Creating and implementing an effective behavior management strategy in a second grade classroom

Kristen M. Geary
Rowan University

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CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN A SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

by

Kristen M. Geary

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Masters of the Science of Teaching of The Graduate School at Rowan University
June 29, 2007

Approved by

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The purpose of this study is to ascertain the effectiveness of creating and implementing a self-management behavior system in a second grade classroom. Different types of behavior management were researched through journals discussing behavior management as well as interviews with classroom teachers. Self-management was determined to be a successful behavior management system and was thus chosen to be implemented in this classroom. An additional goal of this study is also to contribute more knowledge to the field of self-management research. This thesis will combine research, student and teacher questionnaires, focus group interviews and a classroom journal in order to determine the effectiveness of self-management as a behavior management strategy. This study determined that self-management is an effective form of behavior management in a classroom, and that the students in the classroom where the study took place enjoyed being able to monitor their own behavior.
Acknowledgements

To my family and friends who have helped me to make it through the past five years. Without your friendship and ability to help me clear my mind, this would have never been possible. I am grateful for all of your help and for standing by me through everything. Mom and Dad, this would have never been possible without your continuous support. Thank you Dr. Madden for your continued support and guidance throughout the duration of this project.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A Tale of Two Classrooms

Let’s take a journey into a second grade classroom. Mrs. O’Hara is standing in the front of the room talking to her students about the story they had just completed reading, called “Whale Song”.

“Well boys and girls, what was it that finally freed the whales from the ice?” Mrs. O’Hara questioned.

“It was a Russian ice breaker!” Thomas yelled, interrupting the class.

“That is correct, but Thomas you know the rules of this classroom. You have to raise your hand to answer the question,” Mrs. O’Hara replied. “Now, who can tell me how long a whale can hold its breath under water?”

“Oh, o, o! I know! Thirty minutes!!” Thomas exclaimed while jumping out of his seat.

“Thomas! How many times do I have to tell you to sit quietly and raise your hand? I know that you know the correct answer, but there are other students in this classroom. If you call out one more time you are going to the office.” Mrs. O’Hara took a deep breath and continued, “Now who can remember how the nation found out about the whales?”

“The Indi…. ” Thomas began.
“Thomas that is the last straw! Go to the office and speak with Mrs. Monty now!!” Mrs. O’Hara cried in exasperation.

Now let’s peek across the hall into the room belonging to Ms. Roberts. Today Ms. Roberts is helping her students study their spelling words.

“Okay boys and girls, today we are going to review our spelling words by playing a game of HORSE. You all should remember the rules: we spell out the words one letter at a time with each person saying a letter. Now, if you offer the wrong letter you are to put your head down because you are out. The first word is TOUGH. Lisa, we will begin with you.”

“T” Lisa answered while sitting straight and tall.

“O” Marc continued, mimicking the way which Lisa was sitting.

“G”, Chris suggested, sitting tall and hands folded on his lap.

“Oh, I am sorry Chris, but that is not the correct letter”, interjected Ms. Roberts. Chris placed his head down to listen to the correct spelling.

“U” answered Jessica, her hands folded on her desk.

“Very good, Jessica. Now Zach what is the next letter?” asked Ms. Roberts.

“G!”

“H is the last letter” stated Matthew, his back straight in his chair.

“Very good job boys and girls. Now how about the next word FORGET?”

After completing the ten spelling words, each of the students receives a happy face in the appropriate box on their behavior manager sheet, which are located on their desks, in recognition of the behaviors which had been displayed.
What causes these two classrooms to run so differently? Is it the different
demeanor which each teacher displays? Is one classroom full of only well-behaving
students? The answer lies in behavior management.

**Story of the Question**

Throughout my college experience as a Collaborative Education major, I have
heard the words “behavior management” repeatedly in my classes. I have researched
behavior management plans which were implemented in two different classrooms. I also
took a course during my graduate level year which focused strictly on behavior
management. However, I always felt that the knowledge I was given was not enough for
me to be fully prepared when I entered the classroom; I wondered how I would apply all
of the knowledge which I had learned. I also always felt that there were only two types
of behavior management in the classroom: the teachers who were ‘mean’, the ones
always yelling at their students, and the teachers who were ‘pushovers’, the ones who
were always allowing their students to conduct the classroom and exhibiting little control
over their actions.

Throughout my five years at Rowan University I have had field experiences in a
multitude of different classroom settings. This has given me an opportunity to observe
different teachers as well as their varied behavior management strategies. I observed
teachers who had a great control over their classes, whose students seemed to really enjoy
and have fun with learning. I also saw teachers who did not seem to have a well planned
behavior management system. In each of these classrooms, I saw a change in the
attitudes of the students based on what was implemented by the teacher.
In the first semester of my graduate year I was placed in a Kindergarten setting with a teacher who was very stern. She valued and demanded respect as well as control in her classroom. Her students were informed that they had to follow the rules or they would be punished. She was not ‘mean’; through her sternness she still acted lovingly towards her students and treated them like they were her own children. By witnessing this strict control of behavior, I became even more worried about taking over my own classroom and attempting to alter the behaviors of my students. My teacher was able to handle it so effortlessly, due to her personality and experience, but I was afraid of becoming a pushover in the classroom.

During my first semester placement, I observed a lesson in one of the second grade classrooms. The teacher of that classroom did not exhibit the same personality as my original teacher, yet she was still able to control of the class. The students were perfect statues who listened to the teacher and were eager to participate and learn. It was then that I felt that I could still be an assertive disciplinarian even if I did not exhibit the strong personality of my first teacher. Then I observed another second grade classroom, where the teacher was very timid and soft-spoken, and even she implemented a workable behavior management system where the students listened and followed the directions of the teacher.

Once I decided that it was possible for me to be able to enforce a behavior management system, I felt more confident about taking over my own classroom and implementing a behavior management plan there. I began to do research about behavior management and I realized how much information there was out there. I began to wonder what teachers actually used in their classrooms and what they found to be
effective. I decided to conduct my research on behavior management in order understand more about practical solutions to behavior problems in their classrooms which were easy and effective.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to look deeper into behavior management in elementary classrooms in order to ascertain its effectiveness. It also looks critically at different types of behavior management in order to observe their implications in classrooms. To accomplish this task, I combine research findings and teacher interviews to create a behavior management system is then be implemented in a classroom. I then record and examine the effectiveness of that behavior management system.

Behavior management can be defined as “a system made up of preventive and intervention strategies designed to manage rather than control student behavior” (Buck, 1992, p. 37). Students misbehave for a variety of reasons. However, Gottfredson (1993), Teasley (1996) and Buck (1992) all agree that students do not misbehave because these students are innately bad; rather, misbehavior is due to a large part to teacher attitudes and classroom management. Effective management is very useful in a classroom. Not only does it help to keep students on task, it also helps all of the students of the class to learn better due to the fact that more of the time allotted for the class can be used for instruction instead of discipline (Stevenson, 1991).

There are many different techniques which teachers can use in the classroom in order to ensure that their students remain on task and focused. Preparation is very important in any aspect of life, but it is most useful in planning classroom management (Evertson, et al, 1983; Evertson, 1987). If a teacher already has the plans for the type of
management to be used in the classroom, as well as the schedule, that information can be effectively transferred to the students early on in the school year, and then constantly reinforced throughout the year, in order for them to have a better understanding of what is expected of them (Emmer, et al, 1980; Brophy, 1985; Bohn, et al, 2004; Smith and Misra, 1992). Rules are very important for any class and they should be clearly defined and visible in order for the children to see what is expected of them (Smith and Misra, 1992; Buckley and Cooper, 1978).

The teacher needs to decide what type of strategies to use if a behavior problem occurs. For example, a teacher can offer rewards for positive behaviors and then offer punishments for negative behaviors (Buckley and Cooper, 1978; Bohn, et al, 2004; Smith and Misra, 1992). However, both rewards and punishments need to be acted upon promptly to ensure that the correct behavior is reinforced (Buckley and Cooper, 1978; Evertson, et al 1983). Self-management is a popular classroom management strategy which incorporates different methods that allow students to be held responsible for their behavior and given opportunities to modify it (Bohn, et al, 2004; Manning, 1988). Token reinforcement is another behavior management strategy. Tokens can be gained individually, or as a class, and they can be collected in order to earn rewards for appropriate behavior (Thomas, 1980). Tokens are positive motivators for positive behavior due to the fact that students enjoy prizes and, as long as the goal is one which the students find to their liking, they will strive to attain it (Thomas, 1980).

