on student behavior, as well as teacher behavior, and assess student opinions regarding the game. Finally, maintenance data were not collected due to the fact that the study was conducted late in the school year. Given the decreasing trend in teachers' use of BSP over time, it will be important for future research to determine whether the TvS game will produce sustained and meaningful increases in teachers' BSP.

### *Implications for Practice*

The present study has practical implications for practice. Because the TvS game is so simple to implement, costs nothing, requires minimal teacher training, and doesn't have to be sustained over long periods of time, it would be easy to use during periods of unstructured class time. For example, before the bell rings when students have finished their lesson but have some idle time, the teacher can use the game to lead a discussion to reinforce the day's lesson. Additionally, the game can be implemented during test review, providing structure and positive interactions to an activity that might be stressful for students with or at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. Finally, teachers have reported that it is difficult to remember to use BSP in their classes. The chart used to score points during the TvS game might serve as a reminder to implement the game and might increase teachers' overall use of BSP in the classroom which is an evidence-based practice for students both with and without disabilities. Finally, the TvsS game can be used as a way to introduce teachers to the concept of self-monitoring and charting their own behaviors, which can be used as a model for students to track their own behaviors as well.

## *References*


Alber, S. R., & Heward, W. L. (2000). Teaching students to recruit positive attention: A review and recommendations. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, *10*(4), 177-204.

Allday, R. A., Hinkson-Lee, K., Hudson, T., Neilsen-Gatti, S., Kleinke, A., & Russel, C. S. (2012). Training general educators to increase behavior-specific praise: Effects on students with EBD. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37,* 87-98.

Anderson, L. M., Evertson, C. M., & Brophy, J. E. (1979). An experimental study of effective teaching in first-grade reading groups. *The Elementary School Journal*, *79*(4), 193-223.

Baer, D. M., Wolf, M. M., & Risley, T. R. (1968). Some current dimensions of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1,* 91-97. doi:10.1901/jaba.1968.1-91

Barrish, H. H., Saunders, M., & Wolfe, M. M. (1969). Good behavior game: effects of individual contingencies for group consequences on disruptive behavior in a classroom. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 2*, 119-124. doi: 10.1901/jaba.1969.2-119.

Beaman, R., & Wheldall, K. (2000). Teachers' use of approval and disapproval in the classroom. *Educational Psychology*, *20*(4), 431-446. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713663753

Boardman, A. G., Argüelles, M. E., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M. T., & Klingner, J. (2005). Special education teachers' views of research-based practices. *The Journal of Special Education*, *39*(3), 168-180. doi: 10.1177/00224669050390030401

Briere, D. E., Simonsen, B., Sugai, G., & Myers, D. (2015). Increasing new teachers' specific praise using a within-school consultation intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *17*(1), 50-60. doi:10.1177/1098300713497098

Brophy, J. (1981). Teacher praise: A functional analysis. *Review of educational research*, *51*(1), 5-32. doi: 10.3102/00346543051001005

Bursuck, W. D., & Damer, M. (2007). *Reading instruction: For students who are at risk or have disabilities*. New York: Pearson Education.

Cook, B. G., & Odom, S. L. (2013). Evidence-based practices and implementation science in special education. *Exceptional Children*, *79*(2), 135-144.

Cook, B. G., Tankersley, M., & Harjusola-Webb, S. (2008). Evidence-based special education and professional wisdom: Putting it all together. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *44*(2), 105-111. doi:10.1177/1053451208321566

Elswick, S., & Casey, L. B. (2011). The good behavior game is no longer just an effective intervention for students: An examination of the reciprocal effects on teacher behaviors. *Beyond Behavior*, *21*(1), 36-46.

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 § 114 Stat. 1177 (2015-2016).

Fullerton, E. K., Conroy, M. A., & Correa, V. I. (2009). Early childhood teachers' use of specific praise statements with young children at risk for behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, *34*(3), 118-135. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43153473

Gorman-Smith, D., & Metropolitan Area Child Study Research Group. (2003). Effects of teacher training and consultation on teacher behavior toward students at high risk for aggression. *Behavior Therapy*, *34*(4), 437-452. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(03)80029

Harris, P. J., Oakes, W. P., Lane, K. L., & Rutherford Jr, R. B. (2009). Improving the early literacy skills of students at risk for internalizing or externalizing behaviors with limited reading skills. *Behavioral Disorders*, *34*(2), 72-90. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43153804

Hawkins, S. M., & Heflin, L. J. (2010). Increasing secondary teachers' behavior-specific praise using a video self-modeling and visual performance feedback intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *13*(2), 97-108. doi:10.1177/1098300709358110

