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Opportunities to Respond in an Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom

Courtney Schauf
Northwestern College - Orange City

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Opportunities to Respond in an Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom

Courtney Schauf

Northwestern College

An Action Research Project Presented

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Education

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Dr. Sara Waring Tiedeman

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if providing students with opportunities to respond resulted in positive student behavior. The researcher conducted the study in an inclusive preschool classroom including students on Individualized Education Plan's (IEP) and English Language Learners (ELL). The intent of the study was to reduce the amount of negative behaviors in order to provide students with more instructional time and less time addressing unwanted behaviors.

Opportunities to Respond in an Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom

Many classrooms are now inclusive learning environments that accompany children with and without learning disabilities and challenging behaviors. In addition to classrooms being inclusive, many classrooms also include students who come from a low socio economic status. Students who match low-income characteristics are more likely to demonstrate and engage in inappropriate behaviors (Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003). Teachers are faced with the challenge of creating a successful learning environment for all students, while meeting each individual student's needs to ensure success. Teachers are seeing an increase in challenging behaviors in the classroom at an early age.

Students who exhibit disruptive behaviors are less likely to be engaged in academic content. Unengaged students often experience poor academic outcomes, and become anxious and frustrated when presented with challenging tasks (Messenger Common, Lane, Oakes, Menzies, Cantwell, & Ennis, 2017). Students who struggle with academic content are likely to develop a negative perception of school. In current classrooms, up to 20% of students engage in disruptive behaviors that hinder learning for themselves and their peers within the environment (Thompson, 2013). To ensure the success of all students teachers are striving to incorporate effective strategies into their instructional time to help alleviate disruptive behaviors from occurring.

Increasing student's opportunities to respond during teacher-led instructional periods allows frequent opportunities for students to respond. Opportunities to respond can be a verbal (e.g., choral response), written (e.g., response cards), or gestural (e.g. hand signals) responses to respond to questions, cues, or prompting presented by the teacher. By providing students with opportunities to respond during instruction, all students are being held accountable to engage in

academic content as well as given multiple opportunities to practice with the academic materials. Increasing opportunities to respond promotes higher levels of student engagement to ensure success of all students. Students are more likely to participate in learning opportunities when a teacher is frequently asking for a response. Teachers can make instructional decisions based on student's feedback and their level of understanding that is communicated throughout lessons. This allows learning to be purposeful and differentiated to meet each student's individual needs to be successful. In this research project, the researcher will collect data to determine if the implementation of opportunities to respond will result in positive student behavior.

Review of the Literature

Effects and Challenges on Teachers and Students

New challenges are presented to teachers when behavior problems are a part of the classroom environment. Inappropriate student behaviors have become a major issue and distraction in the classroom for both teachers and students. Teachers are being pushed by current education reforms to improve their educational practices including methods, pedagogy, and content knowledge (Cavanaugh, 2013). Teachers claim challenging student behavior is the most stressful part of the teaching profession (Allday, Hinkson-Lee, Hudson, Neilsen-Gatti, Kleinke, & Russell, 2012). According to the U.S. Department of Education, fifty- three percent of highly qualified teachers who left the profession in 2004 cited disorderly student behaviors as the reason for departing from their teaching career (Thompson, 2013). Teachers are left feeling burnt out, exhausted, and unsuccessful when behaviors cannot be managed in the classroom.

Teachers are also facing a diverse group of students who are lacking school readiness skills. Entering school with such a deficit is making the education reform of increased standards and higher performance expectations even more difficult (Cavanaugh, 2013). "Child school

readiness is the child's level of development across multiple domains needed for optimal

performance in school" (Montes, Lotyczewski, Halterman, & Hightower, 2011, p. 542).

Domains such as physical well-being, motor development, social and emotional development,

speech and language development, and general knowledge and cognition all play a role in a

child's school readiness. Students may begin to exhibit unwanted behaviors in the classroom

when they are not equipped with the essential school readiness skills. Students can often begin

to feel frustration and anger when academic tasks are being requested and they are not

developmentally ready. Children with behavior problems enter kindergarten with delays in

speech and language, motor skills, social emotional and play skills compared to their peers

(Montes, et al., 2011). Student's social skill deficit in their early years of life has become a great

concern for educators as well. Without appropriate social skills, academic tasks can become

more challenging. Children are at greater risks for poor academic performance and school

failure when they display disruptive, antisocial, and non-compliant behavior and/or

developmental delays (Cavanaugh, 2013). With the high academic concerns of students teachers

do not often have as much time to dedicate to social skills in the classroom. Often times when

children face such problematic challenges at such a young age they begin to develop a label that

can stick with them throughout their school career. These challenges due to lack of school

readiness can be prevented by providing young children with an appropriate learning

environment to develop their social, emotional, speech, language, and play skills.

