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A Positive Approach to Reducing Negative Student Behavior

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December 5, 2014

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### Abstract

The focus of this research involved the implementation of a behavior management system with a positive focus in order to investigate how it would encourage optimal student behavior. The behavior management system was Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks (ENVoY), created by Michael Grinder (2005). The research was conducted throughout five first-grade Spanish classrooms in an urban Midwest location. Baseline data was measured through student artifacts, student feedback questionnaires, a teacher journal, and behavior observation checklists. Upon the conclusion of the baseline data collection, the remaining time included behavior modeling sessions, the implementation of ENVoY, and data collection. The data collection methods were the same as those used to measure baseline information. The data suggested that the use of ENVoY was beneficial in encouraging positive student behavior. The use of ENVoY will continue to be used within the Spanish classes.

Disruptive behavior is a concern that every teacher faces regardless of the content area or educational setting. Highlighting positive behavior choices rather than negative choices aids teachers in creating a calm environment where students can feel safe and enjoy learning. The use of modeling and positive teacher delivery methods creates opportunities for clear expectations. The implementation of behavior management systems with a positive focus allows teachers to set the foundation for positive behavior expectations of students in the elementary level. These skills and management systems can create a learning environment that fosters healthy relationships and academic engagement.

Maria Montessori stated “that there is but one path to a peaceful world, and that path leads directly through the gateway of our educational system” (Haskins, 2011, p. 67). In her lifetime Montessori spoke endlessly about the need for individuals to realize their potential. Teachers can help children realize their potential through daily interactions and activities within the classroom. Nevertheless, oppressive practices are commonly used within classrooms, such as a restraint of movement, lack of individual choice (the blank slate theory), and the teacher as the center of the classroom (Haskins, 2011). When these strategies are used within the classroom, students do not have the opportunity to use their knowledge actively.

Students may turn to disruptive behavior in order to use their creativity, apply themselves as they see fit, or for attention. Disruptive behavior is a common issue for many teachers. Some classroom management practices highlight the negative behavior choices. As restated by Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, and Colpin (2010) reprimands, corrections, and commands that attempt to move students away from negative behavior

choices may encourage students to cause more disruptions. Highlighting the negative student choices can increase oppositional behavior and/or reduce student self-esteem (Ahmann, 2014). The elementary setting is a significant period for the further development of behavior management as Leflot et al. (2010) restated. Leflot et al. (2010) went on to explain that the confrontation of disruptive behavior may actually reinforce the undesired behavior and can create future behavioral development issues for children. The following sources and research focus upon guiding teachers to manage and to support students with an emphasis on the positive.

Teacher modeling is an easy way to promote positive behavior choices. Kohl (n.d.) highlighted three basic ideas: show respect, think out loud, and show the human side. These three modeling techniques physically show students that their teacher(s) work towards exhibiting positive choices on a regular basis. Students can create connections to this effort as they put forth effort to achieve success in positive behavior choices as well. The Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks system (ENVoY), created by Michael Grinder (2005) further supports the idea of modeling behavior in order to diminish disruptive behavior.

Within the program, seven main “gems” or skills are used in order to connect to getting students attention, teaching moments, transition times, and seat work (Grinder, 2005). Some of these gems include Raise Your Hand vs. Speak Out, ABOVE (Pause) Whisper, OFF/Neutral/ON, and Visual Exit Directions (Grinder, 2005). Grinder (2005) included both verbal and non-verbal skills, and stresses the importance to focus upon the positive rather than the negative. These skills can be used independently or the full ENVoY system can be implemented into the classroom.

Along with the strategies provided by Grinder (2005) in the ENVoY system, he emphasized the importance of voice delivery and stance (Grinder & Yenik, 2009). According to Grinder and Yenik (2009, p. 67), speaking in a quiet voice or a whisper “lowers the listeners’ metabolism, thus calming the group.” Body position may not be something that a person considers when having a conversation or presenting information, but can send the wrong message. When talking with a student, stand with your arms at your side or forearms forward rather than standing with arms crossed or on the hips (Grinder & Yenik, 2009).

The use of positive statements rather than negative statements within a classroom can have a profound effect on classroom behavior. The elementary setting establishes the standards for school behavior for children, which can further affect the choices that students make within and outside of classroom settings in the future (Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, & Colpin, 2010). Leflot et al. (2010) completed a study that measured the amount of disruptive behavior occurrences when the Good Behavior Game was implemented into classrooms. The Good Behavior Game is a behavior management system that can assist in the prevention of disruptive behavior through a social approach (Leflot et al., 2010). The teacher keeps track of the negative behavior decisions (student off-task, disruptive behaviors, passive learning) made by groups of students and awards teams that meet or exceeded the set goal (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007).

The Caught Being Good Game has a similar approach as the Good Behavior Game with a positive variation. Within this behavior management system, the teacher can arrange students together in order to try to achieve a set goal. This behavior management system can be based upon individual student actions rather than groups as well. Wright

and McCurdy (2011) explained that teachers set a timer on a 20-minute interval. When the 20-minute interval has expired, the teacher takes note of any students that are on task and awards points to groups (Wright & McCurdy, 2011). The main difference between the Caught Being Good Game and the Good Behavior Game is that the Caught Being Good Game highlights the positive rather than the negative behavior choices.

Not only can teachers implement behavior management plans that highlight positive behavior choices, but they can implement ones that foster relationship-building. 1-2-3 Magic and the Nurtured Heart Approach are two management programs that stemmed from systems designed for parents. Both of these approaches have been modified so that they can be used within classroom settings. 1-2-3 Magic is a highly effective system has three principle goals, which includes stopping negative behavior, starting desired behavior, and creating ongoing strategies for relationships with students (Moore, 2008). This behavior management program encourages teachers to use an authoritative approach to teaching where the teacher embraces a warm personality with a no-nonsense attitude towards behavior (Phelan & Schonour, 2004). The implementation of the 1-2-3 Magic system allows teachers to reduce their feelings or anger about the negative choices made by students by creating a “no emotion rule” (Moore, 2008, p. 65). As a result, teachers can focus upon teaching and positive relationships.

