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Increasing Rates of Specific Praise and OTR Provided by Para-educators in Special Education Classrooms

Jordan Christopher Politte

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**INCREASING RATES OF SPECIFIC PRAISE AND OTR PROVIDED BY PARA-
EDUCATORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS**

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Science in Education, Special Education

By

Jordan Politte

December 2015

INCREASING RATES OF SPECIFIC PRAISE AND OTR PROVIDED BY PARA-EDUCATORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education

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Jordan Politte

ABSTRACT

Increasing behavior specific praise and the opportunities to respond (OTR) in a classroom increases the likelihood that students will engage in learning activities and socially appropriate behavior. This study was focused to investigate the effects of on increasing para-educator's use of positive praise and the opportunities to respond in small group reading lessons. This study employed four single-subject withdrawal designs were employed in this study. Two were ABAB, the third was ABABC, and the fourth was ABCAC. The interventions consisted of the para-educators receiving training in the area of behavior specific positive praise and opportunities to respond. After each lesson para's evaluated their performance by listening to 5 minutes of the small group lesson and recorded a frequency count of behavior specific praise both academic and social and OTR. Para's received feedback from the special education teacher after the self-evaluation was completed. Results indicated that para-educators increased their rates of praise on average of 35 total specific praise and increased OTR on average of 28 per session across the four sites.

KEYWORDS: behavior specific praise, self-evaluation, opportunities to respond, para-educator training, autism

This abstract is approved as to form and content

Dr. Linda Garrison-Kane
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University

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Approved:

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Numerous researchers have noted that to create a positive learning environment for students, teachers should academically assess each student to ensure the academic instruction was appropriate to the students' learning capabilities, utilize a classroom management strategy that emphasized high rates of positive reinforcement for appropriate classroom behaviors, increase the rate of positive teacher-student interactions, and implemented effective research-based instructional strategies (Sutherland, Wehby, & Yoder 2002; Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2003; Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). Self-evaluation and feedback were proven to be effective strategies for teachers to increase their use of specific positive praise and the number of opportunities to respond (OTR) for students with problem behaviors (Sutherland, 2000; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Students emitted more on task behaviors when they were in an environment that was rich in specific praise and opportunities to respond academically (Sutherland, 2000; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001).

However, even though there was a plethora of research emphasizing the importance of positive teacher and student interactions and the need to create a positive classroom environment, numerous researchers have stressed that disapproval statements were used more often than positive approval statements by teachers who work with students with problem behavior (Heller & White, 1975; Gable, Hendrickson, Young, Shores, & Stowitschek, 1983; Nafpaktitis, Mayer, & Butterworth, 1985; & Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). Teachers often did not provide approval statements to children who displayed disruptive behavior. Gable, Hendrickson, Young, Shores, and Stowitschek

(1983) found that teachers who worked with students with emotional or behavioral disorders provided more disapproval statements than teachers who worked with students in the other disability categories.

Rationale For The Study

Children that displayed disruptive behavior received low amounts of verbal approval in classrooms; consequently, students who did not display disruptive behavior received higher rates of approval from teachers (Gable, Hendrickson, Young, Shores, & Stowitschek, 1983; Nafpaktitis, Mayer, & Butterworth, 1985; Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). Gunter and Jack (1994) found that negative interaction between a teacher and a student who displayed disruptive behavior occurred 22% of the time. They also found that positive interaction between the teacher and the disruptive student occurred 3% of the time. They noted that negative interactions between the student and the teacher often ended in additional disruptive behaviors, and disruptive students rarely received positive interaction with the teacher even after they followed the teacher's request. It can be hypothesized that students who displayed disruptive behavior were escaping an aversive event or task such as academic assignments (Gunter & Jack, 1994; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008). Some sources of the aversive task were difficult material, dislike of instructional format, ineffective instructional strategies, and behavior management that rely on punishment strategies (Gunter & Jack, 1994).

When students engaged in problematic behaviors they became an aversive stimulus toward the teachers and the teachers sought escape. Subsequently, when the teacher escaped the aversive stimulus the student received ineffective instruction or none

at all. Moreover, the teacher tended to focus more on the negative behavior than give attention to the positive behaviors (Gunter & Jack, 1994).

Therefore, the challenge was for teachers to provide positive attention to reinforce positive behaviors and to avoid providing attention to negative behaviors (Gunter & Jack, 1994). Several methods were identified to assist in developing positive classroom environments. The first was to assess students' academic programs and implement teacher programs that were neither too hard nor too easy. The second was to develop classroom management strategies that emphasized positive reinforcement. The key to this second strategy was to develop a positive classroom environment by increasing rates of positive teacher-student interaction, and increase the use of effective instructional strategies (Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, & Nelson, 1993; Gunter & Jack, 1994; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, and Morgan, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to increase behavior specific positive praise statements and OTR provided by para-educators when working with students that display higher rates of off task or disruptive classroom behavior.

Research Questions

The focus of this study was to increase para-educators behaviors by using self-monitoring and performance feedback from the special education teacher. The para-educator's behaviors that were self-managed included: frequency of behavior specific praise and frequency of Opportunities To Respond (OTR) provided to students. The research questions were:

1. To what extent does increasing positive praise and OTR increase the percentage of student on task behaviors?
2. To what extent does para-educator's self-evaluation of OTR's increase frequency of praise and OTR?
3. To what extent can self-evaluations completed by para-educators increase praise statements and OTR?
4. To what extent were para-educators satisfied with the intervention?

Research Design

This thesis study included four separate single subject withdrawal designs. Sites One and Two were ABAB withdrawal designs. Site Three was an ABABC design withdrawal design, and Site Four was an ABCAC withdrawal design. In Sites One and Two participants were asked to teach five small group reading lessons to obtain a baseline (A) sample of behavior. After baseline, the para-educator participated in training for specific praise and OTR. Then five days of intervention (B) was employed. After each day the para-educator evaluated five minutes of the lesson and developed a verbal goal for the next day. After data was stable and at least five data sessions were collected, intervention was removed. Then the para-educator taught five more lessons without self-evaluating their use of praise and OTR. After five data sessions, intervention was reintroduced and the para-educator again self evaluated performance. Site Three followed the same procedures as described for Site One and Two; however, a second intervention phase C1 was completed after the last intervention phase B2. Site Four began with the collection of baseline. Then, the first intervention phase (B1) was completed. Next, a second intervention (C1) was completed. After C1, a withdrawal

phase (A2) was completed. After the withdrawal phase, a third intervention phase (C2) was completed. Additional explanations of each phase within the four sites were explained within the methodology chapter.

Significance of Study

This study allowed special education teachers to train para-educators that work with students that displayed disruptive behavior. This study promoted positive interactions between adults and students with disruptive behaviors. Self-evaluating teacher behavior also allowed para-educators to improve their performance that increased students' academic engagement and students' on task behaviors.

Assumptions

1. Para-educators were willing to provide praise and wanted to increase their ability to provide high quality small group instruction.
2. Students that participated were reinforced by verbal praise from an adult and increased positive behavior to receive more praise.

Limitations

1. Access to students who displayed disruptive behavior and access to a para-educator to put in the environment.
2. Receive parental permission to video record students in the classroom.
3. Academic functioning level of the individual students and the curriculum that the student has access to.

Definitions

1. Opportunities to Respond (OTR) - Opportunities for students to perform an academic task verbally or physically.

2. Behavior specific praise - Approval of student performance that stated the skills of behavior that was performed accurately.
3. Disruptive Classroom Behavior - Behavior that suppressed the students' ability to remain on task and engage in academic activities.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE OF REVIEW

This chapter reviewed research that focused on teacher and student interaction. Some of the studies focused on the interaction between teachers and students in order to determine if overall interaction was positive or negative. Additional research focused on different instructional strategies that enhanced students' appropriate behaviors. This abbreviated review focused on six areas of research within the area of positive praise and opportunity to respond: Classroom Interactions, Altering Academic Instruction To Increase Appropriate Behaviors, Increasing Positive Praise and OTR, Peer Coaching/ Performance Feedback To Increase Praise and OTR, Teacher Self Evaluation of Praise and OTR, and Supervising Para-Educators.

Classroom Interaction

As previously stated in chapter one, students that displayed problematic behaviors in classrooms were often given negative attention from a teacher. Shores, Jack, Gunter, Ellis, DeBriere, and Wehby (1993) observed classroom interactions in 19 classrooms that were segregated (special education only) and integrated (general ed. with 1 or 2 students with behavior problems). Shores and colleagues observed 15 different behaviors in the classroom. The behaviors that were observed in this study were compliance/ feedback response, noncompliance response, positive mands, negative mands, hand raise, positive physical, negative physical, physical aggression, negative verbal gesture, disruptive, positive consequence, negative consequence, withdrawal, talk, and stop. During observations, the observer was in a non-disruptive place in the class that allowed constant observation. A computer based data collection system was used to collect data. Before data was collected, each observer spent time in the classroom so they were not a new

stimulus in the room. Results from the observations indicated that teachers were likely to respond to student compliance with a positive mand or demand. Teacher feedback and talk were the next highest probability to occur after student compliance, meaning teachers responded to student compliance with more demands, feedback, and talk more than any other behavior. Positive consequences in the integrated classroom were not found related to student compliance. However, in the segregated classroom positive consequences were related to student compliance just on a slow schedule. It is also noted that teachers used positive consequences sparingly and children with problem behaviors received negative consequences 6 to 26 times more often than students without problem behaviors. It was also noted that teachers were more likely to deliver more than one negative consequence sequentially and student behaviors that preceded the teacher's negative consequences were negative/ non-compliant behaviors.

In concluding their research, Shores, et al. (1993) stated that the most typical teacher student interaction was teacher mand- student compliance-teacher mand, teacher feedback, or teacher talk. Teachers seldom followed student compliance with a positive consequence but instead, responded with feedback, talk, or another demand. Other researchers focus on finding the rates of teacher approval against the rates of disapproval in classrooms.

Heller and White (1975) and Gable, Hendrickson, Young, Shores, and Stowitschek (1983) were foundational studies within the field that assisted in establishing the framework for future studies in this area of research.

Heller and White (1975) determined rates of approval and disapproval in higher achieving classes compared to lower achieving classes. Disapproval statements often

served as a reinforcer of the undesired behavior. Although the attention was negative, it served as a reward for the student, therefore, the likelihood that behavior occurred again increased. Because attention often reinforced students, teacher approval was found to increase appropriate behavior in classrooms.

The results of the observations completed were that approval statements were given at a significantly lower rate (.29/ min.) than disapproval rates (.52/min.). It was also clear from the observations that approvals were almost always directed towards academic behaviors and not for appropriate behaviors. The most important thing they found was that teachers were providing more disapproval in their lower ability classrooms than higher ability classroom. These disapprovals were mostly aimed at social behaviors to manage the classroom. Teachers provided more disapproval because disapprovals immediately produced a rewarding situation for the teacher (behavior stopped). More Research was completed to compare approval and disapproval across the categories of exceptionalities.

Gable et al. (1983) observed interactions between teachers and students in 97 classrooms containing children that were diagnosed with mental retardation, severe multihandicapped, and learning or behavior disorders. Throughout observations, observers collected data on frequency of approval and disapproval statements in regards to classroom management. Approval statements were teacher praise of children behavior, and disapproval statements were negative statements intended to express dissatisfaction. Observations lasted for a minimum of ten minutes during pre academic times and group instruction times. The observers used 10 second momentary time sampling to determine if approval or disapproval were displayed.

Gable et al. (1983) found that students with learning or behavior problems received less approval statements than the other disability categories. All students received less approval statements than disapproval statements. They found that teacher pre-service training did not factor into rates of approval and disapproval.

Peer observation and self-monitoring strategies may be required for praise to be sustained over time. Interactions between students and teachers were described as teacher-child-teacher interaction. The teacher provided the student with instructions; questions, modeling, silence or non-instruction. Then, the student provided a response (correct, question, other, silence, or error). After, the student's response, the teacher provided a consequence to the student's response. The consequences given by teachers were positive consequences (reward), positive/negative feedback, non-instruction, absent, or negative consequences.

Gable, Hendrickson, Shores, and Young (1983) examined teacher student interaction in special education classrooms containing children with learning or behavior problem as well as mental retardation. Specifically they observed teacher-pupil interaction and teacher planning behavior. Teacher-pupil interaction was described above as teacher mand, student response, and teacher response. Teacher planning behavior was categorized into five behaviors; (1) initial assessment procedures, (2) progress monitoring and establishing mastery criteria, (3) follow up procedures, (4) pinpointing behaviors to be taught, and (5) planned antecedent control during direct instruction. A questionnaire was developed to obtain this information. The procedures included an observer who watched pre-academic or direct instruction time. The observer used a tape

recorder to notify observers of intervals. After the observation was completed the teacher participated in an interview about how they had planned for the direct instruction.

Results from observations indicated that there were no significant difference in teacher pupil interaction between the different groups of teachers (LD/BD, MR, categorical, or non categorical). Teacher planning behavior however, did reveal some differences. Teachers working with students labeled LD/BD used published materials more than teacher working with students who were mentally retarded. They also found that more teachers of learning and behavior-disordered students used norm-referenced assessments than did teachers who worked with the mentally retarded population.

It was observed that when teachers used systematic instruction (sequencing models and positive consequences contingent upon correct student responses) students were likely to be engaged in appropriate behavior (Gable, Hendrickson, Shores & Young, 1983; Gable, Hendrickson, Shores, Young & Stowitschek, 1983).

Over the years, many studies have compared rates of approval and disapproval statements in secondary and elementary settings (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000).

Beaman and Wheldall (2000) was a review of previous research on teachers' use of approval and disapproval statements. They reviewed research in this area from the 70's, 80's and 90's. In the early studies, it was common to find that approval statements were given at a significantly lower rate than disapproval statements. As research continued, the finds changed. More approval statements were being used than disapproval statements when focusing on academic behaviors. However, low rates of approval were given to students when they displayed appropriate social behaviors.

Nafpaktitis, Mayer, and Butterworth (1985) observed 84 middle school teachers. After observations were completed, data showed that approval rates were higher than disapproval (only study to show this until then), but there was a correlation between disapproval statements and off-task behavior. Meaning the more off-task the students became, the more negative statements were given. Also the more disapproval statements, the more off task behavior students displayed.

Beaman and Wheldall (2000) reviewed studies that were completed in the 90's as well. Beaman and Wheldall (2000) indicated that teachers used higher rates of approval than disapproval when acknowledging academic performance. In all but one study, the teacher gave less approval for social behavior compared to academic behavior. Even though approval statements provided positive characteristics in a classroom many teachers did not take advantage of this powerful tool. Now, we know that teachers gave approval for academics but not always behaviors. The question is, "Why don't teachers give more approval statements for student behavior?" In classrooms certain stimuli affect the behavior of students. If stimuli were aversive, then the student most likely escaped and avoided the stimuli.

Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, and Nelson (1993) examined aversive stimuli that were present in classrooms that promoted escape/avoidance behavior. They determined that two things could make academics aversive. They were task difficulty and preference for specific academic activities. Teachers found the level of ability for students and presented academic tasks that were not above or below the students' ability level. If the work were too challenging, then the likelihood students would escape or avoid the task increased. If the work was too easy then the students became bored and engaged in

attention seeking activities. Preference for academic activities was a stimulus that was overcome by allowing the student to make a choice. Giving students' choices was proven to decrease student disruptive behavior. Other aversive stimuli were instructional interactions. Most instructional interactions were in the form of teacher mand, student comply, and teacher mand. In order to increase the probability of success, positive attention was given then errorless learning procedures were used. Instructional interaction between teacher and student was, teacher provided necessary information, teacher provided to-do statements, and feedback was given if student was unsuccessful. If successful, then a positive consequence was presented. Teachers must always keep in mind, what may be aversive during instruction, increased positive consequences, incorrect responses followed by information to obtain correctness, and that their own behavior was shaped by interactions with students. An intervention that controlled academic ability level, student preference, and used a systematic instructional approach provided frequent opportunities for success and more opportunities for teachers to reinforce students. Often times, disruptive behavior displayed by a student positively or negatively reinforced the teacher's negative behaviors. Often loud negative reprimands decreased problematic behavior immediately, for a short period of time, therefore the behavior stopping negatively reinforced the teacher.

Gunter and Jack (1994) examined the effects of challenging student behavior on teacher instructional behavior. When a teacher avoided or escaped problematic behaviors displayed by students, then the teacher often displayed behavior of non-instruction by being engaged in ineffective instruction and attended more to the inappropriate behaviors than the appropriate. Thus, students saw academic activities as aversive and displayed

problematic behavior to escape, or teacher attention was reinforcing the negative behaviors. Strategies to decrease aversiveness in a classroom were: assess students' academic programs to plan, implement teacher programs that were not too hard or too easy, classroom management strategies that focused on positive consequences, increased positive interactions by increasing praise, and increased use of effective instructional strategies. Progress monitoring with the use of curriculum-based assessment helped teachers alter instruction based on student performance.

Classroom management strategies that promoted positive interactions were teacher movement around room, and increased teachers' positive responses. One-way teachers acknowledged more appropriate student behavior was self-monitoring through videotaping of lessons.

It is a teacher's job to develop a positive interactive classroom (Gunter & Jack, 1994). The strategies that have been mentioned in this study encouraged teachers to acknowledge the positive behaviors displayed by students. It also allowed the teacher to set the student up for academic success through progress monitoring. If model, prompt, and check instructional strategy was used it allowed more praise to be given. Two things that a teacher controlled in the classroom were their own behavior and the classroom environment.

Behavior teachers displayed in their classrooms affected how kids behaved and how much they learn. Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, and Morgan (2008) explained ways teacher behavior contributed to learning/behavior problems and assessment procedures to measure classroom context variables. The relationship between learning and behavior problems was reciprocal, meaning behavior effected how a student learned

and the lack of learning was reinforced by avoidance behaviors. Often students who displayed problematic behavior developed negative relationships with teachers. If negative relationships were developed early in school, an increase in academic and behavior problems was more likely to be present. Over time students with learning and behavior problems received less teacher instructional variables or none at all (Sutherland et al. 2008).

When changing the classroom environment of a class with behavior problems, identification of classroom instructional variables was needed before behavior changed. Some proactive teacher behaviors that have shown to reduce problematic behavior and increased active engagement were: clear expectations and routines, posted and taught rules, and pre-correction strategies (Sutherland et al. 2008; Conroy, Sutherland, Synder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009). Other features of positive classroom management included: a physical organization of the classroom that promoted learning, have clear expectations and routines, academic and curricular restructuring, and teacher movement patterns. Another strategy teachers implemented to improve the positive environment in a classroom was increased OTR and praise provided (Conroy et al. 2009).