In conclusion, behavior management is an effective tool which teachers can use within their classrooms in order to not only ensure that their students are behaving properly and remaining on task, but also in order to devote more class time to the subject
of learning. There are many different techniques and strategies which one can use in order to promote positive behavior in the classroom; however, my thesis focuses on specific strategies, which were determined through interviews with teachers. My study attempts to look closely at the different strategies of token reinforcement, rewards and punishments, and self-monitoring, in order to create an effective behavior management plan to use in a classroom. I hope to develop a working behavior management system which will provide teachers more time for learning instead of taking time away from the day in order to reprimand misbehaving students.

Statement of the Research Problem and Question

Behavior management can be a difficult task for teachers to effectively implement in their classrooms. My study will not only research different types of effective strategies, but will go further by creating and implementing a behavior plan which uses these strategies. The difficulty of managing a classroom is what led me to this topic of study. I wanted to offer others examples of different strategies which could be used within their classrooms, as well as to try out these different strategies in my classroom. This study will describe the reasons behind student misbehavior, the definition of behavior management, why behavior management is effective, different techniques and strategies which teachers can use in the classroom, and some problems with conducting the necessary research. My study looks deeper into behavior management, specifically the method of self management in order to determine its effectiveness in a second grade classroom.

Organization of the Thesis
Chapter Two of this study discusses current research that looks at: 1) why students misbehave, 2) the definition of behavior management, 3) the importance of behavior management, 4) different techniques to help modify problem behavior, 5) different strategies for effective behavior management, and 6) some problems with recording behavior management. Chapter Three discusses the context of the study. District, school and classroom environments are discussed. Chapter Three also describes the research design, which includes the methodology and procedures for the study, the methods for the collection of the data, and how the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Chapter Four analyzes and interprets the data. Chapter Five looks at conclusions of the study. Chapter Five also discusses the implications for future research, teachers and schools.
CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Behavior management is needed within the classroom in order to facilitate more effective lessons and to have a better control over what occurs in the classroom. Research suggests what teachers can implement in their classrooms in order to assist with behavior management. This chapter first discusses the reasons as to why students misbehave. Secondly, it will discuss the definition of behavior management as well as the benefits as to why it is both necessary and effective. Then effective everyday techniques, namely preparation, lessons, rules, shared ownership, peer modeling, and class atmospheres will be discussed. In the fourth section, effective strategies, namely peer modeling, token reinforcements, self monitoring and rewards and punishments will be elaborated upon. Finally, problems with studying behavior management will be discussed.

Why do Students Misbehave?

Before one can discuss behavior management, one must first understand the causes of student misbehavior. Students do not misbehave because they are 'bad'; instead there are many deeper reasons why students misbehave. Buck (1992) suggests that students misbehave due to frustration, in order to receive attention, or because they have simply given up in the classroom. Students also misbehave when the rules of the classroom are not “clearly defined” (Gottfredson et al, 1993, p. 181). The way that a teacher represents him or herself can also lead a student to either misbehave or to behave
appropriately (Teasley, 1996). For example, if teachers present themselves to their classes with confidence, then their students have more respect for them and are more apt to follow the rules (Teasley, 1996). Teachers who present themselves as not serious about creating order and following rules have students who are less inclined to follow the rules set forth by the teacher (Teasley, 1996). Students have a reason for their behavior, and it can be triggered by biological, environmental and interpersonal factors (Wheeler, 2005). Creating behavior management practices which target these areas can help to prevent misbehavior (Wheeler, 2005). In summary, students do not merely misbehave because of who they are, but because of the presentation of the rules, the teacher, and the atmosphere of the class.

**What is Behavior Management?**

Behavior management is a term which defines a very broad topic. In order for a teacher to effectively implement behavior management strategies, he or she must understand what behavior management means and encompasses. As Buck (1992) states, discipline “in its truest sense, describes a system made up of preventive and intervention strategies designed to manage rather than control student behavior” (p. 37). Behavior management, then, becomes the way that teachers can alter their students' behaviors, either before or after they occur.

There are many different strategies and types of behavior management. Some teachers use preventive measures to stop behavior management before it begins (Buck, 1992). Some teachers plan beforehand and determine what they will implement in order to address reasons why students misbehave so that there is less of a chance for misbehavior (Buck, 1992). Intervention strategies can be utilized to alter behaviors that
are already occurring in the classroom (Buck, 1992). In using these strategies teachers
determine how they will address a behavior which is already occurring in the classroom
(Buck, 1992). According to Alan B. Teasley, it is the “task of the teacher to identify the
goal of the students’ misbehavior, intervene strategically, and select encouraging
techniques that will build the students’ self-esteem over time” (1996, p. 81). What this
means is that both prevention and intervention strategies need to be intertwined within
the behavior management plan which the teacher implements in the classroom to help
prevent behavior problems before they occur as well as to inform students of misbehavior
when it occurs. Behavior management is necessary in order to create an effective
classroom learning experience; therefore, it is important that teachers fully understand
what this means and how to incorporate the different strategies into every day teaching.

Why is Behavior Management Useful in the Classroom?

B.F. Skinner (1971) determined that man is controlled by his environment;
however, man can also adjust this environment in order to create a better atmosphere.
Skinner argues that one’s environment affects his or her actions (Skinner, 1971). Might
teachers, then, alter the classroom atmosphere to create the best learning environment?
Thomas (1980) states that the majority of teacher comments which occur in a classroom
are directed towards “controlling the class”, such as “giving orders, and reprimanding
behavior” instead of actual instruction (p. 215). Effective classroom management is
necessary in order to have more time for lessons as well as effective classroom
instruction (Buckley, 1978). Delamont (1983) shows that teachers spend more than a
quarter of their classroom time redirecting students (Stevenson, 1991). Bohn, Roehrig
and Pressley (2004) also discuss how “effective primary-grades teachers spend more time
teaching and use more diverse instructional techniques than do less effective teachers” (p. 270). The less effective teachers lose instruction time due to the need to discipline their students (Bohn et al, 2004). These two studies demonstrate that ineffective behavior management techniques take time away from important classroom discussions. Therefore, if teachers use strong models of behavior management they will be able decrease the amount of time needed to reprimand students and ensure that students are on task, and as a result instruction will run more smoothly (Stevenson, 1991).

Bohn et al (2004) likewise argue that since less effective teachers have a lesser understanding of management, they have to discipline their students more. This is mainly due to the fact that their students do not understand what is expected of them (Bohn et al, 2004). Bohn et al (2004) also discovered that learning in a classroom environment with teachers who are effective classroom managers is much “more positive and [that] learning was more enjoyable” (p. 276). The students with better classroom management also performed better academically than those students whose classes had poor behavior management (Bohn et al, 2004). One reason for this is simple: “good managers tend to institute procedures which operate almost automatically so that more teacher and student time can be focused on learning” (Blumenfield, 1985, p. 51).

Doyle (1979) ascertained that all students became ‘deviant’ in the beginning of the school year in order to test the results of their actions. If teachers were to let the students’ poor behaviors occur without reprimand, then the students would believe that the behavior they were engaging in was acceptable (Doyle, 1979). As Stevenson (1991) points out, it is possible to see “deviant students as ‘products’ of the social organization of the classroom, rather than an indication of poor classroom management” (p. 132).
This shows that classroom management influences and creates the ways which students will behave. Bohn et al (2004) noted that effective classroom management promotes “participation, self-regulation and cooperation”, which are three ideals of a classroom environment (p. 277).

In summary, students do not misbehave because they are innately prone to bad behavior; instead poor behavior is caused by many diverse factors. Many of these factors deal with poor behavior management in the classroom which leads to a lack of control, a lack of consequences and students who test the system (Doyle, 1979). Poor behavior management alters the way that students behave; thus teachers should use effective strategies to manage their classrooms (Wheeler, 2005).

Effective Everyday Behavior Management Techniques

There are many different techniques which teachers can use in the classroom in order have their students behave appropriately. These techniques, such as preparation, established rules and procedures, responsibility, peer modeling and visualization, shared ownership, and creating a positive environment can be easily implemented in the classroom and will help students to be more focused on the lessons being taught.

