

INCREASING CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR OF INTERMEDIATE GRADE  
STUDENTS THROUGH THE USE OF THE RESPONSE COST STRATEGY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to increase constructive behavior of intermediate grade students through the use of the response cost strategy. Approximately 70 students participated in this study. Three teacher researchers conducted the research in an elementary school and two middle schools in different counties near a major mid-western metropolitan area. Interventions included student reflections, teacher observations and a cost response strategy called The Green Card System. The study began on September 19, 2008 and concluded on January 30, 2009. The intended outcome of this study was to document an improvement of constructive behavior as evidenced by a decrease in student misbehavior.

The targeted students exhibited poor behavior ranging from talking out during instruction, continuously out of seat or roaming, calling out, not following directions, tardiness, and unprepared for class, calling out, talking during instruction, not following directions, tardiness and being unprepared for class. Beliefs about the origin of disruptive behavior range across the entire spectrum of behavior theories. These can all be related to biological and environmental factors (Johnson, 1989). Our goal was to implement the Green Card System to help all students decrease misbehaviors and increase constructive behaviors.

In our research project, we conducted surveys and observation by students and teachers to help target the main issues of classroom misbehaviors. We implemented a Cost Response Strategy called the Green Card System to encourage students to increase constructive behaviors. Research shows that one of the most effective ways to develop a positive supportive classroom environment is by focusing on recognizing and affirming positive behaviors rather than correcting and redirecting negative behaviors (Mitchem, 2005).

The teacher researchers found the interventions had a positive effect on the targeted behaviors. By conducting this research project, the teacher researchers observed a dramatic increase in constructive behaviors within the classroom. The teacher researchers found that there was a 50 % or more increase in constructive behavior in each of the researcher's classroom. The teacher researchers found the Green Card System to be an effective strategy to increase constructive behavior in the classroom. Students were empowered to become responsible for their behavior. Students became more aware of their behaviors in the classroom. For example, when students were asked do you feel the behaviors of other students affect your ability to learn in the classroom pre-intervention data shows 40 students responded sometimes and pos-intervention data 20 students responded sometimes. They responded in a positive manner as the Green Card System was implemented and their constructive behaviors increased. The teacher researchers believe this intervention can be an important part of a successful classroom management program. The teacher researchers recommend the use of The Green Card System as a positive intervention to increase constructive behaviors in the classroom.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

#### General Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research project was to increase constructive behavior of intermediate grade students through the use of the response cost strategy. Teacher instructional time and student learning in the classroom has been affected by disruptive student behavior. Disruptive behavior is any action that interferes with academic achievement of students in the classroom. These student behaviors include, but are not limited to talking out, tardiness, wandering around the classroom. Throughout the year, the teacher researchers consistently observed these behaviors in their classrooms.

#### Immediate Context of the Problem

This action research project was conducted by three teacher researchers in three separate schools in suburbs northwest of a major mid-western city. All three teacher researchers teach different subjects at different levels. The teacher researcher from Site A teaches fifth through eighth grade art at a middle school. The teacher researcher from Site B teaches third grade in a self-contained elementary school and the teacher researcher from Site C teaches life science and reading to eighth graders at a junior high school.

#### Site A

Site A is located in a village community north of a major mid-western city. Site A is a middle school that serves students ranging from fifth to eighth grade. The teacher researcher at this school teaches art to all students in the school. The information in this

section is taken from the Site A 2007 State School Report Card. The student body of Site A consists of 613 students, 322 male and 291 female. The ethnicity of the student population is 95.1% white, .8% black, .9% Hispanic, 2.8% Asian/pacific islander and .3% multi racial/ethnic. Site A has a .2% limited English proficient rate.

The average teacher salary for site A is \$62,380.00. Teachers employed at Site A have an average of 12.6 years of teaching experience. Thirty two percent of the teachers only have a bachelor's degree while 68% of teachers hold a master's degree and above. There are 14 male teachers and 85 females. The ethnicity of the teacher population is 98.2% white with 1.8% Hispanic.

Site A has a varied yet balanced curriculum that offers a differentiated experience for learners. All students at Site A are exposed to 42 minutes of core classes such as physical education, math, English, history, science and modern language. Classes such as art, music and technology are also offered at Site A. Fifth grade students are required to play an instrument of their choice and rotate throughout the art a technology classes. As sixth, seventh and eighth graders, students are free to choose their art, technology, and music classes after they have met the requirements at each grade level. Site A has a strong 95.1% ISAT performance and a 94.8% overall performance on state tests. Site A has a 0% drop out rate because of the age of students at a middle school.

Site A is located a few blocks from the community's downtown area. The Site A building is three stories high and is handicapped-accessible. The school is equipped with a state-of-the art library, three computer labs, and two gyms, one with a two- story climbing wall, three high-end science labs, a student cafeteria and large classrooms. Each

classroom has at least three computers for student use. Site A also has three large music rooms, an art room and two state-of-the art technology/video production labs. The school is also has one of the largest auditoriums in the area. The building is updated regularly and is maintained by a building and grounds staff of seven men.

According to the community web site and the 2000 consensus, the total population of Site A is 8,762. Seventeen percent of the residents are between the age of 45 to 54 years old while 1.7% are 85 years and over and 7.3% are under 5 years old. The community is 95% white, 2% African American, 1.7% Asian, .1% native Hawaiian and 1.2% Hispanic/ Latino. The majority of the community is Jewish and these students often attend Hebrew school during the week in addition to regular classes. All of Site A students continues on to high school with over 95% of them enrolling into a top-10 ranked college.

The average persons per household in Site A's community is 3.17. The property tax averages out to \$11,162.00 and the median home price is \$1,148,241.00. The median family income is \$218,749.00 with an employment rate of 60.6% for those persons over sixteen years of age. Overall, the community is considered extremely safe. In 2006, fewer than 100 crimes were reported. Those that were reported were related to theft (<http://www.census.gov/>, 2000).

In 1869 the community of Site A was incorporated. Founding members of the community consisted of farmers, cabinet makers, loggers and charcoal burners. With the opening of the railroad line and station the community began to draw more people from the city as residents. The community started at a mere 500 residents and has grown to

over 8,700 residents in 2000 with, 3,310 households, all within 3.85 square miles of land that includes parks, beaches, three golf courses and two commercial districts.

Site A is divided into three schools which make up the communities only school district. The schools are divided as follows; K-2, 3-4 and Site A 5-8 grades. This unique division of grade levels was developed in the late 1970's. This division of the grade levels has helped to maintain the curriculum for each grade level. The district has one superintendent and one assistant superintendent of curriculum as well as a district special education coordinator. The district receives \$19,878,727 from local property taxes. In 2002 the community passed the referendum with 70% voting yes and 30% voting no showing the overwhelming support and desire to maintain the excellence of the school district (<http://www.glencoeschools.org>, 2005).

### Site B

Site B is a K-8 district located north of a major mid-western city. Site B has a diverse population of approximately 2,000 students. According to the community website, Site B is made of these racial/ethnic groups: 79.9% white, 1.8% black, 6.7% Hispanic, and 9.0% Asian/pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American and 3.1% multiracial/ethnic. Approximately 5.4% of the student population lives in homes that are limited in English proficiency. These students participate in the district's English as a second language (ESL) program. This transitional bilingual program services kindergarten through eighth grade. This program removes eligible students from the traditional classroom setting for thirty minutes each day, and places them in small, cooperative learning groups for direct instruction. Interventions are made to help children transition from their native language to the English language. Site B's social-economic

status varies greatly. The median income for a household in the village is \$80,000. The average household size is 3.12 and the average family is 3.52. Most children reside in homes with both parents. Many households have parents who have completed college. However, 3.7% of families live within the low income rate. Students from these families receive free and reduced lunch prices.

There are approximately 103 teachers in the district of Site B. Of this number, 11.6% are males and 88.4% are females. Site B is made these racial/ethnic groups: 97.1% white, 1.9 black, and 1.0 % Hispanic. The average teacher salary is \$56,685. Most teachers have an average of 10 years experience. In Site B, 43.5% of the teaching staff holds a master's degree and above, 56.5% of the teachers have a bachelor's degree, and 1.9% of the teachers have an emergency or provisional credential. The ratio of student to staff is 19.5.

Site B's curriculum is based on The Illinois Learning Standards. These standards and assessment frameworks define what all students in all Illinois public schools should know and be able to do in seven core academic areas as a result of their elementary and secondary schooling. Site B administers several different standardized tests throughout the school year. Recognizing that assessing student learning is complex, teachers and administrators gather as much data as possible including work samples and classroom observations in order to make decisions about individual student learning and achievement. The staff at Site B believes that meaningful assessment does more than measure; it provides direction to guide instruction. Testing data helps teachers and administrators make important choices about curriculum and instructional methods. Site B scored extremely well on the 2007 Illinois Standards Achievement Test which

measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. In reading, over 86 % of students in all grades tested fell into the “meets” and “exceeds” categories. At all grade levels these scores were an improvement over the 2006 scores. In math, over 93 % of students in all grades tested fell into the “meets” and “exceeds” categories. In science, over 93 % of students in all grades tested fell into the “meets” and “exceeds” categories, again an improvement over test results from the prior year.

Site B’s administrative staff consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent of educational services, an elementary school principal, an intermediate school principal, a middle school principal, a middle school assistant principal, a director of technology, a director of business, a special services coordinator, a director of buildings and grounds, and a communications coordinator.

Site B services students in grades K-8 from seven neighboring towns. This site solicits parents and community involvement and support. Parents volunteer to assist teachers in and out of the classroom. Community members are often invited into the classroom as presenters. Site B’s district has community based education foundation, incorporated in the state of Illinois for educational, charitable, literacy, and scientific research purposes. The mission of the foundation is to offer programs and funding for unique and innovative learning opportunities that challenge district students, faculty and administration. Site B offers numerous after-school opportunities. Children may sign up to participate in school sponsored clubs as well as student council, boy scouts and girl scouts and taekwondo.

Site B has three buildings: the elementary school building (K-2), the intermediate school building (3-5) and the middle school building (6-8). The middle school is the

oldest building, and the elementary school was built in 1997. The intermediate school was built in 2007. Technology is limited. The elementary and middle school students have several computers in their classrooms, while the intermediate school has a limited amount of technology. All students receive instruction in the computer lab once a week. All teachers have laptops, but there are no student computers in the intermediate classrooms. Teachers may use the computers on wheels in their classroom if available. Televisions, digital cameras, tape players and projectors are available for teachers to use also.

### Site C

Site C is located in a rural section of a major mid-western city. Site C houses pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in one building with a total of 504 students enrolled. According to a community website, the ethnic make-up of Site C is 78.4% white, 4.0% African American, 1.0% Asian/pacific islander, 0.2% Native American and 2.6% multiracial. The ESL rate is 6.9%. The amount of students from low-income families is 20.2%. Both male and female students attend in equal numbers.

Site C's building is split into sections by grade level, with each section having five classrooms, one for each core subject and one for special education. There is also an art room, Spanish room, gym, and a library with a media center and a speech room. Each classroom has one computer for teacher use that is connected to the internet. The media center has thirty computers for student use and a classroom set out laptops is also available. There is a large open field in the back of the school for P.E. and sports.