All students are able to learn, grow, and succeed in an effective classroom-learning

environment. It seems that disruptive behaviors should only hinder the learning of the

individuals displaying such behavior; unfortunately, that is not the case. Nearly 20% of students

regularly display disruptive behaviors that hinder academic achievement for themselves and

peers learning around them (Thompson, 2013). Students with disruptive behaviors are often

removed from the classroom setting causing instruction to be interrupted for all students, loss of

instructional time, and increased likelihood of dropping out before reaching graduation

(Thompson, 2013). Students that are removed are often expected to make-up their work during

another time, which can lead to additional behaviors and frustration. Peers of disruptive students

lose about four hours of instruction per week, equaling up to nearly seventeen hours over a

month time period (Thompson, 2013). When behaviors are occurring on a daily basis, the loss of

instruction time has a lasting impact on all students' academic growth and achievement. When

teachers strive to find appropriate classroom management strategies to implement within the

classroom setting students who engage in disruptive behaviors and those who don't will often

both be benefited. The earlier student's behavior can be successfully managed the more likely

they will be to succeed in school.

Early Intervention

Early intervention is vital for children who display developmental delays and problematic

behaviors at an early age. Behavior problems are more likely to occur in families that experience

traumatic events or live in difficult circumstances such as, single parent families, families with

fewer economic resources, loss of a family member, transient housing, homelessness, or limited

or loss of employment (Mitchell & Hauser-Cram, 2009). The early years of a child's life are

crucial for building a concrete foundation of learning in order to be successful throughout their

school career. Children need to be exposed to a variety of rich environments that allow them to

learn, play, interact and engage with peers. Behavior problems as well as other delays can be

flagged at a young age allowing these children to qualify for additional services and resources to

help manage and alleviate these problems and delays. High quality early childhood programs

can offer a wide array of experiences that promote learning of all children. These programs can

also provide and seek out additional support and resources for families to build a strong

partnership in the success of each child.   It is important for families to seek out additional

resources if needed, as it helps facilitate the improvement of the child's development. The

earlier families and children begin receiving additional support, the better.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

The inclusion of all students in general education classrooms has left teachers feeling

apprehensive and unprepared to manage the wide array of misbehaviors effectively. As a result,

assistance of additional personal is often requested from teachers to aid with challenging

behaviors occurring in the classroom. Changes in the American Education system, such as No

Child Left Behind, have put a weight on general education teachers and their practices and level

of performance (Reddy, Fabiano, Dudek, & Hsu, 2013). Many teachers are also being asked to

receive additional training and qualifications in order to meet the needs of students who display

aggressive behaviors in the classroom. Many schools are also being forced to increasing their

amount of qualified staff to handle behavioral challenges they are confronting. Additional

positions are being created throughout many districts to work with children who display these

problematic behaviors.

In an effort to address these current changes, schools are implementing Response to

Intervention and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support programs. Response to Intervention

(RTI) is a data driven, three-tier model used to provide early intervention strategies to prevent

and intervene with learning difficulties or problem behavior (Bayat, Mindes, & Covitt, 2010).

The implementation of RTI allows teachers to use their data to make appropriate instructional

decisions to meet their needs of their specific students. Teachers are able to analyze classroom

data to determine who may need additional instruction or strategies on a specific skill. RTI can

be used in a variety of ways such as: preventing children at risk for academic failure, providing

prevention and early intervention techniques for children who are at risk for special needs, and

providing intervention strategies to alleviate challenging behaviors. RTI has been found to

reduce the number of students who qualify for special education services by determining other

appropriate levels of student support to assist with students' individual needs (Hawken, Vincent,

& Schumann, 2008).

Punishment in the Classroom

Teachers struggle to find effective methods to correct and prevent behaviors from

occurring. Students who exhibit these behaviors in the classroom can begin to form a negative

relationship with teachers and peers. It is important for children to develop an honest and

trustworthy relationship with teachers to ensure success in the classroom. When children know

that their teachers are supportive, positive, and strive for them to succeed, they are more likely to

develop a positive relationship. Without a positive relationship, behaviors can escalate.

Negative student-teacher relationships have been associated with academic and behavioral

problems in students as young as preschool aged through eighth grade (Sutherland, Alder, &

Gunter, 2003). Therefore, it is important teachers use appropriate strategies to intervene with

problematic behaviors at the earliest age possible in order to prevent the escalation of

problematic behaviors.

Reactive punishments such as being moved to restrictive environments, timeouts,

restraints, or removal of privileges are often ineffective. The use of student consequences in the

classroom can result in a cycle of negative student behavior, creating a disruptive classroom

environment for all students (Haydon, Macsuga-Gage, Simonsen, & Hawkins, 2012).

Sutherland, Alder, and Gunter (2003) reported that teachers provide less academic instruction to students who exhibit problem behavior such as violent, externalizing behavior. These students then continue to fall further behind academically as they are missing academic instruction. Student's peers can also begin to have a negative outlook on students who exhibit challenging behaviors. Students are less likely to develop a healthy relationship with peers who display problematic behaviors. Young children can often view these students as naughty and avoid them during opportunities of peer interaction.