Preparation

Teachers need to be prepared for the school year as a whole. This includes the schedule, the lessons, and the behavior management system each individual day. Evertson, Emmer, Sanford and Clements (1983) have shown that students will have an effective learning environment as long as the environment is prepared and conducive for learning. This means that on the first day of school the students should be given expectations for the entire year as well as for expectations of what is expected of them.
during instruction (Evertson et al, 1983; Evertson, 1987). Also, the lessons should be planned prior to each school day (Evertson et al, 1983; Evertson, 1987). Different studies, such as Evertson et al (1983) and Evertson (1987), have shown the benefit of the teachers who have the classroom, procedures and consequences planned prior to the start of school and yet still remain flexible in altering them for the students (Evertson et al, 1983; Evertson, 1987). As a result of these preparations, the school year will begin more smoothly (Evertson et al, 1983; Evertson, 1987). During the first few weeks it is important that the students are made aware of the rules of the classroom as well as the classroom schedule and procedures (Emmer et al, 1980; Brophy, 1985). Kounin (1970) found in his studies of classroom management that effective teachers who were able to create an effective classroom management plan in the beginning of the year had to devote less time during the school year to reestablishing the rules. In conclusion, preparation is very important in having a productive classroom environment.

Schedules

Once established, the classroom procedures and routines need to be continuously reinforced for the students so that they fully understand what is expected of them (Brophy, 1985). A schedule can help students to remember the classroom routines. Massey and Wheeler (2000) completed a study on photo activity schedules to determine their effect on behavior. It was found that these schedules helped the students' transition between activities and to comply with the teacher (Wheeler, 2000). During this study the number of prompts needed for one student decreased from 265 prompts in one day to 190 prompts in one day through use of the schedule (Wheeler, 2000). Schedules can be altered to the literacy of the learner, meaning that schedules can be photo-based or...
include key sight words which the students are able to read (Wheeler, 2005). Routines need to be established early in the year so that the students understand what they will be doing on a daily basis (Bohn et al, 2004; Smith and Misra, 1992). This schedule can be prominently displayed in order to serve as a reminder for the students (Smith and Misra, 1992). In a study completed by Doyle (1979), it was found that once students have begun to adjust to high levels of positive behavior it is less likely that they would retreat to a lower level. In summary, it is important for students to understand and be familiar with their routines and schedules in order to promote positive behavior (Doyle, 1979).

Rules

The rules of the classroom need to be worded in a way that all students understand them (Buck, 1991). Rules need to be few in number, in order to not overwhelm the students (Smith and Misra, 1992). Even if students help to establish them, the rules still must be created and must state specific behaviors which are or are not acceptable (Buckley and Cooper, 1978). Rules need to be prominently displayed in the classroom in order for the students to be reminded of what is expected of them (Smith and Misra, 1992). They also must be constantly reviewed, especially in the beginning of the year, in order for the students to have a better understanding of what is expected within their classroom (Buck, 1992). An effective system of rules and consequences needs to be created, explained and modeled for the students so they can be made aware of what is expected of them (Emmer et al, 1980). Rules can help to maintain order in a classroom and also can be used to state consequences for the students (Smith and Misra, 1992).

Shared Ownership
Students and teachers both need to accept responsibility for problems within the classroom. Problems can be solved through active listening in order to figure out what is wanted in order to make the situation better, and “I” messages, where the individual relates the problem behavior to how it makes that person feel (Brophy, 1985). When teachers decide to reprimand their students, it can be more effective if the teacher makes the students aware of how their actions made him or her feel (Brophy, 1985). This way the actions are more easily internalized as affecting another, and students understand that their behaviors affect others, the teacher as well as other students in the class. (Brophy, 1985).

Students need a sense of responsibility for their own classroom (Brophy, 1985). This occurs not only while taking part in creating the rules of the classroom, but also in accepting responsibility for their work and what happens in the classroom (Brophy, 1985). Letting students share ownership of the classroom, for example in creating the rules, also gives them more stake in what happens to the class, and helps them to behave better (Bohn et al, 2004).

Lessons

Lessons can also have an effect on behavior. Lessons need to be “neither too easy nor too difficult” in order for students to not become too frustrated or bored (Smith and Misra, 1992, p. 355). Materials need to be readily available and directions need to be clearly explained (Emmer et al, 1980). Also, students need to have continuous overlapping lessons which engage them and which do not leave down time where they can become bored (Brophy, 1985; Emmer et al, 1980). This can be done by having seat work available or a system where the student reads a book or plays a game while they are
waiting for other students to complete the assignment (Emmer et al, 1980). While creating these lessons, the background and the abilities of the students need to be considered so that all students feel included and able to complete their work (Emmer et al, 1980). Lessons also need to have variety in order to not be too repetitive; yet they must also challenge the students, while not being too difficult (Brophy, 1985). Bohn et al (2004) list a variety of ways which would easily incorporate behavior management into the daily routine: praising students for their efforts, engaging lessons, connecting lessons to each other and to the students and ensuring that tasks are not too difficult (p. 270).

Lessons are very important to the daily schedule of the classroom, so it is also important to make sure that they do not hinder and are not hindered by the behavior of students in the classroom (Brophy, 1985)

Peer Modeling and Visualization

If a problem behavior occurs, there are different approaches that teachers can use to attempt to handle it. Teachers can choose to ignore the disruptive child; however, this does not help students to gain the attention they are striving for (Buck, 1992). Under peer modeling, where the teacher praises the students who are demonstrating the behavior the teacher expects, students strive to behave in the appropriate manner for the attention given to those students, instead of acting out in order to gain attention (Buck, 1992; Smith and Misra, 1992). Students need to see how they should behave, and by praising the students who are behaving correctly, the students are able to see this.

Name cards, visually displayed, can also help students to alter their behaviors. One example is having these cards displayed on the blackboard with an established way to signify to the students if they are behaving correctly (Stevenson, 1991). This can
include establishing categories such as behaving, misbehaving or deserving of a warning and then moving the cards accordingly (Stevenson, 1991). This way the students can have a visual way to monitor how they are behaving and be able to alter behaviors accordingly (Stevenson, 1991). When students are able to visually understand what is expected of them, either by having visual cues or through peer modeling, they will be able to better understand what types of behaviors they need to display (Stevenson, 1991).

Classroom Environment

Teachers need to be the authoritarian in the classroom, yet they also need to be empathetic to the needs of their students and be able to counsel them individually concerning their behavior and problems within the classroom (Brophy, 1985). If a teacher works cooperatively with the students in controlling the behavior of the classroom, then the students are more willing to be compliant with the rules (Brophy, 1985). Although the environment should be fashioned around content learning, it also needs to be supportive and sensitive to the needs of the students (Emmer et al, 1980).

Bohn et al (2004) observed six primary grade teachers, and found that high expectations and enthusiasm can help students to push themselves to higher achievements. Their work also suggests that the classroom atmosphere is very important and students need to feel involved and included in the classroom community (Bohn et al, 2004). Compassion and listening were also found to help students feel comfortable in the classroom (Bohn et al, 2004). In summary, a positive classroom environment seems necessary to promote comfort and learning in a classroom (Bohn et al, 2004).

In conclusion, there are many different techniques which teachers can use while planning lessons or teaching these lessons in order to assist students in staying focused...
and actively engaged. Namely, lessons must be engaging, the atmosphere needs to be supportive yet flexible, advanced preparation is needed, rules need to be created and displayed, and the students need a sense of responsibility and ownership of the classroom.

**Effective Behavior Management Strategies**

In addition to the general techniques discussed in the previous section there are specific behavior management strategies that help teachers keep their students on task and control misbehavior within the classroom. Teachers can be taught these strategies in order to better manage their classroom environments and their students’ behaviors which, in turn, helps their classes to run more smoothly (Hett, 1981). Three types of strategies which teachers I interviewed used in their individual classrooms were: rewards and punishments, self-management, and token reinforcement.

**Rewards and Punishments**

Reinforcement is a consequence which follows a behavior in order to strengthen that behavior (Wheeler, 2005). These consequences can either be positive or negative. Rewards are a type of positive reinforcement which can also be used in order to “increase the chances that the behavior will be repeated” (Buckley and Cooper, 1978, p. 259). Rewards can be gained individually or as a group (Smith and Misra, 1992). One type of reward is a social reinforcer (Smith and Misra, 1992, p. 359). This type of positive reinforcement can be used to alter behavior in the classroom to the manner which the teacher expects (Bohn et al, 2004). These social reinforcers can be verbal, such as praising students, or nonverbal, such as a smile (Smith and Misra, 1992). Nonverbal gestures, such as moving close to students, or offering positive or negative facial
gestures, help teachers to reinforce appropriate behavior (Woolfolk and Galloway, 1985).
Teachers can also use activity reinforcers, where the student is able to “engage in a favorite activity” due to good behavior (Smith and Misra, 1992, p. 360). Negative reinforcement occurs when the teacher removes an aversive stimulus due to the student showing positive behavior (Wheeler, 2005). This can be done by offering less homework due to good behavior (Wheeler, 2005).