At Site C. Students have five core subjects each day; mathematics, science, Language Arts, reading and social studies. Students also have gym daily. . Students rotate

through Spanish, art, and media each trimester. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards on testing was 76.8 in the 2006-2007 school year. The school made adequate yearly progress in math, but not in reading for the 2006-2007 school year.

Site C has an average teacher salary of \$47,095. The percent of teachers holding a bachelor's degree is 53.8. The percent of teacher's holding a master's degree is 46.2. Highly qualified teachers teach all classes. The average years of teaching experience is 10.7 years. Seventy-five percent of teachers at Site C are female and twenty-five percent are male. The ethnic make-up of teachers is 96.2% white, 1.9% Hispanic, 1.9% Asian/pacific islander with no African American or Native American teachers.

Site C has two administrators, both males, which consist of a principal and a superintendent. The curriculum director works between the two schools in the district and is female. The administrator to student ratio is one to 326.7.

The population of the community the school serves is 10,307. The population growth rate is 11.5%. The average income is \$68,653. Single people make up 35.9% of the population. Married people make up 64.1% of the population and 29.5% of the population are families with children. The community is 70% white, 14.8% African American, 4.2% Asian, 14.7% Hispanic, and .2% Native American. The local property taxes create \$5,146,829 in revenue for the school. A recent referendum to add on to the schools was not passed. School administrators feel this may lead to overcrowding in the schools.

The median home age is 31 years old. The average income is \$68,653. The median home value is \$208,500. The unemployment rate is 4.2%. Work positions are

mostly blue collar with some white collar. The crime rate is low. The community wants to stay independent and not be absorbed by some of the larger surrounding cities. They have no park district or recreational activities (<http://www.census.gov>, 2005).

### National Context of Problem

“When children are disruptive in the classroom it can cause a lot of problems for their classmates and their teachers” (Moranda, 2007). The increasing number of students with emotional and behavioral disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and anxiety are contributing to disruptive behavior and the breakdown of the classroom environment (Moranda, 2007). Other factors such as larger classroom size, inappropriate curriculum and a student’s inability to grasp concepts being taught also contribute to disruptive behavior in the classroom. The teacher researchers feel that problems in the classroom are disruptions and distractions caused by students who talk at inappropriate times such as during the teacher’s instruction or whole group discussion, during quiet independent working time, while another student is speaking or at any other time they please. The teacher researchers are spending more and more class time correcting these behaviors rather than focusing on the lesson at hand which results in less instructional time. “Many teachers feel unprepared to deal with disruptive behavior and believe this substantially interferes with their teaching” (Schumm and Vaughn, 1995). The teacher researchers would like to increase constructive behavior in the classroom, allowing more time to be spent on instruction which the teacher researchers feel will lead to greater student achievement.

## Reflections

### Teacher Researcher A

Disruptive behavior is an issue in my classroom. I feel that these behaviors come out in the classroom because of pre-existing conditions from outside of the classroom. These behaviors range from issues such as ADD, ADHD, anxiety, and family issues the students may be facing. The community for Site A is extremely wealthy which in itself brings factors that influence student behavior. These factors range from an enormous amount of pressure to do well in school to expected privilege and the feeling that a student can do whatever they want. Typically, one or more of the parents are out of town working and students are left with a nanny to do school work and provide that parental connection. I also notice that students whose parents are going through a very nasty and public divorce often act out in the classroom. I believe that all of these issues and more are reasons for the disruptive behavior we have in our classrooms at Site A. As I reflect on these factors that create these disruptive behaviors I feel saddened for the students and realize that these behaviors are, in the end, a cry for help.

### Teacher Researcher B

Site B has experienced a growth spurt in the last two years. This growth has birthed several problems for the district. The surrounding community of Site B now provides several subsidize housing areas. A large number of children from these homes attend Site B and this raised the concept of diversity in terms of race and ability. I believe some of these children have come from disadvantaged schools and through no fault of their own; many are not at the academic levels of their peers. I feel many teachers

struggle to adapt to the change in population which needs to be reflected in their teaching style, expectations and classroom management. I have seen many teachers struggle to teach because they are no longer in their comfort zone. I have heard many teachers complain about the district “becoming diverse” as if this were a bad thing. I have seen teachers ignore some students who struggle because they can’t help “Johnny” keep up. These are the children, who become behavior problems, because they want to learn and need to be valued in their new environment. I feel that before we can teach them, we need to reach them and let them know we genuinely care.

I believe Site B also has young professional parents who often don’t have the time to spend with their child reviewing homework. Some seem to value the after school activities more than the academics. Often children are left to do homework on their own, or with the nanny. As time goes on, it appears that the children of these parents often don’t value school simply because their parents don’t. I feel these children lose their direction and sense of caring, and become disruptive behavior problems in the classroom. Some are misbehaving while others are merely crying out for adult attention.

Disruptive classroom behavior has many more causes than the ones mentioned and I strongly feel they must be identified. Once identified, strategies can be developed and implemented to reduce disruptions. Once this achieved, all children will have the opportunity to learn and grow to their highest potential.

#### Teacher Researcher C

Disruptive behavior is a problem at Site C that has been addressed school wide. A new demerit system was put into place in an attempt to improve student behavior. I think it is something that the both administrators and teachers would like to see improve

because it has such an impact on learning. I believe several factors contribute to the increase of disruptive behavior: the community is growing, but more classrooms are not being built, so classrooms are becoming more crowded. The district has four administrators, and a high student to administrator ratio, so it is hard for them to deal with disruptive student behavior. I feel that addressing disruptive behavior will not only improve our school, but also the community because the schools will produce more highly educated students.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

#### Problem Evidence

In this action research project, the teacher researchers wanted to increase students' constructive behavior in their classrooms and create a positive classroom learning environment. The teacher researchers had observed an increase in disruptive behaviors, such as talking during instruction or calling out to other students. Talking or calling out is any non-pertinent conversation that interferes with learning. Roaming in the classroom is also disruptive. Roaming refers to students being out of their seats at inappropriate times. Other behaviors are: not following teacher directions and being tardy to class. Tardy refers to being late to school or for class. Some students come unprepared for class. The teacher researchers define being unprepared for class as when a student comes to class without the needed tools to actively participate in the class lesson. Such tools include but are not limited to their textbooks, homework, notebooks, crayons and pencils. These behaviors often caused the teacher researchers to stop their classroom instruction. This lead to the loss of instruction time as time was spent dealing with and re-directing these behaviors. In the past, redirection of the behavior meant addressing the student's behavior in front of the class. The teacher researchers wanted a way to allow for uninterrupted instruction and still have an immediate response to the disruptive behavior.

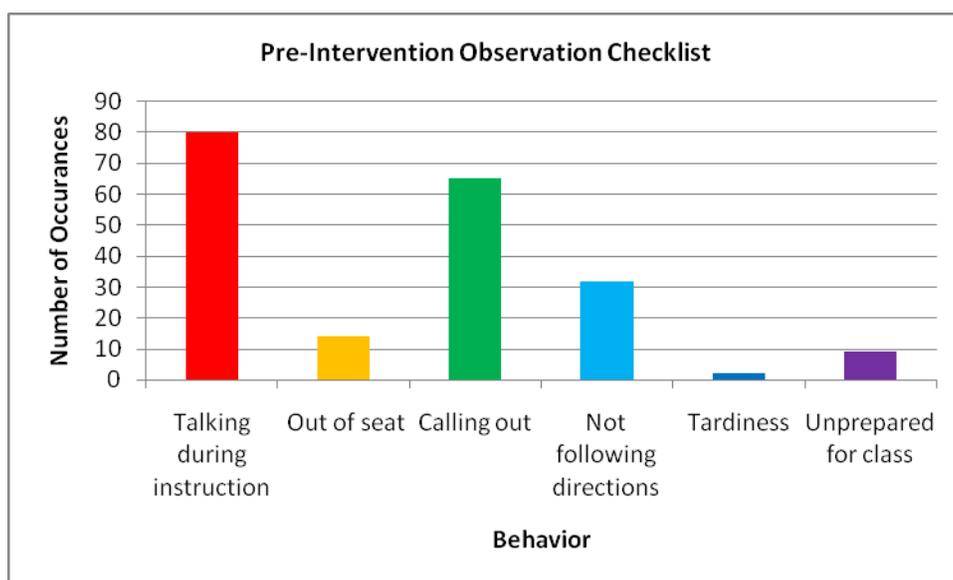
#### Teacher Researcher Pre- Intervention Observation Checklist

From September 29<sup>th</sup> through October 24<sup>th</sup>, the teacher researchers used a weekly checklist (see Appendix A) to tally observed disruptive behaviors. There were six behaviors the teacher researchers were looking for. These behaviors are listed on the

checklist and include: talking during instruction, continually out of seat/roaming, calling out, not following directions, being un-prepared for class, and tardiness. As these behaviors were observed, tallies were made in the appropriate columns. The teacher researchers tallied these checklists on a weekly basis and shared the results with each other (see Figure 1.).

*Figure 1.*

Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist: Observable Student Behaviors



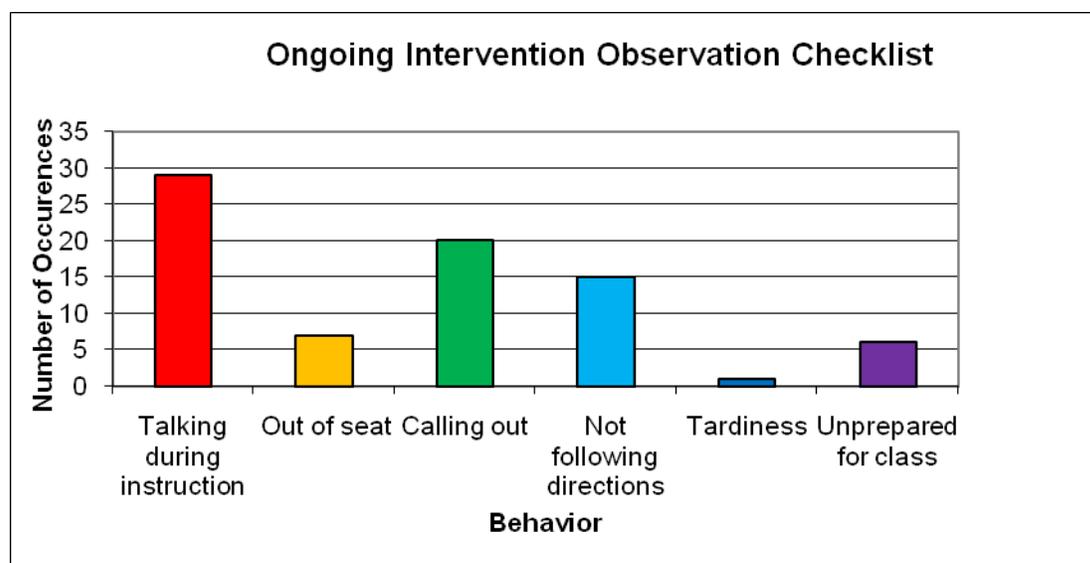
This figure shows the combined 4 week pre-intervention data for the pre-intervention checklist. Eighty students were observed talking out during instruction. Sixteen students were observed out of their seat, roaming, during class. Sixty three were observed calling out during instruction. Thirty were observed not following directions. Five were late to class and ten were unprepared for class.