It was important for teachers to understand that they could not make children learn or behave. Instead, teachers used effective instructional and behavior support strategies to increase the likelihood that students engaged in prosocial behavior and learning. Interventions that included multiple levels of classroom context appeared to be the most effective in changing developmental outcomes. Using effective instructional strategies also increased students on task behavior.

Altering Academic Instruction To Increase Appropriate Behaviors

Altering presentation, pace, and preparation of academic lessons were effective in manipulating student behavior. For instance, Gunter and Reed (1997) altered instruction of students with behavior problems by changing preparation techniques. More than 80% of the time students with behavior problems were asked to complete tasks they did not have the ability to complete correctly.

In past research, Gunter and Reed (1997) used scripted lessons to decrease problematic behavior. Disruptive behavior decreased when more task-related information was provided. When scripted lesson were developed unintentional aversive stimuli were reduced. Gunter and Reed (1997) noted when scripted lessons were introduced correct responses increased as well as teacher positive praise. Disruptive behavior also decreased from almost one a minute to almost one every five minutes (Gunter & Reed).

According to Gunter and Reed (1997), an effective lesson had these seven steps: gained learners attention, reviewed relevant past learning, communicated goal of lesson, modeled the skill, provided prompted practice, provided unprompted practice, and closed the lesson. When a lesson was scripted the teacher first thought was, “the focus of the script.” An alternative instructional interaction strategy was corrective feedback.

Corrective feedback was used to correct students after a wrong answer had been given. Gunter and Shores (1994) altered instruction by giving the student more information to complete a task correctly. More information was given in the form of feedback. After the skill had been completed wrong, the teacher told the student how to complete the activity correctly, and then gave the student another opportunity to get the correct answer.

If a student was presented with an opportunity to respond and they did not have the skills or the information to complete it, they usually engaged in avoidance behaviors. Feedback provided the student the correct answer or the skills for the student to be successful. Therefore, completing the opportunity to respond correctly allowed students to escape appropriately (Gunter & Shores, 1994). Increased pace of instruction was also an instructional strategy that decreased student inappropriate behavior. Praise was a teacher behavior that was widely recognized to increase correct academic responses and appropriate social behavior (Gunter & Shores, 1994).

Increasing Positive Praise and OTR

It has been suggested by past research that OTR's and praise had a correlational relationship. Sutherland, Wehby, and Yoder (2002) examined the relationship between teacher praise and OTR in classrooms with problem behaviors. The majority of teacher praise statements typically occurred in response to correct academic responses, which directly followed OTR. Observations for this study were completed in 20 self-contained classrooms grades K-8. Observations took place in fifteen-minute intervals during whole group and small group instruction. Each teacher was observed for a minimum of 90 minutes using a computer based observation system that allowed for direct observation of behavior sequentially. Data collectors were Master level teachers who practiced observing and using the computer based observation system by watching videos.

Ten different behaviors were observed. Nine behaviors were teacher behaviors, and the student behavior was a correct response. The teacher behaviors were academic specific praise, social specific praise, non-behavior specific praise, teacher academic

reprimands, teacher social reprimands, group OTR, individual OTR, academic statements, and other.

The observations indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between OTR and praise. Teachers who displayed high rates of praise also had high rates of OTR, and teachers with low rates of praise had low rates of OTR.

Student's disruptive behavior also decreased when teacher praise was increased (Sutherland, 2000). However, students with problem behavior were given low rates of praise and engaged in negative interactions with teachers 20% of the time. Positive behaviors were observed less than 5% of the time (Sutherland, 2000). Two methods were identified to help teachers increase the number of praise statements and OTR during academic lessons. They were peer coaching and self-evaluation.

Peer coaching demonstrated positive change in classroom management strategies, increase desired teacher behaviors, and enhanced accuracy of implementation of curriculum based assessments. Peer coaching was most successful when observations used objective and descriptive recordings of behavior rather than anecdotal evaluations; the peer coach was trained to successfully code teacher behaviors, and debriefings lead to goal setting. Observations were live or were accomplished through a video or audio recording (Sutherland, 2000).

Self Evaluation was completed through the use of video and auditory recordings. Five-minute recordings were shown to provide insight toward instruction (Sutherland, 2000). Interventions that were preferred by teachers must consume little time and be easy in difficulty. If peer coaching was the intervention chosen to increase teacher behavior

then the next section provided examples of how past researchers have conducted the intervention and their results.

Peer Coaching/ Performance Feedback To Increase Praise and OTR

Teacher praise was most effective when it was behavior specific (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). Behavior specific praise was when the teacher specified to the student the behavior that earned reinforcement. Past research had shown that as little as 5% of teacher praise statements were behavior specific. Sutherland et al. completed peer coaching/performance feedback procedures with a male teacher. The observer collected data on behavior specific praise, non-behavior specific praise, and on task behavior.

Peer coaching was implemented after nine baseline sessions were completed. Before the first intervention session, the observer met with the teacher and provided the benefits of praise as well as the definition of behavior specific praise. Before each intervention session, the observer met with the teachers to remind them of the goal. Immediately after the session, the teachers and observer met to discuss rates of praise, and praise was given to the teachers as well as specific examples the teacher used in that session.

The results of the study indicated that both behavior specific praise and non-behavior specific praise increased during both intervention phases compared to baseline rates of praise. On-task behavior increased during intervention on average of 29%. It was noted that this intervention (peer coaching/ feedback) had minimal long-term effects on teacher behavior (Sutherland, Wehby et al. 2000). Sometimes feedback can be visual. Rates of praise and OTR were placed on a line graph with a line to represent the goal.

This allowed the teachers to visually see how many more praise statements and OTR they needed to increase, to meet their goals.

Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, and Martin (2007) utilized performance feedback in three regular education classrooms. The school principal recommendations and teacher reports of problematic behavior in the classroom determined participation. Six student were targeted, two in each classroom. Observation session lasted twenty minutes on a daily basis in each classroom. The observers were graduate students who were blind to experimental phases. Ten minute partial interval recording was used to record student behaviors as well as a same sex peer. Non-behavior specific and behavior specific praise was collected as well as student disruptive behavior and academic engagement.

During the intervention phase, three group consultation meetings were held. In the first meeting, teachers were taught the difference between behavior specific and general praise. In second two follow up consultation meetings, difficulties increasing praise were discussed as well as strategies to solve the problems were identified. During the Video-Performance Feedback (VPF) phases teachers received a graph at the beginning of each day with no verbal feedback given. Each teacher started VPF at different times of the experiment.

After VPF was introduced to the teachers, the amount of behavior specific praise increased and the mean rates of student disruptive behavior decreased. All but one teacher involved stated that the intervention was not intrusive, but overall teachers rated the experience important and rewarding. Other studies have used peer coaching in a Response to Intervention approach to increase rates of praise.

Myers, Simonsen, and Sugai (2011) examined the effect of teacher performance feedback within an RTI approach on teacher praise. An RTI approach to increasing teacher behavior allowed teachers to receive feedback and error correction based on their specific needs compared to a one-size fits all approach (Myers et al. 2011). Teacher behaviors that were observed were specific contingent praise, non-specific praise, and negative interactions. Student behaviors that were observed were academic engagement, off-task behavior, and disruptive behavior.

The intervention in this study had three tiers. The first tier every teacher in the building participated in. This tier was part of the School Wide Positive Behavior Support training. This training included the use of specific praise and the need for more positive interactions with students. Movement between tiers of intervention required the teacher to have met the preferred 4:1 praise to reprimand ratio and had six praise statements per 15 min of instruction. Tier two intervention consisted of a brief consultation, before and after ratios of positive to negative interactions, and weekly praise from researchers on use of positive praise. The brief consultation consisted of the rationale of giving contingent specific praise and examples. The teacher moved to the third tier if both criteria were not met. During the third tier of intervention teachers were given feedback after every session. Daily interactions lasted 2 to 5 min and consisted of self-prompting strategies, modeled specific praise, and scripts used when praising students.

Teachers required various levels of assistance. One teacher was able to meet both criteria after receiving tier two intervention, two required more intensive tier three intervention, and one teacher meet criteria before receiving tier two services. Throughout the study all teachers were able to decrease the amount of disruptive behavior and

increase the amount of specific praise given. During maintenance all teachers were able to keep a 4:1 praise to reprimand ratio, however, overall rates of praise increased for all teachers (Myers et al. 2011). Self-evaluation of a teacher's use of praise was completed by videotaping classroom interactions compared to having a peer or administrator observe and collect data.

Teacher Self Evaluation of Praise and OTR

Some critical elements of instruction were provision of content prior to asking questions, rate of eliciting responses from students, correctness of students, rate of contingent praise, rate of student disruption, and teacher attention toward disruptive behavior (Gunter & Reed, 1996). Gunter and Reed (1996) recommended methods for videotaping class instruction. They recommended that recording should be completed during academic lessons that were presenting new information because that was a time when disruptive behavior was increased.

When viewing videotapes for data collection, it was recommended that teachers only collect a frequency count of up to two behaviors at a time (Gunter & Reed, 1996). The primary focus was on direct instruction practices in which the teacher engaged in a pattern of behavior. The pattern was presented information, requested feedback, and reinforced correct responses. Past research was conducted with student teachers and increased rates of praise through self-evaluations (Keller, Brady, & Taylor, 2005).

Little research was completed with student teachers. Keller et al. (2005) completed a self-evaluation intervention with three student teachers in an elementary school setting. During week three of student teaching they received the materials needed to complete the intervention and determined when the recording was going to occur. All

recordings were 15 min long and were completed during teacher led instruction as opposed to seat work or one-on-one instruction. Student teachers recorded three days without collecting data so students could acclimate to the recorder. During the baseline phases' student teachers did not listen to the recordings, but listened to the recordings during intervention. Researchers randomly drew cards out to determine the interval of tape that was going to be reviewed. Intervention was introduced after five days and at least one student teacher showed a stable trend.

Intervention started with an individual training session. The training session included a 60 minute scripted lesson that summarized the nine steps for self-evaluation. Those nine steps were: make a prediction about frequency of social praise in a 5 minute interval, researcher shared mean rate of social praise during baseline, target frequency of specific social praise for change, researcher provided explanation and examples of effective specific praise, researcher modeled how to use recorder, training tape created and coded by both researcher and student, a goal was set and strategies to increase rates were discussed, student teacher recorded teacher led instruction, a graph was prepared for baseline and intervention, and student teacher graphed rates after each day during baseline.

Generalization recordings were completed in other instruction areas. A mentor completed a five-minute observation and recorded rates of praise 4 weeks after intervention ended to determine maintenance of rates of praise. Results of completing the self-evaluation were that all student teachers rates of praise increased during intervention. The skill of giving specific praise also generalized into different instructional areas for two of the student teachers. All the participants were able to maintain increased rates of

specific social praise. Other studies used self-evaluation procedures with practicing teachers and received similar results.

An extensive study that evaluated the effects of self-evaluation of praise and OTR was conducted by (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). All classrooms were self-contained special education classroom with students who met eligibility for learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mental retardation. The average class size was 10.8 students and one para-professional was present in all classes. Twenty teachers were divided into two groups of ten. One group of ten received intervention and one group did not. Teachers who participated in intervention received \$150 and no-treatment teachers received \$100. Each teacher was observed for at least 90 minutes while each observation was only 15 minutes of whole group and small group instruction.

The intervention included the same nine steps of self-evaluation as Keller et al. (2005). The no-treatment teachers were observed only no alterations to teacher behaviors were made.

Teachers who completed self-evaluations averaged more total praise, OTR, correct student responses, and academic talk while having less total reprimands during treatment. Teachers who received treatment also maintained higher rates of praise, OTR, correct student responses, and academic talk than teachers who didn't receive treatment (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Creating a positive and engaging classroom environment was a powerful tool that encouraged learning and prevented problem behaviors.

Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo (2009) identified seven characteristics of effective praise. Praise was specific statements about appropriate student behavior, contingent upon the occurrence of desired behavior, used during initial

acquisition of a skill, teacher initiated, focused in improvement and effort, sincere and in a natural voice, and it avoided comparisons to other students. Conroy et al. (2009) also outlined steps of self-monitoring teacher behavior to increase the use of effective praise. First, teachers identified a time or activity when problem behaviors of a group or individual interfered with classroom instruction the most. Secondly, they recorded the activity to provide a baseline level of praise and problematic behavior. Next, they examined quantity and quality of praise. Then, they set a goal of increased praise statements. After that, they identified children who have the most social or academic problem behaviors. Next, they made a list of target behaviors that elicited praise. Then, they made a chart of problem behaviors and desired replacement behaviors. Then, they made a list of effect praise that was provided to children. Last, they implemented the plan and evaluated changes in rates of praise and student behavior. Feedback was an effective way to promote a positive atmosphere (Conroy et al. 2009). They stated that feedback was intentional, overt, prompt, direct, specific, and positive. Two different types of feedback were instructional feedback and error correction. Instructional feedback was when students obtained the correct answer and more academic information was presented. Error correction was provided after an academic or behavioral error, with the purpose of teaching the correct response. The procedure for correcting student errors included making sure the student was aware of the error, providing the student with the correct response, and providing more practice to produce the correct response. In summary, teachers had three options when responding to student responses. The three responses included: specific praise when response was correct, instructional feedback when response was similar to correct response and the error correction procedure when an error

occurred (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009). Using self-evaluation as a strategy to increase positive praise allowed teachers to see that their behavior impacted student's behaviors. Increasing positive praise of a teacher promoted a positive atmosphere; however, in special education classrooms the addition of a para- educator increased positive praise.

Supervising Para-Educators

Para-educators performed a wide variety of duties that included, small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, material modification, behavior management, monitoring students, supporting teachers, collecting data, and providing personal care (Maggin, Wehby, Moore-Partin, Robertson, & Oliver, 2009). Research has shown that most para-educators lacked training to implement basic instruction and behavioral duties in the classroom. In one particular study, 70% of para-educators had zero interaction with students, and when they did interact, 82% of the time it was social in nature, rather than focused on instruction or classroom management (Maggin, et al. 2009). Maggin and colleagues suggested a four-step approach for supervising para educators included: 1) define para-educators roles; 2) train para-educators to fulfill roles, 3) evaluate performance, and 4) ongoing collaboration with para-educator. Additional recommendations were given to the classroom teacher. They explicitly described classroom responsibilities, focused on exact responsibilities in training, and ensured para-educators were comfortable and fluent with instructional activities and classroom routines, developed how assessment will take place, and met regularly to review roles and performance, and class issues.

The purpose of this study was to increase positive praise in special education classrooms by increased rates of specific praise and OTR provided by para-educators and determine the effects it has on student problematic behavior. This current study employed previously identified research-based procedures and strategies described above to supervise and provide feedback to para-educators in special education classrooms (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009). Para-educators self-evaluated their rate of specific praise, OTR, or both, and the classroom teacher provided feedback on how to increase their use of specific praise and OTR. The teacher provided feedback through modeling the use of specific praise and explained the rationale of why specific praise was most effective.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the participants, setting, measurement procedures, design, intervention procedures, and the dependent variables were discussed.

Settings and Participants

All sites were conducted in two elementary schools in Southwest Missouri. Sites consisted of special education classrooms and regular education classrooms. Sites were conducted with students that had Individual Education Plans and were eligible for services under Autism or Other Health Impaired. Site One and Two were conducted in school One. Site Three and Four were conducted in School Two.

Table 1. School Demographic Data

| School | Free and Reduced Lunch | English Language Learner |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Central Park Elementary Monett R-3 | 73.90% | 31% |
| 2. Westport Elementary Springfield R-12 | 86.65% | N/A |

Site One. Site One was a special education resource classroom. Students participated in small group instruction. Scholastic® System 44 was used to assess and guide instruction in this classroom.

Para-Educator. The para-educator in this classroom was a para-educator for ten years. The para-educator was not pursuing a degree in education.

Student One. Student one was a 9-year-old boy who received pull out services in the area of reading and was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Jay was reading at an end of first grade/middle of second grade reading level. He had a Developmental Reading Assessment (Herein referred to DRA) score of 16 at the beginning of school and a DRA score of 20 after winter break.

Student Two. Student two was a 9-year-old boy who received pull out services in the area of reading and was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Clay was reading at a fourth grade reading level. He had a DRA score of 40 in both the beginning and middle of the year.

Site Two. Site Two was conducted in a 4th grade general education classroom during small group reading time. A special education teacher and a general education teacher co-taught in this classroom. Grade level curriculum in reading was presented in five stations.

Para-Educator. The para educator in this classroom had experience working with students in special education and was in pursuit of a teaching degree.

Student Three. Student three was one-fourth-grade boy. Hunter was a 9 year old who was served under the educational diagnosis of Other Health Impairment. He was reading on grade level. He had a DRA score of 40 in the beginning and middle of his fourth grade year.

Site Three. Site Three was a special education resource classroom that served students in grades K-5.

Para-Educator. The para educator in this classroom had experience working with students in special education. This para-educator was also in pursuit of a teaching degree.

Student Four. Student four was a boy in kindergarten that was 6 years old. Lyle was receiving services for special education under the diagnosis of Autism. Lyle was assessed using a DRA and earned a score of A, which is grade equivalent to a beginning reader.

Site Four. Site Four was conducted in a hallway learning area outside of a 1st grade classroom.

Para-Educator. The para-educator in this had experience working with students in special education. She was not in pursuit of a teaching degree.

Student Five. Student Five was a 7-year-old boy. Luke received special education services under the educational diagnosis of Autism. Luke earned a DRA score of A which is grade equivalent to a beginning reader.

Student Six. Student Six was a 7 years old boy. Hans received special education services under the educational diagnosis of Autism. Hans earned a DRA score of A, which is grade equivalent to a beginning reader.

Design

The design of this study consisted of a series of single subject withdrawal designs (Kazdin, 2011). Single subject withdrawal designs were used to evaluate the effects of the intervention by alternating between baseline conditions and intervention conditions (Kazdin, 2011). The rationale for selecting this type of design was to describe and predict the para-educator and student behaviors. Alternating between intervention and baseline conditions tested whether or not the intervention altered the performance of the participants (Kazdin, 2011).

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables in this study included the following: behavior specific praise (academic and social), Opportunities to Respond (OTR) given by para-educators, and on-task behavior (in-seat, following directions, eye contact) displayed by the student.

