Holding a Mirror to Behavior: The Power of Reflecting on Positive and Negative Behaviors

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Abstract: Classroom management is a topic important to many teachers, both new and veteran. The current research focused on Piaget's concept of egocentrism in the elementary school-aged child and the idea that elementary school children are unable to see how their behaviors affect those around them. This problem was addressed in the current study through implementing a classroom management plan that encouraged students to reflect on their positive and negative behaviors, as well as discuss their reflections with their teacher and state how they think their behavior influences those around them. Results showed that the intervention significantly decreased negative behaviors seen in the classroom, while positive behaviors showed an increase and students showed improvement in behavior reflection. This study helps to lessen some gaps in the area of classroom management research, focusing on helping the young, egocentric child.

Introduction

Classroom management, two words that are seemingly innocent, yet can lead to endless discussion among educators about how to best address behavior concerns in individual classrooms. Early in my teaching experiences, I noticed that almost every single teacher at my school approached classroom management differently. There were teachers who used music to signal students to do certain activities, teachers who used clothespins and colored charts to let students know how their behavior rated for the day, and teachers who resorted to yelling at misbehaving students. I also noticed that, except for one classroom, students were reprimanded or given praise for their actions, but never given a chance to reflect on why their actions were positive or negative. There was never an opportunity for students to think about how their actions affected the classroom and the other students.

Based on my observations of classroom management techniques that are currently in practice, I designed an action research plan to encourage students to reflect on how their positive and negative actions impact others. To establish this plan I first looked at the fourth grade classroom where I was student teaching. I noticed that many of the students acted impulsively and did not consider how their actions affected others. Taking into consideration theoretical concepts and the needs of the fourth graders, I saw the opportunity to encourage classroom reflection, while establishing a classroom culture based on respect for others.
Piaget (1923) posited that young children are often egocentric, or unable to see viewpoints that differ from their own (Beilin, 1994; Piaget, 1959). Similarly, my students did not always see why or how their actions influence others, thinking only about how what they are doing affects their own lives, and do not always see why their actions are wrong. Merely punishing or rewarding students’ behaviors did not necessarily improve their understanding of how those behaviors influence others. However, adults can help them construct such understandings through guided reflection.

Previous research has shown that self-monitoring/self-regulation interventions improve a student’s ability to monitor themselves, and become aware of the thought process behind what they are doing (Rafferty, 2010; Stright & Supplee, 2002). It has also been emphasized that when students become aware of their own thinking and receiving reinforcement for that way of thinking, there can be an improvement in on-task behavior and classroom environments (Bilmes, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Rock, 2005). Some scholars have also introduced the concept of precorrective statements and praise, which involves explicitly communicating behavioral expectations, as a way to reduce classroom problem behaviors (Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, 2000; Stormont & Reinke, 2009). Praise has been incorporated into the classroom to increase desired behaviors (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). For my fourth grade students, precorrective statements were intended to give them an idea of the classroom expectations, while praise helped to reinforce positive classroom behaviors.

Current research, however, does not address the main problem I experienced in my anchor classroom, which involved students acting out without recognizing why their behaviors were hurting or helping the classroom. Current studies focus mainly on student academic reflection, or reflection in the special education classroom (Burack et al., 2006; Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Moore, 2001; Stright & Supplee, 2002; Rock, 2005). There is also little research available on the use of precorrective statements; in only one study was the use of these statements in elementary school aged children explicitly addressed (Lewis et al., 2000). By taking into consideration Piaget’s (1923) concept of egocentrism I propose that students need to reflect on their behavior in the classroom, in order to understand and change these behaviors.

Literature review/theoretical framework

Piaget (1923) introduced the concept of egocentrism in his first book, On Language and Thought (Beilin, 1994). Egocentrism refers to a child’s inability to see things from a point of view that differs from their own. Piaget (1959) maintained that egocentrism declines throughout childhood, yet is still very much present in the ages that are seen in elementary school. According to Piaget’s theory, elementary school aged children are likely to exhibit signs of egocentrism, because they have not reached a more advanced stage of development. Piaget (1959) maintained that egocentrism remains very much present in the ages that are seen in both primary and intermediate elementary school grades. Elementary students are often not able to look at other perspectives, and are not aware of how their actions can lead to negative outcomes when collaborating with others (Hobson, 1982). Collaboration plays such a large role in the classroom, contributing to the idea that egocentrism’s role in behavior choices is something that should be studied.
Surtees and Apperly (2012) found that the elementary school aged children participants in their study showed egocentric thoughts and the inability to see others perspectives. Egocentrism was also present more when children were asked to complete simple perspective tasks, which included determining the amount of dots on the wall when a cartoon avatar was giving a correct or wrong amount. (Surtees & Apperly). This relates to behaviors that are seen in the classroom; when students are unable to see their actions through others’ perspectives, they may be less likely to see the consequences of those behaviors. When children are able to gain a greater understanding of viewpoints outside of the norms that a child usually associates with their perspective they also have higher levels of social competence, not only now, but as they get older (Abrams, 2011; Burack, Flanagan, Peled, Sutton, Zygmuntowicz, & Manly, 2006). Because egocentrism influences children’s perspective taking both in and out of the classroom, children may benefit from praise for their good behaviors, guiding students to see how their good behaviors benefit others, and precorrective statements, statements that give students an idea about ideal behaviors, to guide them to avoid undesirable behaviors.