### Ongoing Observation Checklist

From October 27<sup>th</sup> through December 19<sup>th</sup>, the teacher researchers continued using a weekly checklist to tally observed disruptive behaviors. As the behaviors were observed, tallies were again made in the appropriate columns. The teacher researchers tallied these checklists on a weekly basis and continued to share the results with each other. (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2.*

### Ongoing-Intervention Observation Checklist: Observable Student Behaviors

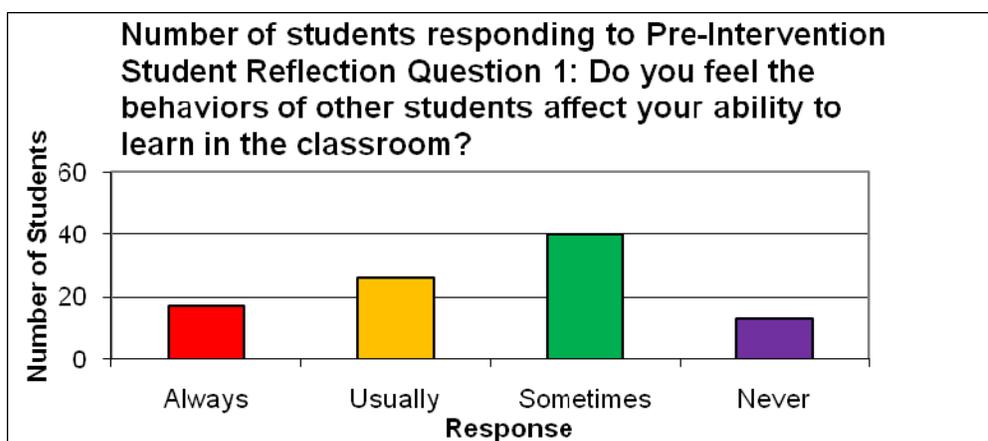


This figure shows the combined 8 week data for the ongoing intervention observation checklist. Twenty seven students were observed talking out during instruction. Seven students were observed out of their seat, roaming, during class. Twenty were observed calling out during instruction. Fifteen were observed not following directions. Two were late to class and six were unprepared for class.

### Pre-Intervention Student Reflection

In the beginning of the year students were given a reflection sheet to determine their thoughts or views about their behavior and that of their peers in the classroom. The Student Reflection was administered to 25 third graders, 25 sixth graders and 25 eighth graders. The first question on the reflection asked students to assess how they felt their learning was affected by the behaviors of other students in the classroom. (see Figure 3) The second and fourth questions asked students how often they felt that they talked or called out during instruction. (see Figures 4 and 6) The third question asked students how often they find themselves out of their seats or roaming in class. (see Figure 5) The fifth question asked students how often they find themselves off task. (see Figure 7) The sixth question asked students how often they are tardy for class. (see Figure 8) The seventh question asked students how often they come to class unprepared. (see Figure 9)

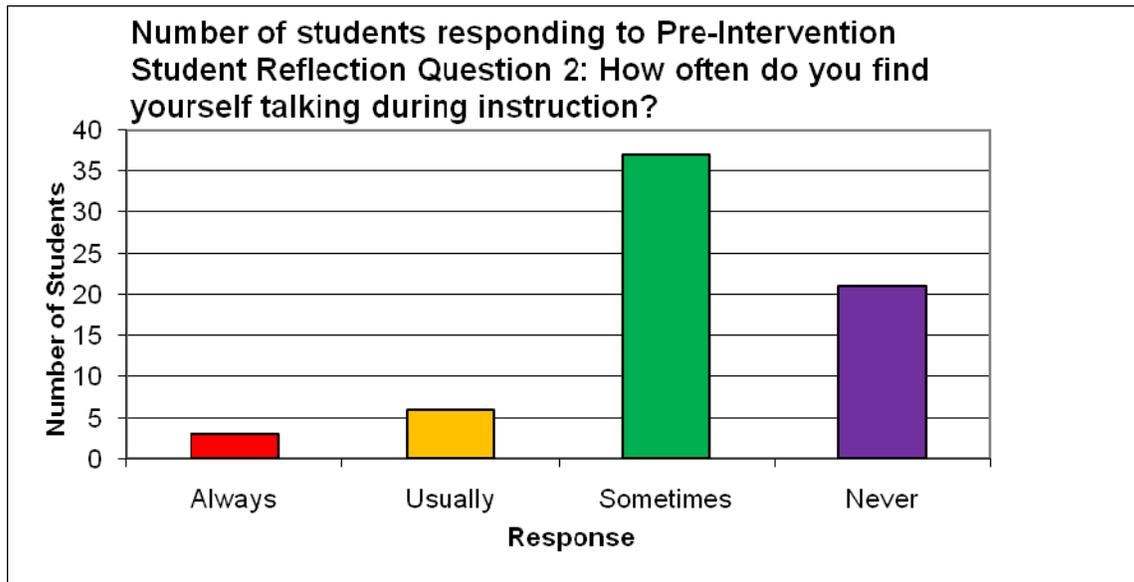
*Figure 3.*



This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they feel other students behaviors affect their ability to learn in the classroom. There were 17 students who responded “always”, 26 students who responded

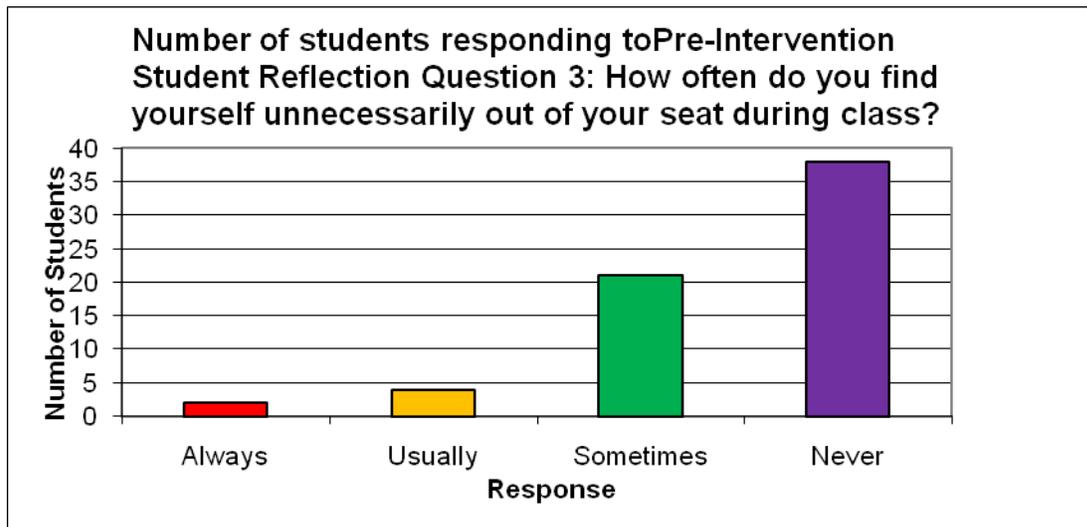
“usually”, 40 students who responded “sometimes” and 13 students who responded “never”.

*Figure 4.*



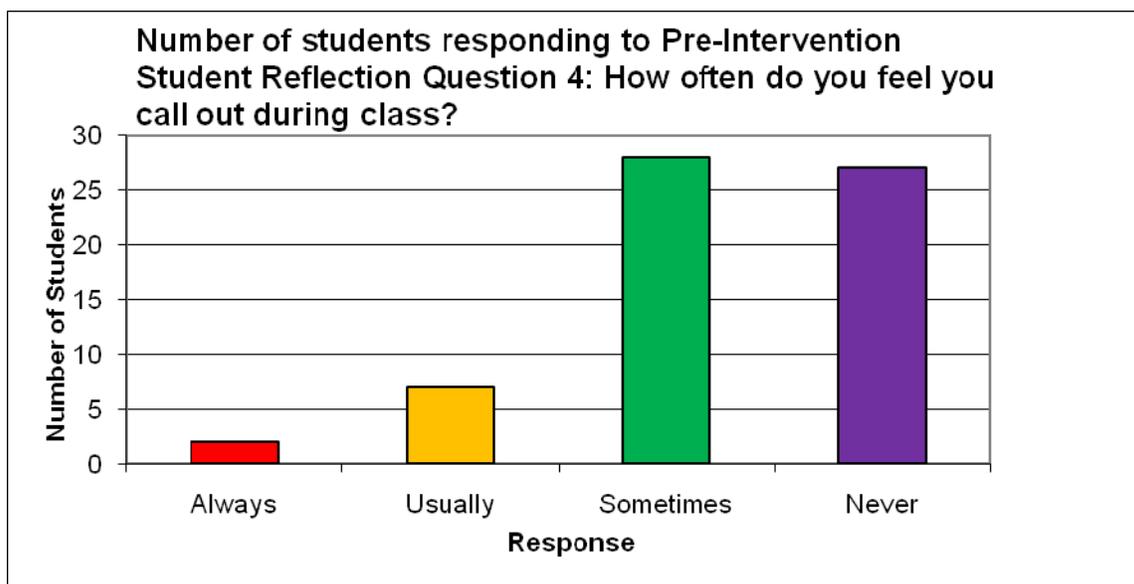
This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves talking during instruction. There were 3 students who responded “always”, 6 students who responded “usually”, 37 students who responded “sometimes” and 21 students who responded “never”.

Figure 5.



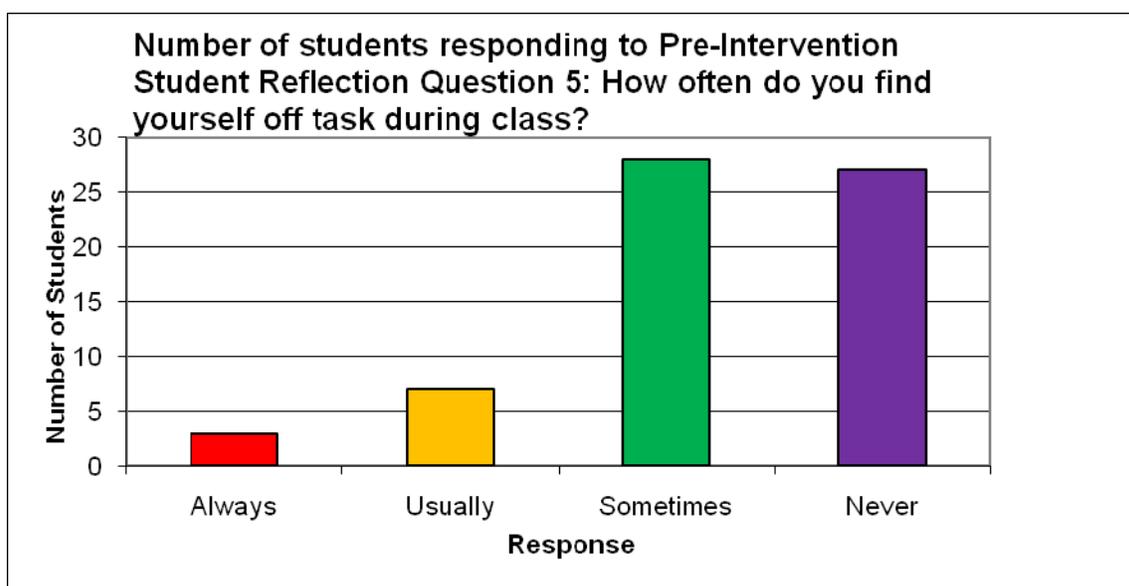
This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves unnecessarily out of their seats during class. There were 3 students who responded “always”, 4 students who responded “usually”, 21 students who responded “sometimes” and 38 students who responded “never”.