Punishments can also be used in order to hinder behaviors from repeatedly reoccurring; however, the punishments need to be perceived as such by the students (Buckley and Cooper, 1978). Further, punishments as well as rewards must be prompt and consistent in order for the behaviors to become constant (Buckley and Cooper, 1978; Evertson et al, 1983). Punishments should also include noting an alternative behavior in which the child might engage in order to avoid this negative consequence in the future (Smith and Misra, 1992).

Reinforcements have certain guidelines to follow. B.F. Skinner (1953), who thoroughly studied behavior management, determined that reinforcement should be individualized so that the interests of the individual learners are met. They also should be presented directly following the behavior to be reinforced in order for the students to know what behavior was correct (Wheeler, 2005). In summary rewards and punishments, when used correctly, can help students alter their behaviors to strive for the goal of positive behavior.

Self-Management

Although students are dependent on guidance from adults, they are also capable of managing their own behaviors (Brophy, 1985). Self-management involves “the
transfer to students of responsibilities typically held by the teacher” (Thomas, 1980, p. 218). Students become able to record their behaviors and assess how they are acting (Thomas, 1980). When students learn to self-monitor they become more likely to display the same behaviors when their teachers are or are not present (Brophy, 1985). “Self-monitoring has been shown to be an effective strategy for increasing attention to task, positive classroom behaviors, and some social skills in general and special education settings” (Babyak et al, 2000, p. 217). However, self-management needs to be taught correctly. When this occurs, children are able to self-discipline and modify their own behavior in order to correct problem behaviors (Manning, 1988; Smith and Misra, 1992). There are many effective self-management strategies which teachers can use in their classrooms. For example, students can partake in selecting what they will be learning, what rules they will follow, what type of schedule they will follow, and what their punishments and reinforcements will be (Smith and Misra, 1992, p. 367).

Contracts can also be used where students identify their goals and the steps they will take to achieve these goals (Thomas, 1980). Wheeler et al (1988) performed a study where students were given a self-checklist which listed the target behaviors. Once students display one of these behaviors, it is removed from the checklist (Wheeler, 1988). Thus, the need for reinforcement will gradually be faded until the checklist is removed and the students are able to display these behaviors on their own (Wheeler, 1988).

If teachers spend the time to review routines, behaviors and expectations with their students, especially in the beginning of the year, students will be able to self-monitor and accurately record their behaviors (Bohn et al, 2004). Having students become self-regulated allows them to effectively use learning strategies and to function
independently (Bohn et al, 2004). This also includes, but in no way is limited to, having the students take responsibilities for their own behavior and cleaning up after themselves (Bohn et al, 2004). This enables students to display appropriate behaviors and perform tasks without directions from the teachers present in the class (Bohn et al, 2004).

According to Manning (1988), there are three components of self-discipline: modeling, practicing, and cueing. Modeling occurs when students view the acceptable behavior demonstrated by how the teacher behaves and as well as the behaviors of their peers whom the teachers praise (Manning, 1988). Practicing means that students have the opportunity to attempt and rehearse the types of behaviors which they are to demonstrate (Manning, 1988). Cueing refers to the praxis of the teacher directing the students on what the proper behavior is (Manning, 1988). Manning (1988) also identified five categories of self-discipline: defining the appropriate behavior, focusing attention, self-guiding, guiding themselves towards what they should have been doing, and coping with their abilities (p. 197).

Brophy (1985) asserts that “self-managers”, i.e. a system where the students have a chart of the schedule on their desk and have to check if they behave appropriately during that activity, are useful. Students learn which behaviors the teacher expects of them and assume the responsibility to determine if they have shown those behaviors (Brophy, 1985). Students need clear guidelines of a behavior which they are expected to demonstrate; they also need the expected behavior modeled for them so that they can completely understand it (Brophy, 1985). These guidelines also need positive expectations facilitated by positive reinforcements (Brophy, 1985). Role playing can
help students become better self managers and allow them to be able to determine if they are displaying these behaviors (Brophy, 1985).

The Good Student Game is a self-monitoring behavior management strategy which allows students to monitor themselves and assess their own behaviors (Babyak et al, 2000). This game is designed for independent work periods and should be used at least once a day (Babyak et al, 2000). In this process the teacher determines the target behaviors, defines good student behavior, teaches the reinforcements which are to be earned, and adjusts the goals to become gradually more challenging over a period of time (Babyak et al, 2000). Students use a manager chart which must be explained and reinforced by giving practice and encouragement prior (Babyak et al, 2000). Using the manager chart requires students to either record themselves or their groups (Babyak et al, 2000). After an interval of time, the students place a check or color in the box for each behavior they feel was represented during that time period (Babyak et al, 2000).

Research on the Good Student Game concludes that all of the students enjoyed earning rewards from the game “75% of the students... liked monitoring their own behavior... whereas only 38% liked having a peer monitor their behavior” (Babyak 2000, p. 222). When students are able to monitor their own behaviors, then the results will be more likely to transfer to other circumstances (Thomas, 1980).

In summary, self-monitoring not only helps students within the classroom environment, it also transfers to other aspects of their lives (Thomas, 1980). Students can easily be taught to evaluate their own behaviors if their teacher models it for them and allows them a chance to practice it (Bohn et al, 2004). Self-monitoring can be fun as well as rewarding for the students involved (Babyak, 2000).
Token Reinforcement

Token reinforcement can be used to increase desired behaviors and decrease undesirable behaviors (Thomas, 1980). However, reinforcement needs to be contingent upon a certain task or behavior. Parks, Fine and Hopkins (1974) found that where tokens were used as rewards for correct math problems in a first grade classroom, the number of correct answers increased. This study shows that students can learn to exhibit desired behaviors in order to attain tokens (Thomas, 1980). Tokens serve as a motivating tool to help students modify their behaviors; students are given tokens, which can be saved to attain a desired privilege or prize, solely for exhibiting desirable behaviors (Thomas, 1980). Eventually, rewards and tokens can be weaned from the classroom in order for students to still exhibit the desired behaviors without a reward (Wheeler, 2005).

Tokens can be given to students for good behavior and taken away for poor behavior (Smith and Misra, 1992). The tokens can be traded in for a reinforcer, and the choice of what kind of reinforcement can be determined by the individual children (Smith and Misra, 1992). In summary, tokens serve as rewards which help students strive to demonstrate good behaviors for rewards; however tokens should not be the only modifications in the classrooms so that the students do not become overly dependent on them.

What are Some Problems with Studying Behavior Management?

Recording the effectiveness of classroom management can be a difficult task. One reason is because of "reactivity" which means that people change their behavior when they know they are being observed (McLaughlin, 1976, p. 653). When students know they are being studied they change their behaviors to what they feel the observer
wants to see (McLaughlin, 1976). This can be harmful to research. One way to alter this problem is to have a control group to compare the differences. Consequently, a researcher needs to be careful when recording behavior management and cannot let the students know that they are being observed to be sure that they do not act a certain way for the observation.

Implementation of behavior management works best when applied by the teachers already in the classroom instead of by outside sources (Hett, 1981). When behavior management strategies were implemented by outside researchers, students only displayed their new learned behaviors in the presence of the researchers and not in the presence of their teacher (Hett, 1981). This work suggests that teachers need to implement the strategies themselves in their classrooms so that the students will continue to demonstrate their new learned behaviors (Hett, 1981).

In summary, although behavior modification research is very useful to inform effective learning and management strategies, there can be problems associated with it. Researchers must design studies to ensure that students will not only display the behaviors which they feel the researcher wants to see, and will instead demonstrate their true behaviors.