The Nurtured Heart Approach benefits children who have been diagnosed with ADHD, ODD, sensory integration, learning disabilities, bi-polar diagnosis, and others. Ahmann explained that this system places the facilitator in the role of the “director” (2014, p. 39) who works to create the best film by focusing on the positive. The components of this program include limitations on attention to negative behaviors,

noticing any amount of positive behaviors, “energizing” (Ahmann, 2014, p. 39) the positive behaviors, and valuing the positive occurrences. Ultimately, the goals of this program are to decrease negative behavior, encourage positive behavior, build character and support the “inner wealth” (Ahmann, 2014, p. 39) of children.

While each of these behavior management systems has been reported to be effective within a variety of classroom settings, a teacher must select a system that fits with his or her class. Furthermore, modifications can be made in order to better accommodate the classroom, the educational goals, and the students. Teachers should look at the whole child when deciding their behavior management path. The creation of a peaceful classroom connects to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs because students can have a safe place to learn (Haskins, 2011). The creation of a calm atmosphere can allow for growth in affective as well as cognitive domains of the child (Adarkar et al., 2007). Both of these concepts can easily be used within any classroom without making significant changes.

My main goal behind reviewing each of the structured behavior management systems was to find a system that highlighted the positive in order to model appropriate classroom behavior clearly to my students. ENVoY and the idea of teacher modeling offer skills that can easily be implemented into any classroom because they are skills that are discretely employed by the teacher. These skills include both verbal and non-verbal skills that do not need to be directly taught to students. The ENVoY program must be used on a consistent basis if a teacher is going to experience success because it focuses on routine actions and choices displayed by the teacher. The Good Behavior Game and the Caught Being Good Game are two approaches with similar styles. They both can use a

group or individual style setting that measure behavior choices of students and offers rewards. While the Good Behavior Game is a well-established method, it focuses on the negative or disruptive qualities found within classroom behavior. Wright and McCurdy (2011) stated that this system can create peer pressure and elicit emotions related to the use of response cost. The Caught Being Good Game does the opposite by focusing on the positive or desirable choices made by students. When implementing either of these systems, the teacher must put forth effort to create the system and time in order to teach it to his or her students. Furthermore, this system will take class time because the student groups need to be scored and rewarded. 1-2-3 Magic is a basic system that encourages the teacher to consider the specific behavior choices of a child. As a result, the teacher can use a neutral view and thus save energy. The consequences are very precise and straightforward so that both the teacher and students are well informed. The Nurtured Heart Approach allows the teacher to take a step back in order to observe behavior as well. The main focus of this system is positive behavior and thrives on specific, positive comments and praise. This system does not need to be taught to the students, but it could take time for the approach to become effective. Overall, each approach and system has great tools as well as disadvantages.

Through this literary research, I have concluded that the ENVoY system offers a behavior management system that highlights positive behavior. The ENVoY system is a unique approach that includes both verbal and nonverbal modeling. As restated by Zoller (2004), 82% of classroom communication is nonverbal. Grinder employs the importance of powerful nonverbal techniques with minimal verbal techniques, such as ABOVE

(Pause) Whisper (2005). The purpose of the implementation of ENVoY is to create a peaceful environment where learning is the main focus.

The environment in which ENVoY will be implemented, observed, and critiqued is an elementary setting in five primary Spanish specialist class rooms. The elementary school is located in an urban Midwest location with a high population of English Language Learners and a diverse student population. Approximately 70% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch status. There will be approximately 110 students participating in this research.

Through my experience and frustration with the lack of effectiveness with various behavior systems, I wanted to find a different behavior system. Upon completion of teaching within my district for five years, I discovered that primary grade level teachers tend to experience more minor disruptive behaviors. Rather than fixate on the negative behavior choices, I decided that I would implement a purposeful behavior management system with a positive focus. During this period I would measure and research the results of optimal student behavior in five first-grade Spanish classrooms.

#### Description of Research Process

In order to create a solid research foundation for discovering the behavioral outcomes in first-grade Spanish classrooms when ENVoY skills were implemented, I created and reviewed four different research techniques. I wanted to use research methods that would measure true outcomes that would be appropriate to use with six and seven-year-old children while not taking away from the main subject of these classes. Furthermore, I aimed to use triangulation within my research in order to gain strong and

credible insights. Through the five-week research process, students completed two different measures: a student artifact (see Appendix A) and a student feedback questionnaire (see Appendix B). Meanwhile, I observed the desirable and less than desirable behaviors of each class through a checklist format (see Appendix C) and completed a teacher journal (see Appendix D) for each day of this research process.

Prior to implementation of ENVoY and during the first week, all of the families of first-grade students were sent an “opt out” letter (see Appendix E). This letter explained the main focus of my research, the reasons for completing research within the classroom setting, and the assurance that students would participate in regular educational practices. Furthermore, it explained that parents had a choice to withdraw their student from the research portion of this period. Additionally, the letter listed the contact information of a St. Catherine University faculty member and my advisor as well as where the completed work could be located. The letter provided a due date in order to ensure that parent’s had adequate time to reflect upon their choice and return the parent signed letter to me if they felt necessary.