Home environment is another key factor in students with challenging behaviors. Children that enter school from home environments that misuse punishment, have inconsistent results due to negative behavior, and have few positive interactions with adults are more likely to enter his/her classroom with deficits in behavior, use coercive tactics to manage surrounding environments, and have a negative attitude about school (Sutherland et al., 2003). Teachers that take the time to learn and understand a student's home environment may benefit by knowing the struggles, challenges, and needs that child comes to school with each day and be better equipped to meet that students' needs. Teachers are often unaware of the traumatic experiences many students experience in their home environment. For some students school is their only safe and consistent environment.

Effective communication between the parent(s) and teacher(s) is an important aspect when working with a child who engages in challenging behaviors. It is important to have open lines of communication in order to communicate the positives, successes, as well as the challenges. Encouraging parents to share the struggles and successes can assist teachers when making plans and accommodations to better meet challenging student's needs. It is vital that teachers and caregivers work together to implement new strategies and ideas to promote success.

Consistency is key for students who engage in problematic behaviors. Students are more likely

to respond to an intervention when it is being promoted in many aspects of their life. Teachers

that develop a relationship with the student and family are not only able to learn more about the

family, but are also able to know which resources and additional support could benefit the

student or families needs.

Behavior in the Classroom

There are a wide array of behaviors that can occur in the classroom and things that can

trigger them to occur. Teachers can have a difficult time pinpointing the exact cause of

behaviors (e.g. gain attention, avoid peers, avoid a task). Some students may have a diagnosed

disorder, while many will not especially at a young age. Students who suffer from emotional and

behavioral disorders (EBD) exhibit behavioral problems in the classroom (Sutherland et al.,

2003). These challenging behaviors can be expressed through aggression and/or disruptive and

off task behavior. Most students who suffer from EBD also experience academic difficulties

(Sutherland et al., 2003). Complex relationships have been found between behavioral and

academic difficulties. Some student's experience behavioral challenges prior to developing

academic difficulties, while others present academic challenges before exhibiting behavioral

difficulties (Sutherland et al., 2003). Children who display behavior problems in preschool are

more likely to continue through school with behavioral problems or be diagnosed with

behavioral disorders such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (Bayat, Mindes, & Covitt, 2010).

Children who display behavioral challenges can often be less engaged in academic content then

their peers. Because many children that experience severe problematic behaviors at a young age

will later develop academic challenges, it is important to address these challenging behaviors in order to find a way to manage them at the young age before they continue to escalate.

Teachers strive to keep all students engaged during instructional time to ensure academic success for all. Students who are actively engaged in academic content are less likely to engage in inappropriate behaviors and are more likely to gain academic skills. Inappropriate behaviors can waste teacher's time and energy that can be used to improve student's academic achievement. Teachers can often be left feeling unsuccessful when delivering instruction that is interrupted repeatedly by behaviors. Teachers may also resort to delivering instruction with methods that are not as effective, such as silent reading and independent work, but are likely to encourage fewer disruptions.

Some students may also struggle with internalizing behaviors such as shyness or anxiety. Students who suffer from these types of behaviors also show lower levels of engagement (Messenger Common, Lane, Oakes, Menzies, Cantwell, & Ennis, 2017). Teachers may perceive these students as unmotivated or unengaged, which can negatively affect their relationship with the student. By increasing opportunities to respond for these students, they are being provided with more interactions and academic opportunities. Whole group responses (e.g, choral response) versus individual responses (e.g., hand raising or calling of students) may also increase the participation of these students as it reduces their fear of failure. Choral responding also allows students with internalizing behaviors to participate without being singled out. Students with internalizing behaviors can begin to gain self confidence with the correct implementation of OTR.

Classroom Management. Learning environments that demonstrate success include solid classroom instruction merged with strategies to assist with managing classroom behaviors and

disruptions. To prevent a chaotic and disruptive classroom environment the use of proactive classroom management strategies are essential. A key factor in creating successful classroom management is providing effective instruction that includes strategies that maximize student participation, active responding, and correct responding while minimizing the amount of incorrect responses (Haydon et al., 2012). Effective instruction increases desired student behaviors such as student participation, on task behavior, and academic learning (Haydon et al., 2012). It is crucial that teachers create well- managed classroom environments to keep at risk students, such as students with academic and behavioral difficulties, in a least restrictive environment rather than being removed to a restrictive setting.

A successful school environment promotes and maintains appropriate student behaviors while allowing for more targeted intervention and prevention supports for students who display negative behaviors (Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). Many classroom environments are failing to provide these supportive environments to alleviate challenging behaviors. Many students who strive for attention will find a way to obtain attention in the classroom. Teachers can often be left to determine if they want this to be positive or negative attention. Unfortunately, students often realize they will receive attention more often for their inappropriate behaviors and interactions resulting in these occurrences to happen more frequently. A classroom that provides an ample amount of student response and interaction can help alleviate these negative behaviors from occurring because students will be busy engaging in appropriate behaviors and interactions. Students are then receiving positive attention by teachers who are then providing feedback and praise to students for their responses and engagement.