Conclusion

This literature review discusses different reasons why students misbehave in the classroom, arguing that a lack of order or no clear rules plays a large part (Gottfredson et al, 1993; Wheeler, 2005). Behavior management is defined as the way by which a teacher manages the types of difficult behaviors which can cause disruptions in the classroom (Buck, 1992). Reasons for using behavior management are to help lessons be
conducted more smoothly and for the students to understand not only what is expected of them but also the repercussions of their actions (Buck, 1992). Different techniques and strategies of behavior management include, but are not limited to, clear rules, advanced preparation, engaging lessons, positive reinforcement, self-monitoring, behavior charts as well as rewards and punishments. Finally, this literature review suggests that research needs to be conducted carefully so as to not receive contaminated results from students who wish to please their teachers or other adults in the room (McLaughlin, 1976). The next chapter looks specifically at the present study, presenting the context and the research design.
CHAPTER 3
The Research Design and the Context of the Study

This chapter clearly explains how and where the study takes place. The chapter also describes the methodology of the study and clearly defines the research questions. The procedure of the study, sources of data, and method of data analysis are also discussed.

The Research Design

Description of Methodology

The methodology of this study is qualitative. As defined by Phillips and Carr (2006), qualitative research “embodies multiple methodologies – narrative, participatory, historical and feminist inquiries” (p. 26). Also, these methods “generally assume the nature of knowledge as fluid and subjective... enriched by multiple viewpoints and changes as these viewpoints are used to further construct a knowledge base” (Phillips and Carr, 2006, p. 26). As defined by Smith and Lytle (1993), “teacher research is a systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (p. 23-24). My study follows along these guidelines due to the fact that it is studying the implementation of a self-management system in order to gauge its effectiveness in the classroom. Teacher research works best for my study because it allows me, the teacher implementing the system, a way to reflect on the reactions of the students as well as the impact self-management has on behavior.

Procedure of the Study
Determining the Behavior Management System

After conferencing with the classroom teacher a behavior management plan was determined based on previous strategies of the teacher and the behavior problems of the classroom. Interviews with various experienced teachers in other schools also served as guidelines in determining the type of behavior modification used in the study.

After carefully considering all of these behavior strategies, I became most intrigued by the teachers who used behavior management charts in order to modify and manage behavior. However, the teacher was in control of implementing this system and I was curious to see if students would be able to correctly mark down or assess their own behaviors. Thus I decided to implement a behavior chart strategy where the students were the ones responsible for recording and managing their behaviors.

Explanation of the Study, Timeline, Materials and Resources

The purpose of this study was to implement a behavior management plan. As researcher, I began the implementation of the plan when I took over the role of teacher in the classroom. Prior to implementation, observations were conducted and the frequencies of particular problem behaviors in the classroom were recorded. Once implemented, the original teacher of the classroom, who thus becomes the observer of the plan, and the researcher, who becomes the teacher, both kept detailed teacher journals about the behaviors of the students and how the plan appears to be working. At the completion of three weeks of implementation the teacher-observer and the researcher-teacher, as well as the students, completed surveys to determine the effectiveness and the preferences of the behavior management strategy which was used. Data was also recorded about the behaviors of the students throughout the study, and at the completion of the study, in
order to determine an increase or decrease of behavior problems which occurred under this model. A classroom journal was placed on the blackboard for students to record their views of the behavior management system. Focus groups of students were also interviewed in order to provide additional data what students felt concerning the self-management system.

This study occurred daily from March 27th until April 13th. Prior to implementation there was a class meeting which discussed the self-management chart as well as determine the consequences for the behavior of the students. The students worked as a group in order to determine the amount of sad faces required for a loss of free time. There were many different materials and resources needed for this study. First, two types of surveys were used, one for the two teachers, the researcher-teacher and the teacher-observer, and one for the students. A detailed letter was also necessary in order to send home to the parents in order to inform them of the study and to gain their consent to allow their children to participate in the study at hand. This letter was sent home with the students and had to be returned prior to enacting the behavior management plan. Two teacher researcher journals were needed, one for the researcher and one for the observational teacher. The specific supplies of the behavior management plan were also needed, and that included a daily behavior chart taped on to the desk of each student, as well as a pencil for the student to record his or her behavior. A tape recorder and student interview questions were needed as well. Finally, a class journal for the students to record their thoughts on the behavior charts is necessary.
Prior to implementation a class meeting was held in order to discuss the self-management system with the students. The students were all able to see the chart and read each column: Did I complete my work? Did I work quietly? Did I raise my hand? The behavior which warranted a happy or sad face was also described. Students were then allowed to ask any questions they had about the chart. Afterwards, the class discussed how many sad faces should warrant a loss of free time and then voted in order to determine the number. It was decided that five sad faces was the equivalent of a loss of five minutes of free time.

Once implemented, the chart was daily placed on the desk of each student prior to the school day by the teacher. At the end of the school day the students were responsible for bringing the chart to the teacher and telling her how many sad faces they received during the day. If a student received five or more sad faces, it was a loss of five minutes of free time, as decided by the class.

Once implemented, the teacher reminded the student at the end of each activity to write down a happy or a sad face, depending on behavior. In the beginning of implementation, many students questioned what it meant after each activity, which the teacher would then continuously explain. However, this decreased with more practice and use of the charts. Math was not included on the chart since the researcher, myself, was not in the room at the time of that activity.

Data Sources

Three different groups were participants in this study: the teacher-observer, the teacher-researcher, and the students of the classroom. Different types of data sources were used. These sources were: surveys, data collection, interviews, classroom journal,
and observations. At the completion of this study the students of the class were surveyed on their thoughts about the effectiveness of the behavior plan; however, one student was absent and did not partake in the survey. Students also suggested possible changes to the plan. They were also questioned on to what they would prefer as a behavior management system as well as suggestions for what would be effective in the future. A classroom journal allowed the students to reflect on how they felt about the implemented behavior management system in order to gain a better insight into how the students responded to the self-management charts. Focus groups were interviewed in order to provide a structured forum to receive constructive feedback from the students about the self-management behavior system. Three focus groups were interviewed for a total of twelve students. Data was also collected from the teacher of the classroom, who is the observer of the study. He was surveyed in order to see how an ‘outsider’ felt about the success of the implementation of the behavior management plan. He was asked to record observations on a daily and weekly basis. The researcher of this study, who is the student teacher in the classroom, also completed the survey to gain another perspective about the effectiveness of the study. The researcher also kept a daily teacher journal in order to record observations during the implementation of the behavior management plan.

Data Analysis

The surveys were collected and organized according to categories; following this themes and patterns were identified. Sections of the observation journals were analyzed based on specific entries. Data on the behavior of the students was collected prior to the implementation of the behavior management plan as well as continually throughout the study in order to gain a holistic view of the student’s behaviors and to determine if they
had changed because of the behavior system. Behavior management charts were
analyzed in order to determine patterns of behaviors as well as student honesty. A
classroom chart was created and analyzed in order to show the progress of student
behavior over the weeks of implementation in order to visually see any changes in
behaviors.

The Context of the Study

Setting

This research takes place in a second grade inclusion classroom in Birches
Elementary School in Washington Township, New Jersey. The classroom has twenty-
three students, nine of which leave for special education classes in the morning. During a
one month period, the student teacher, who is the researcher in this study, implemented a
behavior management plan in order to study any differences in student behaviors.

School District

Birches Elementary School is located in Washington Township, New Jersey.
Washington Township is a part of Gloucester County. As of 2000, the total population of
Washington Township was 47,114 individuals, which comprised of 15,609 households
and 12,658 families living in Washington Township (Wikipedia.com). 43.8% of these
households had children who were under the age of eighteen (Wikipedia.com). The
median income per household was $66,546, and the median income per family was
$74,661 (Wikipedia.com). About 2.5% of the families and 3.2% of the population were
below the poverty line during the year 2000 (Wikipedia.com). The population was
90.20% Caucasian, 4.85% African American, 3.31% Asian, 2.03% Hispanic, 1.01% two
or more races, 0.53% other, and 0.08% Native American (Wikipedia.com).
School Community

Birches Elementary School has 584 students in the grades First to Fifth (Wikipedia.com). Enrollment averages about 24 students in each home room (http://www.wtps.org/birches/). There is about a 96.2% attendance rate each day (http://www.wtps.org/birches/). About 97% of the students speak English at home, only 1% speak Spanish, 1% speaks Pilipino and 1% speaks another language (http://www.wtps.org/birches/). In the 2003-2004 school year Birches Elementary School was named a Governor’s School of Excellence as well as a Star School (http://www.wtps.org/birches/). “Birches School’s mission is to enable its students to develop their self-worth through interpersonal skills, while promoting positive attitudes and fostering honesty, integrity, academic excellence, and good citizenship. The philosophy of ‘open doors, open hearts’ is lived out each day.” (http://www.wtps.org/birches/). The school has programs which include: Special Education, Art, Physical Education, Music (including Instrumental Music), Reading, Accelerated Reader, Quick Mind, Math Enrichment, Reading Enrichment, Computers, MARS, PEP, and Talented and Gifted.
Classroom Community

Demographics for Second Grade Class

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*No actual names are used.

