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A CASE STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR USE OF "BACKDOOR PRAISE" IN THE CLASSROOM

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By

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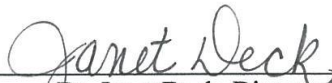in Curriculum and Instruction

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my rock: my husband, Bob, who has supported me throughout all of my graduate work, starting before we got married many years ago. His belief in me, his willingness to make accommodations during my time away from home for classes and research, and his occasional and much-needed "Get back to work!" reminders kept me heading in the right direction to reach this goal of having my doctorate. I am also pleased to share this with my family. My brilliant, talented sister always believed that I could reach this goal; my father, who passed away in 2000, and my mother were my role models for working hard and persevering, doing all they could without complaint or regret so that my sister and I could go to college. I hope that I am, in turn, a role model for my sons, Adam and Ian, in reaching this milestone. The three of us worked these past few years as college students and were often each other's cheerleaders when facing tough courses and challenges. They are fine young men and my pride and joy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I must also note that it has been a joy to work with all of Southeastern University's College of Education faculty and staff. I would be remiss to not extend my thanks to Dr. Bratten, Dr. Roth (and Mrs. Roth), Dr. Henderson, Dr. Gollery, both Drs. Stanley, Mrs. Teague, and my fellow DRAs Dr. Sarah Yates and Dr. Cassandra Lopez for always making me feel welcome. I was told when I started that Southeastern University was truly like family, and they proved that daily. I hope I have made the doctoral faculty proud; I know I will be forever indebted to each of them for allowing me to be a part of the Ed.D. program.

ABSTRACT

"Backdoor praise" (BDP) is defined as praise that is simultaneously delayed, indirect, and embedded in teacher comments. This case study investigated preservice teachers' perceptions of their use of BDP as a strategy for getting and keeping students on task. Three participants, representing elementary, middle, and high school, were observed to collect baseline data on their natural use of BDP. The preservice teachers were then informed of what BDP is and how to use it with students, and they were observed twice more using BDP. Overall, 28 incidents of BDP use involving 21 students were recorded, and 16 of the students maintained long-term on-task behavior post-BDP. The preservice teachers all reported positive effects, including a greater focus on "finding the good" in their students and a decrease in their use of negative comments and reprimands. A tally sheet of BDP per student and individual and focus group interview transcripts are included in the appendices.

Key Words: delayed praise, indirect praise, embedded praise, praise, classroom management, student behavior, preservice teachers, teacher training

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I. INTRODUCTION

The use of general and specific praise is well-documented as an effective method for engaging students (Billingsley, 2016; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Sigler & Aamidor, 2005) and reducing student misbehavior in K-12 classrooms (Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). Researchers have noted that students benefit and respond well to oral praise that is direct (Boyd, Keilbaugh, & Axelrod, 1981; Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009) and immediate (Danielson, 2010; Conroy et al., 2009; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011), whether generic (e.g., "Good job!") or specific (e.g., "You did great showing all the steps for subtracting!" or "I like how you're waiting quietly for the bell."). Either type of praise is used to comment on students' academic work or behavior. When used to comment on academics, both general and specific praise can boost students' self-esteem, let them know how they are progressing, and encourage their learning (Marchant & Anderson, 2012). Praise for behavior reinforces classroom and school rules and expectations (Billingsley, 2016; Partin et al., 2010).

Oral praise that is delayed, indirect, and embedded in teacher comments, however, may also be effective in the classroom. Praise that is unexpected, entering in through a student's emotional "back door" because it is both delayed and indirect, is what this researcher defined as "Backdoor Praise" (BDP). Further, BDP is an oral comment given after a gap of time—as little as five minutes or as much as a day—as a way of reminding a student that his or her previous

response, behavior, or participation was valuable to the class. This type of praise is embedded into teacher comments, making it less obvious and possibly less embarrassing to students who might not want public recognition (e.g., "The way Roger included the zeros as place-holders when we reviewed the homework will be a good method to use with these next problems."). This researcher hypothesized that the use of delayed, indirect, embedded praise statements (BDP) could be linked to increased student engagement and decreased student misbehavior.

Currently, no research exists on the benefits of oral praise in the classroom that is simultaneously delayed, indirect, and embedded. Both Brophy (1979) and Flanders (1961) briefly mentioned the positive effects of praise embedded in discussions, a method that closely matches the description of BDP. Only two studies on delayed praise could be found (Dobrinski, 2004; Trolinder, Choi, & Proctor, 2004), noting the positive effects of praise delivered to individual students a day after behavior was observed. These two studies were related; a doctoral student's dissertation was an expansion of his professors' work. Delayed praise was otherwise only mentioned in contrast to immediate praise in studies on behavior-specific praise (BSP) and contingent praise (Conroy et al., 2009; Duchaine, Jolivette, & Fredrick, 2011; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011). Danielson (2010) noted the negative effects of delayed praise, although the reference was specific to written, not oral, feedback. Indirect praise is often only noted in research as undesirable as compared to direct praise (Boyd et al., 1981). Given the lack of information on the use and effects of the components of BDP, either separately or together, in educational settings, research for this dissertation was expanded to include the business world, where studies of workplace satisfaction suggested that delayed praise and indirect praise are both positively correlated to employee engagement and productivity (Caraher, 2015; Lewis, 2011; White, 2016).

Background and Brief Review of Relevant Literature

During the 1980s, this researcher first discovered how delayed, indirect, embedded praise had a positive effect on students while completing undergraduate preservice teaching in a fifth grade classroom. As a university supervisor over the past decade, this researcher noticed that some preservice teachers also used delayed, indirect, embedded praise, prompting the development of the term "backdoor" praise (BDP). The name "backdoor praise" derives from the definition of the adjective *backdoor* meaning done in a secret or indirect way (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Delayed, indirect, embedded praise "comes in through the backdoor"; BDP is praise students do not expect, and it is different from general and specific praise because of when and how it is used. When asked by this researcher about the use of BDP, classroom teachers and preservice teachers have commented that the method is effective in increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior. Backdoor praise and BDP are not official terms, nor is this type of praise taught in education preparation programs. Delayed, indirect, embedded praise appears to be a topic that has received little attention in scholarly research, yet it may be an effective classroom management technique worth promoting.

While research on praise that is delayed, indirect, and embedded is virtually nonexistent, the field of education is flush with studies on immediate and direct praise, most of which also tie the use of praise to student engagement. From Brophy's (1979) and Flanders' (1961) years of studying effective methods in education to Billingsley's (2016) current research on strategies for battling students' work refusal or avoidance, one can easily find information promoting the use of praise to encourage academic effort and progress and foster appropriate, engaged behavior. Freiberg (1999) described the connection between operant conditioning and the use of praise, among other effective teaching methods, to get and keep students actively learning. Conroy et

al. (2009) provided identifying characteristics of effective praise and steps to increasing its use in the classroom. A subset of research focused on behavior-specific praise (BSP) as a method of classroom management, noting its effectiveness in increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior (Duchaine, Jolivette, & Fredrick, 2011; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000).

The focus of this study, however, was preservice teachers' perceptions of the effect of delayed, indirect, embedded praise on increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior. Indirect praise was defined for this dissertation as an oral statement that praises a student's effort, classwork, or behavior to others, often the entire class. In addition, this type of praise statement was described to be a positive approach to re-engaging a student or stopping behavior that is not praiseworthy. While Boyd et al. (1981) did not employ the type of indirect praise defined and studied for this dissertation, the study looked at the effects of ignoring one student's misbehavior while selecting a student nearby to praise. The hope was that the indirect praise would result in a positive change in the first student's behavior; however, there were no long-term changes in misbehavior with the implementation of indirect praise. The authors concluded that while "the indirect praise procedure is sometimes effective, the authors recommend the use of a direct praise technique to maintain large improvements in behavior" (p. 90).

Delayed praise was defined for this dissertation as an oral statement that is delayed by as little as five minutes to as long as one day. Its purpose is to remind a student that his or her participation in class has made a lasting impression on the teacher and is worth mentioning after the fact. As a classroom management tool, delayed praise can help re-engage students who are off-task or misbehaving. Current research, however, only touts the positive effects of immediate

praise, with numerous studies stating that praise, and feedback in general, should be timely (Danielson, 2010) and behavior-specific (Dobrinski, 2004; Duchaine et al., 2011; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Trolinder et al., 2004). Conroy et al. (2009) concluded that "praise should be contingent upon a desired behavior…provided immediately following the behavior. Praising the children later can diminish the effectiveness of praise" (p. 19).

Backdoor praise, however, is an approach to classroom management that uses praise for a student's *previous* positive comments or actions to counter the student's *current* misbehavior or disengagement. The method of delivery for BDP should be casual and unexpected by students. Through BDP, the off-task student would be drawn back into class participation and engagement via positive and unexpected teacher statements. Only in older articles were there statements that hinted at the use of delayed praise for increasing student engagement. Brophy (1979) wrote about "teacher use of student ideas by eliciting them frequently in the first place and then integrating them into the discussion as it develops" (p. 737). Flanders (1961) pondered whether "praise buried 'inside' a monologue" (p. 179) might have positive effects. An end-of-class "monologue" that incorporates students' earlier contributions would be an example of backdoor praise.

Because of the paucity of research in education on the use of delayed, indirect, embedded praise, this researcher investigated the effects of praise in the workplace and found content relating to positive reinforcement programs (Sims, 2014), incorporation of employee feedback (Caraher, 2015), employee engagement (Chadha & Ajay Kumar, 2016; Wildermuth & Wildermuth, 2008), and appreciative and servant leadership (Lewis, 2011; Mertel & Brill, 2015; White, 2016). Workplace scenarios are similar to classrooms; employees are like students, performing expected tasks, and bosses and managers are like teachers, supervising work,

providing feedback, and evaluating performance of those under their supervision. A perusal of the research indicated employees' productivity and engagement increased when they perceived their work and ideas were appreciated and utilized by their immediate supervisors (Caraher, 2015; Chadha & Ajay Kumar, 2016; White, 2016).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine whether backdoor praise (BDP) can be linked to increased student engagement and decreased student misbehavior. In addition, the study explored preservice teachers' perceptions of its use and effectiveness with students in their final internship classrooms. The goal was to determine if BDP is a technique worthy of further study and possible inclusion in the repertoire of effective methods for classroom teaching and management.

Research Questions

Preservice teachers from a university in the southeastern United States who were in their final internships in K-12 classrooms were invited to participate in a case study to investigate the effects of backdoor praise (BDP). The focus of the study was to answer the following questions:

- What experiences and perceptions do preservice teachers have in using BDP as a method for increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior?
- In what ways do preservice teachers perceive BDP—delayed, indirect, embedded praise—as having a different purpose and effect on students than immediate, direct praise?
- What are any negative effects preservice teachers experience from using BDP?

Methods

Three preservice teachers from the same university who were in their final, semester-long internship in K-12 classrooms participated in this case study. Although BDP is a form of praise, and praise is deemed appropriate and acceptable for preservice teachers to use, because it was being used with minors in K-12 classrooms, each cooperating teacher was informed of, and approved, the study. The preservice teachers were interning in schools representing a variety of grade levels and student demographics: "Kathryn" was teaching high school (ninth grade) English, "Dawn" was teaching middle school (sixth grade) math, and "Ruth" was teaching all subject areas in a fifth grade classroom. The preservice teachers were initially told only that the purpose of the study was related to effective methods in teaching and classroom management. They were each observed three times over a three-week time frame, and they taught a lesson of their choice that would last 30 to 60 minutes. After the first observation, in which baseline data was collected, they were informed of the purpose of the study and provided examples of BDP. The preservice teachers were asked to use BDP between and during the next two observations and were interviewed after both the second and third observations on their perceptions on the effectiveness of BDP in keeping students actively engaged.