Figure 6.

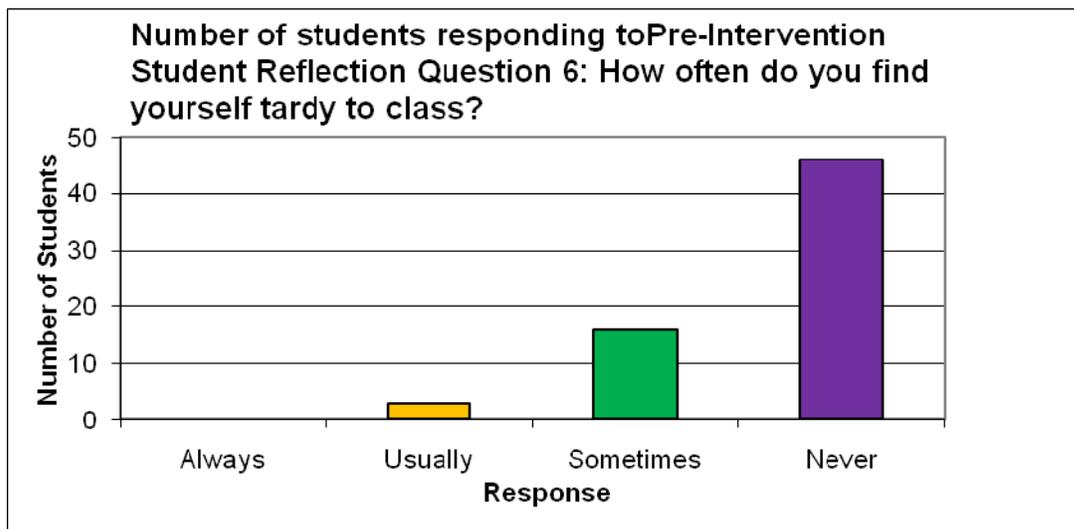


This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves calling out during class. There were 3 students who responded “always”, 7 students who responded “usually”, 27 students who responded “sometimes” and 26 students who responded “never”.

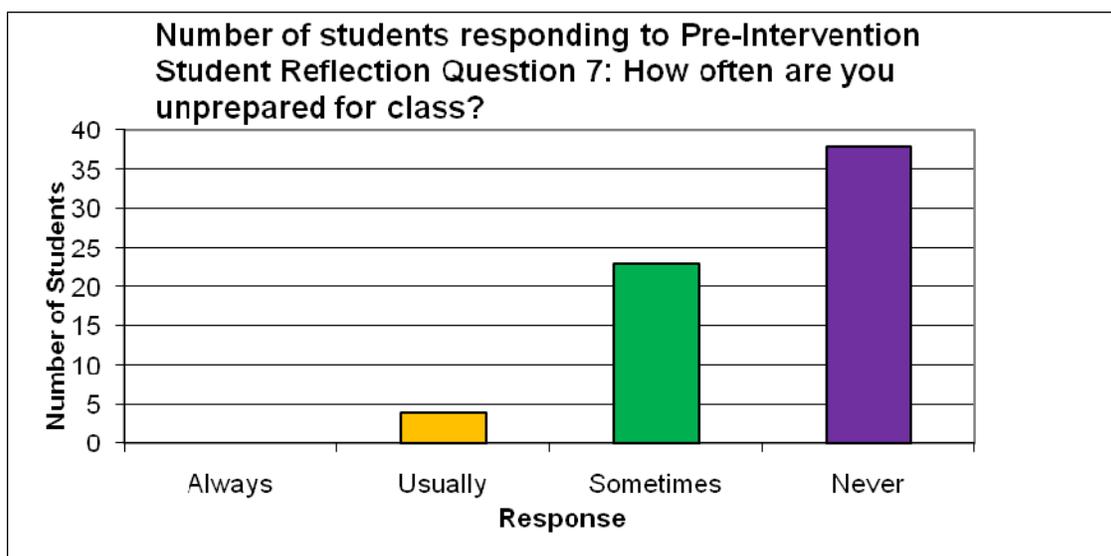
*Figure 7.*



This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves off task during class. There were 3 students who responded “always”, 7 students who responded “usually”, 27 students who responded “sometimes” and 26 students who responded “never”.

*Figure 8.*

This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves tardy to class. There were 0 students who responded “always”, 3 students who responded “usually”, 16 students who responded “sometimes” and 46 students who responded “never”.

*Figure 9.*

This figure shows the pre-intervention data for the student reflection question regarding how often they find themselves unprepared for class. There were 0 students who responded “always”, 4 students who responded “usually”, 23 students who responded “sometimes” and 37 students who responded “never”.

#### Pre-intervention Teacher Survey

During the week of September 22nd, 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from Site B, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from Site A, 8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers from Site C were asked to complete a brief survey. There were two questions on the survey. The Pre-Intervention Teacher Survey was intended to capture the teachers’ views on disruptive behaviors they currently observe in their classroom. Question one asked teachers if disruptive behavior is a problem in their classroom.(see Figure 9) Such disruptive behaviors include but are not limited to calling out, continually out of seat/roaming, not following directions, being unprepared for class, and tardiness. Question two asked teachers to estimate how many minutes of daily instruction time are lost due to disruptive behavior interrupting the classroom lesson. (see Figure 10) These surveys were returned to the teacher researchers by September 26<sup>th</sup>.

## Pre-Intervention Teacher Survey

*Figure 10.*

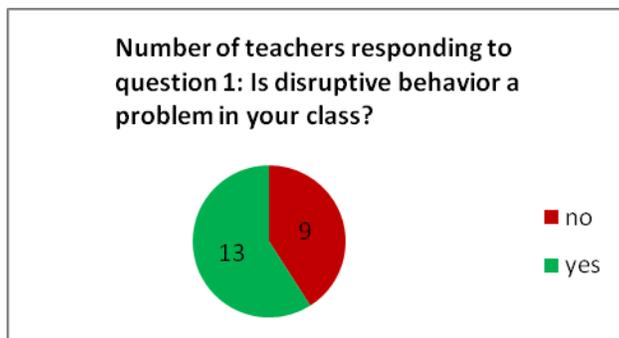


Figure 10. shows that out of the twenty-two teachers surveyed thirteen feel that disruptive behavior is a problem in their classroom while nine teachers do not feel that disruptive behavior is a problem in their classroom.

*Figure 11.*

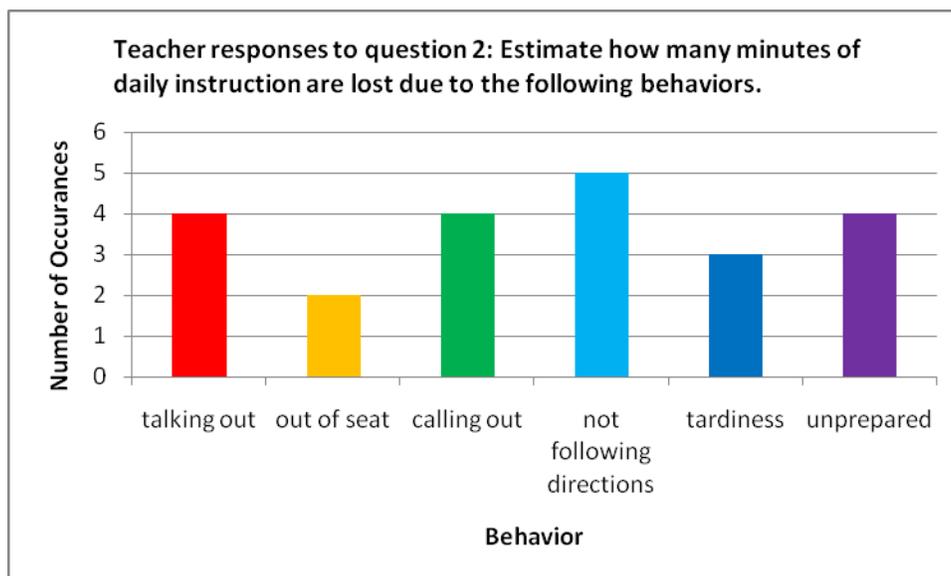


Figure 11 shows that based on data collected from twenty-two teacher's at all three sites, the average numbers of instructional minutes they believe are lost due to

disruptive behavior in the classroom. Survey results show that on average, four minutes of instructional time are believed to be lost due to students talking out; two minutes of instructional time are lost due to students out of their seats. Four minutes of instructional time are lost due to students not following directions, three minutes of instructional time are lost due to students being tardy to class, and four minutes of instructional time are lost due to students being unprepared.

### Conclusion

The Pre-Intervention data collected through the Pre-Intervention Teacher Survey, Pre-Intervention Student Reflection and a Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist showed that both teacher and student awareness of the disruptive behaviors is similar in some instances. However in other instances there is a large range of variation. It is also evident that a majority of teachers surveyed found that disruptive behavior is a problem in their classroom.

### Probable Causes

The research literature on the causes of disruptive student behavior in the classroom focuses mainly on neurological, social and emotional issues, such as student behaviors resulting from ADD, ADHD, anxiety, social emotional issues and parental influences. While a majority of these issues are caused by neurological disorders, the teacher researchers hope to address the social aspects of these behaviors in the classroom.

### ADD/ADHD Issues

“The terms ADD and ADHD are applied to several symptoms: difficulty in paying attention, distractibility, having a hard time following through on things, and sometimes over activity and impulsivity” (Greenspan, 2006, pp.16-17). Causes of ADD/ADHD can vary. For instance, some children are overly sensitive to the environment around them. Sounds, smells, and other children’s movement can be distracting to those with ADD/ADHD. There are also the children who are under stimulated and find themselves daydreaming and not paying attention, while the child who is overly sensitive craves movement and finds it difficult to remain still for long periods of time. While there is no single cause for ADD/ADHD, some of the biological factors that may contribute to these disorders are oxygen deprivation at birth, genetic factors, malnutrition and allergic reactions to certain foods (Johnson, 1989). Although these causes are out of the control of the teacher researcher, the behaviors can still be addressed through appropriate interventions.

### Anxiety Issues

Anxiety can cause students to “exhibit any one or a combination of the following behaviors: squirming or being unable to sit still, laughing at inappropriate times, verbalizing protests, forgetting materials and being consistently late” (Leffingwell, 2001, p.360). According to Leffingwell (2001), disruptive student behavior can be a response to anxiety caused by pressures from test taking, speaking in front of the class, and peer judgment. There are many reasons children become anxious. One predominant cause for student anxiety is fear of failure. Some students tend to pressure themselves to achieve

academic success and parental approval. These students appear to set unrealistic goals to achieve that success and approval which leads to the anxious behavior which in turn leads to their disruptive behavior in the classroom.