**Being monitored to see if still needs Basic Skills.

The behavior plan which was already established in this classroom is one where the teacher has full control of the student behavior where the expectations were given and the students were told they had the choice to follow those rules. This behavior system created a very effective classroom where time was never wasted. The behavior plan which I implemented in the classroom allowed the students control over determining if they were complying with the same behavior policies which were already in tact in the
classroom. The students assumed responsibility for determining if their own behaviors were positive or negative.

Conclusion

This methodology was fairly easily to implement and follow. Teaching while collecting data and determining the honesty of the students was difficult. Interesting findings and changes for future implementation were discovered and will be further discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 4

The Results of the Study

The methodology and the research design of this study have been previously discussed in Chapter Three. The context and the description of the study were also explained. The study was then implemented. In this chapter the results are described and discussed.

This data combines teacher and student viewpoints in order to offer a holistic view of what participants across the study had to say. First I described the progress and changes which occurred in student behavior as shown in the behavior management charts. Second, I discuss the abilities of the students to manage their own behavior throughout the study. Finally, I describe the unexpected findings about student honesty.

Progress and Change in Student Behavior

The purpose of implementing a behavior management system is to show an increase in positive behaviors, such as hard work, participation, and staying on task, as well as a decrease in problem behaviors, such as calling out, talking to classmates, and being off-task. The self-management behavior chart which I implemented in my second grade classroom followed this same format. The three categories of behavior which were monitored by the behavior chart were: talking (Did I work quietly?), participation (Did I raise my hand?), and staying on task (Did I complete the work?). One of the goals of this behavior management system was for the students to be able to not only manage their own behavior, but to reduce the number of negative behaviors and instead display more
positive behaviors during the day. The following chart suggests an improvement in student self-management. Findings are further discussed below.

Prior to the implementation of the behavior management charts I conducted a frequency chart for three days, recording each time a child called out, talked to others or were off-task. I completed this same chart for the last three days of implementation in order to determine a change in student behavior. Although the talking to others and the off-task behaviors both remained relatively constant, there was a dramatic change in the calling out behaviors of this classroom. Prior to implementation, the students called out seventy-three times in three days. However, after the implementation of the self-management chart, this number dramatically dropped to only fourteen call outs in a three day period, a remarkable change from fifty-nine call outs. This showed that the behavior chart helped students to realize they should not call out as well as to refrain from doing so. The off-task behaviors decreased slightly, where as the talking amongst peers increased slightly; however, these were not dramatic changes which should cause alarm. Instead, the fact that these behaviors did not show a dramatic increase shows that the students were able to constantly manage their own behavior at the same level at which it was previously managed by the teacher.
The students also noticed a change in their behaviors and their comments support the results noted on the frequency chart. In a written student survey after the completion of the behavior management charts, the students were able to share their thoughts on the behavior chart. One student, MH, commented “the behaveyer [behavior] chart helps me to behave better during the day.” Another student, EC, felt that the behavior of the class “is better if we have the chart.” TO wrote that it “is the chart that helps me to behave better in school!” One final student, MB, said “I think the caret [chart] hilps [helps] me behave.” In the classroom reflective journal TP stated that “I really like it because it helps me out.”

![Table 2 Focus Group Responses](image)

In a focus group interview, twelve students were asked if they felt that the charts helped them to be able to stay on task, participate, and to not talk to those around them. Ten students felt that the charts helped them to stay on task during lessons. Only two students responded differently, stating that it did not affect their on-task behavior. These two students also both commented that they were already good at staying on task prior to the implementation of the chart and felt that they did not need to use the chart in order to continue this good behavior. Eight students responded that the chart helped them to not talk to others during lessons. One student responded that it did not affect his behavior, and three students said that sometimes it did affect their behaviors, yet that it was not
consistent. Ten students stated that the charts helped them to participate in lessons due to
the fact that a happy face was earned from it, yet two students stated that they still
became nervous and did not always participate. In the same focus group interview three
students, EC, MaP and MoP, all agreed that even though they sometimes lied on the
behavior charts, an issue which will be discussed in a later section, it helped them to
realize when they were displaying, and even to stop, problem behaviors.

Little change was found in the behavior of the class a group. This could be
explained by the factor that the class was already well behaved prior to implementation of
the self-management chart. However, this consistency shows that there was an
improvement in the students' abilities to record and manage their own behavior instead of
having a teacher responsible for it.

Ability to Self-Manage Behavior

Self-management is a type of behavior management where the students are held
responsible for their own behaviors. The students in this study were given their own
behavior management chart and were responsible for determining whether or not they
deserved a happy or a sad face following each subject and then recording it on their
charts. Many students enjoyed the privilege and responsibility of managing their own
behavior. They took on the responsibility and many were able to successfully complete
this task. In a classroom written survey completed after the system was finished, two
students, MP and TT commented that they both felt that they were able to manage their
own behavior without assistance from teachers.

The students were not only able to successfully complete this task, they also
enjoyed it. In a focus group interview, SL said that it was good to manage his own
behavior because he understood what to put on the chart. TP agreed with him, and said that she enjoyed seeing happy faces on her paper at the end of the day. BL also enjoyed the fact that the classroom teacher did not have to tell her how she was behaving, that instead she was in charge of determining her behavior, an added responsibility which she enjoyed. SA and SB both said that it helped them to realize bad behaviors which they were displaying in order to correct it.

However, even the students noticed that not everyone was able to manage their own behavior. One student commented in the classroom journal that “when we D.E.A.R. read some people talk and they put a 😊 faces [face] insted [instead]” which shows that not all of the students were being honest. However, this was not all the students all of the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Focus Group Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Responses (out of 12)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Responses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the students in a focus group interview said that they felt that they were able to manage their own behavior accurately. Yet the responses were very close. As the chart displays, five students claimed that they understood the behaviors which deserved a happy or a sad face and four stated that they did not. Three students declared that they sometimes got confused. The closeness of these numbers suggests that the students were not all fully aware of when they should place a happy or a sad face on their paper. One student, SA, said that he felt that sometimes he was only talking a little, so he
was confused as to whether his behavior deserved a happy or sad face. He also commented that sometimes he would forget how he was behaving by the end of that subject and thus not be able to determine which face he deserved, a happy or a sad. EW agreed with him and added that it would sometimes be confusing to decide how you were acting during that subject.

There seemed to be a lack of understanding about the types of behaviors which were deserving of a happy or a sad face. This misunderstanding leads to the issue of student honesty which will be further discussed in the next section.

**Student Honesty**

Student behavior did not show a dramatic change in all areas after the implementation of the self-management behavior charts. As a matter of fact, it seemed that more students had sad faces in later weeks than they did the first week. I feel as though the increase of the self-management chart can be explained by one thing: increase of student honesty.

![Table 4 Comparison of Self-Management Charts](image)

This graph compares the behavior management charts of the students in three separate weeks during its implementation in order to show what they felt their behavior was. By looking at this graph, it would seem that more students received three sad faces
at the end of the system than at the beginning and fewer students received no sad faces at
the end of the implementation of the self-management strategy. However, I feel as
though these findings suggest the increase of student honesty. As the researcher, I saw
that the number of happy faces in the first week far surpassed the number of happy faces
that should have been earned. Students worried about losing free time, a common theme
in the class journal and focus group interviews. It is possible since they felt that they held
this responsibility in their hands, they would not give themselves sad faces. However, as
the weeks went by and they realized they had to receive five sad faces in order to loose
free time, most students were willing to be honest. A few students even lost free time
due to the fact that they had given themselves five sad faces, showing an increase in
honesty. Another improvement is the fact that in the last week of implementation, more
charts were fully completed than in the first few weeks. This also suggests that students
were beginning to better understand the charts and their behaviors and were better able to
fully complete them.

The issue of honesty was one which affected all of the members of this study,
from the researcher to the students. Many students were able to be honest and accurately
record how they were behaving. In the reflective classroom journal TT stated that his
“favorite part of the behavior chart is that it teaches you how to take care of your self
[yourself].” He then went on to say that he likes “to be onest [honest] even if I get ☹
faces.”