The Use of Praise in the Classroom

Praise can be an effective way to give students a way to classify positive behaviors in a different category from negative behaviors. Teachers often use praise in the classroom, but it is not always delivered in the most efficient and effective way possible. Students are still left questioning why the praise they received is useful to their own perceptions of their actions (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). Even with the establishment of such programs as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a school-wide intervention promoting positive behaviors and discouraging disruptive behaviors, individual teachers are not taking into consideration the research and ideas about how to implement praise in their classrooms in a way they will help students make positive choices in the future (Partin et al., 2010 Reinke, Herman & Storm, 2013). Praise can be a way to encourage more positive behaviors in the classroom, but teachers often do not think through the process of how to effectively praise their students. Teachers need to evaluate their praise based on the age of their students, information that the praise is conveying to the students, whether the praise allows for the opportunity for future positive interactions in the classroom, and whether or not the praise will be beneficial to both the student and the teacher (Partin et al., 2010). Although programs like PBIS address behavior as a whole in the school some students, such as students who consistently show problem behaviors, are not receiving praise to reinforce positive behaviors in a way that effectively addresses the behavior concerns (Partin et al., 2010). When praise is used in an ineffective way, students may continue to display the negative behaviors that are seen in the classroom. These students may feel that displaying these behaviors is the only way to receive attention from the teacher, although this attention is negative (Partin et al., 2010). Burnett and Mandel (2010) asked elementary school students how they felt when being praised and although many students stated that they enjoyed receiving praise and “felt good about themselves” (p. 148) and “motivated” (p. 148) praise was not always taken in a positive manner. There was report by students that praise led to negative feelings, including guilt and did not like the feeling that the teacher caught them doing something (Burnett & Mandel, 2010). This study showed that although praise leads to overall positive feelings in students, this is not always the case and praise needs to be given to students in a certain way. Praise can help students determine what behaviors are encouraged in the classroom,
and praise is also a fairly easy and inexpensive way to encourage students to think about their actions and the outcomes of those actions.

Praise has been studied in elementary schools with students in the general education classroom, and with students who already exhibit behavioral issues on a daily basis in the classroom (Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013; Ford, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2001; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer & Merell, 2008). Ford and colleagues (2001) evaluated the effectiveness of praise in relation to the use of time-outs in classrooms of first year elementary school teachers. Students were either placed in time-out for negative behaviors, or left in the classroom setting when showing positive behaviors (Ford et al., 2001). The study focused mainly on reinforcement techniques that intended to show students that their behaviors could lead to different outcomes, and encourage more positive behaviors. When students did not exhibit desired classroom behaviors, they were put into time-out to think about their behavior and then were asked to retry the task that put them in time-out to begin with (Ford et al., 2001). The students were given praise when they retried the task the correct way, and after four months children were more likely to behave as expected after being placed in time-out and reflecting on their behaviors (Ford et al., 2001). This study suggested that having students take time away from the larger group of students in the classroom gives students the chance to learn from their actions, and recognize what the error of their actions was.

Reinke et al. (2008) looked at praise in a similar way, but also incorporated reprimands for undesired classroom behaviors as a way to respond to both positive and negative behaviors. Coffee and Kratochwill (2013) looked at praise in a different way than Ford et al. (2001). They examined praise in the classroom using seven checklists in the five stages of the study (Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013). The study stood out from others that looked at praise because teachers received training to show them exactly how praise should be used in the classroom, giving teachers prompts to use when talking to their students (Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013). Although Coffee and Kratochwill (2013) noted low levels of praise used by their teachers, and only slight decreases in problematic behaviors in students, they were able to examine praise from the teacher’s viewpoint. Coffee & Kratochwill (2013) used a consultation satisfaction questionnaire, treatment integrity checklist, learning and behavior problem checklist, behavior intervention rating scale and teacher functional behavioral assessment checklist for students to determine how teachers were using praise, and what the outcomes of this praise were. This study looked beyond the student receiving the praise, instead making the main focus of the study the teacher. The various instruments used by Coffee and Kratochwill (2013) showed how important the role of the teacher is to any intervention in the classroom, and how the teacher is the one in control of helping the students set behavior goals and follow through with them. Praise statements used in the Coffee and Kratochwill (2013) study gave students an idea of how they should behave. Statements, however, go beyond just praise and can be used for both positive and negative behaviors.

Precorrective Statements Role in the Classroom

In addition to praise, students may also benefit from precorrective statements. Precorrective statements are descriptions of behaviors that are expected in a certain setting, such as the classroom setting (Stormont & Reinke, 2009). Examples of precorrective statements include telling students that they cannot use markers during an activity, or that you do not hit friends during playtime. These statements are developed and
taught by the classroom teacher to target specific behavioral issues that the teacher feels are taking time away from the school day (Stormont & Reinke, 2009). These statements clarify what is expected of students throughout the school day as a way to encourage students to think before they act and make sure they are following those expectations. Many classrooms teach social skills to students, but discipline problems may still arise when teachers are not presenting students with specific behavioral expectations, like precorrective statements (Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, 2000). According to Stormont and Reinke (2009), precorrective statements can be used to create a positive classroom environment, with a reduction in normally seen disruptive classroom behaviors. They can be used in any academic setting where the teacher is able to explain to the students what the expectations are for their behavior. Precorrective statements are not widely researched, yet studies (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Lewis et al., 2000; Norris, 2003; Rafferty 2010; Stright & Supplee, 2002) have shown the effectiveness of these statements in the school setting.

