

IMPLICATIONS ON BEHAVIOR OF CHALLENGING STUDENT WHEN USING  
THE 'TWO BY TEN' STRATEGY AND THE IMPACT ON CLASS BEHAVIOR

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if Raymond Wlodkowski's "Two-by-Ten" strategy, talking with the most difficult student for two minutes over a period of ten days, would improve their behavior and the class's behavior. Prior to this study, some schools in the district implemented Positive Behavior Support System (PBIS) in 2010; other schools use BIST or another system for management. The study group selected for this study was a Kindergarten class. Data was collected in two stages, first two weeks on the number of redirects for all students, with permission, as a baseline for the class's normal behavior. Second, the strategy of Two-by-Ten was used for the next two weeks while continuing to collect the number of redirects. The analysis of the results indicated that there was a significant difference with the Two-by Ten strategy and decreasing unwanted behaviors. The students were more focused and on-task with learning activities from using the Two-by-Ten strategy. This strategy may be recommended as an intervention for Tier 2 and 3 students. During the second part of the study, it also seems that teacher attitude had some implications on the students behavior.

## Introduction

### Background, Issues and Concerns

A suburban district with a mix of SES population and distribution. This study was done at a Title I, low SES school, with a population of 600 students in a Kindergarten class. The population of the kindergarten class consisted of 26 students, 23 participated in the study; including 15 white, 3 African American, 2 Pacific Islander, 3 Hispanic students, 15 boys and 8 girls.

Selection of student can be subjective and cause issues with the study. The collection of data is also subjective based on wanted and unwanted behaviors. Wanted behaviors will be based on on-task behaviors and behaviors that meet expectations that have been explained to students. The student chosen and teacher expectations have a large role in this study. The data collection being broken by Spring Break or around a holiday may skew the results of prior behavior because behaviors typically increase in unwanted behaviors as schedules change for the holidays. Some students may also be absent for travel over the holiday. The student chosen may have a medical condition that is unknown.

### Practice under Investigation

The practice under investigation is the use of the “two-by-ten” strategy, specifically targeted relationship building, with one student to improve behavior and the effect on the class as a whole.

#### School Policy to be Informed by Study:

Classroom teachers will benefit the most from this study because the purpose of the study is to decrease distracting behaviors using specifically targeted relationship building. Using specifically targeted relationship building, the teacher will be able to target students that are the most disruptive to build a stronger relationship. This type of targeted relationship building will help to decrease the negative or non-learning behaviors, and the student(s) will be more likely to listen to redirection to practice focused behaviors during learning.

#### Conceptual Underpinning

A national survey in 2005 showed that both teachers and students were leaving the classroom and profession because of discipline, which resulted in districts changing the approach to school discipline (Teaching Tolerance, 2008). Students being at school and engaged in learning are key to student achievement. Behaviors that prohibit student learning and distract others need to be redirected. When a student has off task behaviors these impact the learning of those around them. Improving the behavior of students will increase student engagements in learning activities and help the class environment. These behaviors may be promoted by the teacher's attitude, word choice, and expectations. When teachers have high expectations for their class and positive attitude this is reflected in student performance.

RtI is meant to be used in conjunction with PBIS to support students on an academic level with appropriate targeted interventions that use the same three Tiers as PBIS: Tier 1 is the class average results, Tier 2 is students that need interventions in

small group/individual and progress monitoring for success, and Tier 3 is a student that needs an individual plan for success. When interventions are required with students, specifically in Tier 2, in both Response to Intervention (RtI) and PBIS it is highly recommended that they are evidence-based; however many teachers are unsure as to what “scientifically validated instruction” is and even the best strategy or intervention can yield poor results when implemented inadequately (Sandomierski, 2007).

Schools have accepted a variety of systems to create an environment of learning that include PBIS, Responsive Classroom, and BIST. Positive Behavior Intervention System was originally used to support students with developmental disabilities, which additionally supports IDEA (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2009). PBIS has been implemented in over 7,000 schools nationwide. The goal of PBIS is to address behaviors before they are a problem by making expectations for the entire building clear and consistent so that students know what to expect. The benefit of the system is that students stay in school by reducing behaviors that need referrals and suspensions. In this system students are rewarded for making the right choices and showing the correct behaviors and this is generally enough for 80% of students; then 15% will require “targeted supports”, and 5% will require individualized supports (Teaching Tolerance, 2008). Both PBIS and the Responsive Classroom help children with undesirable behaviors using positive strategies.