During this first week, I randomly assigned numbers to students in each of the five classes. These numbers were recorded on a seating chart so that I could easily identify students with their numbers. Students whose parents had decided to opt out of my research were not assigned numbers; however, they would still be expected to participate in the activities that occurred during class time. A handful of “opt out” letters (see Appendix E) were returned to me past the due date. I discontinued recording research results for those students and destroyed any previous records from or about these students. All of the research that was collected over the five-week period contained these

numbers in order to identify students. Nobody else was made aware of the significance of these numbers, and I was the only person who had access to the seating charts with the number assignments.

During the second week, I measured the baseline behaviors of students prior to implementation. Students completed a five question feedback form (see Appendix B) in order for me to gain a better view of their feelings within my class, their thoughts about overall student behavior, and their understanding of desirable behaviors. This feedback form was much more difficult and time consuming for students than I had anticipated. As a whole class, I read each question one by one as well as displayed it on the smart board. Then, I circulated the room to help individual students. This process took 30 minutes to complete. I used a video camera to record the second week in order to review student behavior. As I viewed the recordings, I completed behavior observation checklists (see Appendix C). These checklists included both desirable and less than desirable behavior choices. Because my first-grade classes occur at the end of my teaching day, I was able to complete a journal (see Appendix D) for this initial stage. The journal allowed me to reflect upon the successes and areas of improvement as well as students' reactions. Both the behavior observation checklist and journal were completed for each class. These two measures of student behavior made me aware of the overall attitude of each class as well as specific behaviors from students. I was able to prepare my lessons and myself by predetermining students who would be more disruptive as well as students who would transition easily with the changes of ENVoY.

The implementation of ENVoY began part way through week two with a discussion about correct and incorrect behavior choices for sitting in chairs, raising one's

hand, individual work time, and lining up. After whole group brainstorm sessions in order to discuss the correct way to complete these four student behaviors, students were selected to model the correct and incorrect methods. We were able to refer to these modeling sessions throughout the remainder of the research period. During the second half of week two, students completed a student artifact (see Appendix A) that measured their opinion about their behavior choices within Spanish class for that specific day. Upon completion of each class period, I completed a journal (see Appendix D) that recorded the specific ENVoY strategies that had been implemented, the successes and areas of improvement, and student reactions. I was able to watch the recording of each class and complete the student behavior checklist (see Appendix C). The recordings allowed me to focus on the behavior choices of each student, view actions that I had not noticed while teaching, and record specific outcomes. A separate behavior checklist was completed for each class.

Along with the initial introduction of modeling desirable behaviors, I implemented ENVoY. The main techniques that I incorporated into my daily classes included the “seven gems”, positive and specific comments, decontaminating the classroom, public vs. private voices, follow up with a positive, and silent selection (Grinder, 2005). Students were not made aware of the specific ENVoY techniques because these should be seen as natural verbal and non-verbal behaviors from the teacher. The consistent use of these ENVoY techniques was training students to react to my behaviors in a positive fashion. Nevertheless, not every ENVoY technique was used within each class due to the nature of each lesson. Similar to the initial stages of my research, I completed a journal (see Appendix D) for each class. These journal entries

were used as a reflection time in the form of text in order to record specific ENVoY techniques, the successes, the areas of improvement, and students' reactions. Furthermore, I viewed the recordings of each class and recorded the results of student behavior throughout each class time on a student observation checklist (see Appendix C) for each class each day of Spanish.

At the beginning of the third week of the research period, students completed another student artifact (see Appendix A) that measured their opinion about their behavior choices for that specific day. This point in time was approximately the half way mark of my five-week research period. Students completed a third student artifact (see Appendix A) during the fourth week of research as well in order to continue to measure their personal opinions about behavior. These artifacts allowed me to look for patterns and changes in students' opinions. Initially, I had planned to have students complete a student feedback questionnaire (see Appendix B) at this time in my research, but I didn't deem it necessary for the length of this research period.

Over the last three days of the five-week research period, students completed a second student feedback questionnaire (see Appendix B). Due to the length of this questionnaire, it took students the complete 30 minute class period to complete the questionnaire. We completed this in the same fashion as the first feedback questionnaire where we read each question one by one in the whole group setting. The last stage of this research period included the use of a video camera to record each first-grade session. I was able to review the recordings in order to complete the final class observation checklists (see Appendix C) without the distractions of teaching. In addition to the

observation checklist, I completed journal pages (see Appendix D) in order to reflect upon the last days of research in the form of text.

### Analysis of Data

Prior to implementation of the ENVoY management system, I experienced minor behavioral disruptions throughout my class periods. Not only did this frustrate me as an educator, but I was able to witness the expression of impatience from students as well. The ENVoY structure highlighted a focus upon the use of verbal and non-verbal techniques to model positive behavior rather than call attention to negative behavior. Throughout the five-week research period, I was able to analyze results from my perspective as well as the first grade students' perspectives.

During the second week of the research process, I collected baseline data. This data was collected over a three-day period. At this point, I had highlighted the basic rules of my classroom environment; however, I had not changed my approach to student behaviors. First, students completed a five question feedback questionnaire (see appendix B). This questionnaire was challenging for the students because it required students to concentrate as I read the questions out loud. I experienced disruptive outbursts from some students, which made it difficult for other students to concentrate on my voice and the questionnaire. My journal entry from one of the class sessions explained that the students didn't seem to enjoy completing this questionnaire. Of the 110 students, 56 of the students claimed that they always raised their hand while 40 students marked sometimes, and six students marked that they never raised their hands. This data showed that approximately half of the first-grade students believed that they raise their hands when necessary in order to not disrupt the class and show respect to the speaker. Students

responded very similarly when asked if they felt that others listen to them. Approximately half of the students (58 students) felt that they were listened to by others. There were slightly more students who felt that they were never listened to by others. In terms of listening to the teacher, 72 believed that they always listen to the teacher while 24 students thought that they listen to the teacher sometimes and five students claimed that they never listened to the teacher. These results showed that approximately 75% of students believed that they were doing their best to listen to me at all times during Spanish class. The results for students who believed they understand the rules and can be principled were almost identical to the responses of students who listen to the teacher. Approximately 75% of students believed that they had the capability to show principled traits within the Spanish classroom. The final question inquired how students felt when they followed the rules. 87 students selected happy as their emotion, ten students selected sad, and three students selected angry. The overall results of the feedback questionnaire showed that plenty of students didn't feel that they were showing signs of positive behavior as shown in figure 1.