Use of Opportunities to Respond

Teachers are striving to find ways to keep students engaged and classroom management under control. Providing students with numerous opportunities to respond (OTR) throughout instructional time is a key component of effective teaching. An opportunity to respond can be defined as the interaction between a teacher's academic prompt and a student's response (Haydon et al., 2009). An OTR can be given by teachers through questioning, prompting or cueing to generate student responses and increase engagement. By providing students with OTR, teachers gain frequent responses from students, check for comprehension and understanding, and are able to adjust questions to students' level of understanding (Haydon et al., 2009). By implementing opportunities to respond teachers are able to continually assess and evaluate students understanding as learning occurs. Teachers are then able to make instructional modifications during teaching to meet the needs of students. OTR is used to increase the amount of correct responses and amount of time students spend engaged during instruction (Haydon et al., 2009). Students are more likely to engage in a positive manner and retain skills that are being taught when they are actively engaged in content and are being asked to frequently respond (Haydon et al., 2009).

The use of choral responding is one approach to increase opportunities to respond. In Haydon, Conroy, Scott, Sindelar, Barber, and Orlando's (2009) research choral responding was found to increase learning rates during teacher-led instruction (2009). When compared to individual responding instances, such as students raising hands, choral responding showed an increase in responses and an increase in the number of correct answers provided by students (Haydon et al., 2009). When teachers increased their rates of opportunities to respond, such as choral response, students identified with emotional or behavioral disorder (EBD) showed in increase in the amount of correct responses, fewer disruptions, and an increase in on-task

behavior (Haydon et al., 2009). Choral response is a simple method that can be successfully

incorporated in small or large group instructional sessions.

Another effective instructional strategy found to increase academic response rates and

support teachers in classroom management is the response card strategy. With the response card

strategy, all students are provided with multiple opportunities to respond to questions, cues, and

prompts. When students are provided with multiple opportunities to respond throughout an

instructional session they are able to demonstrate higher rates of instructional learning

(Cakiroglu, 2014). Write-on response cards, such as personal white boards, allow students to

write numbers, letters, or words and hold up their cards to share their response with the teacher.

Preprinted response cards can also be used for young students or students who have limited

reading and/or writing skills (Cakiroglu, 2014). The implementation of the response card

strategy has been found to increase students' on-task behavior and provide opportunity for all

students to respond (Cakiroglu, 2014). The response card strategy allows teachers to assess

individual students' responses, supports engagement for all students, provide immediate

feedback for students who provide incorrect answers, and increases students' tests scores.

Cakiroglu's (2014) research also indicated that low achieving students are more likely to

participate in activities that include the entire class, resulting in a higher participation rate with

the implementation of response cards. Under achieving students often feel more comfortable in

a learning environment when they know they will not be singled out and put on the spot in front

of peers to answer a question.

The use of hand signals is another great way for students to respond. Hand signals can be

as simple as a thumb up or down, but can also be used in more complex ways such as holding up

a number of fingers to indicate a response or level of understanding. This gestural response is a

great method to get student feedback, check for understanding, and promote student engagement. Hand signals allow teachers to make on the spot instructional decisions based off student's level of understanding. Teachers can also easily identify students who need additional practice or material retaught based off of their response.

Providing students with a diagnoses or label can often open the door for many additional resources; however, it is not a solution to the problem. Nearly 70% of students who currently receive special education services with a learning disability label may not have been labeled as such if an effective reading instruction were in place for at-risk students with a strong emphasis on early intervention (Stichter et al., 2008). Strong classroom management and an increase in the amount of opportunities to respond can positively impact the effects of instruction and students' academic gains. "OTR is defined as the functional combination of the interaction between the rates of teacher-based instructional talk, prompts, feedback, and wait time" (Stichter et al., 2008, p. 69). Pacing must be considered to successfully implement OTR into a learning environment. Teachers must develop a pace that is rapid with a suitable speed for their learners but does not leave them feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. When teachers increase their mean rate of prompts from a baseline of 1.24 per minute to 3.52 per minute, the student response accuracy increased from 71.8% to 75.5% and student's on-task engagement increased from 55.2% to 82.6% (Stichter et al., 2008). Teachers were found to be more effective when they provided an average of 3.63 prompts per minutes (Stichter et al., 2008). This resulted in higher engagement and increased responses from students than teachers who demonstrated a lower rate of opportunities for students to respond. Stichter et al. (2008) found that 3.5 prompts per minute during active instruction could serve as a turning point to support an increase in student engagement and achievement.