A BDP Observation Sheet was used in each of the observations to document specific instances BDP, noting the first initial of the student receiving the praise, the behavior that prompted the praise, the praise itself, the immediate student and/or classroom response, and any lasting behavior post-BDP. Baseline data was collected from the first observation for each preservice teacher to determine his or her current use of BDP and compared with later observation data. The BDP Observation Sheets were shared with each preservice teacher after each observation and referenced during the recorded interviews. A blank BDP Observation

sheet, examples of BDP, and interview questions were given to each preservice teacher after the initial observation to help them prepare for the other two observations (see Appendices B, C, and D).

Analysis

Upon completion of the observations of all participants, data from the BDP Observation Sheets and the interview and focus group transcriptions were collected, coded, and analyzed with particular attention paid to pre- and post-BDP student behavior, preservice teachers' perceptions on using BDP, and general classroom reactions to the use of BDP. Already-gathered research was reviewed, and an additional search related to the findings in the case study was done, to determine the extent to which BDP was a unique strategy for classroom management and whether the findings of this study suggested BDP has an impact on educational practice.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The use of oral praise is well-established as an effective method of recognizing students' good work and appropriate behavior (Burnett, 2002; Burnett & Mandel, 2010; Conroy et al., 2009). Preservice teachers learn in their education courses to give oral praise that is immediate, direct, and behavior-specific (Greenberg, Putman, & Walsh, 2014; Marchant & Anderson, 2012). One type of praise that appears to be absent from the literature and practice is praise that is delayed, indirect, and embedded in teacher comments.

"Backdoor praise," a type of indirect praise, is the term being given to student praise that is delayed by at least five minutes to as long as one day, is spoken to a larger audience (small group or whole class) of which the target student is a part, rather than directly to the student, and is embedded in teacher comments as part of a lesson review or closure (e.g., "Hannah's explanation of how volcanos form really created some visuals for us."), introduction to new content (e.g., "As we work these next problems, remember Jacob's method for checking the answer."), or further explanation (e.g., "Let's look back at Sophie's point about the main character's motive."). When embedded into conversation by the teacher, the praise comments are unexpected and likely surprising to the students. Backdoor praise can be used to re-engage students who are off-task. In addition, because backdoor praise is said naturally as part of a larger conversation, students who may not like being publicly praised may be less likely to feel

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embarrassed if they hear their names.

Praise in Research

Praise has been a topic for research and discussion since the days of Ancient Greece. In his theory-based work, Garrison (2003) quoted Aristotle to describe how "epideictic rhetoric [that is, a rhetoric of praise and blame] praises virtuous character, passion, and action, and exhorts its listeners to seek virtue and shun vice" (p. 222). Garrison devoted the remainder of his article to John Dewey's theory regarding praise in educational settings, noting that praise, or the identification of what human actions deserve praise, is based on cultural perspectives and what is "supported by social approval and admiration" (p. 225). Garrison stated that teachers often fail to give praise to students who consistently act and speak in ways deemed appropriate for the classroom. Further, Garrison noted that Dewey's observation that "approval or disapproval becomes itself a vice or a virtue according to the way it is administered" (p. 228). The author, interpreting Dewey's educational philosophy, noted that when students are praised, they need to understand why the praise was given (Garrison, 2003). The ability to self-reflect does not come naturally to children; teachers' responses to their students' actions help the latter develop and determine their own moral conduct. Garrison wanted to make clear to readers that teachers need to embrace reflective morality, be willing to "break rules rather than breaking a student's unique individuality" (p. 241). Backdoor praise may well do just that when teachers act on opportunities to engage students via delayed, indirect, embedded praise, which is in contrast to the current literature on praise (Boyd et al., 1981; Conroy et al., 2009; Danielson, 2010; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Partin et al., 2010.

Baldacchino (2008) also applied John Dewey's work to issues challenging educators today, noting Dewey's belief in student-centered education. In reference to teacher preparation,

Baldacchino wrote "that Deweyan idea of teaching by creating an environment that is conducive to learning is qualified by the fact that student teachers have to be always conscious of their being the aspirant protagonists of a democratic stage" (p. 159). The author warns teachers not to be so focused on the content they are presenting that they neglect to consider how and why students learn. Baldaccino concluded by stating his support for Dewey's "value with the person" (p. 161) and that educators need to understand the theories and philosophical tenets behind their practices as well as how those practices translate into a "habit of good" (Baldaccino, 2008, p. 161) for their students.

Much of the current research on praise refers to Brophy's (1979) article on the effects of teacher behavior on student outcomes. Brophy began the article by identifying how teaching and learning had been studied until the mid-1970s, when approaches to classroom management research shifted toward finding "process-product correlations and, to a lesser degree, causal relations" (p. 734). Brophy promoted the idea of engaging middle and high school students in active learning and discussions and then reincorporating student comments into conversations as they continue. The integration of student responses Brophy suggests is the basic description of what this researcher calls "backdoor praise." The author cautioned, however, on the ways research should be conducted, mentioning praise specifically and the inability for researchers to control many variables that potentially affect how praise is given and its effect on student learning (Brophy, 1979).

In his review of research on context-specific relations and praise, Brophy (1979) referenced a report by Flanders (1970). Specifically, Flanders' review of education research published in the 1950s and 1960s, including his own, concerned teacher-student interactions and how verbal patterns of teachers affect student achievement. Amidon (1959, as cited in Flanders,

1970) found that "when the teacher's control was maintained by an above average use of questions, followed by the development of the students' ideas, achievement was significantly higher" (p. 175). Flanders' own research suggested that teachers who praise students and encourage their participation in class were more likely to be effective in dealing with classroom management and student misbehavior (Flanders, 1970).

Brophy (1979) also included Jacob Kounin's (1970) conclusions that effective classroom management is more likely to occur when teachers consistently use proactive and preventive techniques rather than dealing with student misbehavior after it happens. In previous research by Kounin and Gump (1961), the authors studied 174 first grade children's perceptions of misbehavior based on whether they had punitive or non-punitive teachers. Children in classrooms with punitive teachers were found to be more aggressive, less trustworthy of adults in the school setting, less interested or concerned with learning and school-related values, and conflicted about what constituted misbehavior. In comparison, children in classrooms with non-punitive teachers were more likely to trust their teachers and rules regarding classroom behavior, and, although they could not necessarily explain why, they understood misbehavior was wrong (Kounin & Gump, 1961).

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Current Literature on Praise

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The concept of using praise as a form of classroom management—including backdoor praise—addresses the problem faced by many teachers who seek effective strategies for behavior management in the classroom. When students are given increased opportunities to respond in the classroom, teachers have, in turn, increased opportunities to provide feedback and praise for those student responses, thus increasing the likelihood of students staying on task and decreasing misbehavior (Billingsley, 2016). Despite indications of a correlation between strong, trusting

teacher-student relationships and student engagement (Gregory, Hafen, Ruzek, Mikami, Allen, & Pianta, 2016), studies have provided evidence that teachers will more often respond negatively than positively to students with behavioral problems (Conroy et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b; Van Acker, Grant, & Henry, 1996).

Researchers have indicated that students with behavior problems are more likely to drop out of school than students with other disabilities (Balfanz, Herzog, and Mac Iver, 2007; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b). The report by Balfanz, Herzog, and Mac Iver (2007) focused on identifying dropout predictors and effective interventions in the urban middle grades setting. The predicted graduation rate was only 29% for sixth grade students who attended school less than 80% of the school year, failed math and/or English, and received an out-of-school suspension. On the other hand, the researchers also suggested that support and encouragement from teachers was a strong predictor of urban middle school students' engagement and academic achievement, and 71% of students identified as engaged and academically successful were predicted to graduate.

Van Acker et al. (1996) noted that "there is evidence to suggest that the school may in fact contribute significantly to the development of antisocial behavior" (p. 316) and that "teachers responding to resistive students in a rigid, intolerant, authoritarian or adversarial manner also may provoke violence" (p. 316). In addition, students rated as high risk for behavioral problems experience an overall negative school environment when they perceive they are being treated differently and/or less fairly by their teachers (Van Acker et al., 1996). In a study of elementary school students who were rated by their teachers as above the median for likely aggressive behavior, both student and teacher behavior was observed on at least four occasions over the time span of one school year. Students in the mid-risk group who participated

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received positive feedback and praise, which, in turn, resulted in those students participating more and receiving more praise. Students in the high-risk group, however, were given fewer opportunities to respond to teacher questioning or to participate in class discussions and more likely to be reprimanded, even though their levels of compliance to behavioral expectations was statistically similar to the medium-risk students (Van Acker, 1996). The authors noted their disappointment at finding that praise for the high-risk students tended to be random and reprimands were predictable. Students in the high-risk group seemed willing to misbehave in order to get noticed by their teacher, thus exacerbating the situation and creating a cycle of negativity between teacher and students. One suggestion was to give teachers feedback on how they interact with various students and provided methods to be more equitable in their inclusion of and comments toward their students (Van Acker, 1996).

Sutherland and Wehby (2001b) reported that students from unsupportive homes who also struggle academically "enter classrooms with deficits in interpersonal behavior, a propensity to use coercive tactics to manage their environments, and negative attitudes about school" (p. 114). In the authors' review of literature on the relationship between students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) and their opportunities to respond in the classroom, the authors reported that many students with behavior problems struggle in school, have low self-esteem, and poor relationships with their teachers. Only a third of EBD students complete high school (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b). Whether officially identified and labeled or not, these students often come from unsupportive home situations, where "parents may misuse punishment, provide inconsistent discipline, and engage in few positive interactions with their children" (p. 114). As a result, teachers often react to these students' misbehavior through negative approaches and provide less instruction as compared to students who do not misbehave in class. The authors

suggested from their extensive review of their own and others' research that, although increasing opportunities to respond is positively associated with students' on-task behavior and academic achievement, EBD students do not receive adequate opportunities to respond. "Teachers, researchers, and teacher trainers must seek to positively affect the educational experience of all students, including students with EBD. Increasing the rate of OTR is a means to help accomplish this goal" (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b, p. 119).

In classrooms where students have behavioral issues such as EBD (Emotional Behavioral Disorder), praise can defuse aggression and encourage students to engage more positively (Lewis, Hudson, Richter, & Johnson, 2004). Sutherland et al. (2000) noted that many EBD students struggle academically, often because of their inability to stay on-task, yet "researchers have suggested that the relationship between instruction and problem behavior can be used to both ameliorate the academic difficulties of students with EBD and decrease levels of disruptive and aggressive behavior" (Sutherland et al., 2000, p. 114).