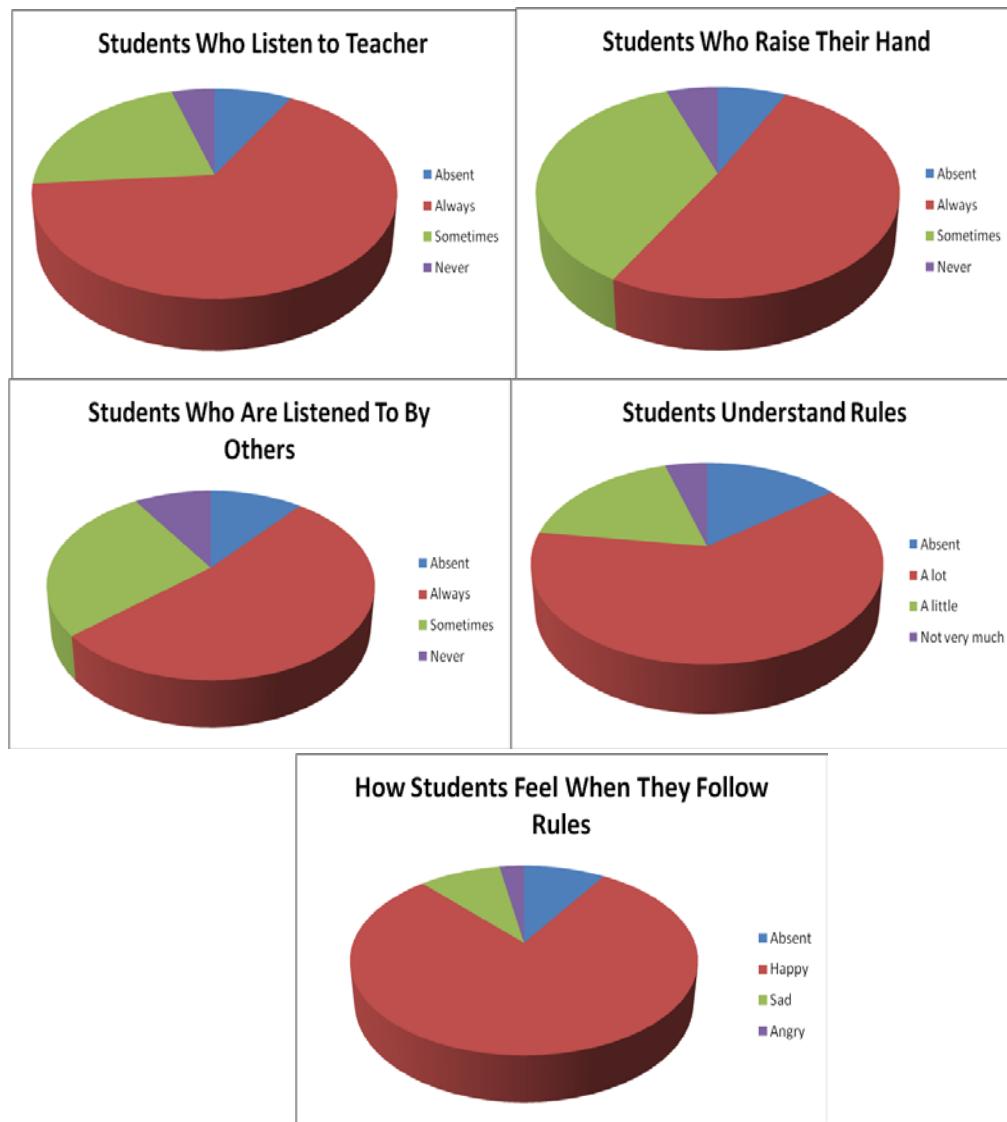
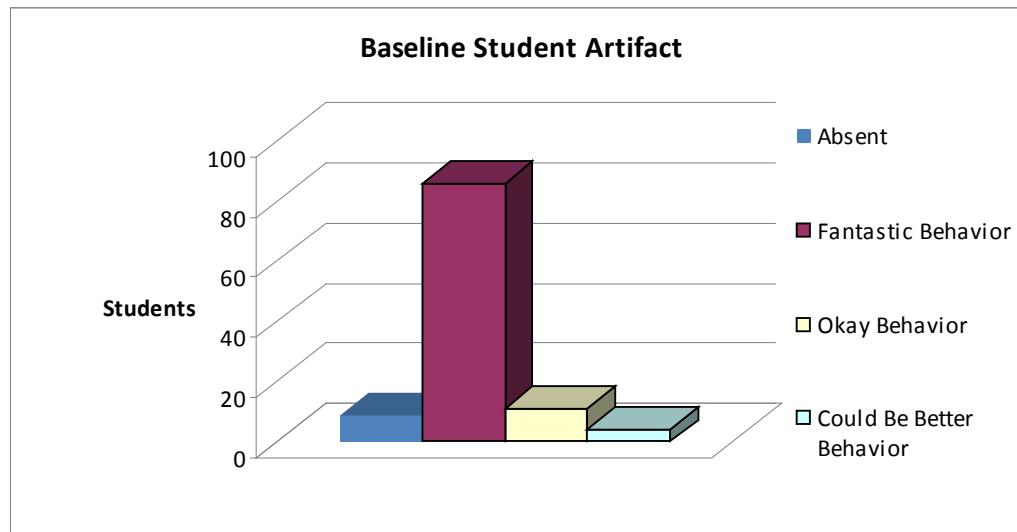


