

## Intervention Paper

### **Behavior Identification:**

Justin, a ninth grade student with ADHD in my Language Arts resource room has difficulty with verbal outbursts during class. I would like to significantly reduce the number of verbal outbursts Justin has during a one-hour class period.

### **1. Research literature Review:**

Many people have written articles and done extensive research on disruptive behaviors within the classroom. Each article helps provide use with numerous unique definitions of disruptive behaviors and a multitude of possible intervention strategies to help eliminate the unwanted behavior. The following is a review of three articles that dealt with disruptive behavior.

The first article I read was *Preventing Trouble: Making Schools Safer Places Using Positive Behavior Supports* by Karen Oswald and S.J Safran (2005). The specific behaviors targeted in this article were: running, jumping, cursing, kicking, pushing, and screaming/loud voices. Behaviors were observed, by teachers, in four specific areas of the hallway where the most problems seemed to occur during the transition time (3-4 min.) to lunch. After each observational period, tally marks from all four stations were added together and the total number of occurrences for each behavior was documented. The intervention strategies used were: pre-correction, correction, incentive techniques, and active supervision. Post intervention data showed a 42.36% reduction in observed behaviors. Based on this information the intervention was very effective. Reducing

these behaviors in the hallway not only created positive changes in student's behavior, but also made the transition time between lunches safer for students.

The second article that I read was *Using Positive Discipline to Reduce Disruptive Classroom Behaviors* by Bremnnan, Dwork, and Reinhart (2002). The researchers in this article worked to correct "inappropriate behaviors". Behaviors considered inappropriate for this project were: talking out, teasing others, hitting others, leaving seat, distracting others, put downs, searching for materials, and late arrival. The behavioral intervention plan the researchers used was positive discipline. To accomplish this they used three strategies: cooperative learning and classroom meeting, student participation in class decision-making, and reflective journals. At the end of the intervention the monthly student and teacher observation sheets were used to show students progress. The intervention that was used in this project was very successful. Both teacher and student observations sheets showed a significant decrease in all of the disruptive behaviors focused on in this project. Student journals showed an increase in overall attitude and perception of the class. Likewise, teacher journals showed and increase in positive social interaction within the classroom.

The third article that I read was *Decreasing the Amount of Classroom Disruptions in Order to Increase the Amount of Time on Task in Elementary Students* by Baugous, and Bendery (2000). The specific disruptive behaviors targeted for this behavior intervention plan included verbal outbursts (talking out of turn and making distracting noises), walking around the room without permission, and physical action toward others (hitting, kicking, pushing). Researchers identified these particular behaviors as the ones that frequently interfered with a student's ability to stay on task. The intervention

strategies used were: character education, a positive discipline program, increasing cooperative grouping, and multiple intelligence lessons. To determine if a change in behavior had occurred due to the intervention, researchers compared teacher and student pre and post surveys regarding how often the disruptive behavior occurred in class and analyzed student journals or self-evaluation of behavior. Post intervention data showed a 5-20% reduction in all disruptive behaviors observed at both sites. Based on this information the intervention was very effective. Reducing these behaviors helped increase the amount of time students were “on task.” The use of cooperative learning and multiple intelligence lessons helped keep the students actively engaged in the activity. Whereas character education helped the students learn how to be a good citizen both in and out of the classroom and the possible benefits result from it.

## **2. Intervention Technique Summary:**

The intervention that I will use to help decrease the number of verbal outburst in class is a behavior contract. Research has shown that behavioral contracts can be used to help address both the academic and nonacademic needs of students and has demonstrated to be effective with students of all ages, and disabilities. (Din, F.S. et. al, 03). Cipanni (1993) reported that one of the biggest benefits of using a behavioral contract is that it: helps the student develop self-control and responsibility for one’s own behavior through verbal and written obligation, and teaches students how to negotiate and compromise with other people and begin to self-monitor behavior according to a designated standard.

This seemed to be the best type of intervention because the student I am implementing the intervention on loves to negotiate for a lighter workload and craves to spend one on one time with me doing nonacademic activities. By using a behavior

contract the student will be able to negotiate the amount of verbal outbursts that will be acceptable and the reward (playing basketball, football, etc.) for meeting the specified criteria. This will provide the student with an incentive to limit the amount of verbal outbursts during class creating a win-win situation for both teacher and student.