Several studies have linked the use of praise with opportunities to respond (OTR), indicating that the more opportunities students are given to respond to questions, the more positive feedback and praise they receive, resulting in stronger engagement and lower likelihood they will misbehave or be off-task (Hastie, Sinelnikov, Brock, Sharp, Eiler, & Mowling, 2007; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Pas, et al., 2015; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b; Van Acker et al., 1996). Hastie et al. (2007) referenced Doyle's (1977) idea that "teacher and student behavior takes place in a manner of dual directional influence" (p. 299), meaning the positive or negative actions of either party will affect the actions of the other in the same way. Teachers who maintain a consistent and positively-focused classroom management system, with plenty of student OTR and receive teacher feedback, are more likely to keep students actively engaged and

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learning content (Hastie et al., 2007). Marchant and Anderson (2012) also commented that increased student OTR provides teachers greater opportunities to acknowledge and reinforce the students' active engagement.

Research by Pas, Cash, O'Brennan, Debnam, and Bradshaw (2015) noted the need for strong, positive classroom management at the high school level to reinforce the focus on academic engagement and learning. In a study of over 1,200 high school classrooms in Maryland, researchers examined student behavior in reaction to teachers' positive and negative classroom management strategies. Observers tallied teachers' use of proactive behavior management (all verbal and physical demonstrations of behavior expectations), approval, disapproval, reactive behavior management (cues or comments to redirect misbehavior), and opportunities to respond (OTR) during a one-time visit for a 15-minute span in each classroom. The rates of OTR at the high school level were lower in classrooms with students whose behavior was identified as inconsistent or non-compliant, and were much lower than what the researchers found in studies on elementary classrooms. Results indicated a significant relationship between students' positive behaviors (participatory, compliant, not disruptive) and teachers' use of OTRs and comments or gestures of approval. One of the conclusions by the researchers is that teachers at the high school level may need training on increasing their use of OTR.

Boyd et al. (1981) looked at the effects of "spill over praise" (p. 81), the method of praising on-task students who sit near off-task students as a way to redirect the latter toward appropriate behavior. The authors conducted experiments using indirect reinforcement techniques: one using oral praise with two learning disabled and emotionally disturbed six-year-old girls, the other using tokens as praise with four children with IQs ranging from 34 to 57.

Although student behavior improved with the use of oral praise and tokens, the results were mixed as not all students maintained positive behaviors (Boyd et al., 1981). Suggestions for future research included studying whether students receiving the direct praise will ignore the temptation toward misbehavior by others around them.

Cormier and Wahler (1971) looked at how contingent and non-contingent (random) praise as a method of behavior management affected off-task students as well as "non-target" students in junior high school classrooms. The researchers conducted observations over a period of 18 weeks in five eighth grade classrooms, focusing on three disruptive "target" students and three randomly selected "non-target" students in each class. During the baseline data collection, researchers noted a nine-to-one ratio of negative to positive teacher comments. After teacher completed training for the study, improved behavior and a decrease in misbehavior was observed by both target and non-target students. Non-contingent praise was also effective but not statistically significant. Although the authors did not list recommendations for further research based on their findings, the last line of their report alluded to it: "The implication of this study is that a teacher can modify and influence the behavior of his students if he can control his own behavior" (Cormier & Wahler, 1971, p. 14).

Researchers have suggested that teachers who approach classroom management from a positive perspective have fewer behavioral problems (Conroy et al., 2009; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b). These teachers used what Billingsley (2016) referred to as "antecedent-based interventions" (p. 13) to reduce or eliminate students' opportunities for misbehavior. Although praise is a form of extrinsic motivation (Danielson, 2010), it can be "considered a generalized reinforcer that can help foster children's intrinsic motivation to learn" (Conroy et al., 2009, p.

20). Techniques such as praising appropriate behavior and giving positive attention can keep students engaged and encouraged (Conroy et al., 2009).

Recent research and reports on the use of praise in the classroom have stressed the need for the praise to be immediate (Conroy et al., 2009; Danielson, 2010), contingent or behavior-specific (Dobrinski, 2004; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Trolinder et al., 2004), and directed at the student (Dobrinski, 2004). Hastie and Musti-Rao (2011) noted that while teachers generally know the positive effect specific praise has on students, they often forget to use it or resort to using general praise since it is quicker and easier to produce. Danielson (2010) related praise to motivation, reminding educators that praise is extrinsic motivation and should be "offered to students for their persistence, for the strategies used, for the insights they bring to their assignments" (p. 38).

Marchant and Anderson (2012) tied the use of effective praise with the need to provide students more opportunities to respond (OTR). When students are engaged and given opportunities to participate in discussions and respond to questions, they are less likely to spend class time disrupting the teacher or engaging in off-task or inappropriate behavior. "Class climate may be conceptualized as a continuum ranging from largely positive student-teacher relationships and frequent acknowledgment of appropriate behavior to unfriendly, less encouraging environments with coercive, confrontational relationships" (p. 22). Increasing OTR and praise helps counter past negative experiences some students have had with teachers. The authors argued that contingent and behavior-specific praise in conjunction with OTR helps create a positive learning environment and a reduction in student misbehavior. This positive environment is critically important in classrooms with children who have emotional or behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, language barriers, or are at risk for school failure

(Marchant & Anderson, 2012). In addition to OTR and praise, the authors stressed that teachers provide students "non-contingent attention" (p. 24), interacting with all students on a regular basis to help establish and maintain a positive learning environment.

In a study involving preschool-age children, Sigler and Aamidor (2005) distinguished praise as a form of positive reinforcement, noting that a child learns about acceptable behavior when he or she receives a positive response from an adult about that behavior. They defined positive reinforcement as "the act of identifying and encouraging a behavior, with the hopes that the desired behavior will increase" (p. 249) and praise as just one type of positive reinforcement. For students craving attention, however, any feedback from teachers, even negative, can serve as positive reinforcement for misbehavior (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). The authors recommended that teachers working with preschool children should ignore misbehavior and aim to redirect the children toward more acceptable activities. Sigler and Aamidor emphasized that, although some students will escalate their behavior until they get attention, most misbehaviors that are ignored are "practically extinguished" (p. 251) within a short period of time. What was important, the authors stressed, was to provide students clear expectations for behavior, use positive comments over tangible rewards, and look for the reason or impetus for the misbehavior to better identify solutions.

Similar to Sigler and Aamidor's (2005) findings, Conroy et al. (2009) suggested that attending to misbehavior while ignoring appropriate behavior could result in students choosing to misbehave in order to get attention. Instead, if teachers provide corrective feedback for misbehavior and positive attention toward appropriate behavior, students will learn that positive behavior is more likely to garner the teacher attention they seek. Conroy et al. (2009) described effective praise in the classroom as "teacher-initiated statements that convey to children the

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specific academic or social behaviors in which teachers would like to see students continue to engage" (p. 19). The authors offered seven recommendations for developing and using effective praise:

1. Praise should be behavior-specific so students know why they are being praised.

2. Praise should be given immediately following an appropriate behavior; delay could result in diminished effectiveness, depending on the child's background and cognitive and emotional abilities (Hitz & Driscoll, 1988, as cited in Conroy et al., 2009).

3. Praise should be given often when a learned skill or appropriate behavior is new to a child, then offered more sporadically while turning praise toward other new skills and appropriate behaviors.

4. Praise should be initiated by the teacher, not solicited by students.

5. Praise should be focused on effort and progress rather than ability or outcome.

6. Praise should be authentic and sincere. Wording and tone should be age-appropriate for the students receiving it.

7. Praise should be individualized and worded so as to avoid comparisons or competition between students.

"Effective praise is considered a generalized reinforcer that can help to foster children's intrinsic motivation to learn that comes from mastering tasks" (Conroy et al., 2009, p. 20). The authors also noted that positive effects of praise are not limited to students. Like Blaze, Olmi, Mercer, Dufrene, and Tingstom (2014) found in their study, Conroy et al. (2009) concluded that teachers who focus on giving praise tend to use it more than negative comments and feedback, thus enhancing the classroom environment, the student-teacher relationship, and students' on-task behavior and correct responses.

Burnett (2002) studied elementary school students' perceptions of teacher praise and feedback, the classroom environment, and their relationship to their teacher. The author differentiated between praise and feedback for effort versus praise and feedback for ability. Students in the lowest 14% for satisfaction with the classroom environment were compared to students in the highest 15%. The less-satisfied students reported receiving less ability feedback, significantly less effort feedback, and significantly more negative feedback (Burnett, 2002). The authors also noticed that male students received significantly more negative feedback than female students (Burnett, 2002). Overall, the results of the study indicated a significant relationship between effort feedback and students' perception of their relationship to their teacher (0.80) and a positive correlation between student-teacher relationship and the classroom environment (0.69).

In a qualitative study, Burnett and Mandel (2010) interviewed five teachers and 56 students in first through sixth grade in Australia. They found that students who received praise "felt proud of themselves, it was motivating (they wanted to try harder to get more praise, and that they generally felt good inside" (p. 148). Two findings were unexpected by the authors and of particular interest as they relate to this dissertation and the subtle use of backdoor praise. First, survey results regarding preferences for ability versus effort feedback differed by age group; students in first and second grade liked praise for their behavior and receiving tangible rewards like stickers, while students in third through sixth grades wanted to be praised for their effort, perseverance, and completion of assignments. Second, the students interviewed preferred quiet praise (60%) over public praise (40%), a finding similar to a previous study by Burnett (2001, as cited in Burnett & Mandel, 2010) that 52% of 747 students surveyed wanted quiet, one-on-one praise, 32% preferred to be praised in front of their peers, and 17% wanted no praise

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at all. In both studies, the authors noted that it was likely some students felt that public praise was embarrassing and possibly seen as a form or punishment if they were teased or berated by their peers as a result.

Blaze et al. (2014) reported conclusions similar to Burnett and Mandel (2010) regarding students' preferences for praise. The authors examined students' behavioral reactions, immediately and over time, to loud (public) praise versus quiet praise in four high school classrooms. Baseline data were collected at the start of the study; then teachers were assigned to use either quiet or loud praise followed by a period of normal class routines and a reintroduction of the same (quiet or loud) praise. Results indicated that regardless of the type of praise or the order in which it was given to students, students' appropriate engaged behavior (AEB) remained higher than baseline and disruptive behavior (DB) decreased for all four teachers. The levels were also maintained during the withdrawal phase for two of the teachers. The authors determined that "both loud and quiet praise resulted in significant improvement in AEB and DB" (Blaze et al., 2014, p. 358). Additionally, they speculated that the increased use of praise during the study may have had a lasting effect on the teachers, resulting in a decrease in their use of negative comments and feedback. One teacher noted a positive change in classroom environment and that students were more relaxed and less defensive or defiant. A recommendation for further research was to track negative comments and reprimands as part of the data collection to see if they naturally decrease when praise is increased.

Motivation Theory and Praise

While the main purpose for using praise in the classroom is to provide positive feedback and encouragement to students, praise is also an effective tool for classroom management (Billingsley, 2016; Conroy, 2009; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Partin et al., 2010). Praise can

influence student behavior when the likelihood of receiving it serves to motivate students to be

on-task and behave appropriately (Blaze et al., 2014; Cormier, 1971; Haydon & Musti-Rao,

2011). How and why students choose to behave or misbehave has been examined for this study

through a variety of psychological lenses: behavioral and cognitive theories, including

contingency management theory and operant conditioning (Freiberg, 1999; Skinner, 1969),

social constructivist theory (Sivan, 1986), adaptive theory of motivation (Middleton & Toluk,

1999), Kounin's (1970) classroom management theories, and self-determination theory (Deci,

1971; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

In a series of socioeconomic studies conducted in the 1920s that became known as the

Hawthorne effect ("The Hawthorne effect," 2008), the productivity female workers in a Western

Electric factory in Hawthorne, Illinois, was monitored as various changes were made to their

workplace conditions, including how much they were paid, the length of their rest periods, the

lighting in the factory, and the degree to which they were supervised. While the factory's

owners expected the key motivator to the employees' increased productivity to be financial, the

researchers concluded the women worked harder because they received more attention and

perceived having an improved relationship with their supervisors and co-workers ("Hawthorne

research," 2001). These findings can be related to the classroom as research on praise and the

positive relationship between engagement and student productivity (Burnett, 2002; Burnett &

Mandel, 2010; Marchant & Anderson, 2012).