Figure 1. Baseline Student Feedback Questionnaire Results

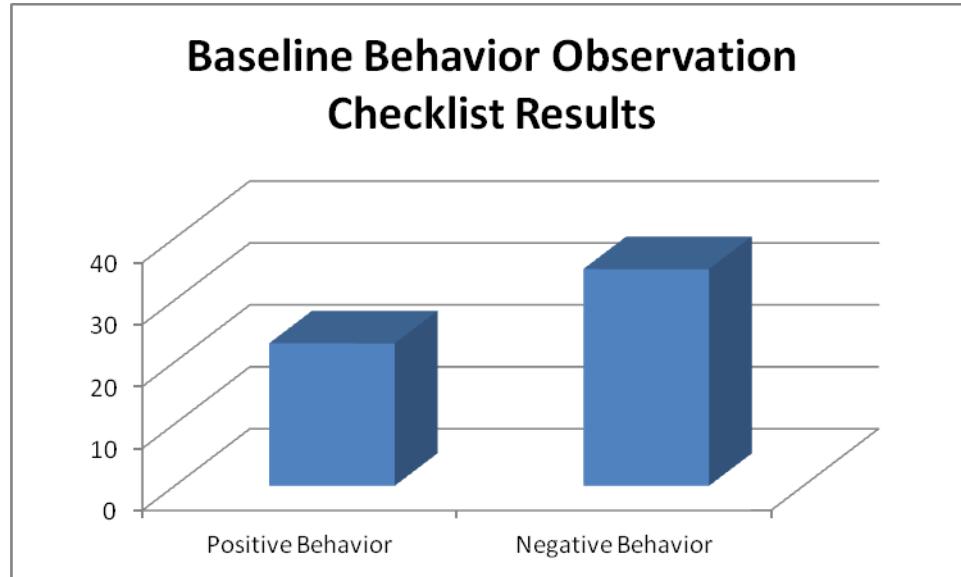
During the baseline measurement period, students completed an artifact (see appendix A) that measured their opinion about their behavior on a specific day in Spanish class. Out of 110 students that were included in this research, 86 students felt that they had displayed fantastic behavior choices, 11 students felt that their behavior was okay, four students felt that their behavior could be better, and nine students were absent on the day that this was administered. The large number of students who felt that they exhibited great behavior choices was a combination of students who were principled and students who did not quite understand the components of fantastic behavior choices as shown in figure 2.



*Figure 2. Baseline Student Artifact Results*

Throughout the period of collecting baseline data, I used a video camera to record the first-grade classes so that I could review the tape and complete the observation checklist (see appendix C). I grouped together six positive behavior qualities and six negative behavior qualities that were included in this checklist in order to interpret the

results. I discovered that throughout the five first-grade classes, I observed 23 positive behaviors and 35 negative behaviors as shown in figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Baseline Teacher Observation Checklist Results

Upon completion of measuring baseline behavior, I conducted research for the remaining three and one-half weeks as I implemented components of ENVoY. During this time, I used Excel spreadsheets to record scores for my quantitative data. For the student artifact (see Appendix A) and feedback questionnaire (see Appendix B), I assigned each response with a number. For the teacher observation checklist, I grouped the positive behaviors and the negative behaviors in order to compare the occurrences of positive versus negative behaviors. The journal was reviewed over time and I added notes in the margins in order to interpret the results throughout the data collection process.

Students completed three separate artifacts, (see Appendix A) in order to document how they felt about their own behavior for particular days in Spanish class.

The first student artifact was completed prior to the implementation of ENVoY. The second student artifact was completed during the third week. The final student artifact was completed in the fourth week. Figure 4 shows that the results are inconclusive. Overall, the students' opinions about their behavior did not alter significantly from the baseline to the final week of data collection. The majority of students believed that their behavior was "fantastic" while a small amount thought that their behavior was "okay" and an even smaller amount believed that their behavior "could be better". While the data does not show any change in results, I did observe differences in the way that students completed the artifacts. Prior to the second and third artifact, we revisited the positive and negative behavior choices that had been modeled in previous lessons. As students completed the artifacts, most took a moment to reflect rather than quickly circling a choice. Some students verbally reflected with me about their choices throughout the 30-minute class period. Therefore, it appeared that students were more aware of their behavior even though the results do not show any significant differences.