Wait Time

An increased rate of opportunities to respond can have many academic and behavioral benefits for students. However, a key component to effectively providing opportunities to respond is providing sufficient wait time to allow students to respond. If a sufficient wait time is not provided it is likely that students will not be able to respond or will choose not to respond (Haydon et al., 2012). On the flipside if the wait time is extended too long students may begin to engage in off task behavior resulting in opportunities to respond to be ineffective. Research gathered by Haydon et al. (2012) suggested that wait times should vary depending on the task presented to students, student's age, and student's method of response. If a more challenging response is presented to students a teacher can provide wait time by encouraging students to process the materials and question and then present their response when asked by the teacher (e.g. on the count of three, using a red light/green light method). An understanding of student's individual needs is another critical factor for educators to consider when providing a sufficient wait time for students.

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Methods

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Participants

An action research study was conducted in an inclusive preschool classroom located in an urban school district in Iowa. Eighty-one percent of the student body at the elementary qualifies for free and reduced priced lunch. The preschool program meets 3 hours Monday through Thursday during the school year. The 20 participants of the study range from age three to five years old. Participants include 16 children who are 4 years of age, 3 children age 3, and one child who is age 5. The class consists of one-fourth of the students identified on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 30% of students with a home language other than English. Home

languages of this thirty percent consist of French, Kirundi, Swahili, and Spanish. Two students

identified on IEP's have academic goals focusing on Math and Reading. Three students have

IEP goals focusing on adaptive behavior. Four of the five students with IEP's also have

communication goals focusing on speech and language. Educators in the classroom include a

certified general education teacher, certified special education teacher, and a classroom

paraprofessional.   All students receive their specially designed instructional minutes within the

classroom and are never taken outside of the classroom for interventions. A certified speech

pathologist pushes in the classroom daily to assist those with communication goals during small

group instruction and center/free choice. English Language Learners do not receive any

additional ELL support at the preschool level but will be evaluated for services prior to entering

Kindergarten.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted a study to determine if the implementation of opportunities to

respond would result in more positive student behavior. Data was collected four times a week

for six minutes during large group instructional periods. The researcher collected data during the

same time every day when students gathered for a large group reading lesson. The classroom

special education teacher recorded data, as the classroom general education teacher was

delivering instruction in a large group setting. Data was recorded using a tally chart to track the

number of opportunities to respond and the number of times unwanted behaviors occurred shown

in Appendix A.

After each large group instructional period the special education teacher shared the tally

chart with the general education teacher. Numbers were then calculated and transferred into an

excel document to record throughout the study and later be developed into tables and figures to

display the findings of the study. The unwanted behaviors that were tallied included the occurrence of any of the following behaviors: talking out of turn, touching other peers, making unnecessary noises, engaging in outside conversation, getting out of seat, and eloping from the carpet. Any opportunity to engage with instruction that was presented by the teacher was also recorded. Student's response to questions, ques, and prompts varied from gestures, actions, hand signals, choral response, or individual response. Students were taught how to appropriately use each method of responding before it was implemented into a large group lesson in which data was collected. In addition to the method being taught, the teacher modeled the method and opportunities to practice the response method were provided in other large or small group instructional times.

Prior to the implementation of opportunities to respond, baseline data was collected four times a week for six-minute periods for two weeks. The special education teacher collected the baseline data during large group instruction using the same tally chart shown in Appendix A. The baseline data was used to compare to the data that was collected during the intervention. The researcher analyzed data to determine if the implementation of opportunities to respond deceased the amount of unwanted behaviors that occurred during instruction.   During the baseline data collection period no new methods of response were used or taught to students.

Findings

Data Analysis

Prior to the implementation of opportunities to respond the researcher collected baseline data to determine the number of opportunities to respond and unwanted behaviors that occurred within a six-minute instructional period. The table below displays the results before opportunities to respond were implemented in the classroom.

Table 1

Baseline Data Prior to Implementation of Opportunities to Respond (OTR)

		Opportunities to Respond	Negative Behaviors
Week 1	Day 1	4	20
	Day 2	6	14
	Day 3	4	12
	Day 4	6	13
Week 2	Day 1	5	19
	Day 2	4	15
	Day 3	6	13
	Day 4	5	13