Skinner's (1969) research focused on the study of operant conditioning, the

reinforcement of a behavior and its relationship to specified consequences (Freiberg, 1999).

With regard to student motivation in the classroom, Skinner determined that operant

reinforcement not only changed behaviors but helped maintain the new behaviors. "A good

program reinforces the student abundantly and at just the right times. It shapes new forms of behavior under the appropriate stimuli…It holds [the student's] attention; it keeps [the student] at work" (p. 96). Most importantly, however, was Skinner's explanation that the most effective contingencies of behavior reinforcement include no external controls; if praise as a reward was not promised or expected, students would be more likely to internalize new behaviors that received such praise.

Kounin (1970, as cited in Hastie et al., 2007) identified key behaviors of effective classroom management, including "withitness"—immediate intervention once student disengagement is noticed—and providing continuous and challenging academic stimuli and frequent, timely feedback that encourages student engagement. The use of BDP may be closely related to Skinner's operant conditioning research (Freiberg, 1999) in that students' participation and contributions to class discussion are reinforced via delayed, indirect, and often unexpected praise. When BDP is embedded in content review, as intimated by Flanders (1961), and the teacher is practicing Kounin's "withitness" (Freiberg, 1999) by noticing non-participants in class, the praise itself will be less overt and can, therefore, casually draw in all students. In addition, BDP can be used to engage students who are avoiding or refusing work (Billingsley, 2016) as well as what Tousignant and Siedentop (1983, as cited in Hastie et al., 2007) call the "competent bystander" (p. 300), the student who behaves but does not participate.

Middleton and Toluk (1999) described the adaptive theory of motivation as the way an individual will predict the likelihood of success in an activity and decide to proceed or withdraw. In the classroom, students who anticipate they will not be academically successful will often engage in behaviors which they perceive they will be successful and/or receive attention from the teacher. "It is clear that there are no unmotivated students. Students constantly evaluate the

requirements for participation in activities and choose to either engage or to find some other activity that better takes up their time" (p. 103). For some students, including many in ESE programs (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b; Van Acker, 1996), being "successful" in disrupting the classroom environment is a way to deal with the lack of success in academics and helps satisfy a need for self-worth (Coloroso, 1984).

Sivan (1986) explained that social constructivist theory relies on reciprocal interactions between an individual and others within his or her social context. During these interactions, an individual is constantly processing meaning through cognitive activity. In the classroom, students develop much of their understanding of the world by working with their teachers and peers. The author noted that, in addition to cognitive activity, social constructivist theory also involves the individual gaining knowledge of his or her environment as well as constructing and negotiating understanding of the sociocultural environment through assisted learning (Sivan, 1986). It is through this assisted learning that students in a classroom gain a mental foundation of understanding for the expectations, rules of interpersonal behavior, and values for that environment. The author pointed out that motivation and motivated behavior are not the same; the former is intrinsic, but the latter may be linked to external forces, such as when a student completes an activity in order to earn a reward (Sivan, 1986).

Motivation theory examines the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli and how each affects behavior. Deci (1971) wrote that a person is intrinsically motivated to do something when the only desired reward is the action itself. Babies are intrinsically motivated to crawl simply because they have discovered their ability to move independently. "Motivation is not something that is done to people. Rather it is something that comes from within a person" (Fretz, 2015, p. 24). "Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, requires an instrumentality between the

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activity and some separable consequences such as tangible or verbal rewards, so satisfaction

comes not from the activity itself but rather from the extrinsic consequences to which the activity

leads" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 331). Fretz (2015) also noted that Deci and Ryan (1985, as cited

in Fretz, 2015) came to view external rewards and consequences as controls rather than extrinsic

motivators.

A study by Deci (1971) examined how people approached small projects (putting puzzles

together, writing newspaper headlines) based on whether they were to receive extrinsic rewards

of money or oral praise for effort. Results of the experiments suggested that monetary reward

decreased intrinsic motivation when, in subsequent projects, the reward was no longer offered.

Study participants who received no tangible rewards other than praise and social approval

remained motivated throughout the study to complete the tasks given. The author posited that

this difference could be due to tangible rewards being a form of control; participants may have

only completed the tasks for the external reward and were less likely to be internally motivated

to succeed. Praise and other verbal approval are generally not perceived to be method of control

(Deci, 1971).

Research by Deci and Ryan (1985b, as cited in Deci & Ryan, 2008) led to the

development of self-determination theory (SDT). In Deci and Ryan (2000), Gagné and Deci

(2005), and Deci and Ryan (2008), the authors identified three basic psychological needs for

motivation to be internalized, all of which are applied in the current study to students in the

classroom. Students want to feel competent—that they are capable of academic success;

students want to feel autonomous—that they have some control and choice over they do and

what happens to them; and, students want to feel relatedness—that they are accepted members of

a community, whether it be with a small group of peers or as a part of the classroom environment (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Praise and Teacher Preparation

Praise has also been the focus of research on teacher preparation. As preservice teachers go from education coursework to field experiences in the classroom, studies indicate weak links between theory and practice (Christofferson & Sullivan, 2015; Moore, 2003; Szabo, Scott, & Yellin, 2002). Brophy (1979) reported that "much of the educational establishment" (p. 733) believed that effective teachers have innate ability and others will learn by trial and error in real-world classroom situations. Christofferson and Sullivan (2015) noted that classroom management has been deemed a "bag of tricks" (p. 249) in many teacher education programs and cited a report by Hammerness (2011) that fewer than half of the teacher preparation programs in New York required a course in classroom management.

In a study on theory-to-practice in Library Information Science (LIS) programs in eight Canadian universities, Hoffman and Berg (2014) wrote that LIS students felt that many of their early classroom-based experiences were "ideal cases and neat, tidy characterizations" and "individual puzzle pieces" (p. 227) that did not cognitively come together for them until their first experiences in actual libraries. Like the practicum and internship opportunities given to students majoring in education and other professional programs, field experiences in real library settings provided a beneficial link between theory and practice for LIS students, providing hands-on experiences and real-world situations in which students could apply their knowledge in their preparation for their career.

Research on preservice teachers by Moore (2003) indicated similar findings: the student teachers did not necessarily know how to identify and apply in real-world situations the effective

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methods they had learned in college coursework. Miller (2008) reported on his own teacher preparation coursework and how "teaching practices in schools…were very different than those advocated by my professors at the university" (p. 77).

To address the disconnect between theory and practice for preservice teachers, Szabo et al. (2002) combined their Classroom Management course with an every-Wednesday practicum experience and reflection journals. Part of the learning process for the student teachers was to develop more critical reflections; rather than just reporting each day's activities in their journals, the preservice teachers were taught how to see situations through various lenses—their own pre-conceived notions, what they read in their management course (theory), the classroom teacher's viewpoint, how students in the classroom perceived things—and process their conclusions in their weekly journals. The authors determined that the combination of university course and real-world application was a positive approach; by the end of the semester, 21 of the 27 student participants could describe how they would handle specific classroom management situations with a rationale supporting their conclusions.

Wadlington, Slaton, and Partridge (1998) looked at ways to alleviate stress experienced by student teachers during field experiences. First, they identified some of the contributing factors: a lack of natural ability in classroom management for some preservice teachers, unrealistic expectations for the classroom setting and their own ability to do well, and the pressures of handling planning and presenting content and discipline simultaneously. Recommendations from the study included student teacher journaling (privately or as part of a course requirement), modeling of effective practices by university supervisors, interviewing classroom teachers and former preservice teachers from the university's program, and

encouragement toward collaborative teaching so student teachers could practice their own skills while observing, and being supported, by more experienced professionals.

In a similar vein, Whitney, Golez, Nagel, and Nieto (2002) wanted to better understand how university teacher preparation programs could improve in theory to practice. They interviewed classroom teachers, who told the researchers that they feel pressured to maintain the status quo in their schools, powerless to incorporate changes in the classroom. They "tend to negate the theoretical influences from their teacher education experiences…[not realizing] their lack of theoretical understandings actually supports their disempowerment" (p. 70). The researchers explained that classroom teachers do not incorporate methods and strategies they found effective in their practice teaching. In addition, new teachers utilized strategies for classroom management that presented the lowest risk, regardless of what they learned in university coursework. Through a survey of 900 teachers and four follow-up focus groups, the researchers identified that field placement experiences were valued and that working with a master teacher was beneficial to preservice teachers' learning. Survey respondents indicated a desire for better preparation for working in urban schools and to learn more about how to manage daily teaching expectations in university coursework. The researchers immediately began implementing changes, including more opportunities for the preservice teachers to link theory to practice.

<div align="center">**Praise in the Workplace**</div>

Parallels exist in the dynamic of teacher-and-student relationships in the classroom and manager-employee relationships in the workplace. Key phrases describing classroom students in Billingsley's (2016) article, "work refusal, task refusal, and work or task avoidance" (p. 12), can easily describe disengaged adult employees. Studies from the business realm have reported that

employee disengagement ranges from 15% (Sims, 2014) to 19% (Bolchover, 2005, as cited in Lewis, 2011) to 40% (Jha & Kumar, 2016). At the same time, when employees feel engaged, there is evidence of fewer days of missed work (Lewis, 2011), reduced staff turnover (White, 2016), higher productivity and profit margins (Jha & Kumar, 2016; Sims, 2014; Wildermuth & Wildermuth, 2008), and greater customer satisfaction (Jha & Kumar, 2016; Mertel & Brill, 2015). In addition, engaged employees report a feeling of belonging and of being valued for their contributions (Caraher, 2015; Dent & Holton, 2009; Jha & Kumar, 2016).

Caraher (2015) provided an illustration of a positive spiral of employee engagement energy in her book *Millennials and Management*: When managers recognize and implement employees' ideas, a workplace implementation of BDP, those employees are naturally more engaged because they feel valued. Highly engaged employees given more authority are more willing, and have more opportunities, to share additional ideas. The positive cycle continues building employee-manager communication, trust, good will, morale, and productivity.

Similarly, Chadha and Ajay Kumar (2016) explained when there is a flow of positive energy in the workplace, individuals are fully engaged and involved in their work, and there is an overall sense of collaboration and support instead of jealousy, intimidation, or disengagement. When the work environment is positive and "virtuous organizational practices" (Lewis, 2011, p. 16) are in place, employees are less fearful of retribution or chastisement when mistakes are made. Cameron, Bright, and Caza (2004, as cited in Lewis, 2011) determined there is a positive relationship between an organization's virtuousness and employee performance. In addition, Lewis (2011) noted the positive effects of organizations that adopt an "affirmative bias" (p. 17), wherein employees and management focus on the good things happening in and to the

organization. These affirmative-focused companies also openly recognize and discuss negative events in order to learn from them (Lewis, 2011).