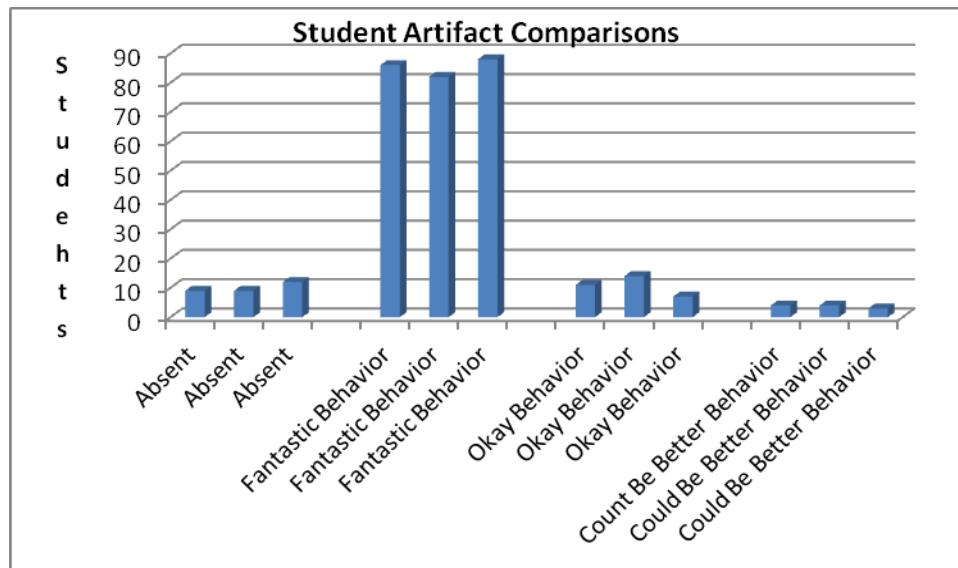


Figure 4. Student Artifact Comparisons

Over the final three days of my research period, the students completed the feedback questionnaire (see Appendix B) for the second time. Prior to beginning the questionnaire, we discussed positive and negative behavior as we referred to the behavior modeling sessions. While none of the comparisons between baseline data and the second questionnaire showed large differences, each question did have a positive change. 74 of the 110 students believed that they raised their hand all of the time while the baseline resulted in 56 students. Therefore, approximately 75% of students thought that they raised their hand when necessary. Of the 110 students, 70 students felt listened to by their teacher and peers. This portion increased from the baseline results by 12 students. There was not a significant increase in students who believed that they listened to the teacher all of the time. There was a somewhat significant increase in students who claimed that they understood the rules in Spanish class and understood how to be a principled student. 84 students marked that they completely understood how to be principled in the final questionnaire while only 69 students felt that they completely understood the rules during the baseline questionnaire. Finally, a small increase of students who experienced happiness from following the rules resulted in the final questionnaire. In conclusion, students did have trouble completing the five questions just as they did during the baseline questionnaire. Some students rushed through the questions prior to having them read out loud by me while others had difficulty marking their responses for the corresponding question that was being read. Nevertheless, it appears that most students felt that their behavior choices had improved as well as the atmosphere of the classroom as shown in figure 5.

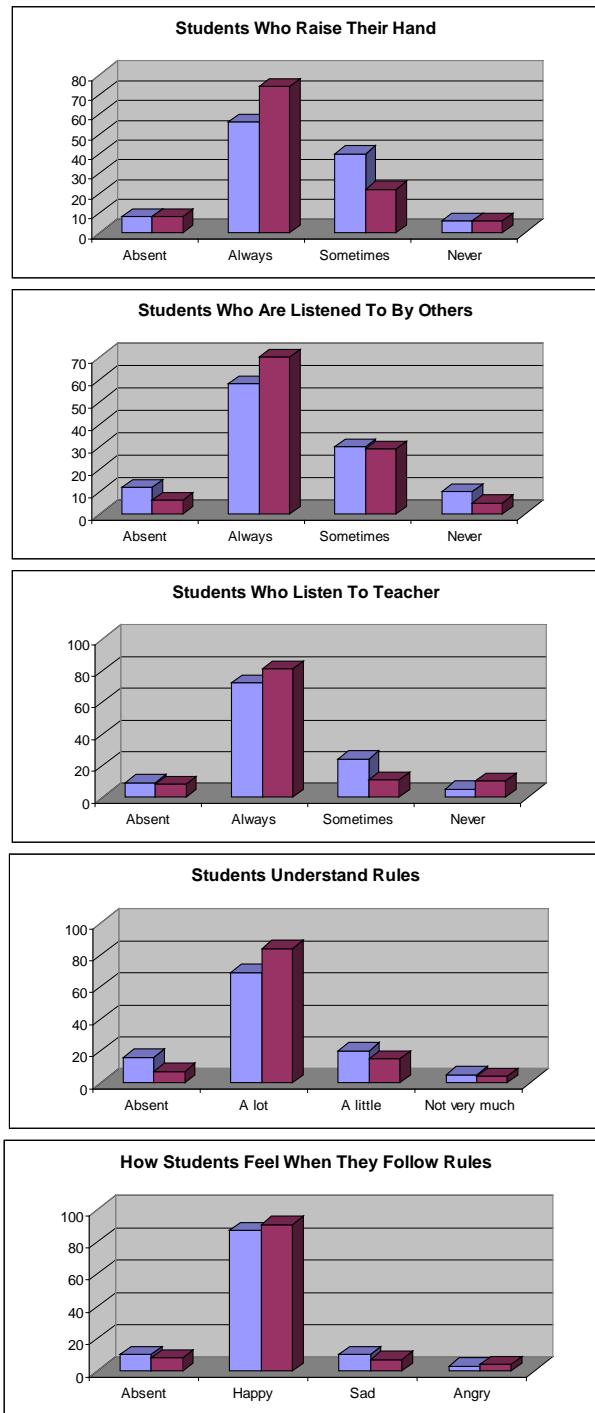
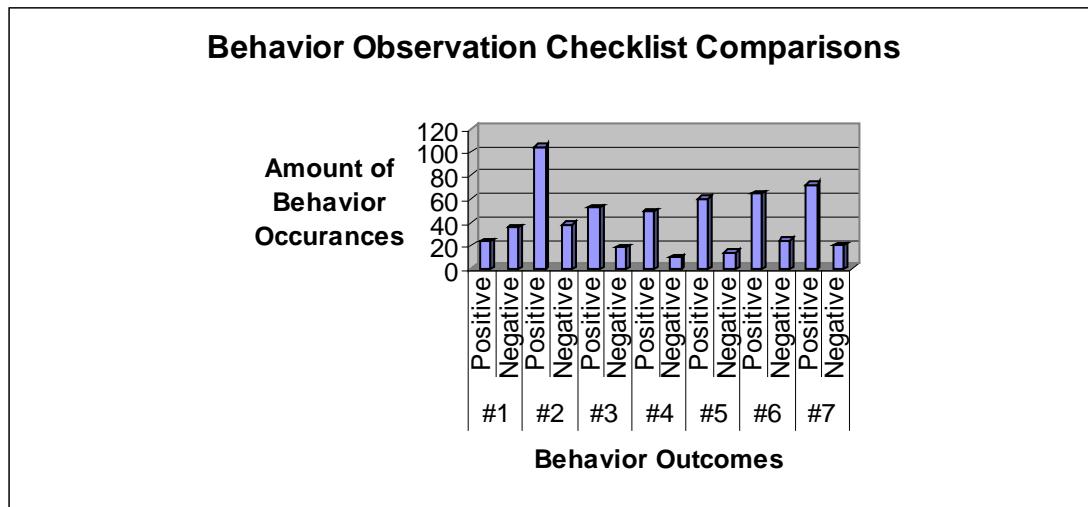