Lewis et al. (2000) were able to study precorrective statements in a Kindergarten through fifth grade recess setting. They emphasized that precorrective statements played an important role in the decline in the five most commonly seen problem behaviors that teachers identified seeing on the playground. The intervention did not simply focus on displaying or stating the precorrective statements once and expecting students to be able to reflect and change their behaviors. Expectations such as, keeping hands and feet to themselves and using playground equipment in a safe and appropriate way, were taught directly to the students and monitored during multiple recess time periods in one week intervals (Lewis et al., 2000). The reduction in behavior problems seen across grade levels suggest that explicitly teaching precorrective statements to students can be beneficial to students to encourage them to think about if their actions are appropriate before they act. Precorrective statements relate to self-reflection of behaviors in this way and reflecting on actions, to change them in the future.

Self-Reflection and Self-Monitoring in the Classroom

Self-reflection and self-monitoring of behaviors in the classroom are two similar aspects that can influence the behaviors seen in the classroom. Self-monitoring is a self-management technique in which students observe their behaviors and are able to state if that behavior is one that they should be displaying, or not (Rafferty, 2010). Self-monitoring requires students to look at behavior goals, observe their own behaviors, and determine whether or not these behaviors reflect the goals by stopping and thinking about the behaviors occurring (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Rafferty, 2010). Self-reflection relates to self-monitoring because it requires students to think about their behaviors, recognize the impact of those behaviors, and regulate and adjust those behaviors in the future, to create a more positive classroom environment (Norris, 2003). When children are able to self-monitor and reflect on their behaviors based on a set classroom standard, they can direct their behaviors in ways that help them adjust future choices (Rafferty, 2010).

Self-monitoring has been researched primarily in instructional settings, with some focus on behavior; but with a main focus on how students can be directed to make more automatic decisions about what they should be doing, becoming self-aware of their behaviors and empathetic of how they may impact others by changing their perspective of the situations, therefore changing social relationships in the classroom (Norris, 2003; Stright & Supplee, 2002). Self-reflection and self-monitoring look mainly at how students
are thinking and reacting to their own behaviors in the classroom, allowing them to make better decisions about those actions.

When children are able to reflect and then monitor their own behaviors in the classroom they are changing the classroom environment. Bilmes (2012) emphasized that when children are taught social skills, they become more competent in their social skills. Children need an environment that not only supports them socially, but also sets specific guidelines to direct their behaviors and allow them to practice these guidelines throughout the day (Bilmes, 2012). Egocentrism plays a factor in why students need this support. When students have guidelines to help them make decisions about their behavior, they are able to monitor future actions and make action choices based on those guideline. In elementary school this is extremely important because students in this age group are learning how to behave in a larger classroom environment, and how their behaviors need to adjust to influence these behaviors (Bilmes, 2012). Pelco and Reed-Victor (2007) supported this idea, stating that direct behavioral instruction should begin in elementary school, to improve long-term both academic and social skill outcomes. The emphasis on how students will reflect and monitor their behaviors may change throughout elementary school, but it is equally as important in all grades and ages (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Developing social skills in the classroom not only helps students with future social interactions, but also builds trust in the classroom. Students who understand expectations and consequences are not caught off-guard by teacher reactions to their behaviors. Having a mutual respect between students and teachers in the classroom, during both academic and social activities, helps even the most impulsive children feel more comfortable and improve behaviors because of the relationships they want to maintain in the classroom (Bilmes, 2012). These students may be more likely to respect the teacher’s expectations for behaviors, decreasing time that would normally be spent disciplining students (Bilmes, 2012).

One occupational therapist, in a study by Cahill (2006), demonstrated the use of train analogies, asking students if their motors were running high, low, or just right, to promote reflection in the general and special education classroom settings. This program was referred to as the ALERT program (Cahill, 2006). The purpose of the ALERT program was to regulate students’ alertness in the classroom, through the use of a three-step intervention (Cahill, 2006). The program identified three steps for students to reflect upon, and regulate their own behaviors. These steps included (a) identifying the behaviors of concern and what the desired behaviors are, (b) explaining how the student can change their behaviors, and (c) allowing the student to practice these skills in the classroom, which included such things as humming a tune to focus on a task (Cahill, 2006). By having students recognize desired behaviors based on expectations and use skills taught to them to demonstrate appropriate behaviors they can reflect on what they are doing and use the new skills to adjust their behaviors.