The consistent themes from business-related research involved employees' desire to be valued by the organization and, particularly, their immediate managers (Dent & Holton, 2009; Jha & Kumar, 2016; Mertel & Brill, 2015), to feel their ideas were important (Caraher, 2015), to have management that provided ongoing feedback and support (Caraher, 2015; Sims, 2014), and to receive recognition when it was earned (Caraher, 2015; Dent & Holton, 2009; Jha & Kumar, 2016; White, 2016). Support and recognition that is not immediate nor necessarily expected by or given directly to employees represent a workplace version of backdoor praise. As Chadha and Ajay Kumar (2016) noted, once the positive perspective has been established, everyone in the organization wants to maintain it.

The desire to feel valued, supported, and recognized by supervisors is present in the classroom as well. Like employees in the workplace, children want to feel valued, have their ideas deemed important, receive feedback and support from their teachers, and be given recognition when it is earned (Burnett, 2002; Burnett & Martel, 2010; Partin et al., 2010; Pas et al., 2015). Further reading of business-related research allows for a better understanding of what managers are doing to ensure their employees are actively engaged. The content of Caraher's (2015) book may be the closest to the educational field since her focus is on millennials whose age range is nearest to that of students in K-12 schools. Caraher noted that people, regardless of occupation, want to be happy where they work. Compared to their older work colleagues, they want to know that their work, opinions, and presence matter as members of a team. They want their managers to give feedback on a regular basis; they want opportunities to get and give authentic praise, and they are aware when appreciation is not genuine.

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In the survey report by Dent and Holton (2009), most employees said they were most motivated when their work was challenging, interesting, and valued by the organization. In addition, employees wanted to be trusted and given opportunities for autonomy, but at the same time, they wanted to know they could trust that the organization did not tolerate poor performance or poor leadership. One employee noted on the survey, "I put forward an idea to my boss and get a muted response but then hear it put forward at a meeting by my boss as their [sic] idea" (p. 38). On the other hand, survey respondents said they were motivated by opportunities to share success stories and learn innovative practices, and they appreciate clear support from upper management that everyone in the organization is important.

Other research on employee satisfaction reported similar findings regarding the human aspect of the workplace. White (2016) found that "employees and managers experience a sense of purpose in their work when they feel valued and appreciated by the supervisors and colleagues" (p. 24). Sims (2014) commented that "a paycheck is not as big a motivator as your boss telling you what you did right and why it matters" (p. 44). Jha and Kumar (2016) wrote that "appreciation, respect or value at work, and a personal touch of management would surely motivate employees to engage with full commitment" and "empowerment and feedback enhances the belief of an employee to stay in the organization" (p. 26).

Research on Delayed Praise

No studies were found that addressed all of the components of backdoor praise including: delayed, indirect, or embedded praise. In the first of only two studies on the effects of delayed praise on student behavior, all from the same group of researchers at the University of South Dakota, Trolinder et al. (2004) studied two eight-year-old second-grade students, one male and one female in different classes, who were chosen by their teachers for the study because of their

low ability to stay on task and behaviors mimicking that of children diagnosed with attention

deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In the 16-day study, the teachers were expected to treat

the two students normally, using praise toward them and all students as they normally would.

During the treatment phase, however, each teacher was to take a few moments before the start of

the day's language arts lesson to provide her student specific praise for behavior observed the

previous day. Both students' behavior improved significantly from the initial baseline to

treatment, even on days when disruptive events occurred. Both students' behaviors were

maintained during the second baseline period. The authors concluded that the implementation of

delayed directive praise served as "as an encourager that prompted continued on-task behavior"

(p. 75) even during the second baseline phase. In addition, the participating teachers noted their

initial discomfort with developing and using delayed directive praise statements was soon

abated, and the authors suggested that the teachers may have naturally yet subconsciously

increased their use of praise over negative statements as a result of participating in this study

(Trolinder et al., 2004).

Dobrinski (2004), a student of two of the authors of the Trolinder et al. (2004) study,

conducted similar research for his dissertation to determine if confounding variables had any

influence on the two students' continued on-task behavior. While the previous study noted that

the praise given included references to two students' behavior the previous day, Dobrinski's

(2004) study specifically focused on the use of behavior-specific praise (BSP) on the previous

day's behavior of four second-grade students in two different classrooms. The criteria used to

select the students was the same as in Trolinder et al. (2004), and each student was observed over

a 16- to 18-day time period. The implementation of the intervention was staggered in each

classroom with one student receiving BSP up to five days before the other, as a way to document

student-specific changes directly related to the intervention. Results were consistent with the previous research on delayed directive praise: students' on-task behavior improved immediately upon the implementation of the treatment (teacher's use of behavior-specific praise on the student's behavior the previous day). The percentage of time on task increased by 22% and 27% during intervention. A particular finding in the study was that on Day 9 during intervention, one of the teachers did not incorporate any BSP, and the on-task behavior of one of the students dropped considerably, from 60% the previous day to 32%. Once the teacher used BSP again, that student's percentage of time on-task rose, with the next eight days ranging between 62% to 85% of the time on task. With regard to the teachers' reactions to the use of BSP as a delayed directive, they "were surprised how easy and natural the intervention was to implement in their classroom" (Dobrinski, 2004, p. 53) and were pleased to have a new and effective method to use for classroom management and maintaining students' on-task behavior.

Research from past decades, however, alluded to the possible positive effects of delayed, indirect, embedded praise, or "backdoor praise" (BDP). Flanders (1961) observed that "the verbal patterns" (p. 175) of effective teachers positively influenced student engagement and behavior. The author particularly questioned whether "the praise given in the immediate response to student contributions [are] more or less effective than praise buried 'inside' a monologue" (p. 179). The "monologue" Flanders describes as an end-of-class review of content and the "praise buried 'inside'" that is comprised of students' previous contributions to the class discussion would be precise examples of BDP, given the praise was delayed and indirect and likely unexpected by the students who heard their names included in the lesson closure.

In Brophy's (1979) article "Teacher Behavior and Its Effects," the author regarded other work by Flanders, writing that

[Flanders'] data do suggest that greater student learning at the middle and upper grade levels is associated with…teacher use of student ideas (by eliciting them frequently in the first place and then integrating them into the discussion as it develops), and praise of good contributions by students. … [The] use of student ideas and praise of student contributions correlated positively with learning gains in seventh- and eighth-grade math. (p. 737)

Flanders' (1961) and Brophy's (1979) observations about embedding student contributions into discussions and monologues combined with Kounin's research (Christofferson & Sullivan, 2015; Freiberg, 1999) provide a solid, research-based foundation supporting BDP as an effective method for keeping students engaged in the classroom. Finally, BDP, which infuses students' names in discussion because of their positive behavior and contributions, would work in an opposite manner than behavior management strategies which incorporate identifying students by name for their misbehavior.

III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the effectiveness of delayed, indirect, embedded praise—"backdoor praise" (BDP)—in the K-12 classroom as perceived by preservice teachers. While giving immediate, direct praise is a commonly accepted and encouraged practice, no research was found on the effects of BDP. Until now, delayed, indirect, embedded praise appears to be an unnamed and unstudied tool for classroom management and student engagement and motivation. Because there is a paucity of research on BDP in teacher preparation, an appropriate starting point was to collect and present evidence on its use and effectiveness. A case study was chosen to examine the usefulness of BDP and the thought processes behind decisions to use BDP versus other forms of praise or classroom management.

Research Design

Texts by Joyner, Rouse, and Glatthorn (2013), Creswell (2013), and Yin (2009) were used to determine the best method of collecting, analyzing, and reporting data and results on an existing yet unnamed and unstudied strategy for student engagement and classroom management. The Joyner et al. (2013) text served as a reference for collecting appropriate data and developing and organizing the content of each chapter. Also helpful were suggestions for creating a calendar for completing components of the dissertation and advice regarding steps to follow related to the preparation, writing, and presentation of the dissertation.

Creswell (2013) identified case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system … over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description or case themes" (p. 97). BDP is a technique that this researcher has observed both experienced and preservice teachers implementing without realizing it; a case study approach suited the goal of studying BDP: to investigate via multiple sources of collected data preservice teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness for themselves and their students in real-life classrooms.

To affirm that a case study would be the most appropriate method to use, this researcher considered whether any of the other four qualitative approaches described in Creswell's (2013) text might also apply. Creswell noted that a phenomenological study identifies a single phenomenon, learns from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, and analyzes the data for themes and to understand the "essence" (Creswell, 2013, p. 79) of the phenomenon. A phenomenological approach was not considered for studying BDP, however, because each person's experiences with, and reasons for using, BDP could be different. A narrative approach would have been premature since there currently is no research on BDP; however, following the progress of novice teachers or students positively affected by using or receiving BDP could be an interesting format in future research. Given that BDP has not yet been formally studied or recognized as an effective strategy in education, a grounded theory approach would also be premature at this time. Because BDP could be used in any classroom with all student populations, ethnographic research was not appropriate, although such research could be useful in situations in which the student demographics or teacher preparation program demographics indicate this approach could address specific issues.

Yin (2009) presented salient questions to consider once the case study method was selected. As a way to further test whether the case study method was appropriate for investigating the preservice teachers' perceptions and use of BDP, key goals were applied to the questions asked in Yin (2009) regarding the form of the research question, whether any variables needed to be controlled, and if the topic was focused on a contemporary issue. Questions to be answered in this study were open-ended, asking participants about their perceptions of their and their students' experiences with BDP. Data was collected through observation in a natural classroom setting; the baseline data documented the preservice teachers' current use of BDP, and the next two observations documented their implementation of the strategy within their normal teaching routine.

Yin (2009) wrote that case study research includes "direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events" (p. 11) and distinguished case studies from experiments, noting the latter involves the direct, precise, and systematic manipulation of behavior. Although the preservice teachers' use of BDP was expected to result in changes in student behavior, there were no experimental or control groups in the current study. In addition, because the extent of the use of BDP was completely determined by each preservice teacher finding appropriate opportunities to use it, this research had "little or no control" (p. 13) over when or how BDP was used or if it was used as instructed.

"Case study research begins with the identification of a specific case" (Creswell, 2013, p. 98), and for this researcher, that specific case occurred during the final student teaching internship, when using BDP with a shy, learning-disabled student resulted in the student's new willingness to more actively participate in class discussions. For the past 30 years, this researcher, as a university supervisor of preservice teachers, has used and observed BDP in

hundreds of classrooms. The purpose and methodological approach of case study research matched the informal data collection this researcher has done for years. The goal was to formally study the strategy to give delayed, indirect, embedded praise a name and perhaps establish it as a solid, research-based strategy for classroom teachers.

Yin (2009) warned of some prejudices against case study method: lack of rigor, researcher bias, assumptions of generalizability, and errors and inconsistencies in procedures and analysis of data. As an initial foray into "officially" studying the effects of BDP in the classroom, mistakes were made and are noted in the Discussion section. A case study approach was still the best choice since the plan was to collect data via observations, to identify how and why BDP was used and its immediate and lasting effects on students, and interviews with preservice teachers, to gain the perspectives of preservice teachers who are more likely to experiment with various strategies as they hone their skills in the classroom.