Figure 5. Student Feedback Questionnaire Comparisons

The observations completed by me through the use of a video camera were the most enlightening. As I viewed each class session, I was able to see student behaviors that I did not observe as I was teaching. Unlike the student feedback questionnaires and student artifacts, the observation checklists (see Appendix C) were based on clear viewing rather than opinions. The results show that the positive behavior increased while the negative behavior decreased as shown in figure 6. These results appear to be a true picture of what I experienced within the classroom setting as ENVoY was implemented. I found the observation through video to be the most useful measurement of results.



*Figure 6. Behavior Observation Checklist Comparisons*

The fourth measure that was used during the data collection period was a journal (see Appendix D) that I completed at the conclusion of each class. These journal entries show that the main ENVoY techniques that I used included Above (Pause) Whisper, Freeze Body, positive and specific comments, and visual exit instructions. These proved to be the most successful during direct instruction time as well as student work time. On

September 11<sup>th</sup>, I wrote that “It was nice to point to the exit instructions rather than re-explain the directions.” Two techniques that were difficult to implement were decontaminating the classroom and regular use of positive and specific comments. Decontaminating the classroom required me to select a specific spot where I would speak about correcting behavior. Every time that I noticed negative behavior choices, I was suppose to walk to the selected location before I could verbally correct the undesirable behavior. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, I noted that decontaminating the classroom didn’t seem to be setting in with the students. While it was useful to reflect upon each class time, I was not able to complete these until the conclusion of my first-grade sessions. At that time, I was not able to recount every specific aspect of these class sessions.

Through these four measures of data, I conclude that the implementation of ENVoY has increased positive behavior choices and diminished negative behavior choices. The student artifacts do not show conclusive results. Meanwhile, both the student feedback questionnaire and observation checklist reflect that the use of ENVoY is effective towards increasing optimal student behavior. The overall atmosphere of the classroom feels calmer. Students appear to know what is expected of them as I overhear them giving reminders to each other. As a teacher, I do not need to raise my voice as much and I see more positive characteristics of student behavior rather than negative.

### Action Plan

Upon completion of my analysis of the data results, I believe that the implementation of the ENVoY behavior management system created a positive shift within my classroom. While the student artifacts were inconclusive, the student feedback questionnaire showed that the view students held about behavior changed for the better.

My observations and the results suggest that these two measurements were difficult for the students to complete because it required concentration and the use of honest self-reflection. I did not have time to teach students about the approach to reflection about one's self. Therefore, I believe that there were variables that went against these two measurements.

The observation checklist was more useful in terms of data results, because I was able to view and analyze student behavior through the use of a video camera. Therefore, I could devote my full attention to the entire classroom rather than be distracted by teaching responsibilities. I discovered that the choices that students made began to shift towards the positive. For example, I noticed that more and more students were able to help each other quiet down quickly when I began the Above (Pause) Whisper approach as well as the Freeze Body approach (Grinder, 2005, pp. 15-21). Students would transition from talking or moving and use the skills that we had practiced during the modeling sessions.

My journal contained a lot of positive results as well. My entries contained excitement towards the implementation of ENVoY as I looked forward to implementing positive changes within my teaching. Furthermore, the results that were beginning to emerge in my classroom showed that the ENVoY techniques were creating a calm classroom through my actions as well as the students' responses.. Nevertheless, I did experience frustration due to the lack of time that I had to track the results. While I had a five-week research period, only three and one-half of these weeks involved the use of ENVoY. True results were only beginning to emerge at the conclusion of this period. The use of the technique called Decontaminating the Classroom was beginning to set in as I

finished up my data collection (Grinder, 2005). I believe that the results would have been more significant if I had continued to track the results.

As I reflect on this process, I believe that the use of ENVoY did change my view on teaching and behavior management. When I begin each class, I have a tool box full of techniques that I can use. I have noticed that I am much calmer and confident with even the most energetic classes. I do not need to raise my voice often or feel that I do not have enough time to reach every student. My view of classes isn't full of worries, but rather excitement as to how I can approach each class. In the past, I blamed the time of day and the combination of students as the reason that the primary grade levels were hard for me to manage. I have discovered that I enjoy teaching much more because I see the positive in my students.

Within the primary grades, I believe that teachers need to create foundations for students. These children are learning how to become students. Therefore, modeling positive and negative behavior choices allows students to practice and see how they should behave in order to support a productive learning environment. Within my classroom, I found that students greatly enjoyed modeling behavior choices. Upon completion of these sessions, we were able to refer to the differences between positive and negative choices. Rather than verbally redirecting throughout the class time, students could reflect back and fully understand my expectations. For example, I observed students giving specific suggestions to each other as to how to listen when I was giving instructions. These sessions gave students a positive and motivating view of behavior choices so that they could make desirable choices themselves.