Similar to the ALERT program, Amarto-Zech, Hoff and Doepke (2006) and Rock (2005) looked at other interventions currently in use, MotivAider and ACT-REACT. These interventions looked at students who were not paying attention in the classroom and showing off task behaviors (Amarto-Zech et al., 2006; Rock, 2005). Both interventions were able to show an increase in on task behavior when students were presented with a way to reflect on their behaviors after a certain interval of time (Amarto-Zech et al., 2006; Rock, 2005). This showed that reflection on off-task behaviors, and giving students the tools to
self-monitor their behaviors, led students to have more positive classroom behaviors. Swoszowski, McDaniel, Jolivetter, and Melius (2013) looked at off task behaviors as well, but used a one-on-one mentor method, as opposed to an intervention system, to help students with behavioral issues monitor their own behaviors. Moore (2001) also took the approach of having students record their behaviors and reflect on those behaviors, using the prompt “What does the teacher want me to do?” This allowed students to think about how the teacher wanted them to act, and reflect about how their behaviors fit into those expectations. Johnson and Johnson (1999) looked at this reflection process in a special education classroom. The students self-assessed their own behaviors based on certain criteria and then reflected on their behaviors, reinforcing certain behaviors (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Kowalewicz and Coffee (2013) used a Mystery Motivator chart method to reinforce behaviors on a variable ratio reinforcement schedule. The Mystery Motivator chart was a student-teacher contract that stated behavior goals for students and made students aware of the rewards and consequences for their actions (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2013). Visual reminders, such as tally marks, were displayed to show classroom behavior goals for an eight week time period (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2013). This led to a decrease in disruptive classroom behaviors. These studies focus on reflection as a tool for students to look at their behaviors, compared to expectations, and adjust their behaviors based on this reflection. Praise and precorrective statements relate to self-reflection and self-monitoring because they give students feedback about their behavior, so students can reflect using that feedback and adjust future behaviors.

Gaps and Limitations in Current Research

Many of these studies focused on students in a special education classroom, or students with behavioral issues (Burack et al., 2006; Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Moore, 2001; Stright & Supplee, 2002; Rock, 2005). Therefore, caution must be used when drawing inferences about the use of these strategies for students with typical behaviors in general education settings. Moreover, the sample sizes in some of these studies were small, which could have influenced intervention outcomes (Cahill, 2006; Reinke et al., 2008; Swoszowski et al., 2013). The age range of students was a limitation in the research done by Amato-Zech et al. (2006). One of the major limitations of all the studies is that variables in the classroom could not be controlled.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to see if behavior reflections, on both positive and negative student behaviors, encouraged more positive classroom behaviors and decreased negative classroom behaviors that were frequently seen in one fourth grade classroom. This study was conducted in a general education classroom. All students in the classroom participated in the intervention, but data collection focused on eight students with behavioral concerns, adding to the field of research by expanding on some of the gaps seen in previous literature. This study will focus on three main research questions:

1. What are the most commonly seen behaviors, requiring teacher intervention, in the classroom?
2. Does student reflection on behaviors deter or encourage these behaviors in the future?
3. Can students reflect on both positive and negative behaviors successfully?
Methods

The goal of this intervention was to increase student awareness of their own egocentric speech and how their behaviors influence the classroom environment. To accomplish this goal, I asked students to reflect on their positive and negative classroom behaviors, based on a predetermined list of classroom expectations. Classroom expectations were determined prior to the start of the study, based on some of the frequently seen behaviors in the classroom. Classroom expectations, both positive and negative, were introduced to the students at the beginning of the study. After this introduction, these expectations were printed on small pieces of paper and taped on the target students’ tables, for students to refer to and think about. During the study, students were asked to fill out a student behavior reflection sheet, which asked the students what behavior on the expectations poster they were exhibiting, why they exhibited those behaviors, how those behaviors impacted the classroom, and how they should act next time in the situation. This process was intended to only take the students a few minutes to complete. During free time, or independent seat work time, the students were expected to conference with me about their reflection, and I added notes about what behaviors were actually occurring, in addition to direct quotes from the students, during this conversation.

The sample consisted of students enrolled in a fourth grade general education class at a rural, public elementary school with around 500 students in the Mid-Atlantic region. Demographically, most of the students were White and were of various SES backgrounds. Throughout the study, students were referred to by their assigned classroom number in all data collection, to ensure confidentiality.

Intervention

The first step in this study involved conducting a pre-observation on March 2, 2015 of the eight target students using a behavior checklist (see Appendix A). This checklist contained the target behaviors of the intervention. The positive behaviors that were assessed were being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn, the PBIS behaviors focused on at the school. The negative behaviors that were assessed were not staying in seat, calling out, interrupting other students, working on other things and playing with objects on the group tables. Each student was observed multiple times during a 45-minute time period by my mentor teacher, and received a tally on the behavior checklist for each behavior that he or she exhibited during this time.

The second step involved introducing the students to the classroom expectations list and student behavior reflection sheet. The classroom expectations list included all the behaviors that were expected to be seen and not to be seen throughout the school day. This list was placed on each target students’ table for the remainder of the intervention. The student reflection sheets were placed on a chair at the front of the room and were handed out to students when they were not behaving. A copy of the student behavior reflection sheet can be found in Appendix B.