Many students saw dishonesty in their classmates and were saddened by it. TP
reflected in the classroom journal that “sometimes people just put ☹ fases [faces] but
they have ☹ fases [faces]. But I like it because I tell the teroth [truth] all the time. I
don't like it again because some people lie so it is not fair to the class at all.” Other students made similar observations in the classroom journal. EW said “I do not like the behavior charts because some people are not honest.” KG also said “I don’t like it because people aren’t being honest and I like it because I have lots of smiles!”

Table 5 Focus Group Interview Question

In focus group interviews of twelve students, students were asked if they were able to be honest with the chart. The majority, seven, said yes. These numbers are all displayed in the graph above. The ones who answered sometimes and no, all said that they would sometimes get confused about how they were behaving, or feel too nervous to put a sad face. When asked in a focus group interview, EC and MoP, MaP all said they would put happy faces regardless of their behaviors due to the fact that they did not want to lose free time. However, these students also said that they understood their poor behavior and tried to change it, even though they lied on the chart. This fact shows that although the students may not have improved in honesty, that they were learning to recognize and manage their behaviors.

Student Reflections

Throughout this research the students were given various opportunities to speak out and reflect on how they felt about the behavior charts. This was completed through
the use of a classroom journal, available to the students at any time, and also through focus group interviews with twelve students, as well as the student questionnaires which were distributed to the entire class.

Table 6 Summary of End of Study Student Questionnaire

*Only twenty-two students were surveyed due to the fact that one was absent.*

The end of the study questionnaire consisted of six questions, five of which are shown, with the student responses, in the chart above.

1. How did you like to be able to manage your own behavior?
2. Did you feel that you were able to accurately describe how you were behaving during each subject?
3. Did the manager on your desk help you to be ready for each subject?
4. Did the manager on your desk help you to stay on task during each subject?
5. Did the manager on your desk help you to pay attention during each subject?

The chart shows that the majority of the students enjoyed the behavior chart the majority of the time. Some of the students had mixed emotions towards the behavior charts, meaning that they did not always like the chart, but that they did like it and found it helpful most of the time. Only a few of the students had negative feelings about the
chart, or felt that the chart was useless to them due to the fact that they felt that they already always demonstrated positive behavior.

![Table 7 Summary of End of Study Student Questionnaire](chart)

The final question in the written survey asked the students who they felt should manage their behavior, the teacher or themselves. An overwhelming response of twenty out of twenty-two students said they want to continue to manage their own behavior. Only two students responded that they feel they would want the teacher to retake control of managing the behavior of the classroom. This attitude of being able to manage their own behavior correctly and honestly helped the students to gain confidence in their ability to accomplish the task of self-manage.

Although both of the previous charts suggest that the students had full confidence in the class being able to monitor their own behaviors, as well as a feeling that they benefited from the chart there were still mixed emotions from the class on how they felt about the chart. Through the classroom reflective journal, the students were able to write down all of their feelings about the behavior management chart. Many students commented on how well they liked it and how much it helped them. MoP stated that she liked it because she got "lots of smiles" throughout the day. MK agreed and said that she likes it because "I oneley [only] get 1, 2, or 3 sad faces." A third student, TP, included the whole class when she said "I like it because it is good for everyone in this class."
In a focus group interview, MH said that he likes the behavior chart because then there is less tattling on classmates since everyone does not have to tell the teacher the bad behaviors they see, instead the students individually mark it down. EC said that she liked it because it helped her to stay on track with her behavior throughout the day and that it reminds her of good and bad behavior. MaP liked the fact that the chart was very little and didn’t get in his way while he was trying to do work. MoP again commented on how she liked to see smiles on her chart. MB, MK and SB all agreed that it helped them to stay focused and on task on during the day.

Students also pointed out parts of the self-management chart which they did not like. One student, BL, commented that she did not like the chart due to the fact that “other people can see how I act.” JG pondered the behavior charts and reflected that he didn’t like the behavior charts “because people around you can see how you acted all day and they sometimes think you are bad” if that person had a lot of sad faces. This shows that both of the previous students were worried about what other students thought about them in the class. Some students were more worried about their punishment that five sad faces has for them. SA said “I don’t like haw [how] we can los [lose] free time esily [easily]” even though it took five sad faces. EC agreed and stated “I do not like it because if you get 5 sad ☹ you will los [lose] your free time.” SA also added that he felt it interfered with his work when he said “I don’t like it because it backx [backs] me up on work and I fall behind.”

In a focus group interview, SL said that people could make fun of you if they saw that you had all ☺, which was similar to JG commenting that students would think poorly upon those who received multiple sad faces throughout the day. MH, MaP, MoP, and EC
said that 5 sad faces made you lose free time, and they were all worried about the loss of
time. MB agreed with BL when she said that she did not like her classmates could look
at the behavior chart in order to see how she was behaving or to see if she was being
honest. MH also said that it is not good to lie and he felt that not everyone was honest
with the charts. SA said that it is not fair to those who tell the truth and accept the
responsibility because some students lied to make themselves have perfect days when
they did not deserve them. EW and MK agreed that they did not like it when people lied.

The students were also asked in the written survey what they would have done in
order to make the behavior management chart better. EW, since she enjoyed receiving
the award certificate and sticker at then end of a perfect day, said that she would give the
students with perfect days a snack as a reward at the end of the day. JG said that he did
not like the chart at all and would instead get rid of it. BL said that she would keep the
chart, just move the location. She felt that if it was on the inside ledge of her desk, she
would be able to remember it and mark in the spaces, so that no one else could see it.
She also said to not put it in a folder because she would not remember it was there.

Teacher Responses

After the completion of the implementation of the self-management strategy, the
cooperating teacher (the observer) and the student teacher (the researcher) filled out a
written survey in order to give feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of the
self-management system. Paul Rodrigo, the cooperating teacher, was a good individual
to be the observer due to the fact prior to the implementation of the system he remarked:
“I would never use self-management in my classroom, I feel as though the teacher should
have control of the classroom; however, every teacher operates differently and different systems work for different teachers.”

Mr. Rodrigo said that the managers helped the students to stay on task and be attentive because the expectations of behavior were stated for the students on the self-management chart, and since the researcher refreshed these expectations daily, the students were reminded of what was expected of them. He also commented that although the teacher asked the students to be ready, it was up to them to “do what was expected to be ready in a sufficient amount of time.” However, Mr. Rodrigo also noticed the major concern of honesty with the study. He stated “I feel the more well-behaved students were more honest and tougher on themselves on how they graded themselves. In contrast, the students who will usually fool around, not work as hard, or not participate will generally feel like they are doing a great job.” Paul Rodrigo also feels that a self-management system is generally not a feasible behavior management system for an entire classroom, and instead should only be used for certain students since it is hard to be the monitor of the entire class’s charts as well as the teacher. Further he suggested that for a future study, the researcher should only use a small group of less well-behaved students as the subject group instead of the whole class, in order to better monitor their responses while teaching. This suggestion holds weight for researching due to the fact that it is not always easy to note when every student deserves a sad face in a group of twenty students while attempting to teach a lesson.

As the researcher I also noted the problem of student honest and I feel that the students lied about their behavior in order to not receive a punishment. However, I also feel that the behavior chart served as a constant reminder of how the students should be
behaving and that, even though the students were not always being honest, it helped them to realize what they were doing wrong in order to better their behavior in the future. I feel that although some students did take advantage of having the ability to monitor their own behavior, it had a very positive reaction in the classroom since students were gaining the ability to determine when they were misbehaving.

Conclusion

In conclusion there were positive and negative developments in my study of student self-management system in a second grade classroom. The students were able to determine their behavior, although they may have been less honest in recording their behaviors. In the final chapter, the results of this study will again be discussed as well as the implications of this research.
Chapter 5

Conclusion and Implication of the Study

The previous chapters describe the study and discuss the data findings of this study of self-management. In this chapter the results are given further thought. Conclusions drawn about self-management charts and implications for future research are also addressed.