### Social-Emotional Issues

A student's social-emotional issues can also lead to disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Dreikurs (2003), states that over 90% of all student misbehavior is for attention. The need for attention is greater than their concern for appropriate classroom behavior. Once the attention is given the student realizes the power they have over the classroom environment, which promotes more disruptive behavior. Students of divorced or troubled families are often disruptive in the classroom. "They (students of divorced or troubled families) come to school with emotional problems and they have a hard time adjusting to other children. They are sensitive and irritable. Their emotional outlet is the classroom thus behavior problems occur" (Lets, 2008).

According to Smith (2003) students sometimes misbehave because they feel bad about themselves. He says, they act consistently with what they perceive to be true about themselves. If they think they're stupid they will not try hard at school and they will act badly if they think of themselves as "bad children." Revenge, lashing out at other students or the teacher, is also considered a social emotional issue that causes disruptive behavior.

### Parental Influence Factor

Parental influence is also a contributing factor to student's behavior. "Sometimes misbehavior is a test of a parent's commitment to enforcing the rules. Children may

disobey to test their parents' reactions and probe the boundaries of their limits". (Smith, 2003, p.47). This type of behavior could then carry over into the classroom with students testing the teacher's boundaries and limits.

Students tend to model their parent's behavior, according to Lets (2008). "A simple example of this could be parents holding a conversation during a musical performance which translates to the student talking during an assembly. Because they are copying their parent's behavior they do not realize that their behavior is disruptive. On the other hand if the parents are too strict, the classroom becomes a place for the child to display suppressed emotions. Parents who are busy might allow misbehavior to occur without consequences. This leads students to believe any behavior is acceptable anywhere" (Lets, 2008, p. 72).

Lee (2008) believes that students who indulge in too much TV and video games begin to lose interest in school. They become inattentive during lessons, are less cooperative and often daydreaming. He says that parents need to monitor their children's use of TV and computer games. Paton (2008) supports this contention saying, that the "growing exposure to computer games is thought to be fuelling bad behavior at school."

Literature shows that there are many underlying factors that can lead to disruptive behaviors in the classroom including ADD, ADHD, and social and emotional issues. Research also indicates that in order to prevent these behaviors, teachers need to incorporate effective strategies to help increase constructive behaviors in the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE SOLUTION STRATEGY  
Literature Review

Researchers have been studying ways to increase constructive behavior in the classroom for the past few decades. A majority of students want to behave well, but sometimes it just does not seem that way to teachers. Educators should attempt to accept the disruptive behavior in their classroom and use it as an opportunity to teach constructive behavior. The literatures on five areas of the topic are explored in this chapter and reveal some of the ways teachers can promote constructive behavior in the classroom.

Non-verbal communication

Wiggins (n.d.) suggests, “Body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and physical proximity all can be effective in promoting self-control by the student” (p.12.). For instance, proximity can be easily implemented by a teacher placing himself in the personal space of the disruptive student. This allows you to send the message that you see the student’s inappropriate behavior and it needs to stop (Bean, 2001). Another non-verbal form of communication is through eye contact. According to Jones (2004), looking at students creates a mild tension between the teacher and student and sends the message that the students should resume working.

Classroom Climate

Classroom climate plays a key part in the behavior of students in the classroom. There are many ways to create a positive classroom climate. According to McIntyre

(n.d.), proactively talking about and modeling good behavior is one strategy all teachers should use in the classroom. Teachers must also clearly establish rules and routines in the beginning of the year. Daily routine is important especially for those students who have ADD, ADHD and anxiety. Teachers should “deal with misbehavior quickly, consistently and respectfully” (Wiggins, n.d.). This will help to ensure that the environment fosters learning for all. “If you do not take the time to carefully teach your rules, routines and standards, you will get whatever the students feel like giving you. Prevention is always cheaper than remediation” (Jones, 2006). He says that teachers need to remain consistent as they establish the rules and routines. Students clearly function better when they know what to expect, and what is expected of them. To be consistent, teachers must respond consistently to the rules and routines in the classroom. “Never make a rule that you are not willing to enforce every time” (Jones, 2006).

Classroom climate not only consists of rules and routines, it also includes effective seating arrangements. “Seating arrangements are important classroom setting events because they have the potential to help prevent problem behaviors that decrease student attention and diminish available instructional time” (Wannarka, 2008). Teachers should carefully place desks in arrangements that will provide optimal learning opportunities for all and at the same time, limit the distractions of behavior interruptions.

A warm nurturing environment helps students feel safe, respected and accepted. “The tone of the classroom interaction has a significant impact on the education environment” (University of California, 2007). The room should be clean and look colorful and inviting. Teachers should treat each child with dignity and respect, and

encourage students to treat each other with dignity and respect. “Mutual respect and the Golden Rule are the key for maintaining this climate” (Wiggins, n.d.).

### Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluations when a student monitoring his or her own behavior and is another strategy found in the literature. “Self-evaluation can have positive effects on children’s behavior and academic performance,” according to Ardoin and Martens (2004). Ardoin and Martens (2004) believe it can be used to change a variety of target behaviors effectively in early elementary to high school-aged children. It has also helped improve behavior of students with ADD/ADHD, and social and emotional disorders. During self-evaluation, students often “evaluate their own behavior, rate it on a continuum, compare that rating to the rating of the teacher, and success reinforces for behavior meeting a pre-specified criterion (McGoey, Prodan, and Condit, 2004). For example, a student is given a checklist with the target behaviors defined. The student would take the checklist to each class, checking off every time they display a target behavior. They would then meet with the teacher to compare checklists. This can help ensure that students focus on the target behavior. According to Glenn and Waller (2007), some students are not aware of the frequency of their disruptive behavior, and permitting students to complete a checklist could help. In some studies, self-evaluation was found to be more effective when it was combined with other techniques such as prompt cards, teacher-home notes and positive reinforcers (Glenn and Waller, 2007).

## Incentives

Another strategy that teachers often use in the classroom is incentives. Reinforcers or incentives “are consequences that strengthen behavior” ( Mather and Goldstein, 2001). There are many different ways that incentives can be used to help keep student’s behavior on track. For example, a point system can be set up to help stop excessive talking. Students would start out with a certain number of points and lose them whenever they are talking out of turn. The points can be saved and cashed in for things like extra computer time, stickers or treats. When using an incentive system the rewards must be meaningful to the student and implemented properly so you don’t get the opposite of what you want, disruptive behavior. According to Mather and Goldstein (2001), when using an incentive system teachers need to remember to target a specific behavior, make sure there are more chances for success than failure and create extra bonus incentives for good behavior. Incentive systems “do much more than simply increase or decrease a behavior. They teach lessons,” Jones says (2004).

## Response Cost

Response Cost is a strategy that deals with disruptive behavior in a quick, consistent and respectful manner without interrupting the flow of instruction. Response cost is the loss of a specific reinforcer based upon the actions of a specific disruptive behavior. Response cost is a tool used to reduce disruptive behavior in students with ADD and ADHD. When combined with positive reinforcers to increase constructive behavior, the Response Cost strategy will produce effective results. According to Mather and Goldstein (2001) study of a group of boys who were diagnosed as hyperactive, “the

Response Cost procedure resulted in significant increases in on-task behavior and academic performance” (p. 18). When implementing a Response Cost strategy, they point out that the teacher researchers must keep in mind to use the strategy the entire day or class period and to be sure to only target specific behaviors. When disruptions occur, they say to not lecture the students. Redirect the students and continue the lesson.

A review of the literature shows that although non-verbal communication such as establishing eye contact, developing a positive classroom climate, establishing routines and consistent class rules are important strategies, “response cost may be the most powerful means of managing consequences for children with ADHD or other disruptive behavior problems”(Mather and Goldstein, 2001, p. 17). Response cost also improves academic functioning as well as student behavior. “Response cost led to marked improvements on task-related attention and a reduction in ADHD symptoms during work time” (Mather and Goldstein, 2001, p. 18). The Green Card System is one of many response cost strategies. The teacher researchers in this project chose to implement The Green Card System to increase constructive behavior in the classroom.

### Project Objective

During the period of October 2008 to December 2008, the students of the three teacher researchers in grades three, six and eight were to increase their constructive behaviors in the classroom through the use of the Green Card System (GCS). The GCS is a simple visual system that is intended to allow instruction to continue in the classroom while warning the student that their behavior is becoming disruptive to the learning environment.

During the week of October 20<sup>th</sup> the teacher researchers introduced the Green Card System (GCS) to their students through a planned lesson. The teacher researchers talked about the specific disruptive behaviors they would be looking at such as talking during instruction, roaming, calling out, not following directions, tardiness, and being unprepared. Once the students were familiar with the procedures of the GCS the teacher researchers began the trial period of GCS. This trial period lasted from October 20<sup>th</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup>. During the trial period students who received three red cards would not have to write a Student Reflection Letter. On October 27<sup>th</sup> the Green Card System was completely implemented as described above. The teacher researchers implement this Green Card System to increase constructive behavior in the classroom.

### Project Action Plan

The following weekly procedures were used to gather data and implement the intervention.

#### Week One (August 25th-August 29th, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Copy Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist
- Copy Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Copy Post-Observation Checklist
- Copy Student Red Card Tracking Checklist
- Copy parent consent forms, student assent form, and cover letters

#### Week Two (September 2nd-September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Copy Pre-Intervention Teacher Survey
- Copy Post-Intervention Teacher Survey
- Copy Pre-Intervention Student Reflection
- Copy Post-Intervention Student Reflection

- Copy GCS Student Reflection Letter

Week Three (September 8<sup>th</sup>- September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Pass out parent consent forms at Curriculum Night
- Distribute student assent forms and collect
- Send home parent consent forms to any parent who did not attend Curriculum night with Friday September 26<sup>th</sup> deadline for turning them in to the teacher researcher.

Week Four (September 15<sup>th</sup>-September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Send reminder notices to parents to return consent forms

Week Five (September 22<sup>nd</sup>- September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Distribute Pre-Intervention teacher Survey, consent letter and form with September 26<sup>th</sup> deadline for turning them in to the teacher researcher.