The third step is when the intervention really began. When students exhibited the behaviors outlined on the classroom expectations list they were silently handed a student behavior reflection sheet. The sheet required students to respond to the following questions: “What did I do (refer to classroom expectations)?” “Was my behavior positive or negative?” and “How did my actions affect my classmates and my teacher?” Students were only expected to take a few minutes to complete this reflection. After filling out a student
reflection sheet for a positive behavior, students were rewarded with praise and the school PBIS reward ticket. Later, when students were participating in independent seatwork, or during free time, there was a student-teacher conversation about the reflection. Teacher observed behaviors were recorded and the student was asked to review his or her reflection with the teacher. Data collection during this step took place from March 3, 2015 to April 10, 2015.

In the final step of the study, which took place on April 10, 2015, changes in the frequency of positive and negative behaviors were evaluated. Each student was observed during a 45-minute period by my mentor teacher using the behavior checklist, to determine frequency of each behavior. In addition to the behavior checklist, a person who has little knowledge of the intervention reviewed the student behavior reflection sheets. This outside observer will use a five-point Likert-type scale (see Appendix C) to determine if students were able to reflect successfully on their behaviors.

A quantitative approach was used to gather data in this study from the behavior checklists and Likert-Scale responses on the student behavior reflection sheets. Quantitative data is the focus of this study, since the dependent variables will be measured for frequency and accuracy. The process of data collection, as described in the previous section, took place in different stages of the observation. Students were observed during a 45-minute time period at the beginning and end of the study, using the behavior checklist. Student responses on the student behavior reflection sheets were organized based on assigned student numbers. The data collection processes, in relation to the research questions of this study, are outlined in Table 1.
Table 1: 
Research Questions and Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Behavior Checklist</th>
<th>Student Behavior Reflection Sheet and Likert-Scale for Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the most commonly seen behaviors, requiring teacher intervention, in the classroom?</td>
<td>A behavior checklist will go beyond the classroom observations, to give an idea of the frequency each behavior is seen by the students in a small window of time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does student reflection on behaviors deter or encourage these behaviors in the future?</td>
<td>The post-intervention behavior checklist will show if there is any decline in negative behaviors, and increase in positive behaviors.</td>
<td>The student behavior reflection sheet allows for the student to think about their behaviors and the teacher to note more about the behavior that led to the student filling out the reflection sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can students reflect on both positive and negative behaviors successfully?</td>
<td>The post-intervention behavior checklist will show if there is any decline in negative behaviors, and increase in positive behaviors</td>
<td>The Likert scale will be used to determine if student reflections accurately reflected the behaviors on the student behavior reflection sheets, as seen over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis
The behaviors noted after employing the pre-and post-behavior checklist observations were first analyzed for frequency of behaviors, negative and positive. After the conclusion of the study a two-tailed, paired, t-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant change in both positive and negative behaviors, after the intervention was completed. The mean was also be calculated for the categories of positive and negative behaviors, based on the pre and post-intervention behavior checklist, and a two-tailed, paired, t-test was used to determine if personal reflection was more effective for positive or negative behaviors. Open-coding was utilized to determine what phrases were commonly used by target students in their reflections each week, to look for a change in the reflections.
of the students. Open-coding was done using the word frequency generator, Wordle, to
determine the most commonly seen responses on all of the student behavior reflection
sheets collected.

Validity Concerns
To address validity concerns I asked others to help with the data collection in order
to prevent any bias in the way I might collect the data myself. My mentor teacher observed
the students, using the behavior checklist, before and after the intervention. For the review
of the student behavior reflection sheets using the Likert-type scale, a graduate student,
with little knowledge of the study and the class, was used in order to eliminate any
potential bias. This student was aware of how to respond to a Likert-type scale and was
told to look at the first half of the behavior sheets for each student and fill out one Likert-
type scale per student, and then to repeat the process for the second half of the behavior
sheets. These sheets were sorted by date.

Findings and Interpretations
Findings of the study were analyzed and sorted based on research question. The findings
related to each of the three original research questions will be discussed by question, with
the interpretations of each question immediately follow the findings.

What are the most commonly seen behaviors, requiring teacher intervention, in the
classroom?
In my field notes I listed some behaviors that were frequently seen during an
observation of the entire fourth grade classroom. My field notes also noted that my mentor
teacher was also frequently noticing these behaviors. These behaviors interrupted the
classroom environment and impacted the learning of students in the room, as well as my
mentor teacher’s ability to teach. I noted that students were frequently calling out, tattling,
leaving their seat, playing with objects on desks, interrupting others, and not working on
assigned work, instead drawing, coloring, and reading.
The behavior checklist pre-intervention observation showed the frequency that the
eight target students exhibited these behaviors and these frequencies are noted in Table 2.
Table 2:  
*Results of Behavior Checklist Pre- Intervention Observation Negative Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Out of Seat</th>
<th>Calling Out</th>
<th>Interrupting</th>
<th>Off-Task</th>
<th>Playing with Objects on Desk</th>
<th>Tattling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In my field notes I also mentioned that the behaviors encouraged by the school, being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn, were not seen as often in the target students. Table 3 shows the frequency of these positive behaviors, as seen on the behavior checklist pre-intervention observation.

Table 3:  
*Results of Behavior Checklist Pre Intervention Observation Positive Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respectful</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Ready to Learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Holding a mirror to Behavior

The results of the behavior checklist showed me the behaviors that needed to be focused on in the classroom. The desired positive behaviors in the classroom were seen less frequently than the undesired negative behaviors. This also showed that the students were not regulating these behaviors themselves and may benefit from the classroom management technique focused on in this study. This addressed the first research question by allowing me to focus on the needs of this specific classroom and students and subsequently influencing my next two research questions.