Research Questions

The primary questions posed for this study were:

1. What experiences and perceptions do preservice teachers have in using BDP as a method for increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior?

2. In what ways do preservice teachers perceive BDP—delayed, indirect, embedded praise—as having a different purpose and effect on students than immediate, direct praise?

3. What are any negative effects preservice teachers experience from using BDP?

Context of the Study

Observations and data collection occurred in three public schools in Florida in which three preservice teachers from the same university were assigned for their final internships: high

school (ninth grade) English classroom, middle school (sixth grade) math classroom, and elementary school (fifth grade) classroom. The schools were in the same county/school district and located within four miles of each other. The student demographics of each class varied widely, and percentages were based on visual observation only. The high school class consisted of 40% white, 35.6% black, and 24.4% Hispanic. The middle school class consisted of 31% white, 24.4% black, and 43.9% Hispanic. The fifth-grade class consisted of 16.7% white, 45.2% black, 33.3% Hispanic, and 4.8% Asian students. The classroom teachers in the middle school and fifth grade classrooms described the student population as "rough" or "from rough homes," and a few students in each of these two classrooms had either been suspended or put in in-school suspension for fighting or theft.

Participants

Three preservice teachers from the same university who were in their final, semester-long internship in K-12 classrooms were identified by two professors as strong candidates for participation in this case study because of their confidence in teaching and because the schools in which they taught represented a variety of grade levels and student demographics. All three preservice teachers agreed to participate, and each signed a consent form (Appendix A). They were aware they could leave the study at any time, although none did. The preservice teachers were initially told only that the purpose of the study was related to effective methods in teaching and classroom management. The participants, all Caucasian women in their early twenties, were identified by self-chosen pseudonyms; "Kathryn" was teaching in a high school (ninth grade) English class, "Dawn" was teaching in a middle school (sixth grade) math class, and "Ruth" was teaching in an elementary (fifth grade) class.

Measures for Ethical Protection

The procedures used in data collection for this dissertation were approved by Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board. The preservice teachers in this study volunteered to participate. The consent form they signed assured them that their participation would have no impact on their university grade, and they were free to withdraw from the project at any time without consequence. The research participants chose pseudonyms, and the teachers and students associated with the participants either remained anonymous or were referred to by pseudonyms. The schools' names and locations were not included anywhere in the study. All data, including handwritten notes on the original BDP Observation Sheets, identified people and places using only pseudonyms or initials. Paper versions of the raw data from the observation sheets were destroyed after they were transferred to electronic versions. The recorded interviews were transcribed, and the original recordings were deleted from the researcher's cell phone. All written data were stored on a single flash drive, and the flash drive has been put in a secure, locked location and will be destroyed in five years.

Role of the Researcher

This researcher has nearly 30 years' experience in education, teaching at both the middle school and college levels. Over the past seventeen years, this researcher has worked as university supervisor to nearly 400 preservice teachers, observing in classrooms in every subject area and at every grade level. Although there have been no studies on BDP, many of the observed preservice teachers have used BDP naturally or incorporated it once they learned about it from this researcher. The preservice teachers who participated in this study were not under this researcher's supervision, nor had they ever met this researcher prior to this study. During the observations, this researcher assumed the role of "nonparticipant/observer as participant"

(Creswell, 2013, p. 167), sitting in the classroom near enough to the preservice teacher to hear and see student interactions without interfering. During the interviews, this observer asked a predetermined set of six questions but occasionally asked additional questions, added comments, or provided insights on the personal experiences using or observing BDP.

Yin (2009) listed required skills for the case study researcher: ask good questions, be a good listener, be adaptable to changes in situations, have a firm understanding on the topic being studied, and remain unbiased to preconceived notions and open to possible contradictory findings. Each of these skills was addressed by the formulation of key questions related to BDP before participants for the study were chosen and this researcher responding to participants' interview answers with comments or additional questions for clarification. In addition, the participants reviewed the transcripts of the interviews to ensure the content was correct. Over fifty scholarly articles and books on praise, teaching, classroom management, motivation, and workplace dynamics were to set a solid foundation of understanding the use and effects of praise. Throughout the review of literature, the observations, and interviews with the three preservice teachers who participated in this study, this researcher welcomed learning from research and results that expanded and sometimes contradicted my personal understanding and existing perceptions of praise and BDP. Despite successes using BDP during this researcher's own preservice internship, data collected during this study provided evidence of the difficulty inexperienced teachers can have in learning how and when to incorporate BDP, as compared to more immediate general and behavior-specific praise.

Methods to Address Validity, Reliability, and Assumptions of Generalizability

Throughout the data collection and analysis, procedures were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Yin (2009) recommended the following three principles of data

collection: triangulate multiple sources of evidence, collect and organize all data, and maintain a "chain of evidence" (p. 122). For this study, data from BDP Observation Sheet (Appendix F), six interview transcripts (Appendices G to L), and the focus group transcript (Appendix M) were analyzed for common themes, anomalies, and preservice teacher perceptions and comments that concurred or diverged from the review of the literature or this researcher's experiences with BDP.

To remain unbiased and refrain from influencing the preservice teachers' decision-making in using BDP, I completed classroom observations as "an outsider of the group under study…recording data without direct involvement with activity or people" (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). Interview and focus group questions were determined prior to meeting with the preservice teachers (Appendices C and D), and additional questions were asked only for clarification, deeper understanding, or as a follow-up to responses given. I followed Creswell's guidelines for performing interviews, and I created classroom maps, on which students were labeled by gender and seat number. Throughout the interviews and by having participants review and approve the transcripts, I implemented Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009, as cited in Creswell, 2013) collaborative interview approach, which encourages "equality in questioning, interpreting, and reporting" (p. 173).

I informed the preservice teachers of my own experiences with BDP as a teacher and intern supervisor, and I provided supportive comments as they voiced their concerns with using BDP and regarding classroom management in general. Once the seven interviews were transcribed, they were sent to the preservice teachers to check for accuracy. Throughout the study, I established a tone of openness, honesty, and collegiality, working with the preservice

teachers in understanding BDP as a distinct type of praise and evaluating its effects, including any negative aspects they encountered or I observed.

Creswell (2013) commented on validation in qualitative research, saying that "the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study [that] all add to the value or accuracy of a study" (p. 250). I have informally observed preservice teachers' use of BDP over the past three decades, and I documented it as a distinct type of praise within my anecdotal records because I saw how it often resulted in increased student engagement. Because of the apparent lack of research on praise that is simultaneously delayed, indirect, and embedded, I relied on my own experiences and self-reflection, comments and anecdotes from hundreds of experienced and inexperienced teachers, and my thorough review of literature on praise to establish what Creswell called "substantive validation" (p. 248).

Yin (2009) encouraged the use of a "convergence of evidence" (p. 117), citing an analysis by COSMOS Corporation (1983) that found that "those case studies using multiple sources of evidence were rated more highly, in terms of their overall quality, than those that relied on only single sources of information" (p. 117). I addressed validity concerns through triangulation of multiple sources of data, analyzing the content of the observations, individual interviews, and a focus group interview conducted with the three participants.

By conducting research on BDP at all three school levels, I addressed concerns of reliability, as well as assumptions of generalizability, with evidence that the preservice teachers in this study shared many common experiences and perceptions, regardless of the grade level of their class. The participants did not discuss their perceptions of BDP with each other until the focus group interview, which took place after all individual observations and interviews were

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completed; their comments and viewpoints were based on their own experiences within their classrooms and with their students. Evidence from the transcripts suggests the results are reliable and generalizable due to the fact that the three participants expressed similar positive and negative comments regarding how and when to use BDP, how adding BDP to their repertoire of strategies affected them as novice teachers, and how BDP affected their students. In addition, most of the students at all three grade levels appeared to react similarly to BDP, with smiles and increased engagement in the class.

Not only were the results in this study consistent between the three participants in three different settings, the results were consistent with my findings from observing and collecting informal data from hundreds of preservice teachers over the past three decades: BDP is a type of praise that can get or keep students engaged in learning. BDP is not a cure-all; the participants in this study noted that BDP does not work with some students. BDP is also not meant to replace any other classroom management strategy. Rather, BDP is an additional tool teachers can use to promote a positive classroom environment.

I also followed Creswell's (2009) suggestion to invite peer review by finding individuals who "ask[ed] the hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations" (p. 251). Throughout the study, I worked with my dissertation committee to address any errors, inconsistencies, or evidence of researcher bias, and I gratefully incorporated their feedback and recommendations.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Because this researcher has been observing preservice teachers for nearly two decades and because there is no research on BDP, an original BDP Observation Sheet (Appendix B) was designed to capture relevant data during observations. The sheet included titled columns to

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document student initials, the time of the BDP, short comments regarding what was said and the targeted students' behavior immediately following BDP as well as later on during the class, and a plus or minus sign to indicate whether a targeted student was on task following BDP. For the purposes of this study, this researcher noted "immediate" behavior as the targeted student's behavior immediately after hearing the BDP. "Long-term" behavior was documented starting two minutes post-BDP and continuously monitored and documented through the remainder of the observation period, up to 55 minutes post-BDP. Targeted students who were on-task most or all of the times they were observed were identified as having positive long-term behavior. The participants of the study also provided information about students who had maintained long-term engagement outside of the observation period, including positive behaviors lasting into the following school day.

Six interview questions were based on the research questions for this study and focused on preservice teachers' perceptions of the effects on BDP on student engagement. Participant responses were recorded as part of the data collection. Preservice teachers were provided paper copies of the observation sheet and the list of questions at the end of the baseline observation.

Procedures

Six preservice teachers from the same university in Florida were invited via email to participate in the study, and four of them responded. To maintain consistency in observing regular classroom settings, the one respondent teaching in a fourth-grade inclusion class was not selected to participate. The three chosen participants were then given a consent form and were told both orally and in writing that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, they were assured that participation in the study would have no impact on their university evaluations or final grade. To ensure anonymity of everyone involved in the study,

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the participants chose pseudonyms, and students and teachers were referred to by initials or pseudonyms. The names and locations of the schools were also not identified anywhere in the study.

Arrangements for the baseline observation were made via email; the participants selected the best time and day for observation. During the baseline observation, the researcher completed the BDP Observation Sheet and explained the study to the preservice teacher's cooperating teacher, including the assurance that no student would be identified or identifiable. Immediately following the baseline observation, the researcher and preservice teacher met in a separate area on the school campus. The preservice teacher was informed of the purpose of the study and shown results of the BDP Observation Sheet after the baseline observation. The preservice teacher was provided with a blank BDP Observation Sheet, the interview questions that would be asked during subsequent observations, and a list of sample BDP phrases. The researcher clarified what qualified as "indirect" and/or "embedded" praise and what student behaviors demonstrated successful implementation of BDP. Each participant was encouraged to practice using BDP on days between observations. At the end of the meeting, the next observation date was scheduled.

Each class was observed a total of three times, and the observations occurred during the same time frame each time to ensure the student population would be consistent. Eight of the nine observations occurred within a two-week period just prior to the school district's spring break. The last observation, in the fifth-grade classroom, was postponed until after spring break due to illness of the preservice teacher.