The following narrative described each dependent variable of the para-educators in this study. Sutherland, Wehby and Copeland (2000), identified two types of praise statements, behavior specific praise and non-behavior specific praise. The dependent variables in the study replicated previous work conducted by Sutherland et al. **Behavior specific praise** was defined as verbal praise for a desired student behavior, where the desired behavior was specific within the praise statement. Specific praise focused on academic behaviors and social behaviors. **Non-behavior specific praise** was defined as providing the student with a praise statement that did not specify the desired behavior that the student was praised for. Two types of opportunities to respond were behaviors that data was collected on. **Group opportunities to respond (OTR)** were defined as a question or statement by the teacher that sought a response to an academic request, and **Individual opportunities to respond (OTR)** were defined as a question or statement by the teacher that sought the response of an individual student by name to an academic request (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000).

Student on-task was defined as students following specific instructional demands, reading words orally, questions answered, and words written. On task was defined as sitting in seat and staying in the learning environment. Additional non-examples of on tasks behaviors were drawing or doodling, playing with an object, staring around the room, putting head on desk, or using academic materials incorrectly.

Independent Variables

The training intervention that was provided to each para-educator began with an introduction to behavior specific praise and opportunities to respond (OTR) for students. The lead investigator provided the definition of both behavior specific praise and OTR for students. Also provided in the introduction, were the seven characteristics of effective praise. The lead investigator then provided examples of behavior specific praise and OTR. The last piece of the introduction was students could respond in multiple ways.

All trainings included, followed the Direct Instruction format of model, guided practice, and independent practice. In the modeling section of the training, the lead investigator/classroom teacher modeled for the para-educator how to develop behavior specific positive praise statements for both social behaviors and academic behaviors. Second, the lead investigator modeled how to complete the modeling, guided practice, and independent practice portion of a small group lesson. During modeling, the lead investigator provided behavior specific praise and OTR's to the para-educator. In the third session, the lead investigator and the para-educator completed the guided practice portion of a lesson together. After the guided practice portion of the training was completed, the para-educator was instructed to complete all the steps of the lesson independently. The lead investigator took notes and provided feedback when the para-educator had completed the lesson.

The final part of the training consisted of the lead investigator thanking the para-educator for participating in the training, and a review of behavior specific praise and OTR was completed as well. Additional information about the independent variable was also provided in the procedure section of this chapter.

Site One and Two. The independent variables in the four sites were para-educator self-evaluation of praise statements and/or OTR. The para-educators received three training sessions on the importance of specific praise and strategies for delivering praise statements and OTR during instruction. During the intervention phase, the para-educators were taught to self-monitor their use of praise and OTR during an academic small group lesson. At the end of the day, the para-educator self-evaluated the number of praise and OTR she engaged in during the reading lesson via an audio recording.

Site Three. The independent variable or intervention at this site was para-educator self-evaluation of only OTR as well as three training sessions. During the intervention phases, the para-educator was taught to self-monitor the use of OTR during an academic small group lesson. At the end of the day, the para-educator self-evaluated the number of OTR she engaged in during the academic lesson. The para-educator then established a goal for the next session. After phase B2 of intervention, the para-educator received three additional training sessions on how to increase and self-evaluate specific praise. Five more days of intervention was employed and the para-educator self-evaluated and received feedback on behavior specific praise and OTR during the reading lesson.

Site Four. The independent variable (B) at Site Four was para-educator self-evaluation of behavior specific praise and OTR after three training sessions. At the end of the session, the para-educator self-evaluated the number of opportunities to respond and specific praise she engaged in during the academic lesson. Each para-educator then established a goal for OTR and praise for the next teaching session. The same procedures were replicated during C1 and C2, with the addition of the goal written on a note card and presented to the para-educator as a visual reminder before the next lesson was taught.

Measurement

A minimum of twenty 15-min audio and video recordings were conducted to assess the rate of specific praise and opportunities to respond by the para-educators in each site. The investigator completed recording and graphing the frequency of praise and OTR for each lesson after the lesson was completed. Student on-task behaviors were recorded using 10-s momentary time sampling. The investigators viewed videos of lessons at the end of the teaching day (see Appendix A for Data Collection Forms) to assess the para-educators use of specific praise and OTR.

Interobserver Agreement

Reliability was collected across each phase of the study with all participants and in all sites. The investigators in the study collected reliability by listening to audiotapes of the small group reading lessons. Video recordings were assessed for the occurrence of the following behaviors; behavior specific praise, opportunities to respond, and student on-task behavior. After the entire tape had been reviewed, the reliability data were then calculated by dividing agreements by disagreements plus agreements. Acceptable levels of reliability were considered at 80% or higher. If reliability was lower, then the tape was reviewed again and the items of disagreement were discussed.

Procedures

The intervention in these sites followed a replication of the independent variables previously employed by Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo (2009), which identified the following steps of self-monitoring teacher behavior to increase the use of effective praise. Conroy's work was modified for teachers working with para-educators. First, the teacher identified a time or activity when problem behaviors of a group or

individual interfered with classroom instruction the most. Secondly, the teacher recorded the activity to provide a baseline level of praise, OTR, and problematic behavior for a minimum of 5 sessions. Next, the classroom teacher and investigator examined the quantity and quality of the para-educators use of praise and/or OTR. The baseline results were presented to the para-educator and a goal of increasing praise statements and/or OTR was set by the para-educator. Next, the para-educator identified children who had the highest rate of social or academic problem behaviors. Then, the teacher and para-educator created a list of target behaviors that elicited specific praise as well as determined desired replacement behaviors. Then, the para-educator made a list of effective praise to be provided for appropriate behaviors and OTR that were provided during a lesson. The last step in self-evaluation was to teach and record a small group lesson. These steps were used in all four sites. Before Intervention phases began, the para-educators participated in a three-day training on the importance of specific praise and how to increase rates of behavior specific praise and OTR within a small group lesson.

Baseline

During baseline, 15-min audio recordings were collected at least three times a week during the designated academic lesson of reading. The investigator prepared the classroom ensuring the audio and video recorders were in place before the para-educator and students entered the room. The investigator started the recordings when the para-educator began the lesson. After the day was completed, the investigator listened to the recordings and recorded the frequency of the dependent variables of the para-educator and selected students. During baseline sessions the para-educator did not listen to the

recordings or participate in trainings about increasing praise and OTR. Baseline was collected for five days for each participant in each site. All sites followed the same procedures during baseline (A1) and withdrawal phases (A2).

Intervention

Sites One and Two. Three training sessions were completed before the para-educators started recording and the self-evaluation procedures were completed. During the initial trainings, the para-educators received instruction on the importance of specific positive praise and educational instructional strategies to improve positive praise and increase OTR. The investigator also modeled how specific praise and OTR were delivered and provided verbal and visual examples to the para-educators. The para-educators were given an opportunity to practice developing and delivering praise and OTR within the lessons.

After the para-educators taught the lessons, the recordings were stopped and a conference between the para-educators and teacher occurred upon the conclusion of the school day. Each para-educator met with the investigator at separate times. During the conference, the teacher and the para-educators simultaneously listened to the audiotape and recorded the number of praise statements and OTR, and then they compared the frequency of occurrence with each other. Feedback was given to the para-educators on strategies to improve their delivery. Specific praise was given to them when goals were met. During the conference, additional modeling of the skill was given, if the data indicated more assistance was needed. A graph of the para-educator's performance was shown to each para-educator and a goal was set for the next day of intervention. These procedures of self-evaluation were aligned to the self-evaluation procedures developed by

Sutherland and Wehby (2001) and Conroy, Sutherland, Synder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo (2009).

After five days of intervention and consistent data results, the intervention was withdrawn. These procedures were then replicated in the second intervention phase (B2), in site one and two.

Site Three. In Site Three all the previous procedures that were conducted in Sites One and Two were completed. Site Three received a second training session that focused only on developing specific praise and embedding it into the reading lesson. Then 5 additional sessions were completed with the para-educator and students. The last phase was added to this site because during the first intervention phases the para-educator was only trained on the importance and implementation strategies for increasing OTR.

Site Four. The intervention procedures in the Site Four followed the same steps as the previous three sites. However, two additional phases were added to this design. In C1 and C2, one step was added to the procedures. After the self-evaluation and feedback from the investigator had been provided, the goal that was developed was written on a note card. Before the next academic lesson was completed the investigator presented a visual prompt (note card) of the goal to the para-educator.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter discussed the data that was collected during each site of the study. During each site data was collected on para-educator's use of specific positive praise and OTR. Data was also collected on students' on-task behavior in each site.

Site One (ABAB)

Para-educator. During baseline (A1), the para-educator from site one averaged .4 behavior specific praise statements during 15-minute reading lessons with a range of 0-3. During the first intervention phase (B1), the para-educator averaged 24.9 behavior specific praise statements with a range of 15-38. When the intervention returned to baseline conditions (A2), the average behavior specific praise per session decreased to 10.6 with a range of 7-15. Intervention conditions were implemented again (B2), and the average increased to 24.8 behavior specific praise statements per session with a range of 17-38.

Non-behavior specific praise statements were given at an average rate of 10.4 per session during A1. During B1, an average of 6.2 non-behavior specific praise statements were given per session. In return to baseline conditions (A2), non-behavior specific praise was given at an average rate of 5.3 per session. During the last intervention phase (B2), an average of 15.2 non-behaviors specific praise statements were given.

During the baseline phase, the para educator averaged 33.6 OTR during a 15-minute reading lesson with a range of 26-53. When intervention was presented, OTR decreased to 31 OTR per session with a range of 25-36. Baseline conditions were withdrawn and the para-educator averaged 26 OTR per session with a range of 18-37.

Intervention conditions were reinstated and the para-educator averaged 42 OTR per session with a range of 25-71.

Student One. Jay averaged 74% of intervals on task during A1 conditions. During baseline Jay's range of on-task behavior was 48%-87%. During the first phase of intervention (B1), Jay averaged 83% on-task. The range of on task behavior during B1 was 72%-92%. When intervention was withdrawn (A2), Jay averaged 78% on task. The range of on task behavior during A2 was 68%-83%. During the second intervention phase (B2), Jay averaged 85% on task. The range for on-task behavior during B2 was 73%-90%.

Student Two. Clay averaged 71% on task during A1 Conditions. The range of on task behavior during A1 was 31%-85%. During the first intervention phase, Clay averaged 84% on task. The range of on-task behavior during B1 was 73%-100%. When intervention conditions were removed, Clay's on-task behavior decreased to 62%. During A2, the range of on task behavior was 26%-84%. When intervention conditions were reinstated, Clay averaged 87% on task. The range of on-task behavior ranged from 82%-94%

In conclusion, Site One para-educator increased her use of behavior specific praise from .4 during A1 to 24.8 during B2. She also increased from 33.6 OTR in baseline to 42.8 during B2. Student One increased on task behavior from 74% on task during A1 to 85% on task during B2, and Student Two increased from 71% on task during A1 to 87% on task during B2.

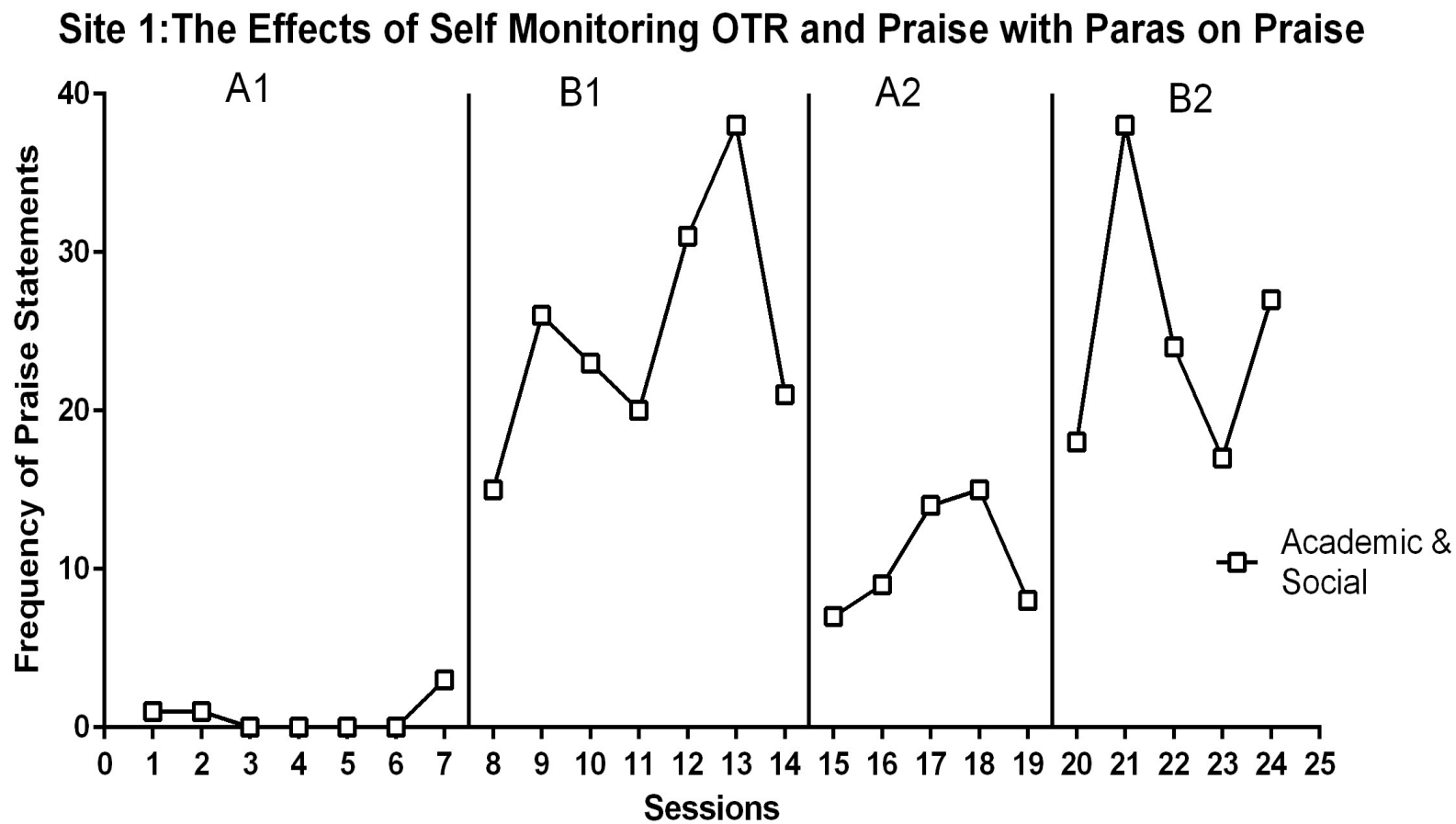


Figure 1. Site 1: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Praise

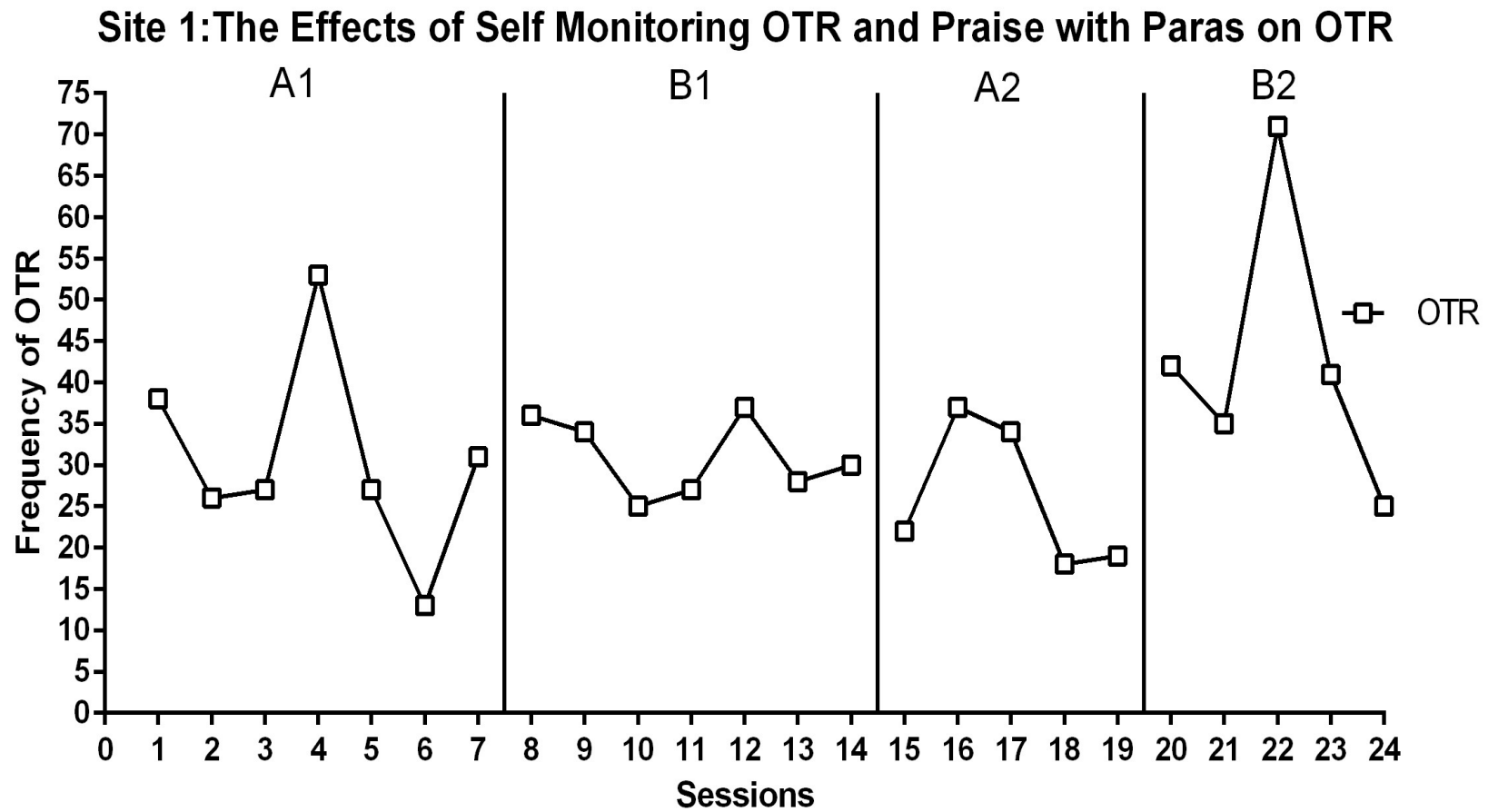


Figure 2. Site 1: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on OTR

Site 1: The Effects of Self Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Student Behavior