The Responsive Classroom encourages teaching social skills and has a specific breakdown of tools for teachers that use morning meeting, logical consequences, and role-playing. When a students show unwanted behaviors the teacher should respond with support to prior behavior teaching methods, “collaborative problem-solving,” written

agreements, or going to a buddy teacher. There is no 'individual behavior plan' as with PBIS in place with the Responsive Classroom (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2009).

#### Statement of the Problem:

There is a lack of knowledge on the best practice to use with students that struggle with unwanted behaviors. Many teachers try a variety of methods that have worked in the past and fit the acceptable behavior method for their school. Frequently there is a child that these strategies do not work with which generally leads to the use of interventions designed by a school team or the teacher. These interventions can be time consuming and require more than one to guide the child to learn the expected behaviors with an unknown timeframe that could take years.

#### Purpose of the Study

Increase learning by identifying if a relationship in using the "two-by-ten" strategy to decrease unwanted behaviors shown by students.

#### Research Question

Is there a difference in student behavior between normal relationship building compared to specifically targeted relationship building?

### Null Hypothesis(es)

There is no difference in student behavior between normal relationship building compared to specifically targeted relationship building.

### Anticipated Benefits of the Study

The benefits of this study include determining if creating positive relationships with challenging students will have an effect on the overall behavior of the entire class. By building relationships with a child in the room and affecting the relationships positively others in the room the learning will increase in the class for all students.

### Definition of Terms

Unwanted behaviors: behaviors that create distraction to self/others learning, off-task behaviors.

Normal Relationship Building: teacher interaction with all students is equal in time and value

Specifically Targeted Relationship Building: teacher interaction with students is targeted to provide students that need more help with behaviors to have more one-on-one time

### Summary

By decreasing behaviors and putting forth some extra effort with students that have unwanted behaviors, learning will increase and students will be allowed to be focused on activities created for learning by the teacher; and in turn may also help

increase the positive behaviors for the class a whole. The student chosen will be allowed to talk about whatever interests them within appropriate school conversation. The purpose of the conversations would be to build a relationship with this student to help them engage appropriately in learning activities independently and with peers to increase their learning in the classroom.



## Review of Literature

As teachers, we need student to be motivated to learn and stay on-task. Many times most of the class is very focused and engaged while a few others struggle with making appropriate choices including the most frequent undesirable behaviors are nicknaming, talking without permission, and verbally assaulting others (Gulec & Balcik 2011).

There are common suggestions as to what teachers should do when the classroom community is weak or behaviors are undesirable including talking to a colleague for suggestions, analyze a videotape of yourself teaching to see the class as an observer, observe a colleague teach, look for starters or antecedents to behaviors, and predict where behaviors may occur and plan for them ahead of time. Challenging behaviors can mean that the environment or teacher is not meeting the needs of a particular student (McDougall, 2004).

In consideration for children that come from different environments, some students that attend Title I schools come from turbulent backgrounds. Children that act out come from high stress environments and do not have basic needs met. These children need social-emotional interventions including their monitoring basic needs to build a feeling of safety and trust with the child. It is also better to have an environment that is structured and predictable with minimal transitions to increase feelings of security. (Lowenthal, 2001).

The Pygmalion effect says that people will live up to expectations whether they are high, low, positive or negative. When teachers have positive expectations, they will have positive results. (Chang, 2011). Along with expectations of others the words that

teachers say and how they are said impact the how students see themselves as learners.

The Northeast Foundation for Children, developers of the Responsive Classroom, suggests that teachers redirect student behaviors when off-track. It is equally important that when redirecting, teachers are helping students live up to the expectations that they want to do well and are delivering a message that is direct, positive, calm, and brief. Being brief is important so that there can be silence to allow students to process the information and react appropriately. (Denton, 2008). Staying positive sometimes means giving a reward, the Roanoke Brain Study researched impulsiveness and found that adolescents and children with attention deficits need rewards at the time of behavior not later. (Sparks, 2012).