In Figure 1 the researcher averaged the number of opportunities to respond and the unwanted behaviors from each week. In week 1 of the baseline data collection the researcher provided an average of five opportunities to respond and recorded an average of 14.75 negative behaviors in those sessions. In week 2 of the baseline data collection the research recorded similar data. An average of five opportunities to respond were given and an average of fifteen unwanted behaviors were observed. The figure below displays the results averaged from the two week baseline data collection period.
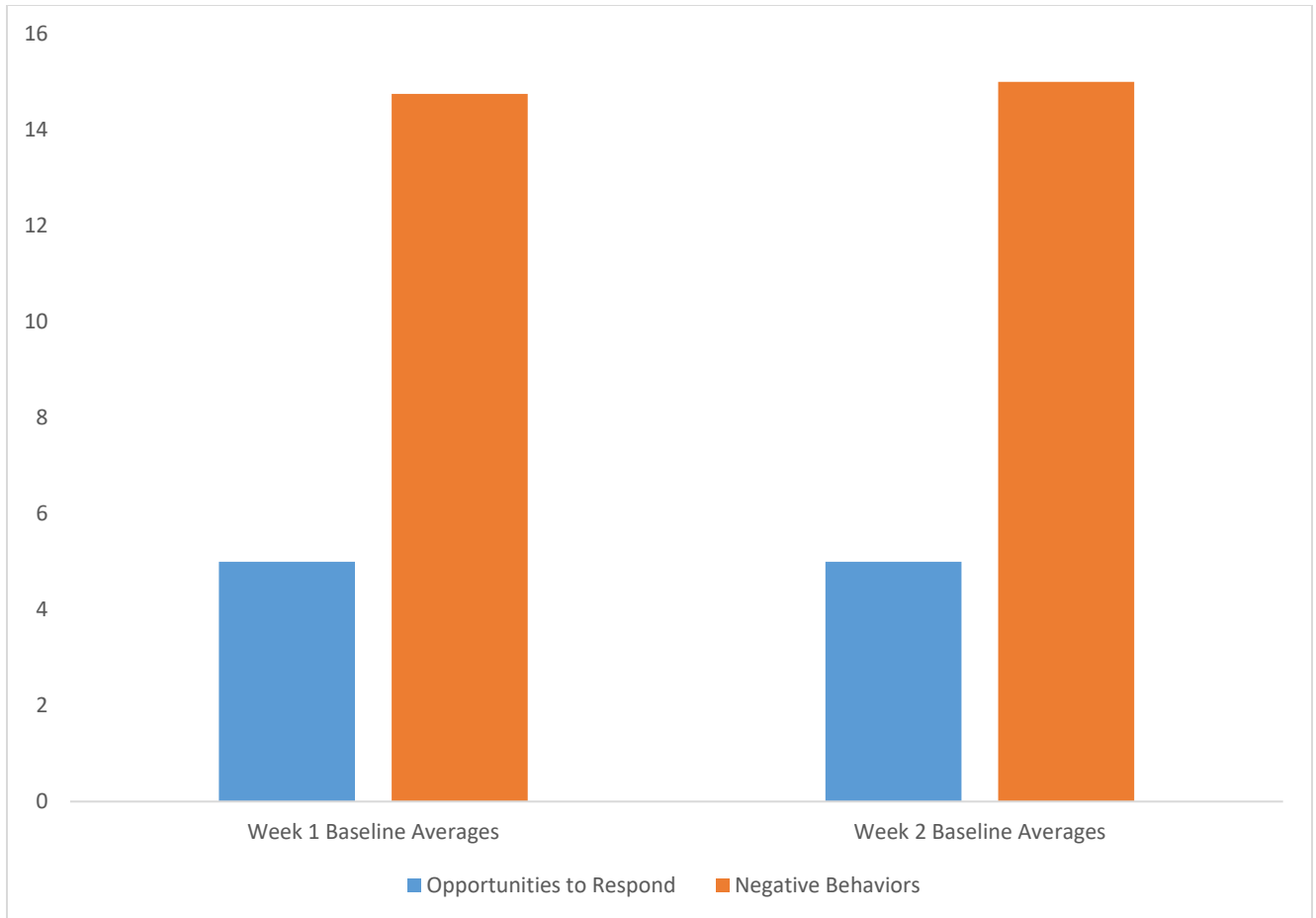
Figure 1. Weekly Averages of Baseline Results Prior to the Implementation of Opportunities to Respond.

After two weeks of baseline data were collected the researcher implemented opportunities to respond into instructional times. The same method was used to collect and record the data during the next six week period. After each week the researcher reflected on the data and worked to increase the amount of opportunities students were asked to respond. Each week the number of opportunities to responded increased and the amount of negative behaviors decreased. A variety of response methods were used throughout the six-week period including gestures, actions, hand signals, choral response, or individual response. The researcher also observed that Day 1 of most weeks seemed to have a higher amount of negative behaviors and as

the week continued numbers tended to decrease.

Table 3

Implementation of Opportunities to Respond (OTR)

		Opportunities to Respond	Negative Behaviors
Week 1	Day 1	14	14
	Day 2	16	10
	Day 3	13	11
	Day 4	12	11
Week 2	Day 1	15	13
	Day 2	16	10
	Day 3	16	7
	Day 4	14	10
Week 3	Day 1	18	9
	Day 2	19	6
	Day 3	16	7
	Day 4	19	6
Week 4	Day 1	19	10
	Day 2	17	6
	Day 3	19	7
	Day 4	21	4
Week 5	Day 1	22	5
	Day 2	19	9
	Day 3	20	4
	Day 4	22	6
Week 6	Day 1	22	6
	Day 2	23	6
	Day 3	21	4
	Day 4	19	4