During all three observations, additional information was gathered in the margins of the sheet: number of students overall, number of male and female students, and a breakdown of

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observed ethnicity. Tally marks were used to also document the preservice teacher's use of general praise (GP), specific praise (SP), whole class or small group open-ended opportunities to respond (OTR-W/G), and targeted opportunities to respond (when students were chosen to respond) (OTR). The marked observation sheets were shown to the preservice teacher during each post-observation meeting.

Immediately following the second and third observations, the researcher interviewed the preservice teacher using the predetermined list of questions. The interviews were recorded on the researcher's cell phone and lasted between four and 17 minutes. Often, additional questions arose as part of the conversation to help clarify misunderstandings and ensure BDP was implemented as instructed. The researcher also reminded the participants that BDP should not be the only strategy used nor was the strategy guaranteed to be successful with all students. The interviews were then transcribed and sent to the individual participants for review and correction. All transcripts were approved, with only two typographical errors needing correction, and then copied onto a flash drive. The flash drive contains only content related to this study, holds the only copies of the recorded and transcribed data for five years, and is stored in a locked location.

Data Analysis

The main sources of data for this study were the BDP Observation Sheets completed for each of the nine observations and the transcripts from the six interviews and one focus group interview. Data from the BDP Observation sheets were evaluated individually, by the participants over the three observations, and as a whole with all participants' data combined. The transcripts were printed, and key phrases were highlighted. Notes were made in the margins as themes emerged with participants individually over time and across participants. Perspectives from participants were also compared against research on the use of praise, effective classroom

management, and teacher preparation. Errors and adaptations that occurred during data collection were explained, and the Discussion section includes limitations of the study, an interpretation of what the results suggest regarding the effectiveness of BDP, and recommendations for further research.

IV. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine whether the use of BDP could be positively related to increased student engagement and decreased student misbehavior. The study explored BDP through preservice teachers' perceptions of its use and effectiveness during their final internships. The goal was to determine if BDP was a strategy worth adding to the repertoire of effective methods for engaging students and maintaining classroom management.

Three preservice teachers in their final internships were recommended by their university supervisors to participate in the study due to their success and confidence in teaching that they demonstrated in their prior practicum experiences. The participants represented the three main types of school settings: high school, middle school, and elementary school. Preservice teachers were chosen for this study because they were still learning, honing, and applying their skills in real-world classrooms. Greenberg et al. (2014) and Wilson and Cameron (1996) reported that preservice teachers would benefit from teacher effectiveness research that could enhance their own knowledge and skills. Relevant to the current study, the report by Greenberg et al. (2014) regarding teacher preparation programs noted that "especially out of favor seem to be strategies that impose consistent consequences for misbehavior, foster student engagement, and -- most markedly -- use praise and other means to reinforce positive behavior" (p. ii). In reflecting on his own and others' internship experiences, Miller (2008) suggested that preservice teachers be

given opportunities to examine the way they "approach, reframe, and make sense" (p. 78) of problems they encounter in real classroom scenarios. Goldstein (2003) noted that part of preparing preservice teachers was to help them to better understand their own preconceived beliefs about teaching, how students learn, and the classroom environment as they "establish a professional sense of self" (p. 121).

Methods of Data Collection

The primary data collected were from BDP Observation Sheets, individual interviews after observations, and a focus group interview with all participants two weeks after all observations were completed. The preservice teachers were observed three times over a span of four weeks. High school English preservice teacher, "Kathryn," was observed during the same 49-minute class, and middle school math preservice teacher, "Dawn," was observed during the same 50-minute class. The time frame for the observations of elementary school preservice teacher, "Ruth," varied due to school scheduling on the days the observations took place, but the same group of students were observed each time. The baseline observation in the fifth grade classroom lasted 90 minutes of the regular 120-minute Language Arts block, the first observation of BDP use was 119 minutes, and the second observation of BDP use was 26 minutes.

Following each baseline observation, I met with the preservice teacher to explain the study and share the data I had collected on the BDP Observation Sheet. I used tally marks to document the preservice teacher's current use of general, specific, and backdoor praise as well as how often their students had opportunities to respond to questions, either via an open format or by the preservice teacher calling on specific students. During the baseline observations, Ruth was the only preservice teacher to use BDP, and she did so twice. In the post-baseline observation meeting, the preservice teachers received a paper providing examples of BDP

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phrases (Appendix C), and I explained how, when, and with whom to use BDP. The preservice teachers were provided the interview questions that would be asked at the next observation, and I encouraged them to ask questions during the meeting and to practice using BDP prior to the next observation.

I met with the preservice teacher following each of the two BDP observations. During the meeting, I shared with the preservice teacher that day's data collected on the BDP Observation Sheet and recorded the preservice teacher's responses to six pre-determined interview questions. The questions focused on the preservice teachers' perceptions about using BDP as a method of student engagement and/or classroom management. They were asked to explain why and how they used BDP, what they observed regarding students receiving BDP, situations in or students with which they felt BDP would not work, the length of time the effects of BDP lasted, and how long they felt BDP should be used after observing a positive student comment or behavior. In a few cases, I asked additional or follow-up questions to gather more information or clarify my understanding of the preservice teacher's perceptions about what occurred during the observation.

After all observations and individual interviews were completed, the three preservice teachers participated in a focus group, which was also recorded, transcribed, and sent to the preservice teachers for validating. Questions during the focus group addressed long-term effects of using BDP on the preservice teachers and their students. The preservice teachers were asked if they were still using BDP to any extent as part of their repertoire of strategies for student engagement and/or classroom management, whether they had altered how they use BDP to work more effectively for their teaching situation and students, and whether they felt their use of negative comments and reprimands had decreased since incorporating BDP.

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I transcribed all seven interviews and sent them to the individual participants for validity purposes, to verify that the data collected was the verbal information presented. Once returned, the transcripts and recordings were saved to a flash drive that is stored in a location that will remain locked for five years. All other copies of the recordings and transcripts were destroyed in accordance with IRB requirements.

The Findings

The data collected from the BDP Observation Sheets indicated the number of times BDP was used as well as the gender and seat location number of students who received BDP (Appendix F). On the individual observation sheets, I noted the time of the BDP, the gender and seat number of the targeted student, the targeted student's immediate reaction (designated by a plus or minus sign or a zero and a comment), and the post-BDP behavior with the number of minutes passed. Targeted students were monitored for the remainder of the observation, with most receiving two to four notations documenting their behavior anywhere from two minutes to 55 minutes after receiving a BDP.

In five instances, a single student received more than one BDP during a class period or over the two observations, but each incident was treated as an individual event. In Dawn's class, the 13 BDPs were distributed to eight students, but the individual long-term behavior (lasting at least five minutes post-BDP) for students receiving more than one BDP was individually consistent: student M4 was observed as off-task 17 minutes after the first BDP and 15 minutes after the second BDP; student M24 remained engaged after all three BDPs; and student M8, who received one BDP in the first observation and two BDPs in the second observation, was on-task each time he was observed post-BDP. In Ruth's class, two students each received two BDPs and were observed on-task for the remainder of the class each time.

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BDP was used the least by Kathryn in the high school classroom, twice in the first observation and once in the second, but the targeted students remained engaged throughout the class period. Dawn in the sixth-grade math class and Ruth in the elementary class used a total of BDP 13 and 12 times, respectively. In the middle school math class, three targeted students during the first observation and two targeted students during the second observation became off-task when observed over the remainder of the class period, while four targeted students in each observation remained on-task for most or all of the class period post-BDP. All of the targeted students in the fifth grade classroom were noted as being engaged 75% or more of the time they were observed following BDP.

During the first observation, Kathryn told the class that she noticed one group of three students had prepared references for their presentation prior to the day's class. One of the females in the group immediately smiled and held up a "peace sign" to the rest of the class. When that same group was mentioned again, the same female "high-fived" another female member of the group. For the remainder of that class period, members of that group stayed on task, and Kathryn noted in the interview afterward that the female who responded both times to the BDP had "been greeting me a lot more and [was] more positive overall" although prior to that day, the student had been "very quiet or goofy."

In Kathryn's second observation, she used BDP only to one female due to the lack of opportunity with the day's lesson. The BDP was observed as effective; although the targeted student was already on task, she remained engaged throughout the lesson. Kathryn had noted in both interviews her concern that BDP, like any form of praise, could have negative results if targeted students overreacted, were embarrassed at the recognition, or stopped working to avoid attention. For the two observations in which BDP was used, however, students reacted

positively. Kathryn also stated that she felt students appeared to like this form of praise and seemed to become more engaged, possibly in the hope they would also receive praise for their efforts.

During the first observation in Dawn's classroom, the students were determining area of various shapes. All of the targeted students were male, including one whom I noticed during the baseline observation because he did not participate or take notes, despite Dawn's directions on two occasions to do so. In the first BDP observation, Dawn saw him working on a problem and that his answer was correct. As she went over the problem with the class, she embedded a comment about how he had worked the problem, and the student's reaction was immediate: He sat up straighter in his chair and worked quickly on the next four problems, trying to be the first to finish. He would flap his paper in the air and say, "That's the answer I got!" and "See?" and "I know the next answer!" I also observed him helping the student sitting next to him, and he raised his hand for help for a problem he was not sure about. Each of the seven times I observed him over 35 minutes, during which he received two more BDPs, he was actively engaged in the lesson. Another student also remained on-task 20 minutes past the BDP he received. Of the two other students who received three BDPs total, one was off-task within three minutes. Dawn reported this student is generally not on task, gets out of his seat often, and sometimes leaves the room without permission. The other student stayed on task for ten minutes after his first BDP and four minutes after his second BDP.

In Dawn's second BDP observation, the last student noted above received two BDPs and remained engaged for the remaining 30 minutes of class. One student smiled when he received a BDP, and he was engaged throughout the class, despite sitting near students who were off-task. Three females received BDP during the class period; the first student was observed as on-

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task at least 12 minutes post-BDP, and the second student was partially participating but was considered off-task since she called out often and made a remark about wanting to fight a student in another class. When I asked Dawn about this student's active behavior in the interview, Dawn said, "She's a mover and a shaker!" Dawn told me that the third female who received BDP struggles with math and is often off-task, the latter of which I also noticed. Dawn worked with this student one-on-one prior to the BDP, hoping the BDP would work, but the student was caught off-guard and was unable to answer correctly, despite having the answer on her paper. The student did pay attention to the lesson immediately following the BDP, however, watching the examples on the screen, and she stayed on-task up to ten minutes post-BDP. Between the two BDP observations, long-term monitoring showed that eight students in Dawn's class remained on task each time they were observed post-BDP, and five students were observed being disruptive or off-task at least once in the two or three times their behavior was noted.

The long-term positive effects of BDP were the most lasting and noticeable in Ruth's fifth grade classroom. In the first observation, a female targeted student, "Amy," smiled when she received a BDP nine minutes into the observation, and she stayed engaged throughout the 90-minute class. Ruth explained in the interview that Amy struggles to stay on task, so her on-task behavior that day was "huge" for her. "I think that BDP led her to have a better day today than she usually does because she heard, 'Okay, we can start out the day positive and we can end it positive.'" Three other students, two females and one male, also responded positively to the BDP they received, and all stayed on-task throughout the class period, up to 45 minutes post-BDP. One boy, "Randy," stayed engaged only two minutes post-BDP and was off-task and belligerent within five minutes of receiving BDP. In the interview following the observation,

Ruth said that Randy sometimes responds to encouragement, but "some days Randy could [sic] care less what you say to him, good or bad." She felt that, although she sees most of her students responding positively to BDP, she was not sure BDP would work as effectively on students like Randy.