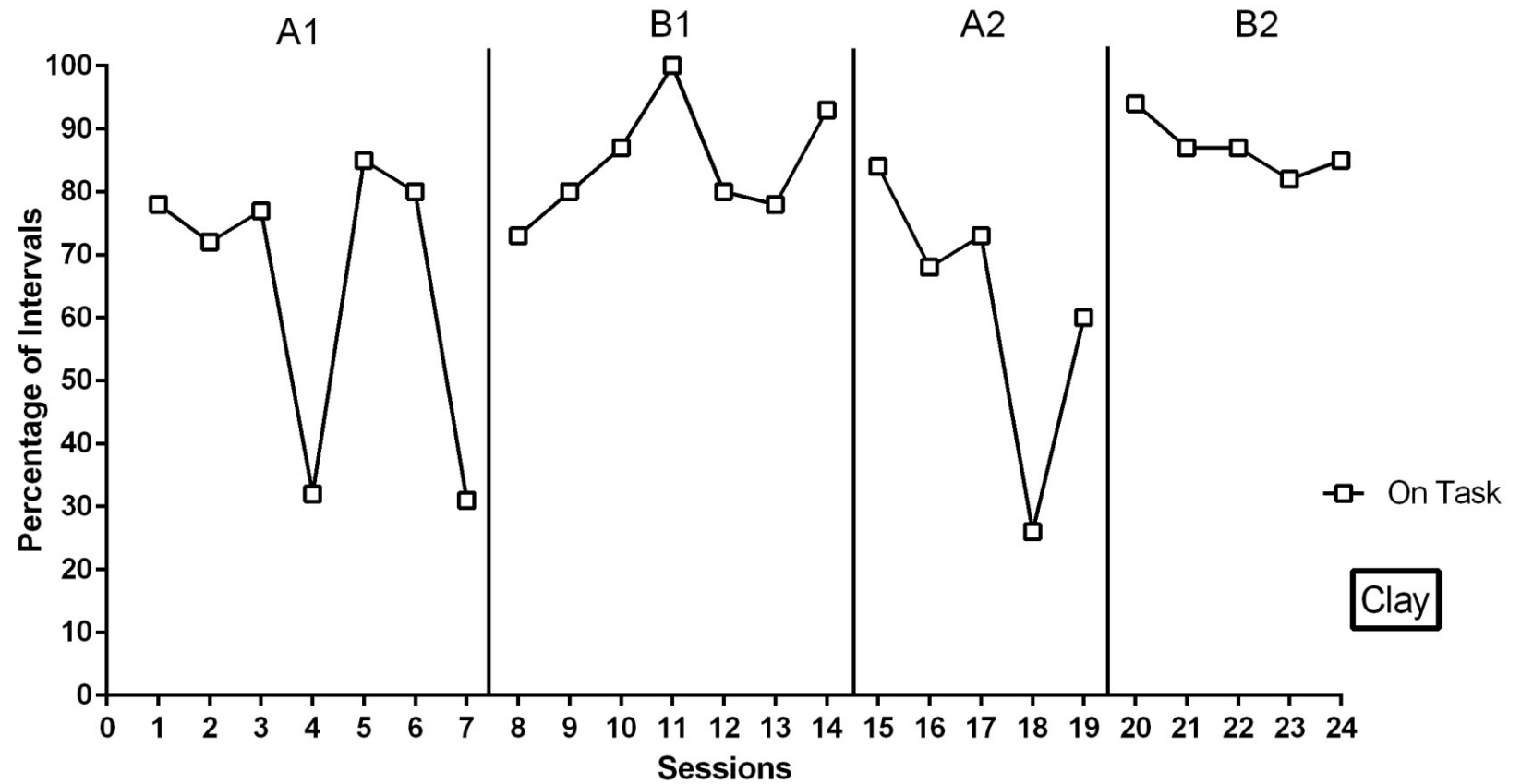


Figure 3. Site 1: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Student One Behavior

Site 1: The Effects of Self Monitoring OTR and Praseie with Paras on Student Behavior

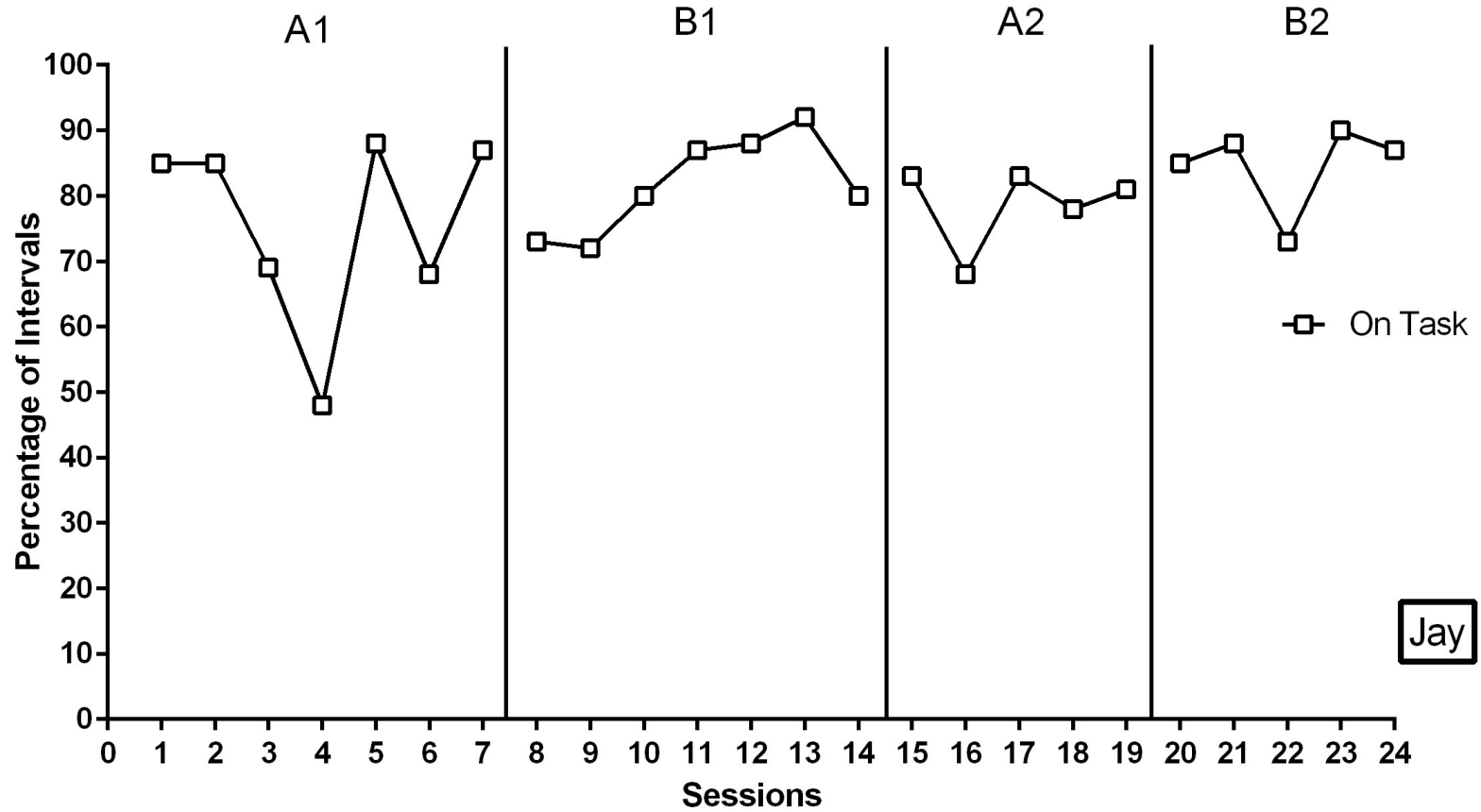


Figure 4. Site 1: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Student Two Behavior

Site Two (ABAB)

Para-Educator. During baseline (A1), the para educator from site two averaged .2 behavior specific praise per session. The range of specific praise statements per session was 0-1. When the intervention was instated she averaged 43.7 specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise during B1 was 24-69. Intervention was withdrawn (A2) and the average specific praise increased to 58.8 per session. The range of praise during A2 was 47-63. In the last phase of intervention, she averaged 60.2 praise statements per session. The range of praise for B2 was 52-76.

Non-behavior specific praise during A1 averaged 3 per session. During intervention B1 the para-educator averaged 4.7 non-behavior specific praise statements. When intervention was withdrawn (A2), she averaged 4.4 non-behavior specific praise statements. During B2 return to intervention, she averaged 2.2 non-behavior specific praise statements per session.

Also, during A1, the para-educator averaged 31.8 OTR per session during the baseline phase. The range of OTR during A1 was 17-56. During B1, intervention phase she averaged 40.4 OTR per session. The range of OTR during B1 was 19-56. When intervention was withdrawn (A2), she averaged 51.2 OTR per session. The range of OTR during A2 was 44-62. During the last intervention phase B2 the para-educator averaged 50 OTR per session. The range of OTR during B2 was 46-57.

Student Three. During (A1) baseline condition, the student in site two averaged 41% on task. The range for on-task behavior in A1 was 16%-53%. When intervention was instated, the student's on-task behavior increased to 42%. The range for on task behavior during B1 was 21%-55%. When intervention conditions were withdrawn (A2),

on task behavior decreased to 16%. The range for on-task behavior during A2 was 7%-41%. During the final phase of intervention, on-task behavior was 24% on task. The range for on task behavior during B2 was 16% - 34%.

In conclusion, the para educator in sight two increased her use of behavior specific praise from .2 in A1 to 60.2 in B2. Non-behavior specific praise decreased from 3 in A1 to 2.2 in B2. The para-educator also increased her use of OTR from 31.8 in A1 to 50 in B2. The student's behavior decreased from A1 to B2, however, from A1 to B1 on task increased from 41%-42%. Also from A2 to B2, on task behavior increased from 16%-24%

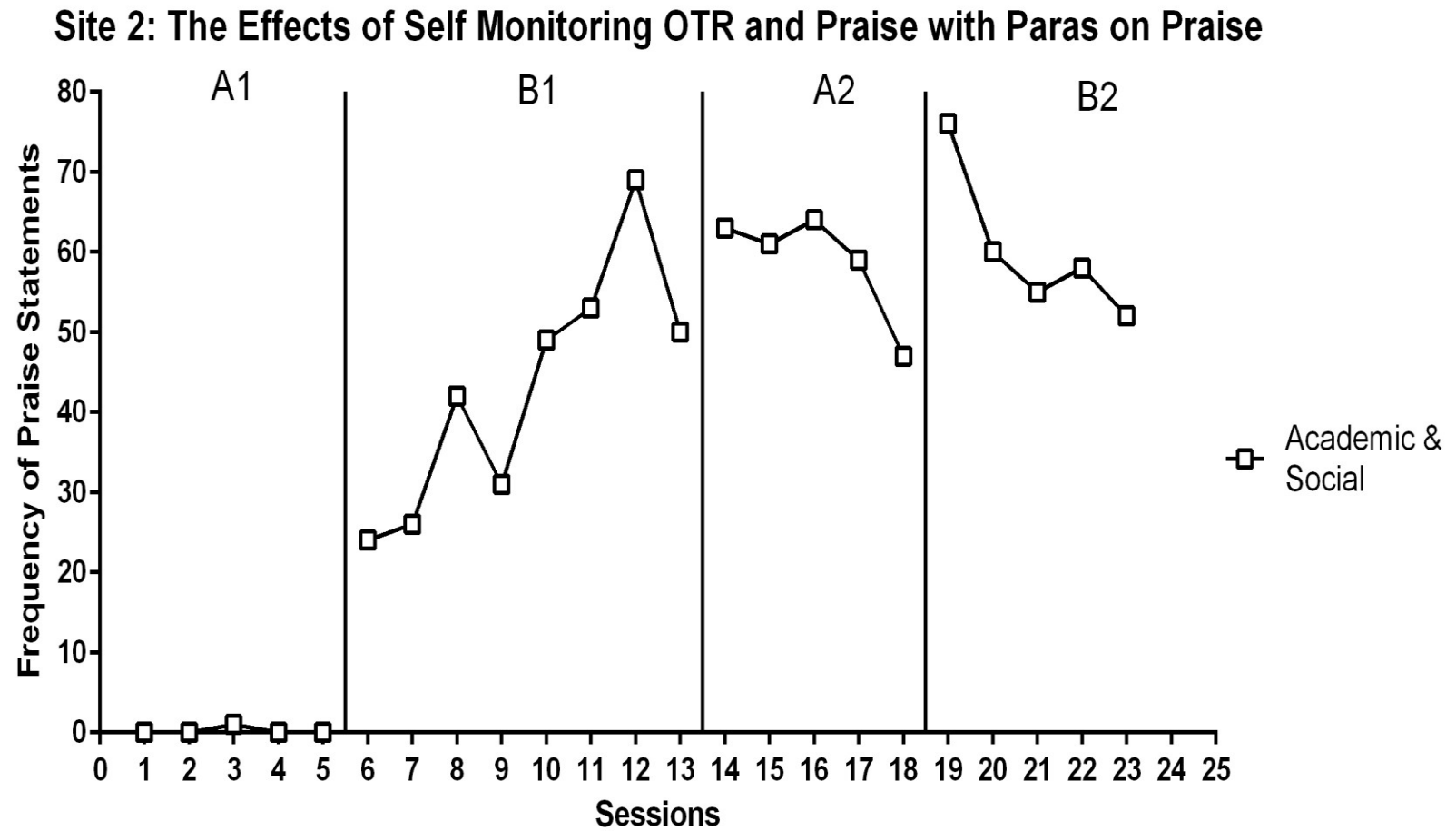


Figure 5. Site 2: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Praise

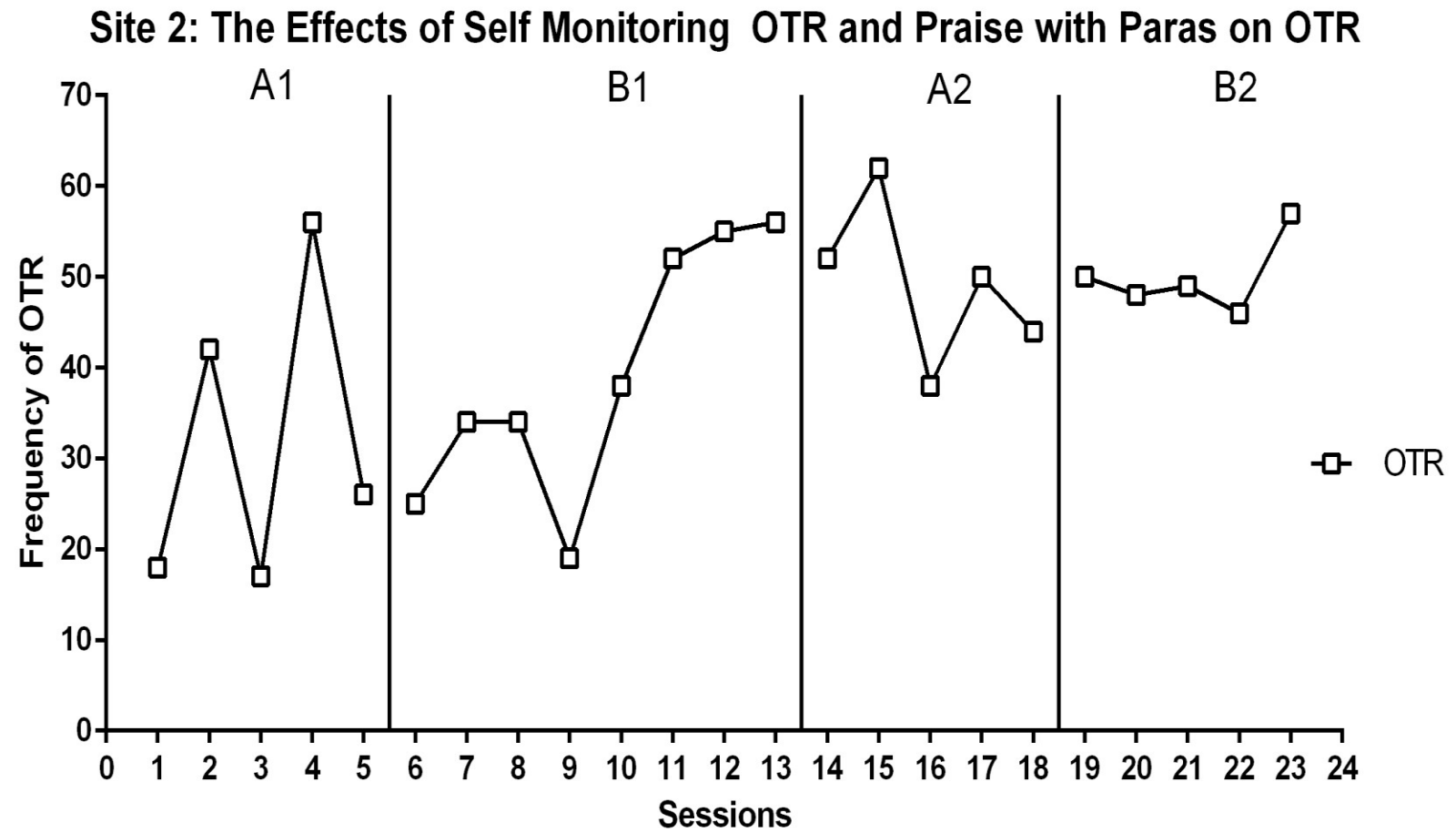


Figure 6. Site 2: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on OTR

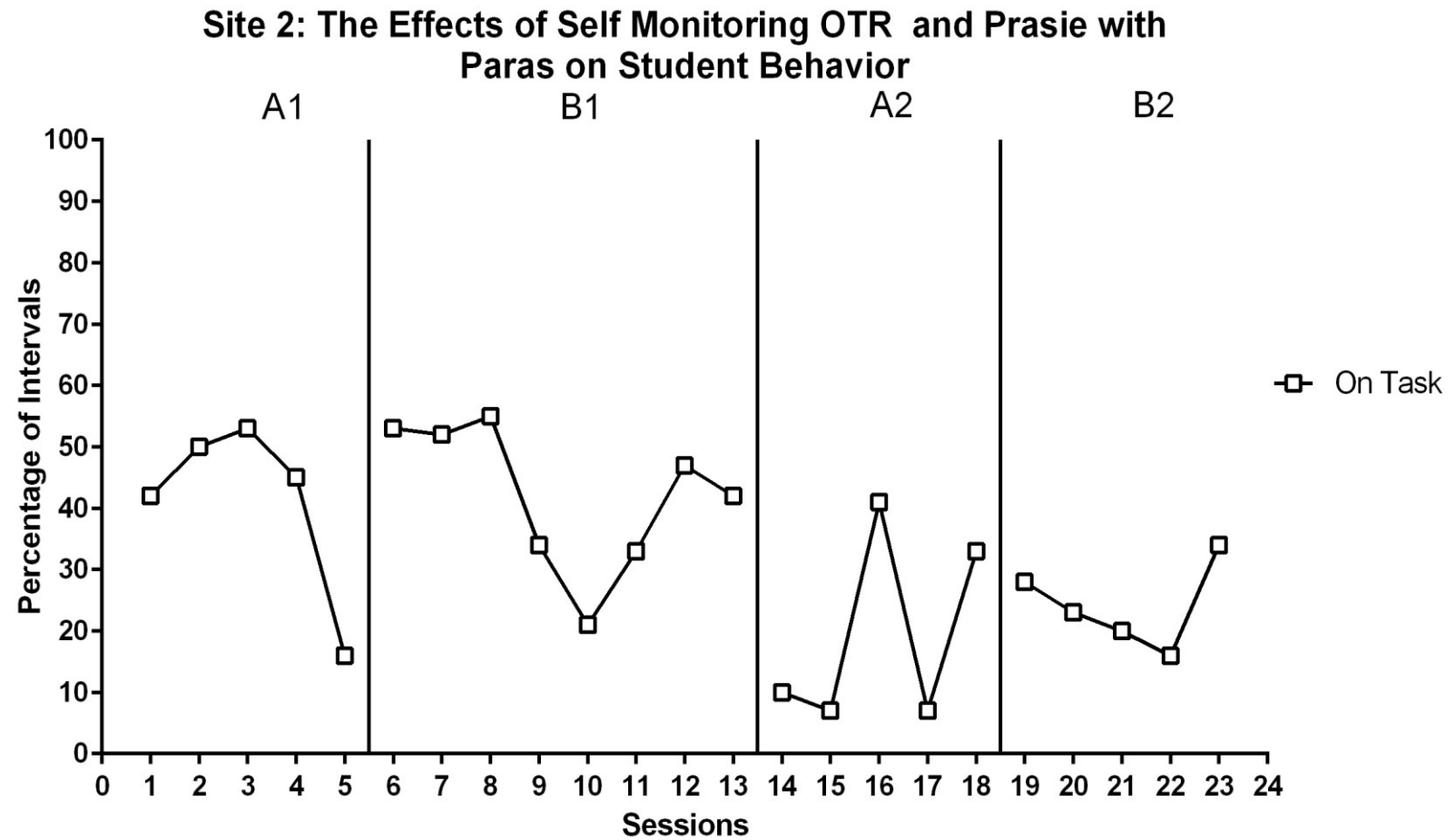


Figure 7. Site 2: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR and Praise with Paras on Student Three Behavior