In order to begin implementing the behavior contract, four important steps are needed. In each step, collaboration between the teacher and student is necessary and vital to the future success of the contract. Step one requires collaboration between the teacher and student to clearly identify and define the disruptive behavior. In step two, the specific number of disruptive behaviors that will be allowed under the contract for a designated period of time is established. During this step it is important to clearly identify how the target behavior is going to be observed and measured. Step three describes the teacher's obligations (incentives) when the student's behavior matches or exceeds the contract. Both teacher and student jointly create the positive reinforcer options that can be achieved. Step four identifies the allotted time the child will be able to receive or use the incentive. Once all of the details of the contract have been determined and both teacher and student agree to the terms, the behavior contract is written down on paper. Then, the teacher and student both sign the contract to ensure that they agree with the terms and will respectfully hold up their end of the deal.

All three of the articles showed tremendous improvement in student behavior through the use of a behavior contract. Din, et. al (2003) reported that when a behavioral contract was used to decrease tardiness in a high school classroom over a twelve-week period, the experimental group (the group under the contract) showed significantly fewer tardies than those in the control group. In a different study by Lassman, et. al (1999) the

behavior contract was used to successfully increase the social skills of a seventh grade student with EBD during the reintegration into the general education classroom.

However, it is important to note that no behavior contract will work without consistency and the determination by both parties to stick by the contract and fulfill their obligations.

### **3. Classroom Intervention Strategy**

The target behavior I will be focusing on for this intervention is verbal outbursts. For this intervention verbal outbursts will be defined as any loud random comment or noise produced orally by the student during class.

The method I will use to collect baseline data and intervention data is event or frequency recording. I chose this method of data collection because most of his outbursts are very short in nature (usually a couple words or one sentence) and have a clear beginning and end. This will also allow me to see how many times the behavior typically occurs in one sixty-minute class period. In order to collect the data, I will keep a golf counter in my front pocket. Each time there is an outburst I will click the counter once. After the end of the class period, I will record the number of outbursts for that day on my weekly tally sheet. This process will continue everyday until the intervention is done.

The intervention that I have chosen to use is a behavioral contract. Before the intervention begins I will meet with Justin to discuss the high frequency of verbal outbursts he is demonstrating in my classroom. At this time, I will share with him the baseline data that has been collected, which shows a high frequency of daily verbal outbursts. Then, together we will determine what an acceptable and achievable amount of verbal outbursts would be for Justin in a normal sixty-minute class period. After we agree upon the number of verbal outbursts deemed acceptable, we will sit down and

discuss the positive reinforcers that Justin will be able to earn when he does achieve his goal. The reinforcers that I will suggest are: playing basketball with me, computer time, listening to I-pod, and lunch with me. Once Justin and I have agreed upon which reinforcers to include in the contract, I will type up the contract, which will only be good for one month, for both of us to sign. Once the contract is signed, Justin will be able to earn points each day based on the number of verbal outbursts recorded. Below is a copy of the exact contract used.

## Behavior Contract

This is to certify that: Justin LaFontaine

**Will:** Limit the amount of daily verbal outburst in 4<sup>th</sup> hour.

<b>For completing:</b>	0 outbursts	10 points
	1-2 outbursts	8 points
	3-5 outbursts	6 points
	6-9 outbursts	4 points
	10-14 outbursts	2 points
	More than 15	1 point

**\*Points may be spent on Friday of each week.**

10 pts. = 5 free minutes of desired activity  
20 pts. = 10 free minutes of desired activity  
30 pts. = 15 free minutes of desired activity  
40 pts. = 20 free minutes of desired activity  
50 pts. = 30 free minutes of desired activity