Summary of Findings

My analysis of the data seems to suggest that the self-management study was successful. In my second grade classroom there was a significant decrease in calling out behaviors during the three weeks in which the self-management behavior system was in place. Ten out of twelve students commented in a focus group interview that the self-managers helped them to stay on task and participate throughout the day. Eight out of the same twelve students also commented that it helped them to not talk during lessons. Seven out of the same twelve students also stated that they felt that they were able to be honest while filling out the behavior charts. The other five students said that they sometimes became confused when determining their behaviors, or that they gave themselves a smile in order to not receive a punishment. The students had an overwhelming positive reaction to the ability of the self-management charts and the connection with their behavior. Many not only enjoyed the responsibility of managing their own behavior, but they were also able to correctly determine their own behavior.
Twenty out of twenty-two students also stated that they wished to continue managing their own behavior in the classroom.

**Conclusions Drawn about Self-Management Systems**

Throughout this research I have found self-management systems to be an effective solution to classroom management problems. When implemented correctly, self-management systems allow students to effectively share in the responsibility of their classroom. As I previously discussed in Chapter Two, students misbehave for a variety of reasons, many of which are caused by poor classroom management. As this study has shown, self-management is an effective way for students to remain on task, as well as to participate and refrain from calling out. Self-management can be a fun and rewarding experience. As described in Chapter Four, many students in my classroom were delighted when they saw smiles on their paper at the end of the day; this seemed to give students a more positive view of themselves.

**Limitations of the Study**

One limitation of this study is that the student behavior was not a serious problem in the classroom in which the study took place. The students were already well behaved for their teacher when I as researcher and student teacher took over the classroom. Although the study proved that the students were able to maintain the same level of discipline without teacher interference, the demeanor of the students could have been the cause of the increased good behavior, not the self-management charts.

Another limitation of this study is the time period of the study. The study occurred over a three week period, which did not leave much time for the students to adjust to the new system. Given more time, the students might have become more skilled
at using the self-management charts and could possibly have shown greater improvements in the areas of honesty and behavior.

The results of this study were not totally successful. There was also a lot of controversy over the honesty of the participants. However, the study was not a total failure. Both the researcher and the students gained new insights into self-management and the ability of the students to recognize mistakes in their behaviors. One insight learned was that the students understood their mistakes, even if they were not completely honest about it. This helped them grow as self-managers; they were learning to self-monitor behaviors and increasingly recognized when they exhibited poor behaviors.

Suggestions for Improvement

As I mentioned in Chapter Four, there is room for improvement with every behavior management system. I feel as though a major fall-back of this system occurred in the short amount of implementation time. In order to have more effective results, the students should begin the year with the self-management behavior management strategy. However, I feel as though the teacher should begin the year by telling the students during the lessons if they should put a sad face in the box for that activity, and then the students with blank boxes can fill in a happy face at the end of the activity; instead of giving the students the responsibility for determining their own behavior in the first few weeks of implementation. This way the students would be able to spend more time learning about the behaviors which deserve a sad face, and to have more experience witnessing them, prior to gaining control of evaluating themselves. Also, during the first week of the students monitoring themselves, the teacher could go around and change happy faces to sad faces if they feel the students were not being honest. This will give the students more
practice in judging their own behaviors. I feel as though this will help the honesty which my research concluded was problematic. Sometimes the students were not honest because they worried about a loss of free time. Many of the students also pointed out that they became confused about their behavior, or forgetful of how they acted, and just put a smile face in the box instead. However, most of the students were successful in judging their own behaviors and being honest in their markings. I believe this suggests that second grade students are able to assume responsibility for their behaviors. I also feel that the increase in the number of sad faces at the end of the study further suggests that students were able to be more honest after weeks of practice.

Implications for Future Research

Behavior management is a very difficult study, self-management especially. Self-management gives the task of managing and recording behavior to the students, which is a large responsibility if the students are not prepared for it. I feel as though a future study should be completed which spans a longer time period and allows the students more time to become familiar with the system.

I also feel that implementing a behavior management plan in the middle of the school year is not an ideal situation. The students need adequate time to adjust to a new system. Students who have spent an entire year with one teacher and one way of management have a hard time adjusting to a new system, especially a new system where they are the ones in control of their own behavior. I think that a future study where the teacher implements the self-management system in the beginning of the school year would be an interesting one to offer to this field of research.
Implementing a self-management plan in a classroom which already was well behaved did not leave much room to see improved behaviors. The students of my second grade classroom were already very well behaved during the day and there were few times when lessons were interrupted. This behavior continued throughout my study of self-management. However, this left me with the feeling that the study was a success due to the students, not the system.

From this thesis, educators can increase their knowledge of different forms of behavior management, especially self-management, in the classroom. By teaching students to be responsible for their own behaviors, students gain greater pride and responsibility for their actions of the classroom as well as become more self-sufficient. Research such as this study gives educators the tools necessary to create an effective behavior management technique for their classroom. It also allows educators to look more closely at the self-management behavior system and its effects on increased student understanding of ways to self-monitor behavior.
References


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Lane, Erleen. Personal Interview. 23 October 2006.


Martin, Margaret. Personal Interview. 24 October 2006.


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Turano, Amy. Personal Interview. 24 October 2006.

Tussey, Jessica. Personal Interview. 7 December 2006.


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Appendices
Appendix A

Parental/Guardian Consent Letter
Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the Collaborative Education (Co-Teach) Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Midge Madden as part of my master's thesis concerning behavior management in a classroom. I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this study. The goal of this study is to see what happens under the implementation of a popular behavior management system.

A behavior management model will be created and implemented in the classroom in order to test its effectiveness and preference. At the end of the study the students will be asked to fill out a survey determining if they felt that the behavior management system helped the classroom setting and if they felt that it made them behave better. The data collected in this study will be based on records kept on behavior, anecdotal notes/observations, and surveys given to the teacher, student teacher and students. To preserve each child's confidentiality pseudonyms will be used for each student's name.

Your decision whether or not to let your child participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his/her class. Permission is voluntary and can be removed at any time. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at (856) 232-1290 Ext. 3014 or Dr. Midge Madden at (856) 256-4500 ext. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kristen Geary

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this to your child's teacher by February 9, 2007.

____ I grant permission for my child __________________________ to participate in this study.

____ I do not grant permission for my child __________________________ to participate in this study.

_________________________________________    __________________________________
Parent Signature                             Date
Appendix B

Frequency Observation Chart

Self-Management Activity Sheet

Student Certificate
Frequency Observation Chart

/ = one student

Students may fall into more than one category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Off-Task</th>
<th>Calling Out</th>
<th>Talking to Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies/Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Total numbers of behaviors for class:_

Date: ____________
### Self-Management Activity Sheet

#### Name: 

#### Date: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Did I work quietly?</th>
<th>Did I raise my hand?</th>
<th>Did I complete the work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Language Arts</td>
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<td>Centers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.E.A.R. Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

😊 - Yes I was

🚫 - No I wasn’t
Congratulations on a day full of smiles 😊!!

For: 

Date: 

From: 

You had a great day today 😊
Appendix C

End of Study Student Questionnaire

End of Study Teacher Questionnaire

Focus Group Interview Questions
End of Study Student Questionnaire

Initials: ____

Circle the best answer to the following questions.

1. How did you like to be able to manage your own behavior?
   - Never  Sometimes  Most of the Time  Always

2. Did you feel that you were able to accurately describe how you were behaving during each subject?
   - Never  Sometimes  Most of the Time  Always

3. Did the manager on your desk help you to be ready for each subject?
   - Never  Sometimes  Most of the Time  Always

4. Did the manager on your desk help you to stay on task during each subject?
   - Never  Sometimes  Most of the Time  Always

5. Did the manager on your desk help you to pay attention during each subject?
   - Never  Sometimes  Most of the Time  Always

6. Did you prefer to manage your own behavior or have a teacher manage your behavior?
   - Own Teacher

7. What do you think would make you behave better during the day?
End of Study Teacher Questionnaire

Name: ______________________

Please answer the following questions on the implementation of the self-manager behavior management system. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

1. Did the self-managers help the students to stay on task and be attentive during each subject? Explain.

2. Did the self-managers help the students to be ready for each activity? Explain.

3. How do you feel the students reacted to the self-management system? Explain.

4. Do you feel that the overall effect of the self-managers was a good or a poor one? Explain.

5. What could/should have been done differently? Explain.
End of Study Focus Group Interviews

1. Did you enjoy managing your own behavior?

2. Do you think that the manager helped you to stay on task? To not talk to those around you? To participate in each activity?

3. Did you feel you were able to record your behavior accurately?

4. Did you feel that you were able to be honest while recording your behavior?

5. What did you like about this behavior chart?

6. What did you not like about this behavior chart?