Site Three (ABABC)

Para-Educator. During baseline (A1), the para-educator from site three averaged 1.2 behavior specific praise statements per session. The range of praise for A1 was 0-5. During intervention phase (B1), she averaged 14.8 behavior specific praise statements per session. The range of praise per session during B1 was 11-22. When the intervention was removed (A2), she averaged 9.8 specific praise statements per sessions. The range for praise during A2 was 5-15. During return to intervention (B2), the para-educator averaged 9.1 specific praise statements per session. The range of praise for B2 was 3-13. After the completion of B2, the para-educator participated in training on behavior specific praise and began to self-monitor during intervention phase (C1). During C1, the para-educator averaged 59 behavior specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise during C1 was 45-68.

During baseline the para averaged 11.6 non-behavior specific praise statements per session. When intervention was implemented (B1), the para-educator averaged 31.6 non-behavior specific praise statements. When intervention was withdrawn (A2), the average non-behavior specific praise per session was 30. When the intervention as put back in to place (B2), the para educator's average non-behavior specific praise statements were 38.5. In the last phase C1, the para-educator averaged 19 non-behavior specific praise statements per session.

During the baseline phase (A1), the para-educator averaged 26 OTR per session. The range of OTR per session during A1 was 16-44. When intervention was implemented (B1), the average number of OTR increased to 74.8. The range of OTR during B1 was 51-89. When the intervention was withdrawn (A2), the average decreased to 61.6 OTR

per session. The range of OTR during A2 was 52-74. During B2, the para-educator averaged 68.1 OTR per session. The range of OTR during B2 was 54-90. During the last phase of intervention (C1), the para averaged 70 OTR. The range of OTR during C1 was 50-80.

Student Four. In baseline conditions, the student in site three averaged 46% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during A1 was 41%-66%. When intervention was implemented (B1), the student averaged 85% on-task behavior. The range of on task behavior during B1 was 71%-91%. When intervention was withdrawn (A2), the student averaged 87% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during A2 was 76%-99%. When intervention conditions were implemented (B2), the student was 86% on-task. The range of on task behavior during B2 was 68%-92%. In the last intervention phase (C1), the student averaged 84% on task. The range of on-task behavior during C1 was 74%-91%.

In conclusion, specific praise increased a small amount from A1 to B2. The increase was from 1.2 per session during A1 to 9.1 per session during B2. After receiving training on behavior specific praise, the para-educator increased her use of behavior-specific praise from 9.1 in B2 to 59 during C1. The para-educator also increased her use of OTR from 26 during A1 to 70 during C1. The student in site three increased on-task behavior from 46% during A1 to 84% during C1.

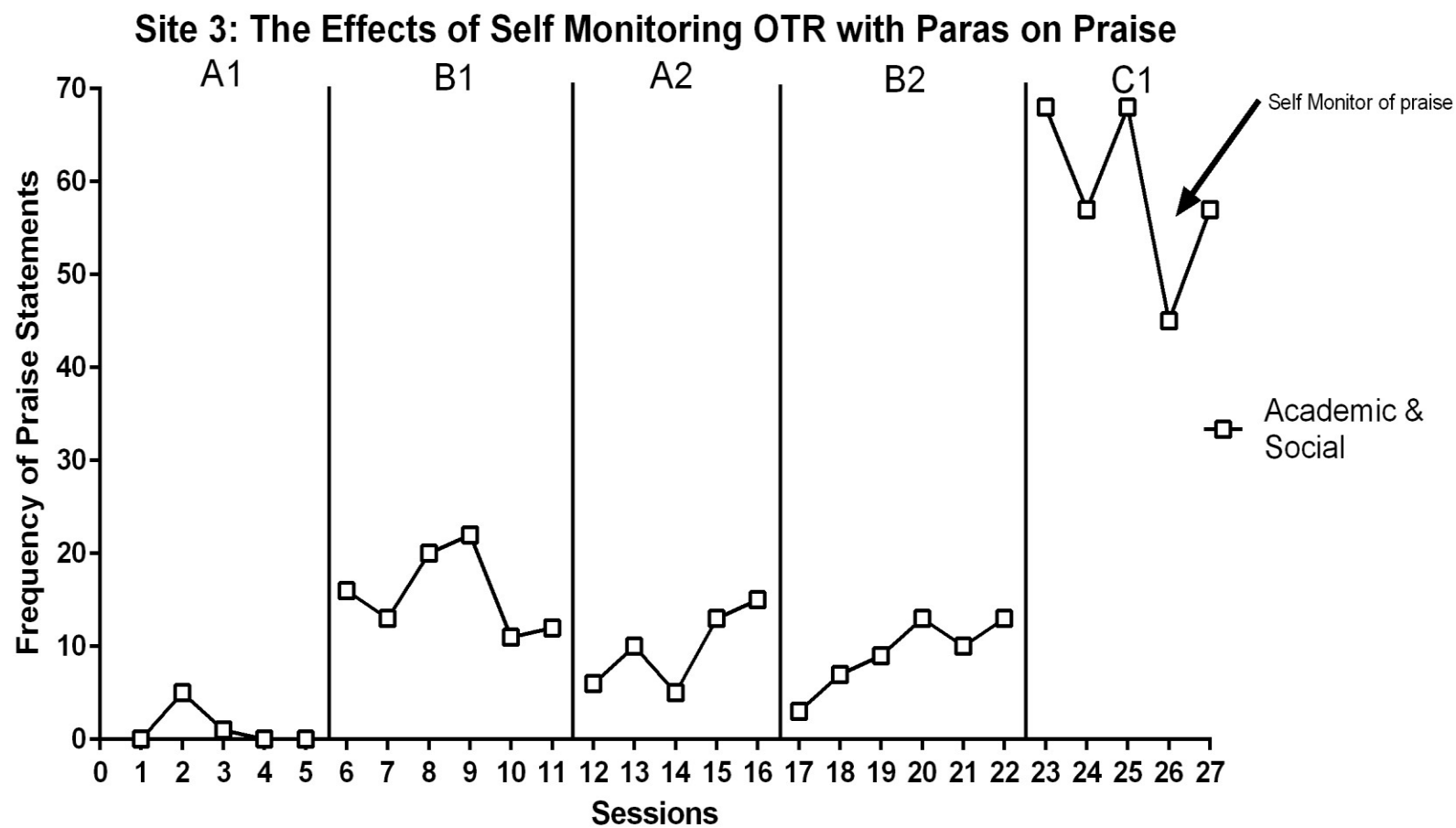


Figure 8. Site 3: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR with Paras on Praise

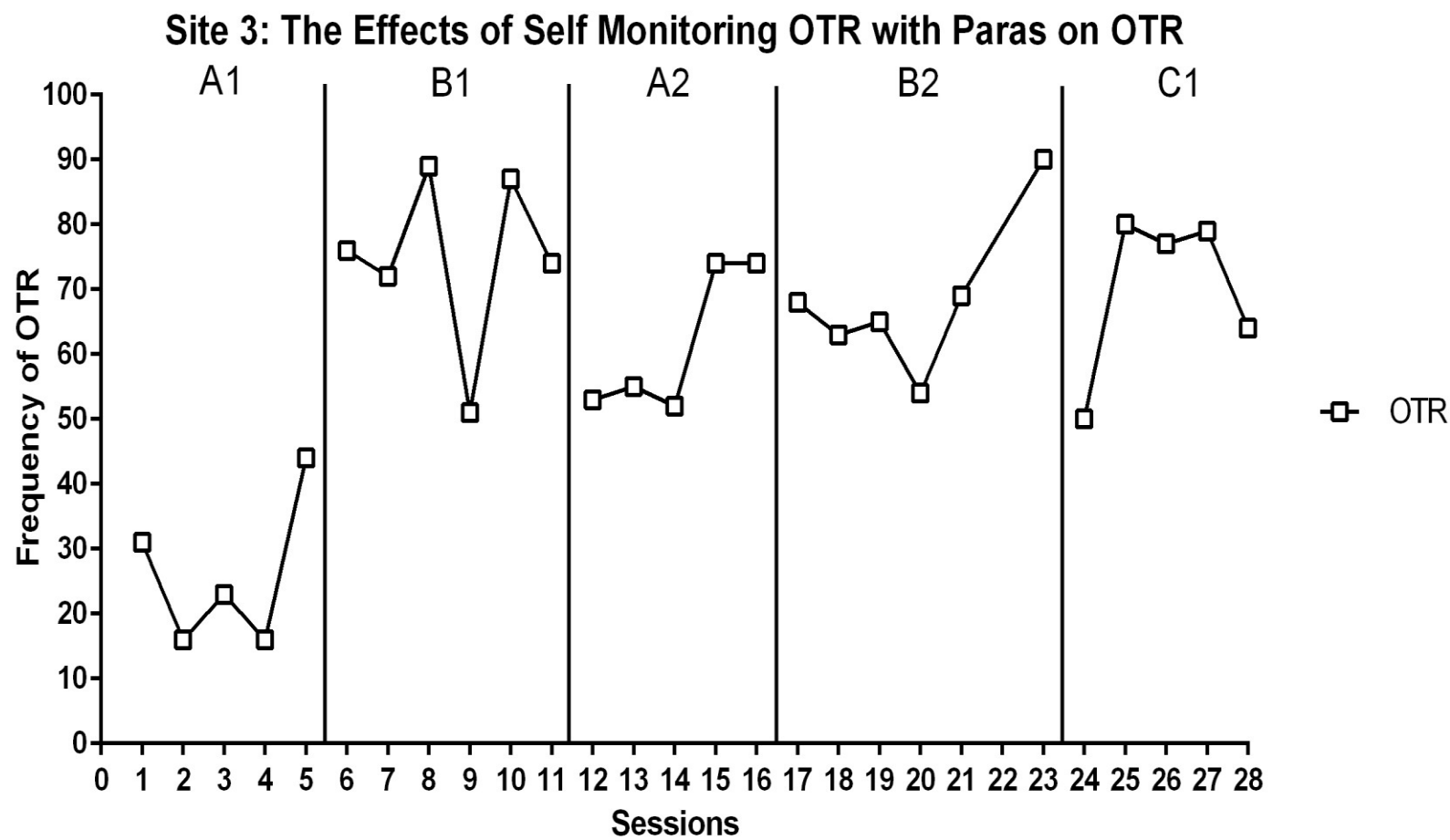


Figure 9. Site 3: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR with Paras on OTR

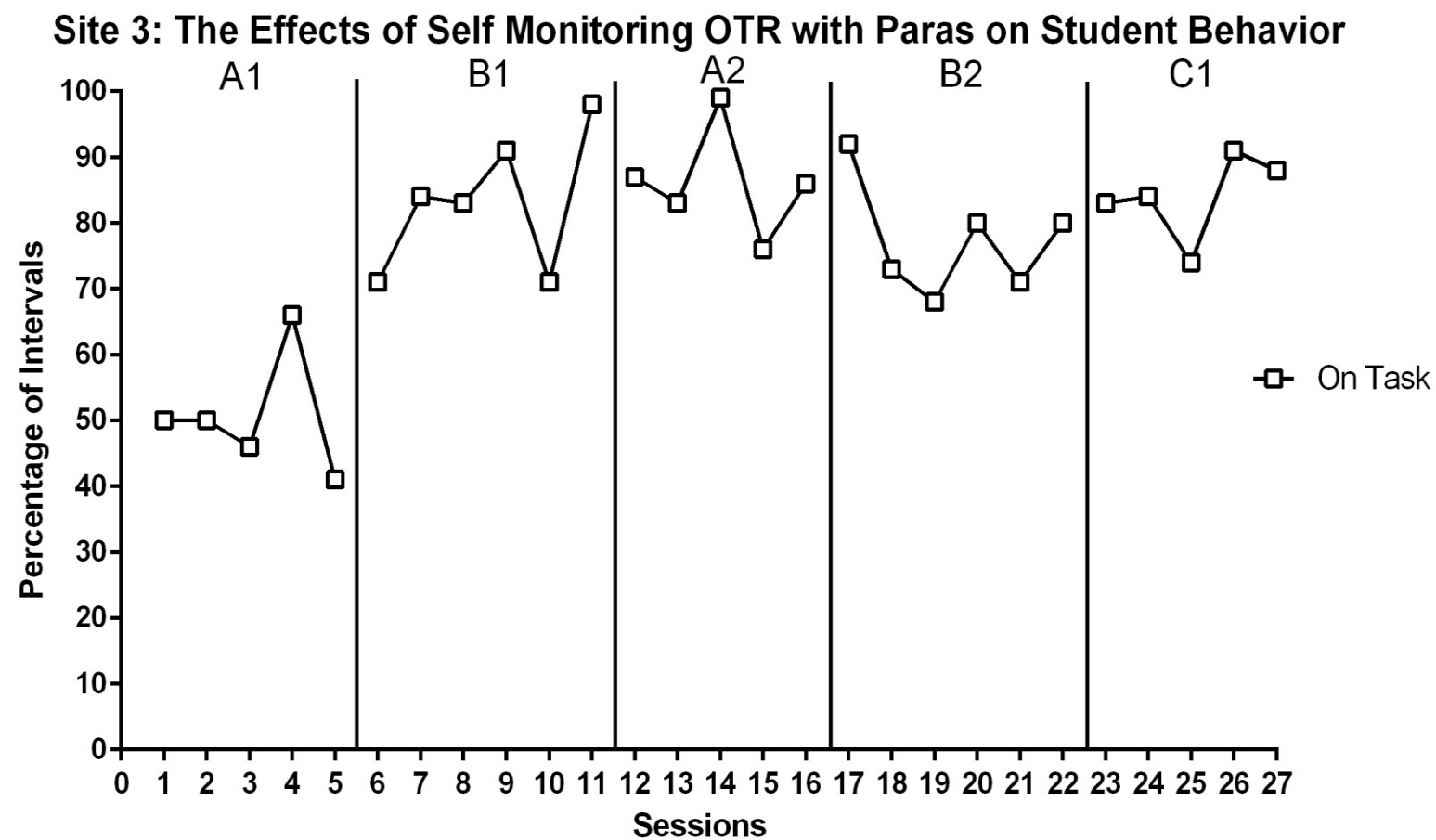


Figure 10. Site 3: The Effects of Self-Monitoring OTR with Paras on Student Four Behavior

Site Four (ABCAC)

Para-Educator. During A1 baseline conditions, the para-educator in site four averaged 3.4 behavior specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise during A1 was 2-7. During the first intervention phase (B1), the para-educator averaged 22.2 specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise per session during B1 was 19-26. During the second intervention condition (C1), the para-educator averaged 34 specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise statements per session during C1 was 25-42. When the intervention phase was withdrawn (A2), the para-educator averaged 6 specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise statements per session in A2 was 4-9. When the second intervention phase was put back into place (C2), the para-educator averaged 31 specific praise statements per session. The range of specific praise statements per session in C2 was 25-42.

During baseline conditions (A1), the para-educator averaged 1.8 non-behavior specific praise statements per session. The range of non-behavior specific praise in A1 was 0-7 per session. In the first intervention phase (B1), the para-educator averaged 13.2 non-specific praise statements per session. The range of non-behavior specific praise in B2 was 6-24 per session. In the second intervention condition (C1), the para-educator averaged 10 non-specific praise statements per session. The range of non-behavior specific praise in C1 was 2-25 per session. When the intervention conditions were withdrawn (A2), the para-educator averaged 6 non-specific praise statements per session. The range of non-behavior specific praise in A2 was 5-7 per session. When the second intervention conditions were implemented (C2), the para-educator averaged 12.2 non-

specific praise statement per session. The range of non-behavior specific praise in C2 was 8-19 per session.