Does student reflection on behaviors deter or encourage these behaviors in the future?

Using the number of occurrences of negative behaviors noted during the pre-and post-intervention behavior checklist observations, I conducted a two-tailed paired t-test. The t-test for negative behaviors showed a significant decrease in negative behaviors in the target students from the beginning (M = 12.25) to the end (M = 7.25) of the intervention (p < .05).

![Figure 1: Number of instances each student exhibited a negative behavior in a 45 minute observation period pre and post intervention.](image)

Using the number of occurrences of positive behaviors noted during the pre-and post-intervention behavior checklist observations, I conducted a two-tailed paired t-test. The t-test for positive behaviors showed no significant decrease or increase from the
beginning ($M = 2.215$) and end ($M = 4.375$) of the intervention in the target students ($p = .065$).

**Figure 2:** Number of instances each student exhibited a positive behavior in a 45 minute observation period pre-and post-intervention.

**Figure 3:** Number of occurrences of each negative and positive behavior pre-and post-intervention.
Table 4:
*Number of Student Behavior Reflection Sheets Handed Out Per Week*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheets Handed Out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative behaviors were the only behaviors that had a significant decrease, overall. Looking at the number of occurrences of each behavior, it can be seen that every negative behavior saw a decrease in the post-intervention observation, except for playing with objects on desk (see Figure 3). Playing with objects on desk had six more occurrences in the post-intervention observation, than in the pre-intervention observation. This however, did not impact the overall decrease in negative behaviors. Although positive behaviors did not show a statistically significant increase or decrease there was practical increase in the number of positive behaviors seen (see Figure 2). There were 11 more instances of students being ready to learn and nine more instances of students being responsible. Although there were two fewer instances of respectful behavior, the majority of the positive behaviors increased in the classroom. The number of student behavior reflection sheets handed out decreased throughout the intervention, however many different factors could have impacted this number, including student willingness to fill out the sheets, and the amount of sheets stuffed into student book boxes (see Table 4). The student behavior checklist sheets counted included only the sheets turned in at the end of each day during the intervention. Sheets that were found post-intervention, or that were not filled out, were not included in the data analysis.

Can students reflect on both positive and negative behaviors successfully?

Using the one (strongly disagree) through five (strongly agree) scale, filled out by an outside researcher on the Likert-type scale (see Appendix C), I conducted a two-tailed, paired t-test. The t-test did not show a significant increase or decrease in the ability of students to reflect accurately on their behaviors from the beginning (M = 13) to the end (M = 16.5) of the study (p=.20; see Figure 4) Accurate reflection was determined based on the student response compared to the teacher notes. To see student reflections beyond the Likert-type scale, a Wordle, word frequency analysis (see Table 5) was conducted to see what the top responses were from each week during the intervention. The Wordle showed that the top responses each week stayed fairly consistent, with students identifying their behaviors and stating if they were negative or positive (see Appendices D-H).
Table 5:
*Top 5 Reflection Responses Each Week (And Times it Occurred)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1:</th>
<th>Week 2:</th>
<th>Week 3:</th>
<th>Week 4:</th>
<th>Week 5:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative (26)</td>
<td>Negative (13)</td>
<td>Negative (7)</td>
<td>Negative (8)</td>
<td>Talking (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling Out (22)</td>
<td>Not a Good Choice (10)</td>
<td>Not Paying Attention (6)</td>
<td>Affected My Classmates (5)</td>
<td>Negative (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrupting Others (9)</td>
<td>Calling Out (9)</td>
<td>Affected No One (4)</td>
<td>Interrupting Others (4)</td>
<td>Affected No One (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking (7)</td>
<td>Interrupting Others (4)</td>
<td>Distracting Classmate (2)</td>
<td>Talking (4)</td>
<td>Interrupting Others (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattling (5)</td>
<td>Not Following Directions (3)</td>
<td>Interrupting Others (2)</td>
<td>Teacher Had to Stop (3)</td>
<td>Teacher Had to Stop (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Results of Likert scale averages for student responses, ranging from 1 (student is not accurate in response), to 5 (student is accurate in response).*
Student responses remained fairly consistent, as seen in Table 5. The students more frequently noted their behavior as negative, and then explained the behavior in all weeks. In the first two weeks almost all of the top five responses consisted of straightforward answers about the behavior that took place, with a general “not a good choice” response when asked how the behaviors affected others. In the last three weeks top reflections included more insightful answers including “affected my classmates” “distracted my classmates” and “the teacher had to stop.” The response “affected no one” was also in the top five responses in week 4 and 5. This could be due to the fact that some students were not as willing to participate in the intervention at this point, and therefore their reflections showed this.