The teacher's attitude of assuming that students want to be at school and do their best helps student behavior and relationships because they feel valued. Thinking that students want to be at school and have fun helps teachers be compassionate listeners. Teachers should watch their communication and be sure their messages are clear and calm. Raymond Wlodkowski researched the "Two-by-Ten" strategy discovering behavior improvements with the class, in many cases, when teachers have personal conversations with only one student about anything appropriate that the student would like to talk about for two minutes over ten days in a row. (Smith & Lambert 2008). It is also important to identify why student are acting out or avoiding tasks. There are two types of challenging behaviors seeking attention or escape. Students that are seeking attention could benefit from the "Two-by-Ten" strategy by receiving attention that is positive and not as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors (McDougall, 2004).

## Research Methods

### Research Design

Experimental design that will measure the impact of building relationships through small 2 minute conversations daily for 10 days on the behavior of that child and the class. The independent variable is time period of 10 days before adding the conversation. The dependent variable will be the class and student behaviors after the 2-minute conversation time period of 10 days. Tests run include the t-Test. The dependent variable will be re-directs. The independent variable will be prior to the 2-minute conversations and after the 2-minute conversations.

### Study Group Description

Title I school in one Kindergarten classroom with 23 students consisting of 15 boys and 8 girls with the ethnic backgrounds being 15 white, 3 African American, 2 Pacific Islander, and 3 Hispanic students. Over 75% of the class qualifies for Free and Reduced Lunch. This school follows the PBIS behavior system and the student chosen was in Tier 1, which is the top 5% needing an individual behavior plan.

### Data Collection and Instrumentation

A table was used with each student having a letter and tally unwanted behaviors for all student individually. Then create a class total each day.

Step 1: 10 days of data collection of whole class behaviors to tally unwanted and wanted behaviors every 30 minutes. Total behaviors for the class and total the behaviors for the selected student.

Step 2: Continue data collection as in Step 1 adding the morning 2-minute conversation with the selected 1 student. Separate the data for the class and the selected student.

#### Statistical Analysis Methods

A Statistical Package software will be used to complete the calculations of the study including the t-Test. Microsoft Excel will be used to compile data totals to use in the research data analysis.

## Findings

**t-test Analysis****Table1****t-Test Analysis Results for Class Redirects with Normal Relationship Building and with Specifically Targeted Relationship Building**

Source	Mean	Mean D	<i>t</i> -test	df	<i>p</i> -value
Normal Relationship Building (n=8)	0.34				
Specifically Targeted Relationship Building (n=9)	2.86		-2.63	15	0.019

Note: Significant when  $p \leq 0.25$

Table 1 shows a significant difference (t-Test = -2.63; p-value = 0.019) in the mean scores was found between Normal and Specifically Targeted Relationship Building. The null hypothesis was rejected. Students with a lower redirections (mean = 0.34) and students with a higher redirections lunch (mean = 2.86) did record significant difference in response to Specifically Targeted Relationship Building with one student, when compared to the criterion p-value = 0.25. These findings suggest that strengthening a relationship with a challenging student will decrease the total number of redirects for the class. The alpha level is set at 0.25, with a p-value = 0.019 being less than the alpha level of 0.25 the null hypothesis is rejected showing a significant difference in specifically targeted relationship building by the classroom teacher.

### Conclusions

The student's behavior did improve with the use of the "Two-by-Ten" strategy as shown by Table 1 with the p-value of 0.019 being less than the set alpha level of 0.25 rejecting the null hypothesis which means that there is a significant difference when specifically targeted relationship building is used in the classroom. The resulting impact shown in Table 1 is the significant difference between the student and the classroom behavior. A significant difference was shown between the "Two-by-Ten" strategy and a positive impact on student behavior. The results suggest that by helping a challenging student improve behavior the class' behavior is improved.

While these results are promising, it is important to consider that the results are of one classroom and support the findings of the "two-by-ten" research. It will be recommended to the school district that the use of the "Two-by-Ten" strategy early on in classrooms with students who show frequent unwanted behaviors. This strategy was very simple to do in the classroom and would be an easy pre-intervention for teachers to do to help their students to transition into a new school year and/or build relationships with students that are struggling with positive behaviors in the classroom. It is also recommended that the district may want to consider an in-depth study of the "Two-by-Ten" strategy. It would be important to study multiple classrooms to test the validity of the results. This further study could include more classes, have a variety of areas within the district that have different socioeconomic status, and/or using preschool and non-preschool experience to show how that impacts student behaviors.

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