In baseline conditions (A1), the para-educator averaged 43.4 OTR per session. The range of OTR per session in A1 was 34-52. During the first intervention phase (B1), the para-educator averaged 49.4 OTR per session. The range of OTR per session during B1 was 43-63. In the second intervention condition (C1), the para-educator averaged 51.4 OTR per session. The range of OTR per session in C1 was 47-59. When the intervention was withdrawn (A2), the para-educator averaged 29 OTR per session. During A2 the range of OTR per session was 23-53. When the second intervention was put back into place (C2), the para-educator averaged 46.8 OTR per session. The range of OTR per session during C2 was 37-47.

Student Five. During the baseline phase (A1), Han averaged 56% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during A1 was 41%-74%. When intervention was in place (B1), Han averaged 70% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during B1 was 49%-86%. When the second intervention was conducted (C1), Han averaged 95% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during (C1) was 91%-100%. When intervention conditions were withdrawn (A2), Han averaged 89% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during A2 was 86%-93%. After the second intervention conditions were reestablished (C2), Han averaged 90% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during C2 was 83%-95%.

Student Six. Luke averaged 43% on-task behavior during A1 baseline conditions. The range of on-task behavior during A1 was 31%-54%. During intervention conditions (B1), Luke averaged 69% on-task behavior. Luke's range of on-task behavior during B1

was 41%-82%. In the second intervention condition (C1), Luke averaged 85% on-task behavior. The range of on task behavior during C1 was 72%-89%. When the intervention conditions were withdrawn and baseline conditions were reestablished Luke averaged 74% on-task behavior. The range of on task during A2 was 64% -83%. When the second intervention conditions were reestablished (C2), Luke averaged 83% on-task behavior. The range of on-task behavior during C2 was 76%-89%.

In conclusion, the para-educator increased her use of behavior specific praise from 3.4 during A1 to 34 during C1. From A2 to C2 the para- educator increased behavior specific praise from 6 to 31 per session. The para-educator also increased OTR from 43 in A1 to 51 in C1. From A2 to C2, OTR increased from 26 to 46. Han increased on-task behavior from 56% during A1 to 90% during C2. Luke increased from 43% in A1 to 83% on-task behavior during C2.

Site 4: The Effects of Self Monitoring and Goal Setting on Praise with Paras

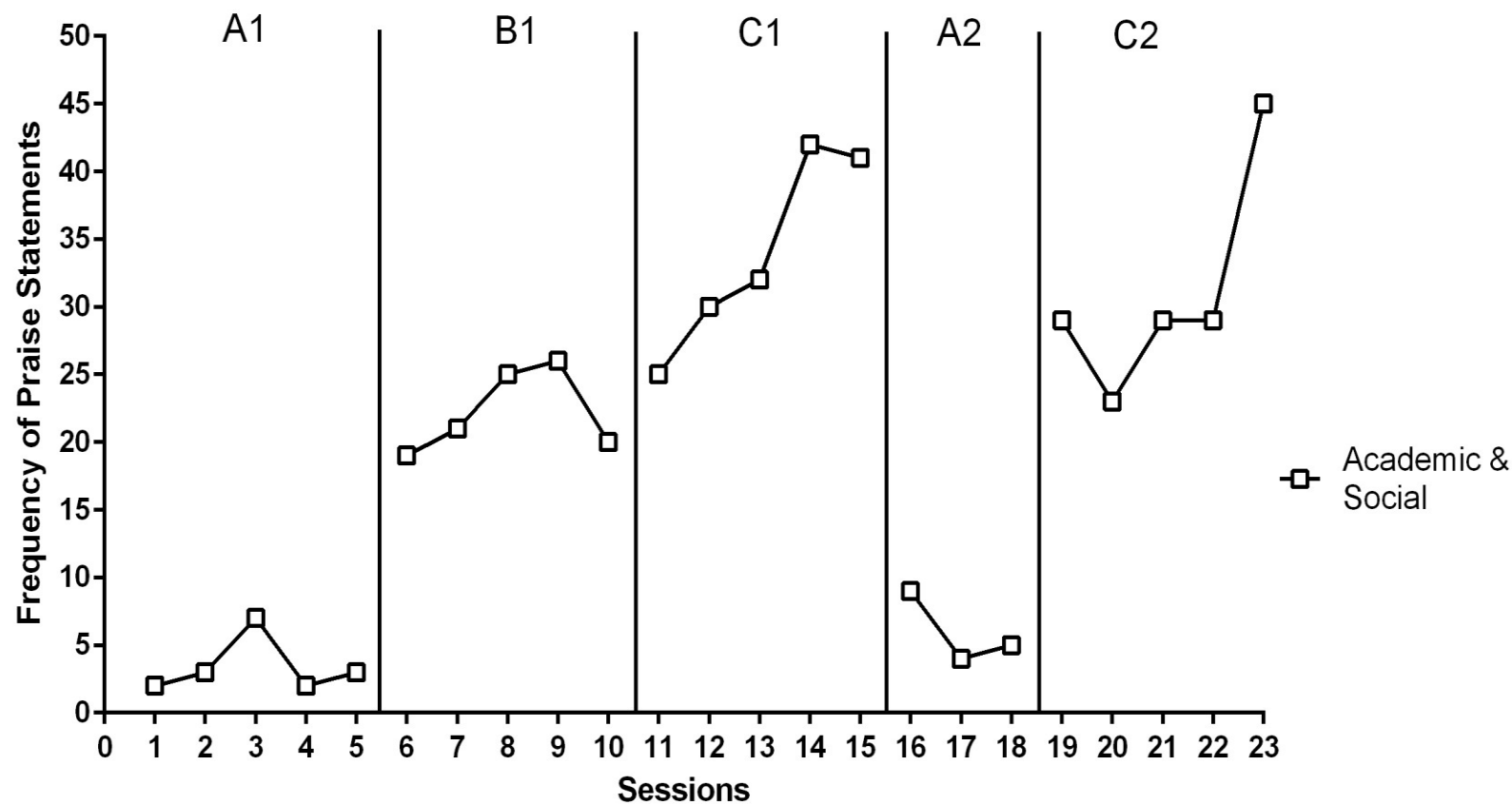


Figure 11. Site 4: The Effects of Self-Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on Praise

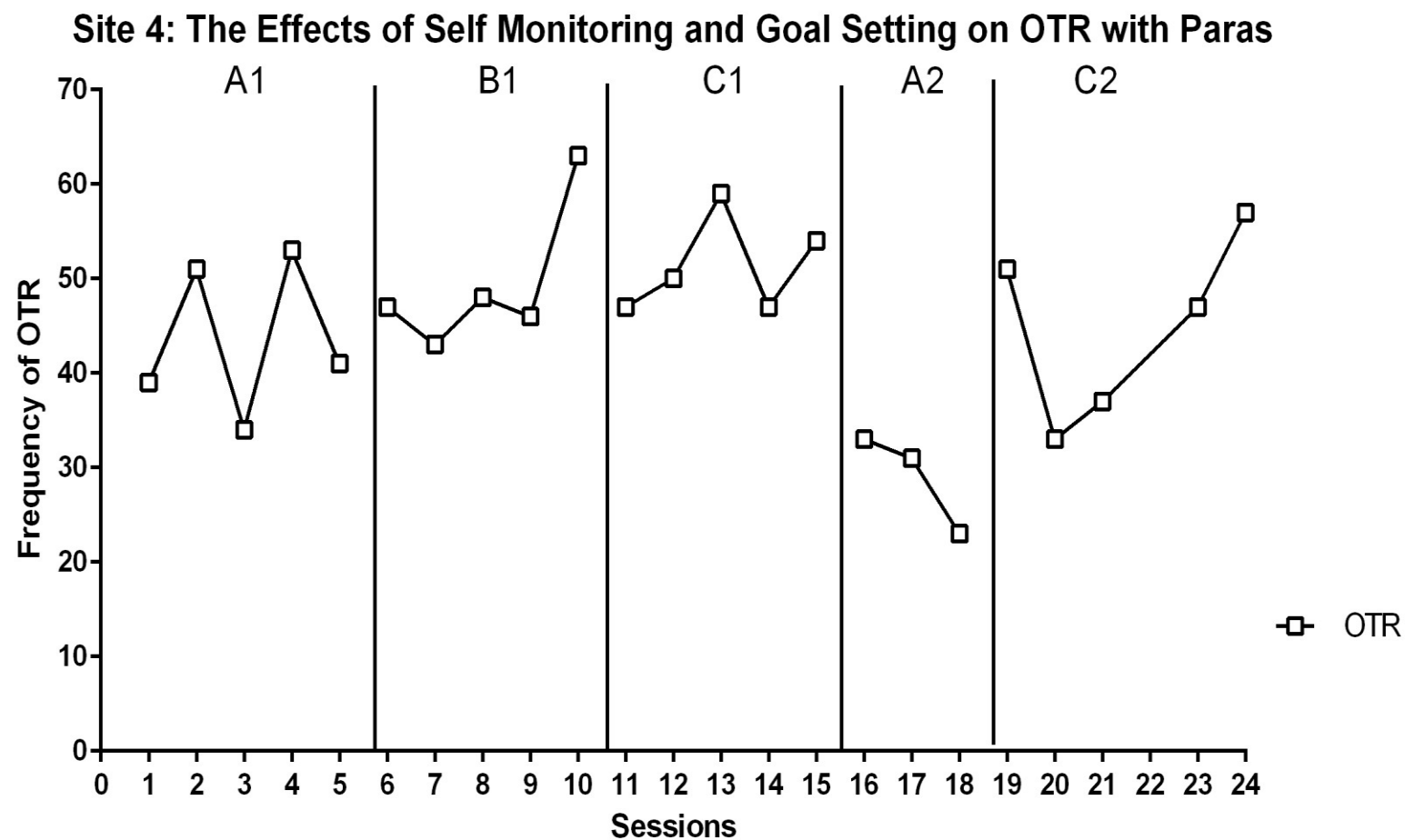


Figure 12. Site 4: The Effects of Self-Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on OTR

Site 4: The Effects of Self Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on Student Behavior

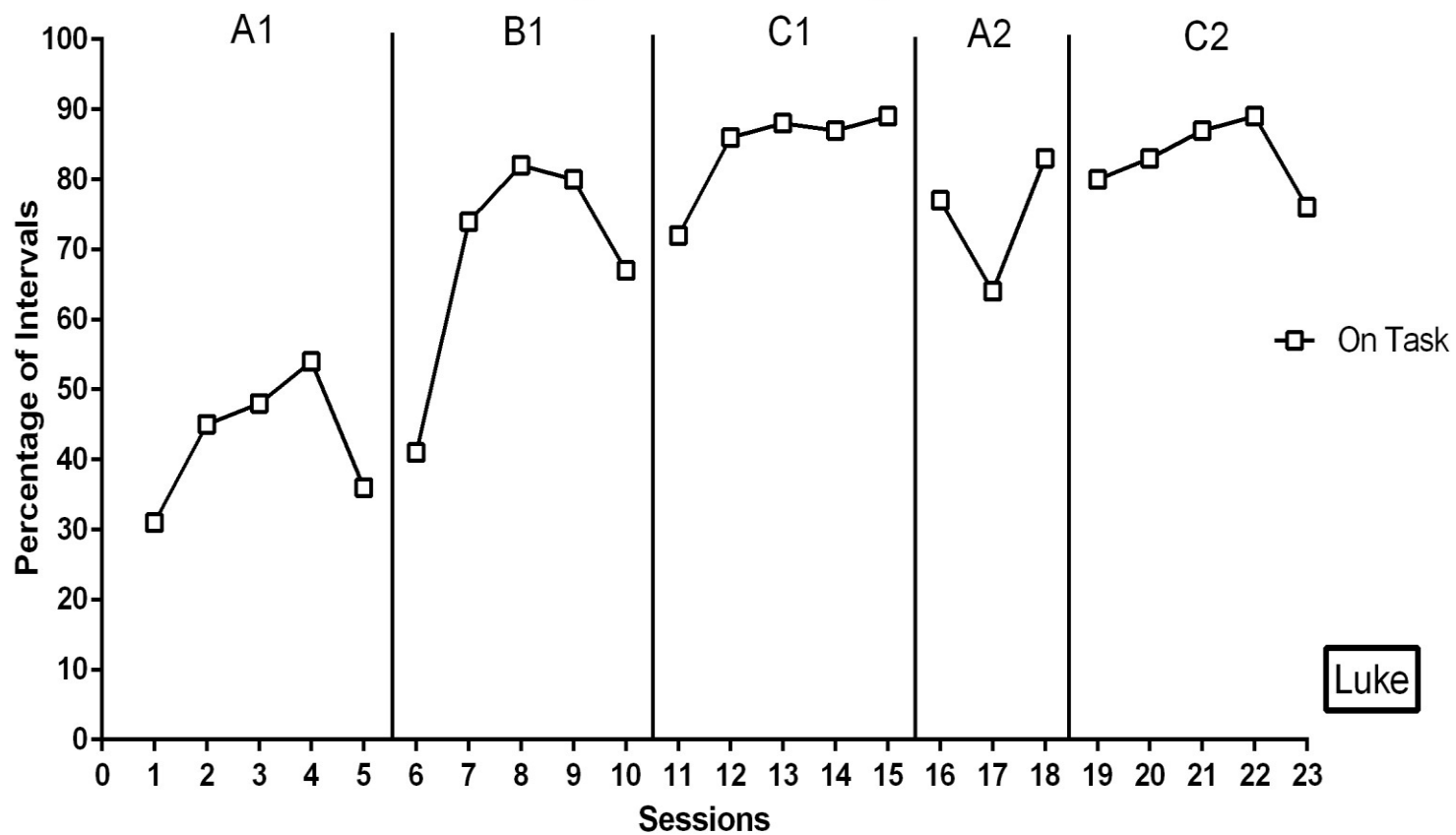


Figure 13. Site 4: The Effects of Self-Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on Student Five Behavior

Site 4: The Effects of Self Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on Student Behavior

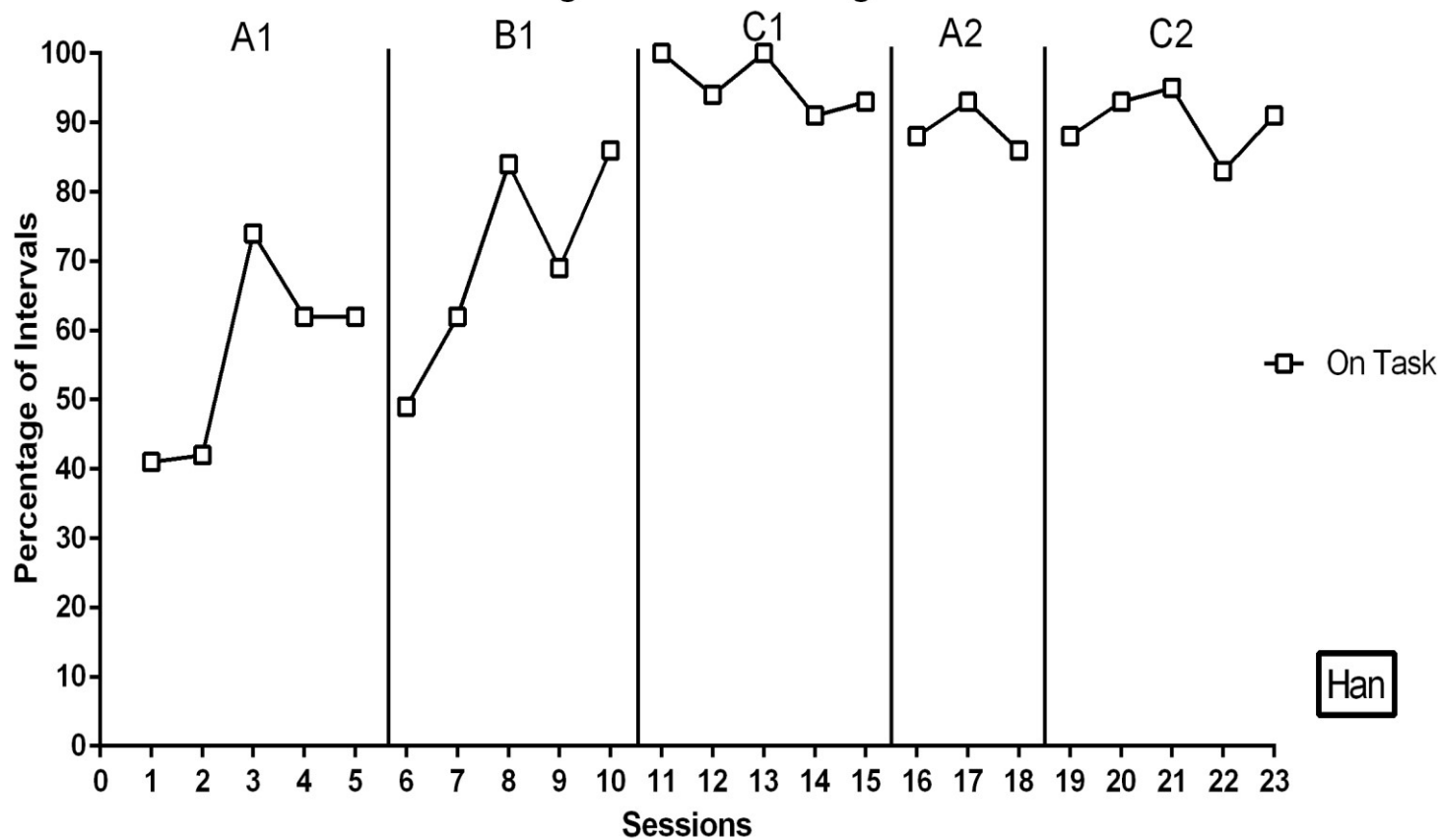


Figure 14. Site 4: The Effects of Self-Monitoring and Goal Setting with Paras on Student Six Behavior

Interobserver Agreement

Interobserver agreement was completed for 20% of each phase during each site. Interobserver agreement was completed for each dependent variable (Table 2). In Site One interobserver agreement for student on-task behavior averaged 94% across all phases. The range of agreement was 89%-97%. Behavior specific praise and OTR agreement was 93% across all phases. The range of agreement was 87%-100%. Agreement in Site Two for student on task behavior was 96% across all phases. The range of agreement was 94%-97%. The agreement for behavior specific praise and OTR in Site Two was 90% across all phases. The range of agreement was 84%-96%. In Site Three the observer agreement for on-task behavior was 95% with a range of 92%-97%. In Site Four the observer agreement was 93% with a range of 86%-100%.