Although the Likert scale t-test analysis was not statistically significant, Figure 4 shows an increase in accuracy in the responses seen in the beginning half of the intervention, compared to the ending half of the intervention. The higher the number on the scale, the more accurate the student’s reflection was, and all questions showed an increase at the end of the study. Question 1, “The student and teacher description of the behavior matches” increased from an average of 1, or strongly disagree, to a 3.25, roughly neutral. Therefore, students were able to match my description of their behaviors more accurately at the end of the study. Question 2 “The student accurately reflected on his or her behavior” was fairly neutral, however saw an increase showing that student responses more accurately reflected what I noted the behavior was. Question 3 “The student was able to see how his or her behaviors affected others” showed the least change throughout the intervention, although student responses at the end of the behavior as positive or negative intervention showed that they were thinking more about how their behaviors affected others. Student 12 was also able to see how their behaviors impacted the classroom early on in the study, while student 16 was unable to show an understanding of how their behaviors affected others, throughout the study and may have skewed results. Question 4 “The student was able to identify the behavior as positive or negative” saw an increase in Likert-scale averages, showing that although negative was a top five response in Table 4 for all weeks, students were more accurately able to identify the behavior as negative or positive at the end of the intervention. Question 5 “The teacher notes showed that the student was able to accurately reflect on their behavior” had an average of below 3, or scaled more towards students inability to reflect accurately based on student description of behavior, throughout the intervention.

Discussion of results

The results indicate that having students reflect on their positive and negative behaviors can affect behavior choices. After having my students reflect on their behaviors they showed a significant decrease in the amount of negative behaviors that occurred, as well as an increase in positive behaviors. Negative behaviors decreased from 98 occurrences seen from the eight students prior to the start of the intervention, to 58 occurrences seen from the eight students after the intervention. Positive behaviors increased from 17 to 35 occurrences seen from the eight students. Although the Likert-type scale findings were not significant, all questions saw an increase in the accuracy of student responses, showing that students were grasping the concept of reflection better than they did at the beginning of the study. In the qualitative analysis students answers in weeks three through five showed more in-depth responses of “distracting classmates” and
“teacher had to stop” than week one and two’s more surface responses of what the behavior was or that the behavior was “not a good choice”. The number of behavior sheets handed out to students each week declined significantly from 44 to 8 throughout the course of the study.

These results demonstrate what Piaget (1953) was discussing when talking about egocentrism decline throughout elementary school. The results indicated that my students were still egocentric, and unable to see others points of views at the beginning of the intervention, and showed fewer egocentric responses at the end of the intervention. However, because these students were older elementary school students, they were able at the beginning to see how their behaviors may affect their classmates and teachers, the responses just evolved over time. The results also supported Partin and colleagues (2010) study that showed that PBIS rewards and praise could encourage students to have more positive behaviors. Throughout the intervention the eight students were aware that if they could identify their positive behaviors they would earn a school PBIS ticket. The use of PBIS tickets may have played a role in the increase of positive behaviors, and was not analyzed as a part of this study. Partin and colleagues (2010) found that praise without understanding the behavior is ineffective, so the reflection was an attempt to encourage students to identify and learn from their positive behaviors beyond the school ticket reward.

Stormont and Reinke (2009) and Lewis and colleagues (2000) research was also supported by the results. Like both of these studies I found that repetition and awareness of classroom expectations could encourage students to regulate their behaviors and decrease the number of negative and disruptive behaviors seen in the classroom. The results were also consistent with Amarto-Zech et al. (2006) and Rock’s (2005) results because students were able to show an increase in positive behavior after reflecting on negative behaviors. Students also generally responded well to praise, similar to Burnett & Mandel’s (2010) results. Overall, students resisted filling out the behavior sheets a lot less when they were for a positive behavior, rather than a negative behavior.

Although the intervention took place as a whole class intervention, there were some differences in the way that students responded to the concept of filling out behavior reflection sheets. Since the intervention began about seven months after the start of the school year the students were not used to this classroom management technique, and had already found comfort in the one that was established in the classroom at the beginning of the year. They were not all fond of the change of system so late in the year. As my mentor teacher noted, the target students were more against filling out the behavior reflection sheets, than the rest of the class. The students for whom the intervention was intended for expressed great disinterest in the reflection, while those the intervention was not intended for quietly and thoroughly reflected on their actions. This was very interesting to see and may have affected results.

Conclusion
The purpose of this study was to help students see how their positive and negative actions affect their classmates and teacher. Based on literature, I discovered that precorrective statements could help students understand classroom expectations, praise could encourage students to practice more positive behaviors, and self-reflection could help students regulate and understand their own behaviors. From the data I collected, I can
conclude that behavior reflection can positively influence student behaviors in the classroom. Due to these findings, I will continue to encourage student behavior reflection as part of my classroom management system.

Limitations

There were several factors that could have affected the outcome of this study. One factor is that between weeks four and five students had a week off of school for spring break, interrupting the time where students were practicing the expectations of the classroom. This could have influenced the results of the post-intervention observation, which took place a few days after returning to school after spring break. There were also a few snow days that took place during this time period, which interrupted the behavior routine of the students. Students also hid some of their behavior reflection sheets in book boxes on their table, and did not fill them out, so data on their reflections were lost with the uncollected sheets. Starting the intervention so late into the school year was another limitation. Students were not as willing to change the structure of their behavior routine at this point in the year as earlier in the year, and results could have been different if the intervention was implemented at the beginning of the fourth grade year. The intervention also took place over a short five week time period, and may have benefitted from a longer length study. Another limitation is that due to the time in a school day it was unrealistic to have a thorough conversation with each student for each behavior reflected and therefore some day’s teacher notes were a lot shorter than other days, depending on the amount and type of work that had to be accomplished, and the overall behavior of the class. This study also included a small sample size, which may have affected the results.