In the first week of implementation the researcher recorded an average of 13.75 opportunities to respond as well as 11.5 unwanted behaviors. Week 2 revealed 15.25 opportunities to respond and 10 unwanted behaviors. In the weeks to follow, the same trend continued to occur. As the number of opportunities to respond increased the amount of undesired behaviors during instructional time decreased. In week 3 the unwanted behaviors decreased to an average of seven as the opportunities to respond increased to eighteen. Opportunities to respond and behaviors decreased in week four with an average of nineteen OTR and 6.75 unwanted behaviors. In weeks five and six the averaged opportunities to respond continued to climb with an average of 20.75 in week five and 21.25 in week six. The behaviors had a similar trend in the final weeks as well. In week 5 the average unwanted behaviors decreased to six, while in week six the unwanted behaviors declined to five. Figure 2 shown below, displays the results during the 6-week period of the implementation of opportunities to respond.
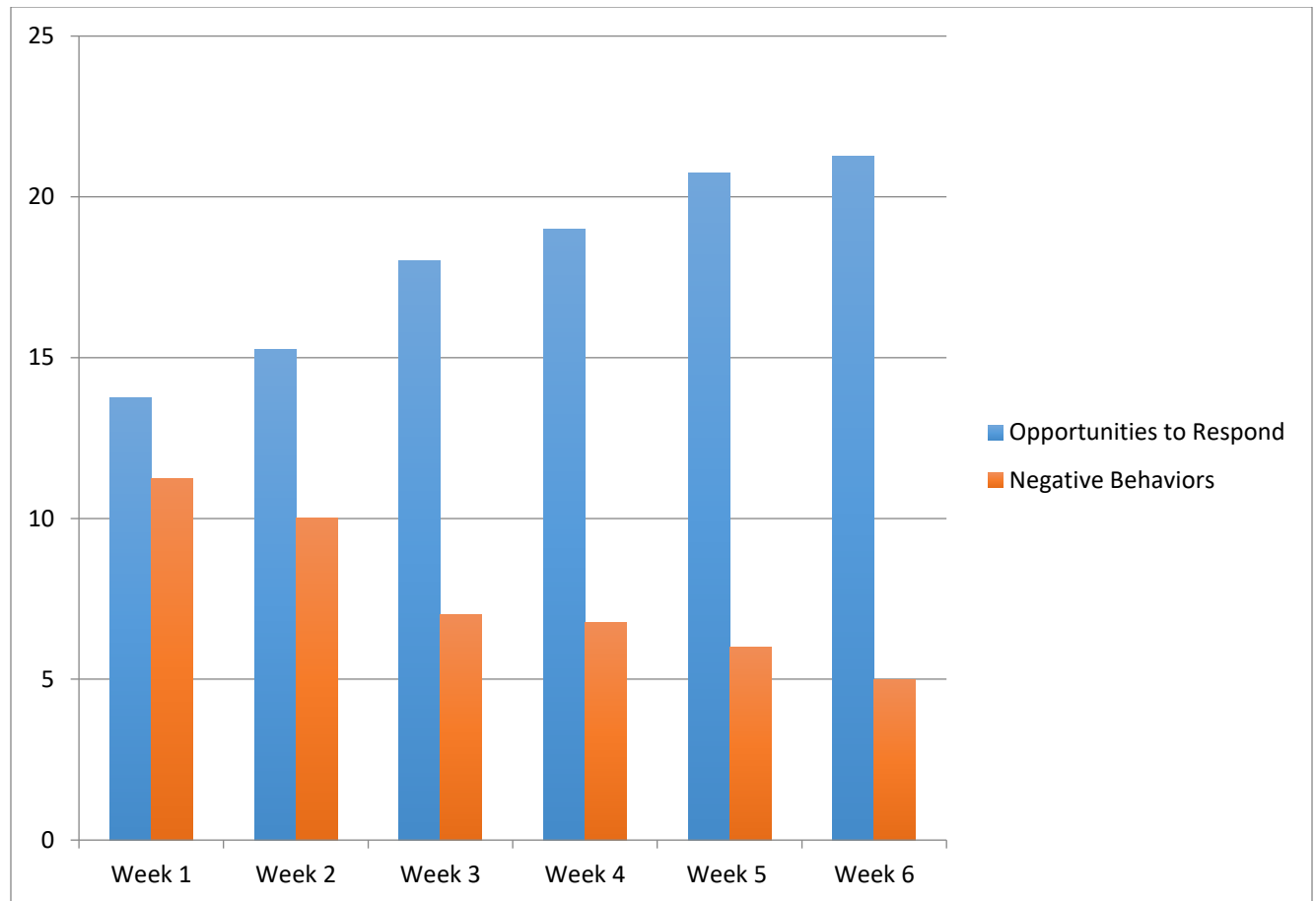
Figure 2. Results from the Implementation of Opportunities to Respond

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

Data results indicated that as the number of opportunities to respond increased the

number of negative behaviors decreased. As seen in Figure 3 above, each week's average

number of negative behaviors decreased as the number of opportunities to respond continued to

increase. In week one of data collection an average of 13.75 opportunities to respond and 11.25

negative behaviors were recorded. By week six the average number of opportunities to respond

decreased to 21.25 resulting in negative behaviors to decline to five. Each week the researcher

noticed an increase in students' engagement during instruction time, as well as an increase in the

number of students participating during each opportunity to respond that was presented by the

teacher. The researcher felt that instructional time was more effective because so many checks

for understanding were provided. Next steps for instructional material were easier to determine

because of the increased feedback from each student throughout the learning experience.