Week Six (September 29<sup>th</sup>-October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Hand out Pre-Intervention Student Reflections
- Begin recording student behaviors on the Pre-Observation Check list

Week Seven (October 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue recording student behaviors on the Pre-Observation Checklist

Week Eight (October 13<sup>th</sup>-October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue recording student behaviors on the Pre-Observation Checklist

- Construct GCS card system

Week Nine (October 20<sup>th</sup>-October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Introduce lesson plan on Green Card System (GCS)
- Introduce positive reinforcements and rewards
- Introduce trial period of GCS

Week Ten (October 27<sup>th</sup>-October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008)

All teachers will:

- Implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Record red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Eleven (November 3<sup>rd</sup>-November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Twelve (November 10<sup>th</sup>-November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Thirteen (November 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class

- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Fourteen (November 24<sup>th</sup>-November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Fifteen (December 1<sup>st</sup>-December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Sixteen (December 8<sup>th</sup>-December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Seventeen (December 15<sup>th</sup> December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

All teachers will:

- Continue to implement GCS behavior plan with class
- Continue to record disruptive student behaviors on the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist
- Continue recording red cards on the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist

Week Eighteen (December 22<sup>nd</sup> December 26<sup>th</sup>)

- Winter Break

Week Nineteen (December 29<sup>th</sup> January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009)

- Winter Break

Week Twenty (January 5<sup>th</sup>-January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Record student behavior on Post-Observation Checklist  
Week Twenty-one (January 12<sup>th</sup>-January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Record student behavior on Post-Observation Checklist  
Week Twenty-two (January 19<sup>th</sup>-January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Record student behavior on Post-Observation Checklist  
Week Twenty-three (January 26<sup>th</sup>-January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Distribute Post-Intervention Teacher Survey with a January 30<sup>th</sup> return deadline to teacher researchers
- Distribute Post-Intervention Student Reflection  
Week Twenty-four (February 2<sup>nd</sup>-February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Tabulate Data  
Week Twenty-five (February 9<sup>th</sup>-February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

All teachers will:

- Graph data  
Week Twenty-six (February 16<sup>th</sup>- February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

- Work on final chapters on action research document  
Week Twenty-seven (February 23<sup>rd</sup>- February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

- Work on final chapters of action research document  
Week Twenty-eight (March 2<sup>nd</sup>- March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

- Complete final chapters of action research document

## Methods of Assessment

Four methods of assessment were used to measure the effects of the intervention. The methods were 1) a Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist (see Appendix A), an Ongoing Intervention Checklist (see Appendix B), and Post-Intervention Observation Checklist (see Appendix C), 2) a Student Red Card Tracking Checklist (see Appendix G), 3) a Pre-and Post-Intervention Teacher Survey (see Appendix D) a Pre-Intervention Student Reflection (see Appendix E) and a Post-Intervention Student Reflection (see Appendix F).

The Observation Checklists were used throughout the intervention to keep track and assess changes in the number of occurrences of disruptive behavior of each student. The Student Red Card Tracking Checklist was used to keep track of and assess the changes in how many times individual students received red cards. The Pre and Post Teacher Surveys were passed out before and after the intervention to help gather data on whether or not teachers (non-researcher teachers) observed behavioral changes in shared students.

The Student Reflections were passed out before and after the intervention to help gather data on changes in how students viewed their own behaviors in class.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT RESULTS

#### Historical Description of the Intervention

The three teacher researchers initiated the Green Card System on October 20, 2008 in each of their three classes. Small card holders with the student's name on a green card, a yellow card and red card were placed on a board and displayed in a specific area of the classroom. This area was easily accessible to the teacher as well as visible to the students. However the teacher researchers did not place them in such an area that it could cause embarrassment to the students. For example, instead of placing the Green Card System board in the middle of the front board, it was put it in an area that is less obvious. As a specific disruptive behavior occurred the teacher researcher walked over to the particular student's card holder and removed the green card to reveal the yellow card. The yellow card was a signal to the student that their behavior was becoming disruptive and they now had a warning. If the behavior continued the teacher removed the yellow card to reveal the red card. The red card was a signal to the student that they had now lost their reward for the day. Once a student had received a total of three red cards they were asked to stay in for recess to reflect on their behaviors in class, and ways to modify them.

Students who remained on a yellow card received a treat at the end of the class or period. Those students who remained on a green card received a treat and a raffle ticket at the end of the day or class period. The student put his or her name on the raffle ticket and then placed it in a jar. At the end of each week the teacher researcher pulled a ticket from the jar and gave a special reward to the student whose name appears on the ticket.

The Green Card System was implemented in each of the three classrooms for eight weeks.

The student reflection was an integral part of the GCS. The teacher researcher gave the student a copy of the GCS student reflection letter that he or she copied and completed. This letter asked the student to reflect and write about the behaviors that earned the red cards and how they will attempt to modify those behaviors in the future. After the student was finished writing their reflection letter the teacher researcher went over the responses with the student. The teacher researcher made sure both the student and teacher researcher were noticing the same disruptive behaviors. The teacher researcher then discussed with the student the strategies the student suggested for modifying these behaviors. At this point the teacher offered other behavior strategies that would be useful, as well as positive reinforcement. The teacher researcher made a copy of the letter for the student to take home to be signed by a parent and returned the next day. If the letter was not returned the teacher researcher contacted the parent.

### Presentation and Analysis of Results

Analysis of the data shows a decrease in disruptive behavior in the classroom during the implementation of the Green Card System. Teacher checklists were used to collect data for this portion of the project (See Appendices A, B and C). Observed disruptive behaviors were recorded on these sheets using tally marks. Behaviors such as talking during instruction, roaming, calling out, not following directions, being tardy and unprepared for class were recorded. Student reflection questions and teacher questionnaires were also used to gather additional data. The student reflection

questionnaires provided data both pre-intervention as well as post intervention, regarding how students viewed their own behavior as well as the behaviors of their peers.

Figures 12 - 19 compare the pre-intervention, ongoing intervention and post intervention observation checklists as well as the pre and post student reflection questions.

*Figure 12.*

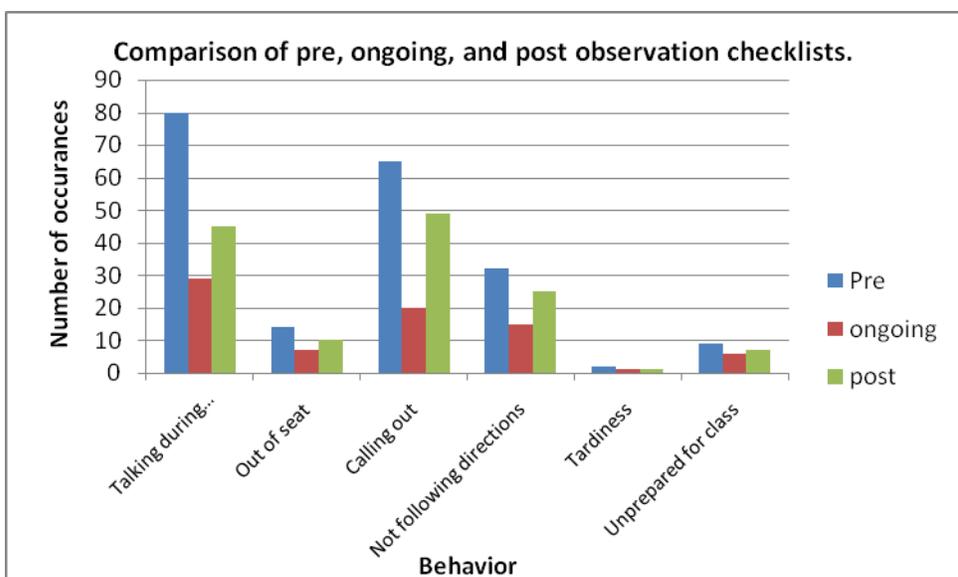


Figure 12 shows the results of the pre, ongoing and post observation checklists. The figure displays all of the behaviors and occurrences of these behaviors that were observed during the pre, ongoing and post intervention time periods. Figure 12 shows that the number of disruptive behaviors dropped dramatically from the pre-intervention to the ongoing intervention stage where the Green Card System was implemented. The number of occurrences of students talking during instruction decreased from 80 to 29. The number of occurrences of students out of seats decreased from 14 to 7. The number of occurrences of students calling out decreased from 65 to 20. The number of

occurrences of students not following directions decreased from 32 to 15. The number of occurrences of students tardy decreased from 2 to 1. The number of occurrences of students unprepared for class decreased from 9 to 6. The data represented in Figure 12 also shows that during the post observation, where the Green Card System was no longer in use, the disruptive behavior increased. Although there was an increase in disruptive behaviors during the post observation the disruptive behaviors never reached the levels of those in the pre-intervention.

### Pre-Intervention and post-intervention Student Reflection Questionnaires

*Figure 13.*

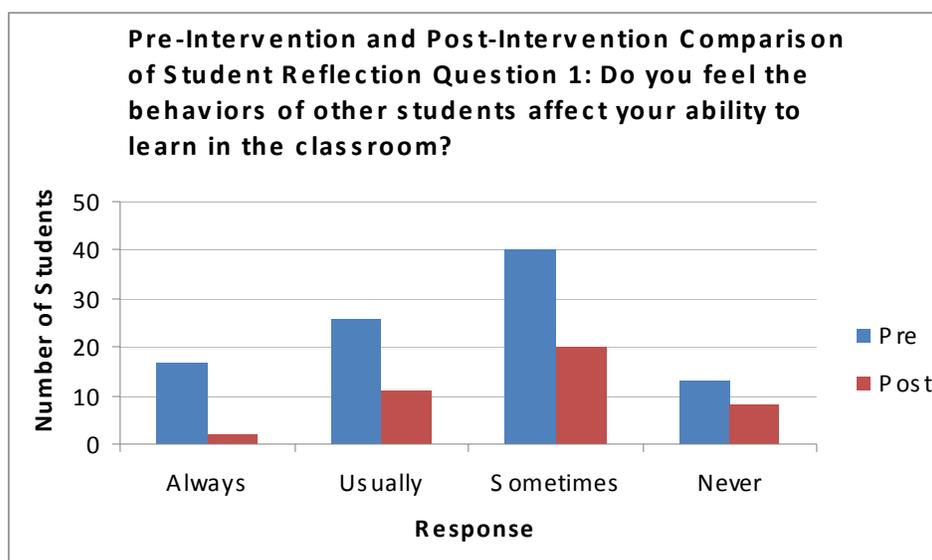


Figure 13 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often they felt other students behaviors affect their ability to learn in the classroom. The number of students who felt they are “always” affected decreased from 17 to 3. The number of students who felt they are “usually” affected decreased from

26 to 11. The number of students who felt they are “sometimes” affected decreased from 40 to 20 and those who felt they are “never” affected decreased from 13 to 8.

*Figure 14.*

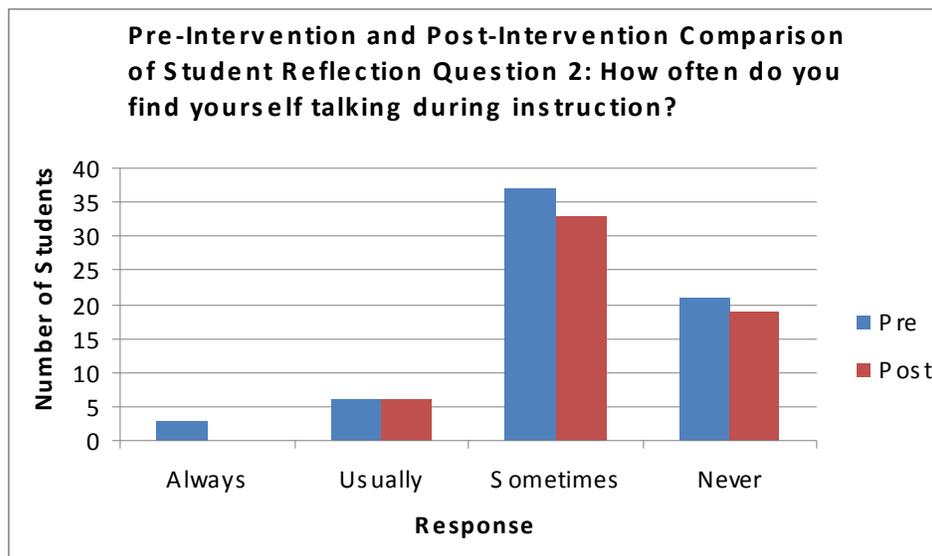


Figure 13 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves talking during instruction. The number of students who felt they were “always” talking during instruction decreased from 3 to 0. The number of students who felt they were “usually” talking during instruction stayed the same. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” talking during instruction decreased from 37 to 33 and those who felt they were “never” talking during instruction decreased from 21 to 19.