Implications

I believe that the results from this intervention could be valuable to the area of classroom management. My results could be useful to teachers who want their students to understand how their actions can affect their classmates and teachers. They could be especially useful in younger students, who have more egocentric thoughts. This could also be used in addition with a teacher’s already established classroom management system. I would recommend this intervention for use in the classroom, and am planning on using it in my own classroom next year. The results showed that the intervention made a change in the behaviors seen in the classroom, and I think that as a year long classroom management technique it could be successful to help egocentric students see how their behaviors impact others.

For future research, I would start the intervention at the beginning of the school year, making it the only behavior system that students are using that year, hopefully eliminating any negative responses from students participating in the intervention. I would also establish a time every day to talk to the students, so that the teacher-student discussion is not rushed. I would also make sure to check that students are actually filling out reflection sheets, so that they are reflecting on their behaviors throughout the day, and benefitting from reflection instead of hiding the sheets in their book boxes. It would also be interesting to see how the reflection sheets work for younger students. I would also make more of a note to hand out more reflection sheets for positive behaviors, since I tended to hand them out for more negative behaviors.
As a new teacher, one of my biggest struggles will be to establish a classroom management system that helps the first year of teaching go more smoothly. Classroom management concerns not only affect new teachers, but could also affect veteran teachers who may be experiencing a difficult class who does not respond to classroom management techniques that have been used for years. Although the concept of egocentrism is unavoidable in the elementary school classroom, the solution to improving behaviors in these students could be as simple as reflection.
Holding a Mirror to Behavior

References


### Appendix A

**Student Behavior Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student 1</th>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Student 21</td>
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</table>

**Columns:**
- Out of Seat
- Calling Out
- Interrupting Others
- Wearing Headphones
- Using Cell Phone
- Buying with Objects on Desk
- Tattling
- Respectful
- Responsible
- Ready to Learn
Appendix B

Student Behavior Reflection Sheet

Number __________________ Date________________________

Student Behavior Reflection Sheet

What did I do (refer to classroom expectations)? Was my behavior positive or negative?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How did my actions affect my classmates and my teacher?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Teacher Notes:
Appendix C

*Likert-Type Scale*

**Student Reflection Likert Scale**

1. The student and teacher description of behavior matches.
   
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The student accurately reflected on his or her behavior.
   
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The student was able to see how his or her behavior affected others.
   
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The student was able to identify the behavior as positive or negative.
   
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. The teacher notes showed that the student was able to reflect on their behavior.
   
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Word Frequency Wordle Week 1

I was distracting my teacher. The teacher had to stop. My teacher and classmates had to wait.
Not doing what I was supposed to do. Could tell the answer. My classmates had to get my attention.
Class was not having my attention. I was not listening. I wasn't talking. I was making faces.
I moved when I did not have permission. Not interrupting others. I got out of my seat.
Drawing instead of listening. Should have raised my hand. Teacher could not talk.
Quiet and focusing. Playing with objects.
Slowing everyone down. I distracted them. Called out. I don't know what I did.
Out of my seat. I don't know the only thing that happened was my book fell on accident.
Not paying attention. Ready to learn. Tattling. Talking. I was loud. Interrupted the class.
Interrupted others. Wasn't talking. I did not follow directions. I stopped the class. Putting my head down.
Getting my work. Teacher heard me. I interrupted the class.
Out of seat. Stopped the class. Interrupting others.
Interrupted. I wanted to put the pencil in the extra pencil box.
I was calling out. Working on work I shouldn't be. I was not ready for the day.
I was talking when wasn't supposed to be. I got caught.
Classmates not able to get work done.
The teacher did not tell me to. Didn't get on classmates nerves.
Appendix E

*Word Frequency Wordle Week 2*

**Negative**

Ms. Kamin thought it was rude  
Stopped the class  
Making classmates not able to hear  
Positive Out of seat  
Could have told the answer Teacher has to wait  
Quiet Wrong Called out  
Calling out Not giving my attention to the class  
Interrupted others Interrupted  
Making classmates not hear  
Did not read Stopped teacher  
Not a good choice Talking  
Following directions  
Not giving classmates chance to talk  
Talking  
Ready to learn  
Not following directions
Appendix F

*Word Frequency Wordle Week 3*

Distracting teacher and classmates
Not looking at board
Affected no one
Did not listen I could not hear stuff
My classmate had to start over Interrupted
Playing with scraps
Singing Stopped the teacher
Looking around I didn't say anything
Positive In a good way
Ready to learn
Wrong
Negative
I did nothing
Talking
Interrupting others
Not following directions
Not giving full attention
Appendix G

*Word Frequency Wordle Week 4*
Appendix H

*Word Frequency Wordle Week 5*

Teacher had to stop
Talking
Slowed down Ms. Kamin
Had to stop teaching I called out
Erasing Interrupted the class
Interrupted others
Talking to others
I affected no one Affected no one
Could put name on paper
Off-task
Did not let my classmates talk
I wasn't talking

Negative