The researcher also noted that in many weeks Day 1 of data collection seemed to have a

heightened number of negative behaviors. After recognizing this trend the researcher strived in

increase the number of opportunities to respond even more on the first day of the week. In weeks

five and six of data collection the amount of negative behaviors on Day 1 decreased and closely

resembled the number of behaviors that occurred throughout the week. The researcher believes

this elevated amount of behaviors on day 1 was related to students not being in school for three

days (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) and then returning and getting accustomed to the school

routines and expectations again. The researcher was pleased with the overall results of the

implementation of opportunities to respond. With such a diverse population the researcher felt

that the implementation of opportunities to respond held students accountable for their learning

and increased the number of students participating throughout large group instructional periods.

The researcher felt the implementation of opportunities to respond was beneficial to all students

but specifically those with behavior concerns as well as English Language Learners.

Limitations of the Study

The preschool classroom in which the research occurred is limited to the behaviors of the

students within the room. The research findings of this study only reflected a small population

of twenty students in this particular class. If a future study were to be conducted the researcher

would encourage opportunities to respond to be implemented in more than one class or section

so that more data could be collected and compared to ensure that opportunities to respond

decreased negative behaviors. By expanding the study into more than one classroom the

research would also expand in the number of students and types of behaviors being observed and recorded.   By expanding the research population the study will include a more diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population as well as a larger variety of challenging behaviors and learning disabilities.

Another limitation of this study was the attendance of the sample size. Not all twenty students attended class everyday that data collection occurred for the study. This inevitably could alter the data during the study. If a student who exhibits challenging behaviors is gone for multiple days it could significantly alter data collection and weekly averages of data. In a future study the researcher also suggests that selecting specific students within different classrooms could prevent this limitation from occurring as data collection could not occur without the student present. By selecting a variety of students such as behavior, ELL, or a student identified with a disability, the researcher could determine if the implementation of opportunities to respond had similar results on students who have a variety of needs.

Further Study

If the researcher were to further this study they would look at the effects of opportunities to respond on individual students who display challenging behaviors. The researcher would prefer to narrow down the sample size and focus on students displaying specific problem behaviors and how the implementation of opportunities to respond would assist specific students in the classroom. As stated above in the literature review, early interventions of problematic behaviors are vital for student success throughout their school career. The researcher believes that many interventions can take place to ensure success in the classroom before students become identified or labeled on an Individualized Education Plan. The researcher then plans to share the findings with other early childhood educators and professionals through professional

development events and conferences in hopes to see opportunities to respond implemented in more classrooms to benefit and ensure success for each individual learner.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the implementation of opportunities to respond resulted in more positive student behavior during large group instructional periods. This study supported the researchers question that the implementation of opportunities to respond was a successful preventative support for children who engage in negative behaviors. Early intervention of problematic behavior is essential to ensure success as children begin to develop a concrete foundation that shapes the rest of their school career. Through the implementation of opportunities to respond students who engage in negative behaviors are now being asked to engage in instruction in a positive manner, which increases engagement and allows for their voice. High achieving students are more likely to volunteer when compared to lower achieving or unengaged learners. By providing ways to question all students teachers are increasing student interest in learning, activating their prior knowledge, and increasing engagement in an inclusive manner. Students who are more engaged in learning are less likely to engage in negative behaviors. When challenging students become engaged in learning it also reduces disruptions from occurring the classroom setting. By decreasing the occurrences of negative behaviors in children who display problematic behaviors it allows these children to develop a better attitude toward school as well as create positive relationships with their teachers and peers.

With the incorporation of opportunities to respond fewer students are being taking out of the classroom for negative behaviors and facing punishments or repercussions. Increasing opportunities to respond can be viewed as a preventative classroom management strategy to increase engagement of all students. Students within the classroom are all able to attend and

engage without continuous interruptions resulting in more instructional time for all students. By increasing students instructional time students are more likely to reach their academic goals and standards. With decreased disruptions teachers are then able to focus on delivering the instruction and meeting student's needs to ensure success for each student. Instructional times with fewer disruptions do not leave teachers feeling unsuccessful and frustrated. Increasing opportunities to respond in the classroom presents many benefits for both teachers and each student within the classroom.

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Appendix A

Tally Chart Used to Record Negative Behaviors and Opportunities to Respond

Number of Negative Behaviors	
Number of Opportunities to Respond	