Figure 15.

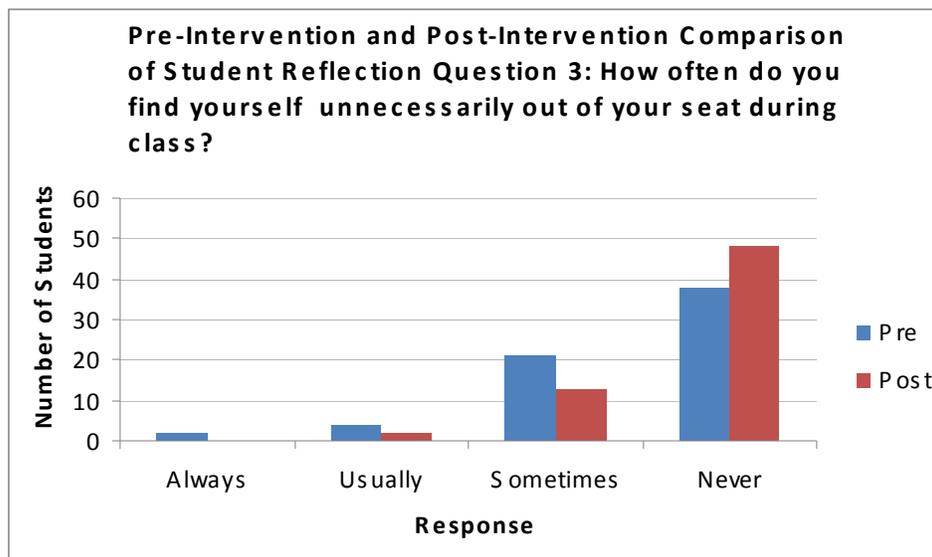


Figure 13 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves out of their seat. The number of students who felt they were “always” out of their seat decreased from 3 to 0. The number of students who felt they were “usually” out of their seat decreased from 4 to 2. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” out of their seat decreased from 21 to 13 and those who felt they were “never” out of their seat increased from 38 to 48.

Figure 14.

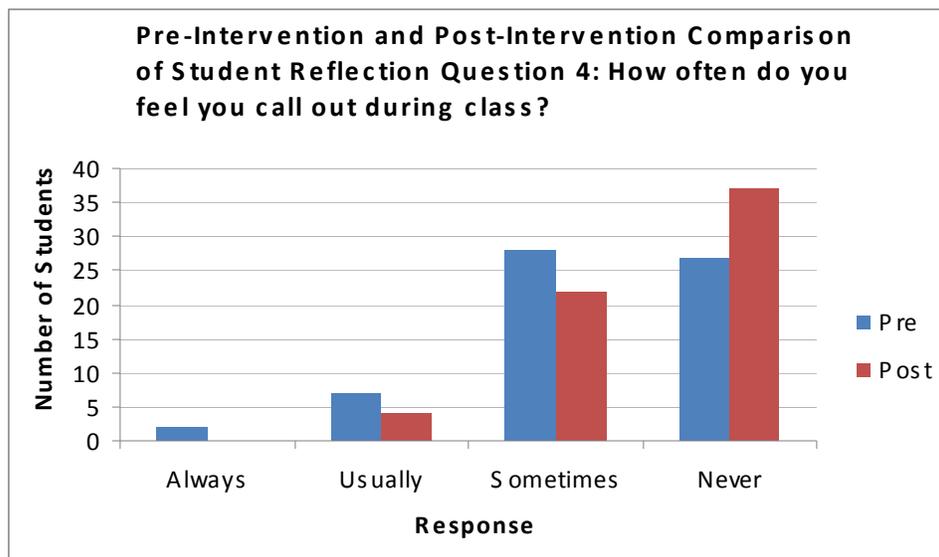


Figure 14 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves calling out during class. The number of students who felt they were “always” calling out during class decreased from 2 to 0. The number of students who felt they were “usually” calling out during class decreased from 7 to 4. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” calling out during class decreased from 28 to 22 and those who felt they were “never” calling out during class increased from 27 to 37.

Figure 15.

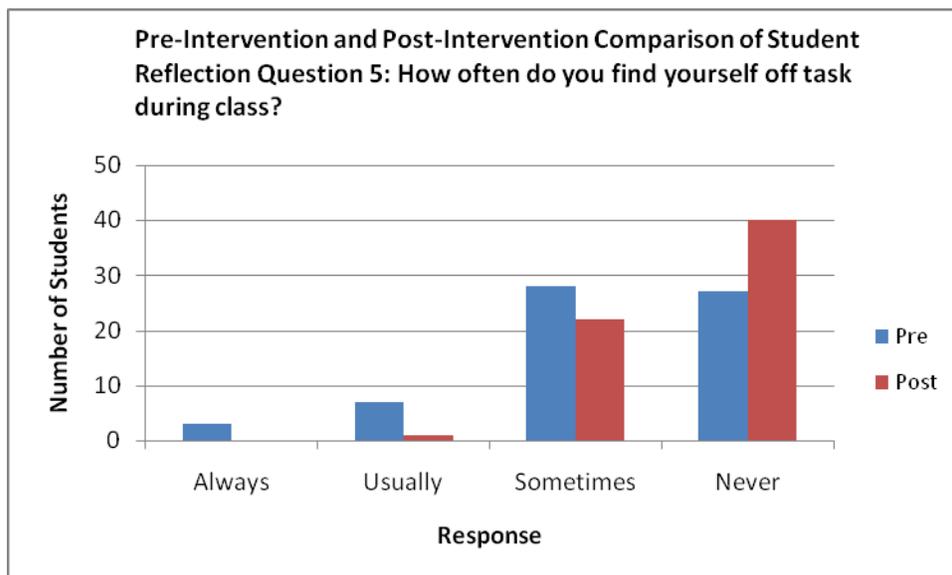


Figure 15 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves off task during class. The number of students who felt they were “always” off task during class decreased from 3 to 0. The number of students who felt they were “usually” off task during class decreased from 7 to 1. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” off task during class decreased from 28 to 22 and those who felt they were “never” off task during class increased from 27 to 40.

Figure 16.

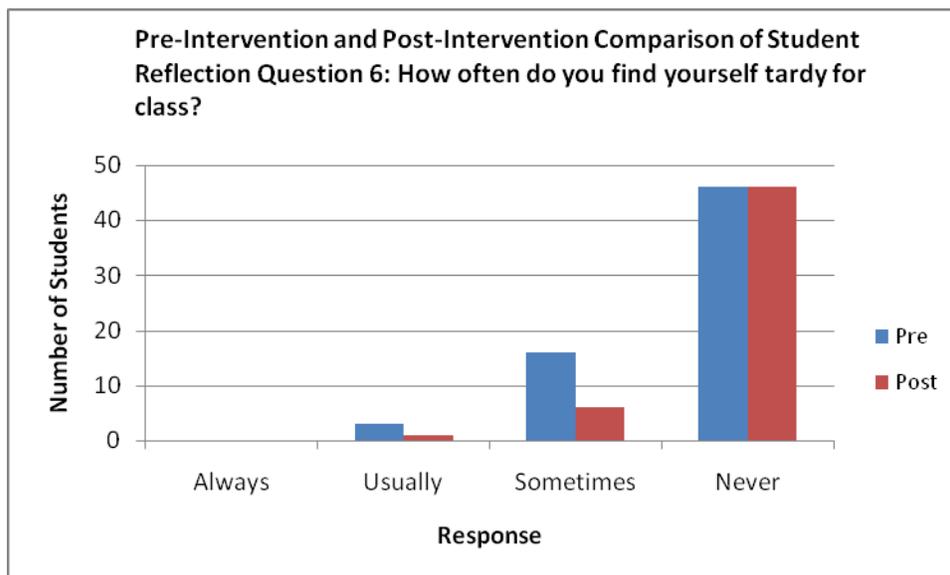


Figure 15 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves tardy to class. The number of students who felt they were “always” tardy to class remained at 0. The number of students who felt they were “usually” tardy to class decreased from 3 to 1. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” tardy to class decreased from 16 to 6 and those who felt they were “never” tardy to class remained at 46.

Figure 17.

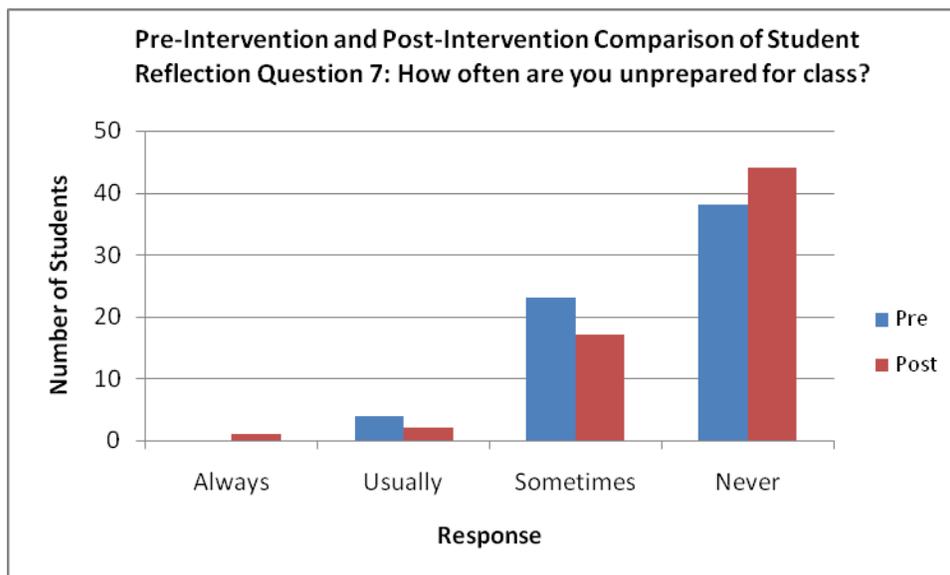


Figure 15 shows the results of the pre and post intervention student reflection question regarding how often students found themselves unprepared for class. The number of students who felt they were “always” unprepared for class increased from 0 to 1. The number of students who felt they were “usually” unprepared for class decreased from 4 to 2. The number of students who felt they were “sometimes” unprepared for class decreased from 23 to 17 and those who felt they were “never” unprepared for class increased from 37 to 44.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this action research project was to increase constructive student behavior. We feel that the Green Card System and its components were effective in doing this. In the time periods between the intervention and after the intervention was complete there was an increase of constructive behavior when compared to the pre-intervention time period.

We feel that the Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist, Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist, and the Post-Intervention Observation Checklist (See Appendixes A, B, and C) were effective tools for recording student behavior. In reviewing the results of the Observation checklists, we found that the Green Card System was generally effective in increasing constructive classroom behavior. When comparing the Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist and the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist, we found that the constructive behaviors increased in the eight weeks of the intervention while using the Green Card System. Compared to the pre-intervention period of four weeks when we were not implementing the Green Card System. We also concluded by reviewing the Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist and the Post-Intervention Observation Checklist that the constructive behaviors decreased when the Green Card System was no longer being implemented. Lastly, by reviewing the Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist and the Post-Intervention Observation Checklist we saw that the constructive behavior was lower during the pre-intervention observation period. From this we can conclude that at least some of the more constructive behavior remained after the intervention was complete.