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).
Jenkins, L. N., Floress, M. T., & Reinke, W. (2015). Rates and types of teacher praise: A review and future directions. *Psychology in the Schools*, *52*(5), 463-476. doi: 10.1002/pits.21835
Lannie, A. L., & McCurdy, B. L. (2007). Preventing disruptive behavior in the urban classroom: effects of the good behavior game on student and teacher behavior. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *30*(1), 85–98.
Martens, B. K., Witt, J. C., Elliott, S. N., & Darveaux, D. X. (1985). Teacher judgments concerning the acceptability of school-based interventions. *Professional psychology: Research and practice*, *16*(2), 191-198. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.16.2.191
Musti-Rao, S., & Haydon, T. (2011). Strategies to increase behavior-specific teacher praise in an inclusive environment. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *47*(2), 91-97. doi:10.1177/1053451211414187
Myers, D. M., Simonsen, B., & Sugai, G. (2011). Increasing teachers' use of praise with a response-to-intervention approach. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *34*(1), 35-59.
Nelson, J. R., Benner, G. J., & Mooney, P. (2008). *Instructional practices for students with behavioral disorders: Strategies for reading, writing, and math*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. 20 U.S.C.A. § 6301
Oakes, W. P., Mathur, S. R., & Lane, K. L. (2010). Reading interventions for students with challenging behavior: A focus on fluency. *Behavioral Disorders*, *35*(2), 120-139. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43153812
Perle, J. G. (2016). Teacher-provided positive attending to improve student behavior. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *48*(5), 250.
Rathel, J. M., Drasgow, E., Brown, W. H., & Marshall, K. J. (2014). Increasing induction-level teachers' positive-to-negative communication ratio and use of behavior-specific praise through e-mailed performance feedback and its effect on students' task engagement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*, 219-233. doi: 1098300713492856.
Reinke, W. M., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Martin, E. (2007). The effect of visual performance feedback on teacher use of behavior-specific praise. *Behavior Modification*, *31*(3), 247-263. doi: 10.1177/0145445506288967
Richardson, B. G., & Shupe, M. J. (2003). The importance of teacher self-awareness in working with students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *36*(2), 8 – 13.
Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Evidence-based practices in classroom management: Considerations for research to practice. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *31*(3), 351-380.
Spencer, T. D., Detrich, R., & Slocum, T. A. (2012). Evidence-based practice: A framework for making effective decisions. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *35*(2), 127-151.
Sutherland, K. S., Alder, N., & Gunter, P. L. (2003). The effect of varying rates of opportunities to respond to academic requests on the classroom behavior of students with EBD. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *11*(4), 239-248.
Sutherland, K. S., Wehby, J. H., & Copeland, S. R. (2000). Effect of varying rates of behavior-specific praise on the on-task behavior of students with EBD. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *8*(1), 2-8.

Texas Education Agency. (2016) Texas academic performance report. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/

Tingstrom, D. H., Sterling-Turner, H. E., Wilczynski, S. M. (2006). The good behavior game: 1969–2002. *Behavior Modification, 30*, 225–253. doi: 10.1177/0145445503261165

Zimmerman, J. (2006). Why some teachers resist change and what principals can do about it. *NASSP Bulletin*, *90*(3), 238-249.

### *About the Authors*

**Renée E. Lastrapes, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor of Educational Research and Assessment at the University of Houston-Clear Lake where she teaches graduate courses in measurement, research design, and statistics, and supervises graduate student research for doctoral dissertations. She has been a classroom special education teacher in California and Louisiana with sixteen years of experience working with students with various disability categories from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Her research interests include formative assessment in the content areas and evidence based behavioral interventions for students with behavioral disorders.

**Jennifer Fritz, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor in the Department of Clinical, Health and Applied Sciences, where she teaches courses in behavior analysis and is coordinator of the undergraduate certificate program in behavior analysis. Dr. Fritz also serves as Director of the Severe Behavior Disorders Research Clinic at UHCL's Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities and of the Behavior Analysis Program at Texas Children's Hospital's Autism Center where graduate and undergraduate students learn valuable clinical skills in the assessment and treatment of behavior disorders. Dr. Fritz serves on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, is the Secretary of the Behavior Analysis Public Policy Group – Texas, and is the Program Chair for the Professional Track of the Texas Association for Behavior Analysis annual conference. In the past, she has served as President of TxABA, as Program Chair of the Autism Track for the TxABA annual conference, and as co-chair of the Autism Track for the Association for Behavior Analysis International.

**Robert Hasson, Ed.D.** was a native of Southeast Houston and served as principal of Park View Intermediate School in the Pasadena Independent School District for 17 years. He attended Pasadena ISD schools where he graduated from South Houston High School and earned his undergraduate degree in communication from the University of Houston-Downtown. He went on to earn his master's and doctorate degrees in educational leadership from the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL). Dr. Hasson was a member of UHCL's Teacher Certification Council, University Expansion Committee, and University Accreditation Council; and facilitated literacy methods classes and recruiting symposiums for the College of Education. In addition, Dr. Hasson was an adjunct professor with Concordia University-Texas since 2012 and taught a variety of graduate courses in educational leadership. He was the 2016 recipient of the Marilyn S. Sims Leadership Service Award from the UHCL Alumni Association. He was active in the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP), Phi Delta Kappa International Society, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, Bayport Aero Club, Boys & Girls Harbor of La Porte, and South Houston High School Alumni Association. He was an outstanding educator and will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and colleagues.