Table 2: Interobserver Agreement

| | Student On Task | Specific Praise & OTR |
|--------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Site 1 | 94% (89% - 97%) | 93% (87% - 100%) |
| Site 2 | 96% (94%-97%) | 90% (84%-96%) |
| Site 3 | 95% (92% - 97%) | 94% (89% - 100%) |
| Site 4 | 93% (86% - 100%) | 89% (80% - 97%) |

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Site One and Two. In Sites One and Two para-educators completed a satisfaction survey (Table 3). These scores were added together and averaged. When asked if students' behavior improved, the average score was 3 or somewhat disagree. Next, they were asked if students were more aware of their behavior they somewhat disagreed. When asked if the intervention as worth the time, the average score was 5.5 or in-between agree and strongly agree. The para-educators were asked if the intervention interfered with their ability to teach. The average responses were 4.5 or between somewhat agree and agree. They were also asked if they would recommend the training to others. The average answer was a 5 or they agreed. The next question was, "Is the intervention easy to implement?" The average answer was a 4 or somewhat agree. When asked if self-monitoring helped improve their behavior the average para-educators' responses were a 5 or agree. The last question was, "Was the feedback and instruction from the special education teacher helpful." The average para-educators' responses were a 5 or agree.

Site Three. The para-educator in Site Three completed a consumer satisfaction survey (Table 4). When asked if student's behavior improved the para-educator strongly agreed. The para-educator also strongly agreed that the intervention was worth the time, it was age appropriate, it was easy to implement, self-monitoring improved their behavior, and the feedback and instruction from the teacher was helpful. The para-educator marked that she agreed that students were more aware of their behavior, the intervention didn't interfere with her ability to teach, and that she would recommend the intervention to others.

Site Four. The para-educator in Site Four completed a consumer satisfaction survey (Table 5). The para-educator somewhat agreed that the students' behavior increased and that the students were more aware of their own behavior. The para-educator strongly agreed that the intervention was worth the time, was age appropriate, didn't interfere with her ability to teach, she would recommend the training to others, it was easy to implement, self-monitoring improved her own behavior, and feedback/instruction from the teacher helped her improve her teaching skills.

Fidelity of Treatment

Two observers watched the training videos to complete fidelity of training and record the occurrence of each step of the training as identified in Table 6. In Site One, 95% of the training was completed. In Site Two, 86% of the training was completed. In Site Three, 90% of the training was completed. In Site Four, 90% of the training was completed. In all sites interobserver agreement for the fidelity of training was 100% agreement.

Table 3. Consumer Satisfaction Survey Sites 1 and 2

| | Site 1 | Site 2 | Average |
|--|--------|--------|---------|
| 1. Students behavior improved. | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 2. Students were more aware of their behavior. | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| 3. Intervention was worth the time. | 5 | 6 | 5.5 |
| 4. Intervention was age appropriate. | 5 | 6 | 5.5 |
| 5. Intervention didn't interfere with my ability to teach. | 4 | 5 | 4.5 |
| 6. I would personally recommend this intervention with others. | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 7. The intervention was easy to implement. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 8. Self-Monitoring my own behavior helped me improve. | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 9. The Feedback/ instruction I received from the teacher helped me improve. | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 1. Strongly disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Somewhat disagree 4 - Somewhat agree 5 – Agree 6 - Strongly agree | | | |

Table 4. Consumer Satisfaction Site 3 and Site 4

| | Site 3 | Site 4 |
|--|--------|--------|
| 1. Students behavior improved. | 6 | 4 |
| 2. Students were more aware of their behavior. | 5 | 4 |
| 3. Intervention was worth the time. | 6 | 6 |
| 4. Intervention was age appropriate. | 6 | 6 |
| 5. Intervention didn't interfere with my ability to teach. | 5 | 6 |
| 6. I would personally recommend this intervention with others. | 5 | 6 |
| 7. The intervention was easy to implement. | 6 | 6 |
| 8. Self-Monitoring my own behavior helped me improve. | 6 | 6 |
| 9. The Feedback/ instruction I received from the teacher helped me improve. | 6 | 6 |
| 1. Strongly disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Somewhat disagree 4 - Somewhat agree 5 – Agree 6 - Strongly agree | | |

Table 5. Fidelity of Completion of Training and Interobserver Agreement

| | Completion of Training | Inter observer Agreement |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Site 1 | 95% | 100% |
| Site 2 | 86% | 100% |
| Site 3 | 90% | 100% |
| Site 4 | 90% | 100% |

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discussed the research questions that were addressed in this study. Data collected in this study was compared to the results of previous studies that focused on the same dependent variables and employed the same independent variables. Based on the results of this study and the results of previous studies the direction of future research was also discussed.

The effects of para-educator training and self- evaluation of specific positive praise and OTR were examined in this study. This study also examined the effects of increased rates of specific praise and OTR on 6 students with Autism and their rates of on-task behavior. Two ABAB, one ABABC, and one ABCBA designs were employed during this study. The sites in this study were special education and general education classrooms. Data was collected using momentary time sampling, frequency of occurrence, consumer satisfaction rating scales and fidelity of treatment assessments.

The data and research in this study added evidence for increasing specific positive praise, and increasing OTR in the classroom with students who displayed problem behavior. Previous research provided support for the effectiveness of increasing positive praise and OTR with students with Emotional Behavior Disorders (Gunter & Shores, 1994; Sutherland, 2000; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001; Sutherland, Wehby, & Yoder, 2002). Previous studies were conducted with teachers in special education classrooms and general education classrooms. This study focused on training para-educators the teaching behaviors that worked to increase on-task behaviors of students in small groups.

The results of the study and an evaluation of each of the research questions were addressed in this chapter. Strengths and limitations as well as the directions of future research were also discussed in this chapter.

Effects on Student Behaviors

Research question one asked, “To what extent does increasing positive praise and OTR increase the percentage of students’ on task behaviors?” This research question was addressed through 4 withdrawal designs that involved six students with autism. Data was collected using 10 second momentary time sampling. Data was recorded via video and audio recordings of 15-minute small group lessons.

The data from these four sites suggested that increasing specific positive praise and OTR during small group lessons increased students with autisms’ on-task behaviors. Five out of six students increased their on-task behaviors by a minimum of 10 percentage points. Three of the six students increased their on-task behaviors by 30 or more percentage points. Student one averaged 70% on-task behavior during baseline phases and increased his average on-task behaviors to an average 85.5% on-task behavior during intervention phases. Student two averaged 73% on-task behavior during baseline and increased on task behavior during intervention to an 84% on-task average per lesson. Student three was the only student whose behavior did not increase. This student averaged 41% on-task behavior during baseline, and during intervention phases he averaged 33% on-task behavior. Student four increased 40% from baseline to intervention. Student five increased on task behavior from 56% during baseline to 85% on task during both intervention phases. Student six increased on task behavior from 43% during baseline to 79% during intervention phases. Due to variability in data and the

lack of withdrawal back to the baseline levels of performance a functional relationship cannot be assumed.

Self-Evaluation Effect on Praise

The second research question was, “To what extent does para-educator’s self-evaluation of OTR’s increase frequency of praise and OTR?” The data to address this research question was collected using frequency count. The lead investigator and the special educator in the second school watched 15-minute video and audio recordings of the lesson.

Total Specific Praise. The data from the four sites in this study suggested that self-evaluation of para-educator’s behavior was an effective way for increasing teachers’ behavior specific praise of both academic behaviors and social behaviors. Overall behavior specific praise (academic and social) both increased. In Site One, Two, and Four training sessions were completed. In these sites, overall specific praise increased an average of 35 total specific praise statements per session. In Site Three, praise training was not provided initially the para-educator. The para-educator in Site Three received training on behavior specific positive praise in C1. Without training specifically on praise, the para-educator’s total specific praise increased from 1.2 per session in baseline to 11.9 in two intervention phases. Once the training on praise was completed, the para-educator increased total specific praise to 59 per session.

Academic Specific Praise. Academic specific praise increased in Sites One and Two from an average of .1 during baseline to an average of 23 during intervention. Social specific praise in these sites increased from 0 to 14.6 during intervention. In Site Three, where praise training was not completed until the last phase, academic praise increased

from 1.2 per session to 9.15 per session. Once praise training was completed, academic specific praise increased from 9.15 before praise training to 32.6 after praise training. In Site Four two, interventions were completed. The first intervention consisted of the same procedures as in Site one and Two. The second intervention included a visual reminder of the goals made the previous day. Academic specific praise in baseline of Site Four was 3.4. In the first intervention the average academic specific praise per session was 17.2. Once the visual reminder for the para-educator was implemented, academic specific praise increased to 21.7 per session.

Social Specific Praise. In Sites One and Two, social specific praise increased on average from 0 during baseline to 14.6 during baseline conditions. In Site Three (no initial praise training), social specific praise increased from 0 per session to 2.25 per session. After training, social specific praise increased to 26.4 per session. In Site Four, social specific praise increased from 0 to 5 per session during the first intervention. During the second intervention, the para-educator averaged 8.8 social specific praise statements per session.

Non-Behavior Specific. Non-behavior specific praise statements decreased in Site One from 10.4 in baseline to 9.6 during intervention phases. In Site Two, non-behavior specific praise increased from 3 during baseline to 3.5 during intervention. In Site Three, non-behavior specific praise was 11.6 during baseline and it increased to 35 during initial intervention phases. After training, non-behavior specific praise decreased to 19 per session. In Site Four, during baseline non-behavior specific praise was 1.8 per session. When the first intervention was implemented, non-behavior specific praise

increased to 13.2. After the second intervention was implemented (visual reminder of goal), non-behavior specific praise decreased to 11.1 per session.

In conclusion, when the para-educators were trained on the use and importance of specific praise (academic and social) and self evaluated their behavior, they increased their use of both academic specific praise and social specific praise. When a visual reminder was implemented, both academic and social specific praise increased as well. Due to variability in data and the lack of withdrawal back to baseline levels of performance, a functional relationship cannot be assumed.

Self-Evaluation on OTR

The third research question was, “To what extent can self-evaluations completed by para-educators increase praise statements and OTR?” The data to address this research questions was collected using a frequency count. The results from the four sites suggested that para-educator training and para-educator self-evaluation was an effective practice for increasing OTR during small group lessons. On average, all four para-educators increased their rates of OTR by 28.3 per session during intervention phases. Sites One and Four increased the least. These two sites averaged a 4.9 OTR increase from baseline to intervention phases. In these sites the para-educators were teaching pre-developed curriculums that were structured and scripted. In Sites Two and Three, the teachers and para-educators were more in charge of the activities being taught, meaning the there was not a pre-develop curriculum such as System 44 being taught. In Sites Two and Three, the para-educator had control of what activities and responses the students were engaged in. In Site One, OTR increased 3.9 per session from baseline to intervention phases. In Site Two, OTR increased 58.6 per session from baseline to

intervention. In Site Three, OTR increased 45 per session from baseline to intervention phases. Para-educator three was only trained and self-evaluated OTR during the first two intervention phases. The para-educator completed a self-evaluation of specific praise during the third intervention. When the para-educator self-evaluated both OTR and specific praise, the level of OTR did not decrease from the previous intervention phase. In Site Four, OTR increased 6 per session from baseline to intervention phases. In Site Four when the visual prompt was added to the intervention, the number of OTR per session did not increase. Due to variability in data and the lack of withdrawal back to baseline levels of performance, a functional relationship cannot be assumed.

Para-Educator Satisfaction

The last research question asked was, “To what extent were para-educators satisfied with the intervention?” The data collected to address this research question was collected via a survey. The para-educators completed the survey after all phases of the study were completed. The para-educators from Site One and Two strongly agreed that the intervention was worth the time it took to implement. They also agreed that they would recommend this intervention to others, and that the self-monitoring of their own behavior improved their ability to provide specific praise and OTR. The para-educator from Site Two was completing a children’s literature course the same semester she was participating in this study. After a final project, she shared with the lead investigator how good of a grade she had received because she used the same skills that were taught to her during the trainings of this study. She stated that the professor of the course made an example of her and provided praise to her.

The para-educator from Site Three strongly agreed that the intervention was worth the time, students' behaviors improved, the intervention was easy to implement, the self-monitoring changed her behavior, and the feedback from the special education teacher helped her improve as well. The para-educator in Site Four was aware of the trainings that the para-educator in Site Three completed. Due to the success and satisfaction that the para-educator in Site Three expressed with her, the para-educator in Site Four volunteered to participate in the study. The para-educator from Site Four strongly agreed that the intervention was worth the time, it was easy to implement and she would recommend this intervention to others.

In conclusion, the para-educators in this study had positive reviews of the study and all agreed that it helped them change their teaching behavior. All para-educators also stated that this intervention was worth the time and that they would recommend this intervention to others.

The results from this study were consistent with the results from a previous study conducted by Sutherland, Wehby, and Copeland (2000). In the previous study, the rate of behavior specific praise provided during intervention sessions increased compared to the levels of behavior specific praise from the baseline and withdrawal phases. Also, the student in this study increased on task behaviors during intervention phases compared to baseline and withdrawal phases. The results from this study also agree with Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, and Wehby (2010) stating that goal setting, feedback, and self-evaluation was an effective way to increase teachers' rates of praise and OTR to students with behavior problems. Moore Partin, et al. (2010) stated that teacher self-evaluation was necessary for teachers to consistently use these strategies in the classroom.

As well as the para-educators in this study, the teachers that participated in studies (Sutherland, 2000; Wehby, & Copeland, 2000; Sutherland, Adler, & Gunter, 2003) rated in favor of self-evaluating their own behavior.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study were that all para-educators increased their rates of specific positive praise and OTR, five out of six students increased their on-task behavior, all para-educators viewed the intervention as worth their time and effective at changing their behavior, and all trainings were conducted with at least 80% accuracy. These were the strengths of this study.

The first strength of this study was that all para-educators increased their rates of behavior specific praise academically and socially. They also increased their rate of OTR. The minimum amount of increase for total specific praise was 24 specific praise statements per session. The para-educator in Site Two was able to maintain her rates of specific praise during the withdrawal condition. This information suggested that the para-educator learned the skill quickly and was able to see the change in students' behaviors. It was also observed that after the training session on specific praise, the amount of non-behavior specific praise decreased as well. The para-educator in Site Three maintained her level of OTR during the withdrawal condition. This information suggests that the para-educator learned the skill of asking questions and providing multiple ways of responding.

The second strength of this study was five out of six students increased their rates of on-task behavior. The average increase in percent of on-task from baseline phase to the first intervention phase for five students was 20%. The on-task behavior of these five

students during the second intervention phase remained at a similar level of that during the first intervention phase.

A third strength of this study was that all the para-educators that participated in the study viewed the study as being worth the extra time spent. It was also noted from the para-educators that they all saw the intervention as an effective way of increasing their use of specific praise and OTR. All of the para-educators expressed their discomfort with being recorded and hearing themselves on tape. However, all para-educators proceeded and used the recordings as a way to improve.

The fourth strength of this study was that all the trainings were conducted with at least 80% fidelity of treatment. Each training followed scripted lessons created by the lead investigator and based upon research methodology previously developed by Gunter and Reed (1996), Sutherland (2000), Sutherland and Wehby (2001), Conroy, Sutherland, Synder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo (2009), and Moore-Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, and Wehby (2010). The training was completed over three sessions. After each session the investigators assessed the session and determined what steps of the lesson still needed to be completed.

These were the strengths of this study. In the next section the limitations of this study were presented and discussed.

Limitations. This study had limitations. One limitation was student 3 in Site Two, did not increase on-task behavior but instead decreased on-task behavior. This student was a unique case. The para-educator that was participating in the study was assigned to be his one-on-one para-educator; however, he did not receive any special education minutes in reading, writing, or math. He only received minutes in speech and language. It

can be assumed that this student was not reinforced by attention from adults. Other factors that may have played a role in this student's decline in behavior were a lack of consistency from the regular education teacher providing small group rotations every day. Other factors were, he went on vacation in the middle of the study and was gone for a week and a half, and his past reinforcement history for non-compliant behavior. This student's on task behavior decreased from 41% on task during the initial baseline phase to 24% on task during the last intervention phase.

Another limitation was that due to time restraints of a school setting, some intervention phases ended on a decline in performance, which the investigator was unable to control schools' schedule such as holiday breaks and map testing schedules. Many of the intervention phases ended in a decline in performance from the para-educator and the students. It would have been ideal to complete more sessions to get a more consistent trend in data before changing conditions. In future research within school settings, it would be beneficial to plan the dates for each phase in advance and consider the need to obtain more data points in each phase.

Another limitation in this study was that variability in student data made it difficult to visually see an effect from baseline conditions to intervention conditions. In all sites there were data points that overlapped with the previous phase. In all four sites, the students didn't return back to baseline levels of on task behaviors. This made it impossible to determine if the intervention had a functional relationship with the levels of behavior. Also, three of the four para-educators did not revert back to their baseline rates of OTR. Two out of four para-educators did not revert back to baseline rates of praise. This suggested that the para-educators acquired the skill of providing high rates of praise

and OTR after participating in a training lesson and self-evaluating for one phase of intervention.

Another limitation during this study was that during withdrawal phases the para-educators' performance and the students' on task behaviors didn't adjust consistently to the baseline levels.

Another limitation was that Site Four was unable to be completed as planned due to unforeseen circumstances. It was planned that Site Four would follow the pattern of baseline, intervention 1, baseline/withdrawal, intervention 2, baseline/withdrawal, and the most effective of intervention 1 and 2. Due to some conflicts with schedules and access to students, Site Four was only able to complete a portion of the phases. The second intervention was completed directly after B1 and no withdrawal phases were completed in between intervention conditions. The withdrawal condition was implemented after two consecutive intervention conditions. In this withdrawal phase only three data sessions were completed. In the next section the direction of future research was discussed.

Future Research

Based on the results of this study, a component analysis should be conducted to assess what component of the intervention was most effective. The intervention package consisted of training the para-educators on the importance of specific praise and OTR as well as how to embed those two teaching strategies into all the parts of a small group lesson. Future research could separate feedback, self-evaluation, goal setting, and the training in order to determine which was more important. Sutherland, Wehby, and Yoder (2002) suggested future research should focus on using larger samples to obtain bigger results. Sutherland, Wehby, and Yoder (2002) also suggested that if there were more

teachers participating in the study then teachers could be grouped based on specific teaching behaviors. This strategy could help identify which behaviors were the most effective in teaching.

Another area of future research that needs to be addressed was student engagement and student achievement. This study had little control over the materials used to teach students. In future studies determining if and how much the students are learning would provide better information on which teaching behaviors were the most effective.

Reinke, Lewis- Palmer, and Martin (2007) suggested another area of research. They suggested that research that determines how often performance feedback and evaluation needs to be completed would help determine what the optimum level of self-evaluation is. This information would help with cost as well as maintaining interest and effectiveness.