The teacher researchers feel that the Pre-Intervention Student Reflection (See Appendix E) and the Post-Intervention Student Reflection (See Appendix F) were useful tools in determining student perceptions on their behavior and how the behavior of their peers affects them. After viewing the results of the Pre-Intervention Student Reflection and the Post-Intervention Student Reflection (See Appendix F) we saw that many students answered sometimes or never too many questions. This conflicts with the behaviors that were tallied on the Observation Checklists. The teacher researchers feel

that some students are not fully aware of their disruptive behavior or how much the behavior of other students is affecting their learning.

We feel that the Pre-Intervention Teacher Survey (See Appendix D) was a valuable tool in establishing that many teachers feel disruptive behavior is a problem in their classroom. By reviewing the results we also saw that many instructional minutes are lost in the classroom due to disruptive behavior.

Based on our research, we feel that continuing the use of the Green Card System throughout the school year would be beneficial in creating a classroom environment where instructional time is not lost due to disruptive behavior. We feel that the Green Card System also helps to increase constructive behavior in the classroom. We would recommend using the Green Card System along with the Red Card Tracking Checklist and the GCS Student Reflection Letter. We do feel however, that the use of the Observation Checklists were a bit of a distraction during instructional time, therefore we would not recommend using them.

The data indicate that using the Green Card System as an intervention had a positive effect on the teacher researchers' classroom environments.

## Reflection

### Teacher Researcher A

My students were excited to embrace upon a new intervention that would reward them for choosing good behavior in the classroom. Young children tend to respond quickly to the opportunity of being rewarded for good behavior. As the intervention

began I was surprised at how quickly the change in my classroom behavior occurred. Students responded in a positive manner to immediate feedback given to them by the use of the Green Card System.

The Green Card System was a useful tool to increase constructive behavior in the classroom. Students looked forward to using this intervention in the classroom. It was a clear way for students to focus on their behavior. They knew their behavior affected their learning and that of their classmates. No one wanted their card to change from green so all seemed to rise to the challenge of preserving a positive classroom environment.

Once the Green Card System was no longer in use, many students quickly reverted back to some of their old behaviors. I believe this is because students no longer had a visual reminder of their behavior, and they no longer had immediate rewards for constructive behavior in the classroom. Displaying the Green card system was a reward in itself because students could show pride in their behaviors and that of their peers.

Overall, I felt the Green Card System was quite successful for use in my classroom. The students responded quickly and consistently. I plan to use the system in the future with some changes. Instead of handing out candy each day, I would like to implement the use of a checkbook or sticker book. Students would then receive a check or sticker for each day of good behavior. Later, this can be redeemed for a prize. This change would eliminate the amount of candy students consume in school.

Since my research findings have proved that the Green Card System is effective, I will use this intervention in my classroom in the future. It is particularly appropriate for students in the younger grades. The procedure is simple and the results are immediate.

The students need immediate feedback and rewards for constructive behaviors. They became responsible for their behavior and showed great pride as they received rewards for success. The Green card system is a very effective cost response strategy.

### Teacher Researcher B

When we began this action research project I was pretty optimistic about the Green Card System we decided to implement. At the time I had a perfect mixture of students to implement our intervention. I was pleasantly surprised with the reaction I got from my students when I explained to them what we would be doing over the next several weeks.

I felt that during the intervention the Green Card System served its purpose of increasing constructive behavior and worked well. It was a clear reminder to the students that they needed to keep their behavior in check. I felt that they were more aware of not only how they were behaving but how their peers were as well. During the intervention they seemed to keep each other in line and remind each other that they did not want to have a card pulled.

However after the intervention was over and the Green Card System board disappeared it didn't take to long before the disruptive behaviors returned. I felt that because there wasn't that visual reminder there for them to keep them in check most of the students went back to their old behaviors. I felt that with the board up, there was a little bit of underlying peer pressure to not have a card moved so they needed to keep their behavior in check.

Although I felt the Green Card System was a success in my classroom there were a few things that could have been improved upon. For example, I found that the pre, ongoing, and post intervention checklists were at times a bit of a burden. It became difficult to tally the behaviors as accurately as I had hoped because the process interrupted instructional time. I also felt that the student reflection questionnaires may not have been as honestly answered as they could have been by the students.

As a result of all my research findings, I believe that I will implement the Green Card system in my classroom. While using the Green Card System I really saw a difference in the behavior of some of my toughest students. However, I will implement this system on an as need basis depending on the dynamics of the students in my classroom each quarter.

#### Teacher Researcher C

I was excited about implementing the Green Card System in my classroom. I felt that it would be a positive experience for both my students and me. My students were also excited to be a part of my Action Research Project, and were very responsive to taking part in it.

I feel that overall the Green Card System did increase constructive behavior in my classroom. It became a sort of competition between some of my students to see who could keep their green card the longest. Many students really cared about staying on green. Many students were glad earn tickets to collect for a chance to win a prize. However, since some students wanted larger, more costly prizes, this was not an effective motivator for all students.

Once the intervention was done, I did see a decline in constructive behavior. Once the students did not have to worry about losing their cards, and the students knew they were no longer earning tickets for a prize, many went back to their old behaviors. I feel that to work best, the Green Card System should be introduced at the beginning of the school year, and used for the whole year.

Although the Green Card System was successful in increasing constructive behavior there are a few components I will change when I use it in the future. First, I would have less target behaviors to focus on. We focused on six and I feel that this was too many for me to easily accurately keep track of on the Pre, Ongoing and Post Intervention Checklists. Because there were so many behaviors to keep track of, it was difficult to keep count without disrupting instruction. Another thing I will change is have group prizes when a certain number of students stay on green. I think having a group goal for a Fun Friday where the class would earn a reward, like playing an educational game, would be a good motivator and encourage the students to help each other stay on the green card. I would also let my student's brain storm for ideas on what they would like the prizes to be. If they have more say in what the prize is, more students may be motivated by them. I would encourage them to choose prizes that centered around special privileges, like eating lunch in the classroom while listening to music with friends, instead of prizes that cost money. With a few minor changes, I would use the Green Card System in the future.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## Pre-Intervention Observation Checklist

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Student Behavior                 | Occurrences |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking during instruction       |             |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |             |
| Calling out                      |             |
| Not following directions         |             |
| Tardiness                        |             |
| Unprepared for class             |             |

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Student Behavior                 | Occurrences |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking during instruction       |             |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |             |
| Calling out                      |             |
| Not following directions         |             |
| Tardiness                        |             |
| Unprepared for class             |             |

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Student Behavior                 | Occurrences |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking during instruction       |             |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |             |
| Calling out                      |             |
| Not following directions         |             |
| Tardiness                        |             |
| Unprepared for class             |             |

## APPENDIX B

## Ongoing Intervention Observation Checklist

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Student Behavior                 | Occurrences |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking during instruction       |             |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |             |
| Calling out                      |             |
| Not following directions         |             |
| Tardiness                        |             |
| Unprepared for class             |             |
| Earned Green Cards               |             |

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Student Behavior                 | Occurrences |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking during instruction       |             |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |             |
| Calling out                      |             |
| Not following directions         |             |
| Tardiness                        |             |
| Unprepared for class             |             |
| Earned Green Cards               |             |

## APPENDIX C

## Post-Observation Intervention Checklist

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Student Behavior</b>          | <b>Occurrences</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Talking during instruction       |                    |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |                    |
| Calling out                      |                    |
| Not following directions         |                    |
| Tardiness                        |                    |
| Unprepared for class             |                    |

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Student Behavior</b>          | <b>Occurrences</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Talking during instruction       |                    |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |                    |
| Calling out                      |                    |
| Not following directions         |                    |
| Tardiness                        |                    |
| Unprepared for class             |                    |

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Student Behavior</b>          | <b>Occurrences</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Talking during instruction       |                    |
| Continuously out of seat/roaming |                    |
| Calling out                      |                    |
| Not following directions         |                    |
| Tardiness                        |                    |
| Unprepared for class             |                    |

## APPENDIX D

## Pre- Intervention Teacher Survey

1) Is disruptive behavior a problem in your class?

Yes                      No

2) In your classroom, how many minutes of instruction time do you feel are lost on a daily basis due to the following behaviors?

|                                  |     |     |     |           |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| talking out during instruction   | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |
| continuously out of seat/roaming | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |
| calling out                      | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |
| not following directions         | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |
| tardiness                        | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |
| unprepared for class             | 0-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9 or more |

## APPENDIX E

## Pre- Intervention Student Reflection

Please think about your behavior in the classroom. Circle your response to each question.

|  |        |         |           |       |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Do you feel the behaviors of other students affect your ability to learn in the classroom? | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself talking during instruction?                                 | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself unnecessarily out of your seat during class?                | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you feel you call out during class?   | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself off task during class?                                      | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself tardy for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often are you unprepared for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |

## Pre- Intervention Student Reflection

Please think about your behavior in the classroom. Circle your response to each question.

|  |        |         |           |       |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Do you feel the behaviors of other students affect your ability to learn in the classroom? | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself talking during instruction?                                 | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself unnecessarily out of your seat during class?                | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you feel you call out during class?   | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself off task during class?                                      | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself tardy for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often are you unprepared for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |

## APPENDIX F

## Post- Intervention Student Reflection

Please think about your behavior in the classroom. Circle your response to each question.

|  |        |         |           |       |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Do you feel the behaviors of other students affect your ability to learn in the classroom? | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself talking during instruction?                                 | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself unnecessarily out of your seat during class?                | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you feel you call out during class?   | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself off task during class?                                      | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself tardy for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often are you unprepared for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |

## Post- Intervention Student Reflection

Please think about your behavior in the classroom. Circle your response to each question.

|  |        |         |           |       |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Do you feel the behaviors of other students affect your ability to learn in the classroom? | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself talking during instruction?                                 | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself unnecessarily out of your seat during class?                | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you feel you call out during class?   | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself off task during class?                                      | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often do you find yourself tardy for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
| How often are you unprepared for class?  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |

APPENDIX G

**Student Red Card Tracking Checklist**

The teacher researchers will use the Student Red Card Tracking Checklist to keep track of how many times individual students get red cards. The teacher researcher will fill in the behavior that occurred and the date each time a red card is issued. The teacher researcher will use this information to help students in their reflection.

Disruptive Behaviors

1-Talking out during instruction

3-Calling out

5-Tardy

2-Continuously out of seat/roaming

4-Not following directions

6-Unprepared

Student  
Name

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Reflection/  
Date

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Date

Behavior/  
Date

Reflection/  
Date

APPENDIX H

**GCS Student Reflection Letter**

Student Reflection: After you receive three red cards you will copy and complete the letter below. I will copy the letter and you will take it home for one of your parent’s signatures. I will keep the original letter.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I missed \_\_\_\_\_ today because I received three red cards on the Green

Card Behavior System in our classroom. I received the three red cards for the following reasons:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Here’s how I plan to improve my behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please talk with me about my behavior plan. I need your support to be my best at school.

Love,

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form tomorrow.