Furthermore, the implementation of ENVoY allows students the opportunity to make mistakes yet shows students the correct path without making them feel bad about themselves. The use of the ENVoY techniques creates consistency within the classroom as we celebrate the positive choices. I was able to connect verbally with students who were making correct behavior choices rather than pointing out students who were not. As I made positive and specific comments about students who displayed desirable behaviors my other students would look to those students and make changes to mimic that behavior. Not only did this allow students to see how to modify their choices, but it did not focus upon poor decision making.

Finally, the use of ENVoY created a calmer environment. As previously mentioned, I became a much calmer teacher. I am able to deliver my instructions in a quiet voice rather than a raised voice. Additionally, I do not need to use my approach as an intimidation factor for students who are misbehaving. I believe that my demeanor has translated to the students as well. When we get started, I only need to do my quick attention getter, pause, and then keep teaching in a calm voice. Students are not yelling out as much and when they have something to say to each other or me they speak in a calm and quiet tone. Even the students who frequently struggle with behavior respond in a calmer manner. In most cases, they can process what I say to them and state how they feel. This atmosphere has created a much more productive learning environment where students are more willing to be actively involved.

As I complete my research, I see myself continuing to use the ENVoY techniques. I hope to create a more natural approach to these techniques without needing to think about using them. Furthermore, I hope to implement more techniques as we start

individual seat work. Not only do I plan to continue the use of ENVoY within my first-grade classes, but I plan to implement this system in my other classes. ENVoY is a behavior management system that can easily be used within any grade level. The continuation of seeing the positive student choices will create a caring atmosphere rather than one where the teacher is constantly fighting to reduce the negative behavior.

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## Appendix A

**Student Artifact**

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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

My behavior in Spanish class today was



Fantastic! I listened to the teacher and made principled choices.



Okay. The teacher needed to give me a reminder one or two times.



Could be better. The teacher needed to give me more than two reminders.

## Appendix B

## Student Feedback

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**1. In Spanish class, I raise my hand when I want to say something or ask a question.**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**2. Everybody listens to me when it is my turn to talk.**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**3. In Spanish, I stop what I am doing and listen when the teacher is talking.**

Always

Sometimes

Never

**4. I understand the classroom rules in Spanish class and know how to be principled.**

A lot

A little

Not very much

**5. When I follow the rules in Spanish, I feel**



## Appendix C

**Behavior Observation**

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please indicate how often the student exhibits the behaviors by marking a tally every time that the behavior is shown throughout the 30 minute class period.**

	Student uses caring language towards teacher and/or peers.
	Student talks to peers at an appropriate time.
	Student waits to talk until called upon by teacher.
	Student raises hand.
	Student sits in chair appropriately with pockets on chair, feet on ground, and body facing towards teacher. Student is ready to listen and learn when teacher complete attention signal.
	Student calls out or blurts out.
	Student talks during instructional time.
	Student uses uncaring language towards teacher and/or peers.
	Student does not focus on teacher during instructional time.
	Student does not sit in chair appropriately and/or gets out of chair.
	Student initiates physical contact with others.

Student 1								
Student 2								
Student 3								
Student 4								
Student 5								
Student 6								
Student 7								
Student 8								
Student 9								
Student 10								
Student 11								

## Appendix D

**Teacher Journal**

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Classroom Management ENVoY Skills Implemented Today:

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Successes:

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Needs Improvement:

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Student Reactions:

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Additional Notes:

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## Appendix E

**A Positive Approach to Reducing Negative Student Behavior  
Notification Form**

Dear Parents,

As you may know, I am a St. Catherine University student pursuing a Masters of Education degree. An important part of my program is the Action Research project.

As the Spanish teacher of your child at R.L. Stevenson Elementary, I have chosen to learn about the implementation of behavior management skills with a positive focus because first grade is a crucial age level when students develop their understanding of appropriate behavior. I am working with Dawn Quigley who is a faculty member at St. Kate's and Siri Anderson who is my advisor St. Kate's to complete this particular project.

I will be writing about the results that I get from this research; however none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any students, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular student. Other people will not know if your child is in my study.

When I am done, my work will be electronically available online at the St. Kate's library in a system called Sophia, which holds published reports written by faculty and graduate students at St. Kate's. The goal of sharing my final research study report is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

Student participation in this study involves regular educational activities. It is my hope that through your child's participation in this study, I will learn how to support optimal learning and reduce negative behavior distractions such as speaking out of turn, lack of focus during instructional periods, and struggling to stay on task.

If you decide you want your child's data to be in my study, you don't need to do anything at this point. Data that will be collected from your child includes student reflections of their own behavior within Spanish, teacher observations of student behavior, student feedback in regards to behavior and reactions to behavior, and teacher journaling to record outcomes.

If you decide you do NOT want your child's data included in my study, please note that on this form and return it by Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014. There is no penalty for not having your child involved in the study, I will simply delete his or her responses from my data set. All children will receive the same treatment in my class, regardless of your decision on this matter. If at any time you decide you do not want your child's data to be included in the study, I will remove included data to the best of my ability.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, [brittany.oslund@fridley.k12.mn.us](mailto:brittany.oslund@fridley.k12.mn.us) or 763-502-5361. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, you can ask me or my advisor, Dawn Quigley (dquigley@stkate.edu) who will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk

to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at [\(651\) 690-7739](tel:(651)690-7739).

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

**Opt Out**

I do NOT want my child's data to be included in this study. Please respond by Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

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Name of Child

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Date

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Signature of Parent

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Date

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Signature of Researcher

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Date