**Teacher** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contract Date** \_\_\_\_\_

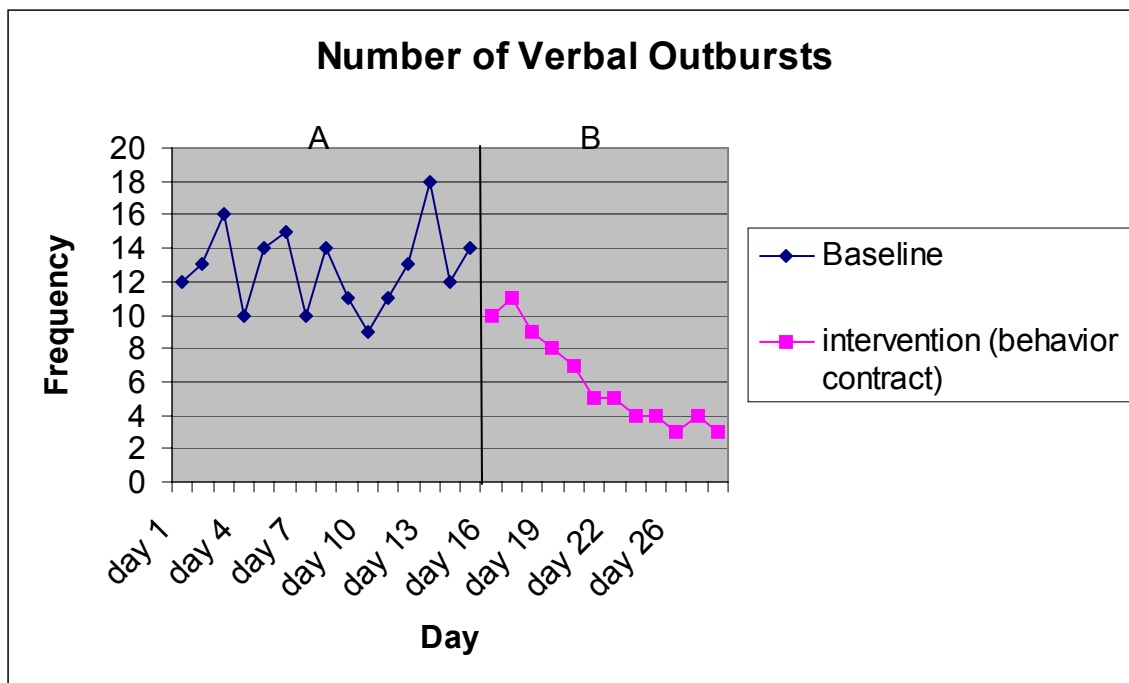
#### **4. Intervention Implementation:**

**Data Collection Instrument-** Frequency was kept using a golf counter. At the end of each class period, I recorded the total number of outbursts on the spreadsheet.

**Baseline and Intervention Data-** Please see attached

	# Of Verbal Outburst In 1hr.	
	Baseline	Intervention (behavior contract)
Day 1	12	
Day 2	13	
Day 3	16	
Day 4	10	
Day 5	14	
Day 6	15	
Day 7	10	
Day 8	14	
Day 9	11	
Day 10	9	
Day 11	11	
Day 12	13	
Day 13	18	
Day 14	12	
Day 15	14	
Day 16		10
Day 17		11
Day 18		9
Day 19		8
Day 20		7
Day 21		5
Day 22		5
Day 23		4
Day 25		4
Day 26		3
Day 27		4
Day 28		3

**Baseline and Intervention Graph-** Please see attached



**Interpretation of Data Collected**

Based on the data collected, the intervention was very successful. The implementation of a behavior contract dramatically reduced the number of verbal outbursts Justin had during class. Throughout the three weeks that I recorded baseline data, Justin was averaging thirteen outbursts per class period. After the behavior contract was implemented, Justin’s verbal outbursts decreased to around six per class period. The graph corresponds with the data by showing a negative slope, which represents a decrease in verbal outbursts. The first three days of the intervention showed only a slight decrease in his behavior. However, once Justin received his first reinforcer (playing basketball against me) his behavior dramatically decreased for the remainder of the intervention.



Overall, the key to this intervention was consistency. I felt that I was consistent in the way I monitored and recorded data, and with Justin's accessibility to the reinforcers. I will continue to use this intervention with Justin and plan to use this intervention again with individual students and with an entire class as a whole.

### Bibliographic Citations

1. Baugous, Kristi; Bendery, Shelly (2000). Decreasing the Amount of Classroom Disruptions in Order to Increase the Amount of Time on Task in Elementary Students. *Masters Dissertation/Thesis*.
2. Bremnnan, Renee; Dwork, Jeff; Reinhart, Scott (2002). Using Positive Discipline to Reduce Disruptive Classroom Behaviors. *Masters Dissertation/Thesis*.
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4. Din Feng S.; Isack, Lori R.; Rietveld, Jill (2003). Effects of Contingency Contracting on Decreasing Student Tardiness. *Conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association*, Feb. 26 - March 1.
5. Kelley, A. Lassman; Kristine Jolivette; Joseph H. Wehby (1999). My Teacher Said I Did Good Work Today. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 31, 4, 12-18.
6. Oswald, Karen; Safran, S.J. (2005). Preventing trouble: making schools safer places using positive behavior supports. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 28, 265-278.