Additionally, Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, and Martin (2007) also suggested that future research determining the highest preferred forms of feedback. They stated that feedback could be given in person, through email, written on paper, or visually on a graph. Determining the highest preferred type of performance feedback would allow feedback to be provided in the most effective form. They suggested that the teachers should be asked their preference on types of performance feedback as well as ABAB designs determining which was most effective at increasing rates of positive teacher behaviors.

Gunter and Reed (1996), Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, and Martin (2007), and Simonsen, MacSuga, Fallon, and Sugai (2012) suggested that self-evaluation and performance feedback be generalized to transition areas such as hallways, bathrooms,

recess, and lunchrooms. All three studies stated that it would be important to determine if these skills transfer across settings. Both of these studies also discussed the importance of determining if fading self-evaluation procedures and will lead to maintained levels of behavior from teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: On-Task Data Collection Tool

Observer: _____

DATE: _____

Operational Definition of Behavior: in seat and following directions_

Phase: _____

Description of Activity: _____

Time of Observation: _____

Momentary Time Sampling
10seconds for 15minutes

X=occurrence

O=nonoccurrence

| MIN | 10' | 20' | 30' | 40' | 50' | 60' |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 11 | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| MIN | 10' | 20' | 30' | 40' | 50' | 60' |
| 14 | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | |

Appendix B: Specific Praise and OTR Frequency Data Collection Sheet

Teacher: _____ Room # _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Observer: _____ Tape # _____ Session # _____

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1m | 2m | 3m | 4m | 5m |
| OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise |
| G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ |
| I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ |
| NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ |
| IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ |
| 6m | 7m | 8m | 9m | 10m |
| OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise |
| G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ |
| I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ |
| NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ |
| IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ |
| 11m | 12m | 13m | 14m | 15m |
| OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise | OTR Praise |
| G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ | G _____ A _____ |
| I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ | I _____ S _____ |
| NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ | NBS _____ |
| IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ | IR _____ GR _____ |

Key:

OTR Opportunities to Respond

G Group (this is the number of OTRs asked to the entire class/group)

I Individual (this is the number of OTRs asked to an individual student)

Praise Praise Statements

A Academic (verbal comments indicating approval of students' academic behavior that specify the behavior)

S Social (verbal comments indicating approval of students' social behavior that specify the behavior)

NBS Non-Behavior Specific (verbal comments indicating approval of students' behavior that do not specify the behavior)

IR Individual Reprimand (verbal comments indicating disapproval of an individual student's behavior)

GR Group Reprimand (verbal comments indicating disapproval of the class'/group's behavior)

Appendix C: Praise and OTR Training Lesson

Positive Praise Training Lesson Plan

Training Objectives

Understand importance of giving specific contingent praise and increasing opportunities to respond.

Increase ability to recognize behavior specific praise and when OTR should be given.

Increase ability to give contingent praise.

Be able to Identify appropriate student behavior during instruction.

Be able to identify parts of a lesson

Be able to teach parts of a lesson while giving specific praise and OTR.

Introduction

Behavior specific positive praise is an important factor in creating a positive classroom environment. Past research has shown when a teacher increases amount of behavior specific praise given to students then students decrease the amount of disruptive behavior as well as increase positive academic behaviors (Sutherland, 2000; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000; Sutherland, Wehby, & Yoder, 2002).

So what is behavior specific praise? (Opportunity for Response) Yes! That's right behavior specific praise is verbal praise for a desired student behavior, where the desired behavior was specific within the praise statement. So for example: "Great Job waiting patiently in line!" or "Your doing so well making eye contact when I'm talking!"

What are some essential characteristics of effective praise? (Opportunity for Response) Yes! Great job those are some characteristics; however, seven characteristics of praise have been identified by researchers.

1st Praise should be specific to appropriate behaviors displayed by students

2nd Praise should be given after a student has engaged in the desired behavior

3rd More praise should be given during initial teaching of a new skill then during practice of an all-ready mastered skill

4th Teachers should intend to "catch the student being good" give praise when positive behaviors are displayed

5th Focus on effort and improvement rather than an evaluating performance.

6th Give praise in a sincere natural voice. Be age appropriate, do they need private or public praise, and praise all children

7th Avoid praise that compares students other students. Can compare current student performance to one's own past performance.

OTR:

Increasing Opportunities for students to respond is important because it has been shown to increase the amount of on task behaviors displayed by students. Increasing the amount

of engagement as also been shown to help students' academic performance. The more time students spend engaged the more learning is done during that time.

Opportunities to respond are defined as question or statement by the teacher that seeks a response to an academic request (Sutherland, Wehby, and Copeland, 2000). They can be individual or as a group. OTR can also be completed many different ways. Students can use verbal sounds, writing, hand signals or gestures, and performing a skill to respond to teacher mands

Example for para to Opportunities to Respond

What is an opportunity to respond?

How can students respond?

Can more than one student be given the same OTR?

Why are OTR's important?

Can you have OTR's during modeling/guided practice/ independent practice section of the lesson?

Body (Model-Lead-Test)

Modeling of skill- direct instruction

Teacher models a small group lesson while giving specific contingent praise. Para professional act as the student of a lesson while teacher walks through the first small group lesson.

Teacher should think aloud while modeling a lesson.

Think out loud how to determine praise and opportunities to respond for each section of the lesson- model writing down praise statement and OTR on note cards or scrap piece of paper.

Teacher models reading through all parts of a lesson and determining when OTR and praise can be given.

Teacher models introducing a topic providing OTR and specific praise

Teacher models modeling a skill and praise that can be given during modeling section of lesson

Teacher models providing feedback during guided practice and giving praise

Teacher models giving independent practice and providing praise.

Teacher models how to close a lesson and how to give praise.

Lead – Guided practice- feedback

Next the para professional leads through a small group lesson while the teacher acts as the student. The teacher can also give feedback at this time

Together the para and teacher determine praise statements and OTR for each section of the lesson- para can write them down.

Para reads through all parts of a lesson and determines when praise and OTR can be given with teacher assistance.

Para introduces a topic provided OTR and praise

Para models a skill provided OTR and praises student.

Para provides feedback during guided practice and provides OTR and praise.
Para gives independent practice and provides praise.
Para closes a lesson and gives praise.

Teacher should provide error correction to para when appropriate.

Test – Assess skill mastery

Teacher should ask para to tell why specific praise and OTR are important and give an example of specific praise and OTR to show understanding of the definition.

Teacher asks para to perform all the skills previously taught
As para walks through the steps teacher can make notes of errors and address the errors with feedback after para has completed walk through.

Extended activities

- Putting praise and OTR on note cards
- Using praise in other areas of school
- Rephrasing existing praise statements

Entire lesson will be completed in three 10-minute training sessions

Appendix D: Praise and OTR Training Fidelity Checklist

Introduction

- Did you state why specific praise and/or OTR are important? y/n
- Did you define praise and/or OTR? y/n
- Did you explain the seven characteristics of effective praise? y/n
- Did you provide examples of praise and OTR? y/n
- Did you explain that student's responses could be
written verbal or a gesture? y/n

Body of lesson

Modeling

- Did you model how to develop praise statements and/or OTR for each
section of the lesson? y/n
- Did you model modeling the skill as well as provide
OTR and/or praise? y/n
- Did model how to provide guided practice? y/n
- Did you model providing students with independent practice? y/n

Guided practice

- Did you assist the para in preparation of the lesson? y/n
- Did you assist para in modeling the skill? y/n
- Did you assist para in providing guided practice? y/n
- Did you assist the para in providing independent practice? y/n
- Did you assist para in closing the lesson? y/n
- Did you provide error correction and praise to para? y/n

Independent practice

- Did you instruct para to complete lesson independently? y/n
- Did you make notes of errors and provide feedback after
completion of lesson? y/n
- Did you provide praise when performance granted it? y/n

Closure

- Did you thank the para for participating? y/n
- Did you review why praise and OTR are important? y/n
- Was para able to explain why praise and/or OTR are important? y/n

Appendix E: Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

| Intervention Evaluation Statement | 1= strongly disagree ... 6= strongly agree |
|--|--|
| 1. The students' behavior in the classroom improved. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 2. The student became more aware of his or her behavior. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 3. Intervention is worth the time. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 4. Intervention was age appropriate. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 5. Intervention did not interfere with my ability to teach. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 6. I would personally recommend this intervention to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 7. The intervention was easy to implement. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 8. Listening to myself teach and self-recording of my own behavior helped me improve. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 9. Receiving instruction and feedback from the special education teacher helped me improve my teaching behavior. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

Appendix F: Principal Consent Form

PRINCIPAL CONSENT

Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise

Dear Principal,

As part of my thesis project for my masters in special education in autism at Missouri State University, I plan to implement an intervention program to teach para educators self-monitoring techniques to increase rates of positive praise.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement self-evaluation strategies for para educators in order to increase positive interaction with students during small group instruction. The increasing positive interaction with students has also been linked, in past research, to increase student's on-task behavior. The intervention will not interfere with current IEP and will only enhance the progress on IEP goals. The resulting information may be disseminated at regional and national behavior conferences such as the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders or Association for Behavior Analysis International. This study is completed to meet thesis requirements for a master's degree in special education in autism.

What are the behavioral assessments?

Assessment for behavior includes teacher rating scales and interviews, and observations of student on task performance and inappropriate behaviors. The observations are conducted by the researcher and school staff involved in the students.

What are the behavioral interventions?

The behavioral interventions are para educators self-monitoring their rates of positive praise, as well as, teacher monitoring with feedback. In order for the para-professional to self- monitor a frequency data sheet will be used to count the number of general and specific praise. After listening to the audio recorded lesson with the teacher the para and teacher will discuss strategies to improve rates of praise and set a goal for the next lesson. The para will be shown a graph of their rate of praise after each session in order to show improvement or lack thereof.

What are the benefits of your participation in the project?

Students may benefit from participation in the assessment and intervention programs. Improved learning, classroom behavior and social interactions with peers and teachers are expected. Self-evaluation of adult behavior is a research-based practice for teachers. This research will increase positive interaction between teachers and students within your classrooms.

Video Recording: We may videotape samples of the classroom instruction and intervention for later review by the research and development team and for training

purposes. This recording may be accessed by members of the research project to inform future collaboration. No personally identifying information will be disseminated. It will only be used to ensure the fidelity of treatment and efficacy of the study.

What are confidentiality procedures?

Your permission allows a copy of all information obtained from assessment and interventions to be provided to the Missouri State University staff involved in this study. This information will be kept confidential in closed files at Missouri State University with Dr. Garrison-Kane. An alias will be used for each student and no identifying information will be included. All school policies on confidentiality will be followed. Information from assessments or observations shared in verbal or written reports only to the school staff that assist each student. Parent permission will be granted through a separate permission form and will be provided access to all data and information collected upon request.

Should you desire any additional information or have questions, please contact Dr. Garrison-Kane at Missouri State University.

Sincerely,

Jordan Politte
Special Education Teacher
Monett R-1
Central Park Elementary
Ph. # 417-354- 2168
jpolitte@monett.k12.mo.us

Dr. Garrison-Kane
Missouri State University Professor
417-836- 6960
LGKane@Missouristate.edu

-----**Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise**

PRINCIPAL PERMISSION:

If you agree to participate in this study please sign where indicated, then tear off this section and return it to the investigator. Keep the consent information for your records.

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study and the use and disclosures of information about my child for the study.

I agree to take part in this study. I understand that information will be used to help the school. Assistance with behavior support will be developed by the school student support team with consultation from Missouri State University staff.

I also understand that my permission allows for classroom observation student performance and sharing of school records (discipline contracts) with research staff.

Principal's first and last name

Principal's signature

Date

With my signature I affirm that I have been given a copy of this consent form.

I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact

Dr. Garrison-Kane, Professor

Missouri State University
(417) 836-6960
LGKane@Missouristate.edu
901 S. National, College of Education
Springfield, MO 65897

Jordan Politte
Special Education Teacher
Monett R-1
Central Park Elementary
Ph. # 417-354- 2168
jpolitte@monett.k12.mo.us

Appendix G: Parent Consent Form

PARENT CONSENT

Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise

Dear Parent,

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to assist teachers in increase the amount of positive interaction during small groups or individual instruction time. The goal of this study is to increase the amount of positive praise provided to students, as well as, the amount of time students are engaged in instruction.

What are the behavioral assessments?

Assessment for behavior includes teacher rating scales and interviews, behavior and academic records (including academic assessments and IEPs), and observations of student on task performance and inappropriate behaviors. The observations are conducted by school staff with assistance from the Missouri State University staff.

What are the behavioral interventions?

The behavioral intervention consists of audio and video recording small group lessons in the special education classroom. Audio and video records will allow the teacher and the para-educator to self-evaluate their rates of positive praise during academic lessons. The video records will allow the teacher and staff from Missouri State University to determine if increasing praise was beneficial in increasing task engagement and what changes can be made to improve rates of teacher praise.

What are the benefits of your child participating in the project?

Your child may benefit from participation in the assessment and intervention program. We expect to see improved learning, classroom behavior and social interactions with peers and teachers.

Video Recording: We may videotape samples of the classroom instruction and intervention for later review by the research and development team and for training purposes. Members of the project or school district may only access these recording. It will only be used to ensure the fidelity of treatment and efficacy of the study.

What are confidentiality procedures?

Missouri State University supports the practice of protection for human participants taking part in our research programs. Your child has been given the opportunity to participate in a research study using an intervention program to teach on task behavior in the upcoming school year. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish your child to participate in the measurement portion of the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not have your child participate in this study.

You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw your child from the study at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with the school, the services it may provide to you or your child, or Missouri State University.

Your permission allows a copy of all information obtained from assessment and interventions to be provided to the Missouri State University staff involved in this study. This information will be kept confidential in closed files at Missouri State University. All school policies on confidentiality will be followed. Information from assessments or observations shared in verbal or written reports only to the school staff that assist your child. These persons will have the information available for parents to review.

Sincerely,

Jordan Politte
Special Education Teacher
Monett R-1
Central Park Elementary
Ph. # 417-354- 2168
jpolitte@monett.k12.mo.us

Dr. Garrison-Kane
Missouri State University Professor
417-836- 6960
LGKane@Missouristate.edu

Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise
PARTICIPANT PERMISSION:

If you agree to have your child participate in this study please sign where indicated, then tear off this section and return it to the investigator. Keep the consent information for your records.

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study and the use and disclosures of information about my child for the study.

I agree to allow my child to take part in this study. By my signature I affirm that I am the parent/guardian of the child and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

I understand this means he/she may be observed and that information will be used to help the school and my child's teacher support my child.

I also understand that my permission allows for classroom observation of my child's performance and sharing of school records (discipline contracts) with project staff.

Child's first and last name

Print Parent's name

Parent's signature

Date

With my signature I affirm that I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Appendix H: Para-Educator Consent Form

PARA-EDUCATOR CONSENT

Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise

Dear Para-Educator,

As part of my thesis project for my masters in special education in autism at Missouri State University, I plan to implement an intervention program to help Para-educators self-monitor rates of positive praise.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement self-evaluation strategies for Para educators in order to increase positive interaction with students during small group instruction. The increasing positive interaction with students has also been linked, in past research, to increase student's on-task behavior. The resulting information may be disseminated at regional and national behavior conferences such as the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders or Association for Behavior Analysis International. This study is completed to meet thesis requirements for a master's degree in special education in autism.

What are the behavioral assessments?

Assessment for behavior includes teacher rating scales and interviews, direct observation of the use of praise, and observations of student on task performance and inappropriate behaviors. The researcher and school staff involved in the intervention will conduct observations.

What are the behavioral interventions?

The behavioral interventions are Para-educators self-monitoring their rates of positive praise and feedback from the teacher. A frequency data sheet will be used to count the number of general and specific praise during small group lessons. After listening to the audio-recorded lesson with the teacher, you and teacher will discuss strategies to improve rates of praise and set a goal for the next lesson. You will be shown a graph of the rate of praise after each session to show progress and set goals.

What are the benefits of your participation in the project?

Students may benefit from participation in the assessment and intervention programs. Improved learning, classroom behavior and social interactions with peers and teachers are expected. Self-evaluation of adult behavior is a research-based practice for teachers. This intervention will increase rates of positive interactions between you and students.

Video Recording: We may videotape samples of the classroom instruction and intervention for later review by the research and development team and for training purposes. Members of the research project to help inform future collaboration may

access these recordings. No personally identifying information will be disseminated. It will only be used to ensure the fidelity of treatment and efficacy of the study.

What are confidentiality procedures?

Your permission allows a copy of all information obtained from assessment and interventions to be provided to the Missouri State University staff involved in this study. This information will be kept confidential in closed files at Missouri State University with Dr. Garrison-Kane. An alias will be used for each Para-educator and no identifying information will be included. All school policies on confidentiality will be followed. Information from assessments or observations shared in verbal or written reports only to the school staff that assist each student.

Should you desire any additional information or have questions, please contact Dr. Garrison-Kane at Missouri State University.

Sincerely,

Jordan Politte
Special Education Teacher
Monett R-1
Central Park Elementary
Ph. # 417-354- 2168
jpolitte@monett.k12.mo.us

Dr. Garrison-Kane
Missouri State University Professor
417-836- 6960
LGKane@Missouristate.edu

Title: Increasing Para Educators Rate of Positive Praise

PARTICIPANT PERMISSION:

If you agree to participate in this study please sign where indicated, then tear off this section and return it to the investigator. Keep the consent information for your records.

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study and the use and disclosures of information about my child for the study.

I agree to take part in this study. I understand that information will be used to help the school. The school student support team will develop assistance with behavior support with consultation from Missouri State University staff.

I also understand that my permission allows for classroom observation by research staff.

Para- Educator's first and last name

Para-educator's signature

Date

With my signature I affirm that I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Appendix I: IRB Approval

To: Linda Garrison-Kane
Counseling Ldrshp and Special Ed
HILL 438 901 S National Ave Springfield MO 65897

From: MSU IRB

Date: 9/05/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 1.Educational setting
Study #: 14-0071

Study Title: Increasing Rates of Specific Praise and OTR Provided by Para-Educators in Special Education Classrooms

This submission has been reviewed by the Missouri State University IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this project is to increase the amount of positive interactions in four special education classrooms. This will be accomplished through the use of teacher/para-educator self-evaluation strategies that consist of audio/video recording academic lessons and then self-monitoring the use of praise statements, disruptive behaviors and academic opportunities to respond.

Investigator's Responsibilities:

If your study protocol changes in such a way that exempt status would no longer apply, you should contact the above IRB before making the changes.

CC:
Jordan Politte
Michael Goeringer, Counseling Ldrshp And Special Ed
D Mitchell, Psychology