Ruth used seven BDPs on six students during the second observation, including Amy (mentioned in the first observation). Three of the students, two females and a male, smiled upon receiving the BDP. All but two students remained on task and engaged throughout the observation period; two students were briefly off-task nine minutes after BDP, when they teased each other between reading activities, but they were both on task again 13 and 15 minutes post-BDP. Ruth explained in the interview that the two students briefly off-task "like each other" and she has to monitor their behavior regularly. Ruth also shared in the interview the positive effect BDP had on a student the previous day. "Nick" has difficulty staying on task, but upon receiving BDP, "he just lit up and for the rest of the class he was on task." Ruth said Nick is on a behavior plan with a number system ranging from five, being the best, to one. "He got a four that day, which is very good for him. Most of the time he earns twos or threes."

Overall tabulation of BDP use for the six observations concluded that all 28 incidents of BDP resulted in targeted students being engaged immediately following. Long-term results indicated that targeted students remained engaged in 23 of the 28 incidents. The five incidents of long-term off-task behavior following BDP involved four students who were all in Dawn's class.

The Research Questions

The structured interview questions were based on the three central research questions of the study; they were also submitted with the IRB application to be sure they met requirements for

research involving human subjects. The questions were worded to be open-ended and avoid yes-no responses. In a few instances during the interviews, some questions were repeated or rephrased to help the participants better understand what was being asked. The participants responded to the pre-determined questions as well as any additional questions that were prompted by a response.

Research Question 1: What experiences and perceptions do preservice teachers have in using BDP as a method for increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior?

Kathryn noted that although she had not gotten to use BDP very much yet, when she did, she noticed her students "all seemed to switch to almost like a positive mode." She admitted a concern that high school students might tease peers who received BDP, but instead she had only seen positive reactions. Students seemed to be encouraged by the praise and willing to work harder to continue receiving it. Kathryn noticed that when she used BDP with a small group of students, other students in the class observed what that specific group was doing and began asking more questions related to what the group had been praised for, as though they were also trying to earn that praise. She said that using BDP can gain the attention of the entire class and result in students working harder to be the recipients of the praise. Each time she used BDP, she "noticed the impact" in that other students became more focused and engaged on the work they were doing. One long-term effect of BDP that Kathryn noticed was that one of the female students who received BDP during the first observation "has been greeting me a lot more and [was] more positive overall."

Dawn's observations of her students' immediate response to BDP were similar to Kathryn's. She said her students were "listening more because they were listening for me to say their names." Dawn admitted her concern that some students might be embarrassed because they

are shy, but she noticed most students sitting up more when their own or someone else's name was said in a positive way via BDP. She felt that middle school students "pay attention more because they want you to call their name; they want to hear their name in front of the class and be like, 'Yeah, I answered that question. That was me.'" Dawn said she had tried using BDP in other classes as well, with mixed results. She said using BDP did not work as well in one class because "they don't respect me because I'm not their teacher." Some students in that class overreacted and either became more off-task or stopped working when publicly praised. When asked about how she would use BDP, she said she would be more likely to use it for student engagement and less so for classroom management. Overall, she said she liked using BDP, felt it has a positive effect on most students, including some who surprised her, and will incorporate it into her repertoire of engagement strategies when she becomes a teacher.

Ruth mentioned often in her two interviews wanting to "be more intentional" about using BDP. This type of praise was a new strategy "that no one's ever really taught me," and she had "so many things going through your mind to remember" as a preservice teacher, but she felt BDP was a "really nice tool to have." She said she saw positive results with many of her students, and she would use it for both student engagement and classroom management. Ruth stated that BDP was a positive method of regaining students' attention, and the more she used BDP, the more her students seemed to "crave" it.

Research Question 2: In what ways do preservice teachers perceive BDP—delayed, indirect, embedded praise—as having a different purpose and effect on students than immediate, direct praise?

All three participants in the study noted that students were often surprised to hear their names embedded in positive comments to the class. In Dawn's class, BDP had a lasting effect

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(through the end of the class period) with a few students who normally did not participate. The embedded praise may have been better received by some students who do not like or want specific praise. Ruth felt that BDP had directly resulted in two of her usually off-task students staying engaged for an entire day. In addition, Dawn and Ruth agreed that they found themselves using fewer negative statements or reprimands because they were focused on using BDP to get and keep students on task and engaged. They commented that by trying to intentionally find opportunities to use BDP, they were more cognizant of students' positive comments and behaviors that they otherwise might not have noticed. All three preservice teachers concurred that general and specific praise, as well as reprimands for off-task behavior, were easier to use since these types of praise were behavior-specific. Overall, however, they saw the use of BDP as an effective additional tool to use for engaging students in learning.

Research Question 3: What are any negative effects preservice teachers experience from using BDP?

The participants all mentioned in their interviews that BDP, like any form of praise, may not be well-received by students who do not want to be singled out, even for positive reasons. As noted by Blaze et al. (2014) and Burnett (2001, as cited in Burnett & Mandel, 2010), anywhere from 17% to 37% of students prefer quiet praise to public praise. Dawn felt that some of the middle school students in her classes do not like public recognition while others "get a little rowdy" at hearing their name said publicly by the teacher. As a result, Dawn chose to praise these students more quietly and directly. Kathryn and Dawn also commented that if any student received a lot of praise, including BDP, others in the class might resent or tease that student. Ruth felt that BDP would not be effective with students who did not care about school

or did not react to positive or negative comments from teachers; she would utilize other strategies to engage those students.

Themes

Once the six interviews and focus group interview were transcribed, I followed Creswell's (2013) guidelines to get "a sense of the whole database" (p. 183). I read through each transcript numerous times and highlighted key words such as "engaged" and "positive" as well as phrases such as "I felt" and "I think" that indicated the preservice teachers' perceptions as they used BDP. I made notes in the margins as I identified potential themes consistent among all three participants. Initially, I found four categories, which I labeled with the letters: A – engagement, B – use of BDP, C – timing, and D – preservice teacher perceptions. I coded the transcripts by writing the letters next to every word or phrase related to a particular category. During additional inductive analysis of participant comments that seemed valuable to this study, I identified, highlighted, and labeled two more categories: E – secondary or "ripple" effects of BDP, and F – positive versus negative teacher comments. In many cases, a preservice teacher's response related to more than one category. For example, Kathryn's comment "…especially today, they were very focused, more than they usually are, and I think that can be from just that positive comment toward them and that feedback" fit into three categories: engagement (A), preservice teachers' perceptions (D), and positive versus negative teacher comments (F). Punctuation such as ellipses and em dashes in the transcripts indicated pauses or interruptions in dialogue. In one instance during the focus group interview, when asked if BDP had affected their confidence with classroom management, the three participants seemed hesitant to respond, and I made a notation "three second pause with no response" in brackets within my dialogue.

After further analysis of the seven transcripts, I confirmed the existence of the six themes and reworded them to better reflect the content of the transcripts: changes in student behavior, using BDP, length of delay in giving BDP, preservice teachers' teaching and use of BDP, secondary effects of BDP, and shifts in types of teacher comments.

Changes in student behavior

All three participants and I noticed immediate positive changes in all 21 students who received a total of 28 BDPs during six observations in this study (see Appendix F). One middle school student and two elementary school students each received two BDPs, and two middle school students each received three BDPs. Overall, the students' immediate response was to engage in the lesson. Students sat up, looked at their teacher, and/or engaged in reading, class discussion, or whole-class assignments for the first two minutes post-BDP.

Students who received BDP were then sporadically observed, starting two minutes post-BDP through to the end of the class period (up to 55 minutes post-BDP), in order to document the long-term effects of BDP (see Appendix F). Positive student behavior through the remainder of the class period was observed in 22 of the 28 incidents. Five of the six negative results occurred in the middle school classroom and involved four students; one student received two BDPs during one class period, but neither resulted in sustained positive behavior. The sixth negative result occurred in the elementary classroom.

The preservice teachers said they had used BDP outside of the observations as well, and in the individual and focus group interviews, all three reported mostly positive changes in students' behavior and engagement. Ruth said one of her students "really thrives off of that encouragement, especially when it's unexpected like that." Dawn noted that she had used BDP with a student who sleeps in her class ("He sleeps, just, all the time."). She was able to get him

to do one problem and then shared his strategy for working out the problem via BDP. When she

collected his paper at the end of class, she saw that he had completed every problem, "and he's

never finished a paper for me in the whole month I've been there. There was work all over the

place [on his paper], and it was just…nice."

Using BDP

The biggest hurdle all three preservice teachers found with BDP was in finding

opportunities to appropriately use it. For Ruth, trying to remember positive student comments or

behavior to mention later was one more task on top of everything else she had to remember to do

as a preservice teacher. She mentioned repeatedly her desire to "be super intentional" in using it

and to make BDP part of her natural teaching behavior. Kathryn's and Dawn's comments were

similar, noting that they felt they would get better at using BDP with practice. Additionally, all

three participants said that, unlike other types of praise, BDP is contingent upon a student's

earlier positive comment or behavior. Students who do not participate or behave appropriately

are unlikely to receive BDP. Kathryn explained that she used BDP in transitioning to new topics

or activities and in reviewing content from previous days, embedding students' previous

comments as she explained new content.

Length of delay in giving BDP

The consensus between the participants was that they used BDP usually within five to ten

minutes after noticing a student's positive comments or behavior. Kathryn felt that incorporating

BDP between classes would be interesting; she would want to see if a BDP to a student not in the

class would reach that student through students talking to each other. Ruth commented that she

had been trying to turn student comments from recess or walking to and from lunch into BDPs

later in the class. Dawn said that some of her students who received BDP often did not

remember what they had done to receive the praise, but they were pleased at the unexpected mention of their name to the entire class.

Preservice teachers' teaching and use of BDP

As noted above under "Using BDP," the three participants were pleased to have a new strategy to use in the classroom but they did not always remember to use it. Each of them was willing to try using BDP with various students and learn from the experience, and all three preservice teachers think they had probably used BDP before this study without realizing it. Kathryn said that BDP was a bit challenging to use because it requires a student's previous comments or behavior to refer to. She noted that she often resorted to using general and specific praise since that was easier and immediately behavior-specific. Because she saw the positive impact of BDP, however, she planned to incorporate it into her teaching in the future. Dawn and Ruth also stated their intent to use BDP in their teaching, and all three preservice teachers felt BDP would become easier and more natural for them to use as they gained experience as teachers.

Secondary effects of BDP

Kathryn was the first to mention the secondary effects of BDP; she said that she saw students asking more questions about a part of their assignment for which a group had received BDP. "They [the students] were like, 'Hey, I need help specifically with citations because you [gave BDP to] that other group on their citations. How do I get mine to that level?'" Dawn and Ruth also noted the "ripple effect" that BDP had on some students, whose behavior improved when they heard other students being praised. Ruth said BDP does not necessarily positively affect every non-targeted student; her student "Randy" often chose belligerence or shut down emotionally, regardless of the type of praise given directly to him or that he observed others

receiving. The more Ruth used BDP, however, the more she saw other students working toward

receiving praise.

Shifts in types of teacher comments

During the baseline observations, I noticed some negative comments from the preservice

teachers in their classroom management. Whether one-on-one to students or vocalized across the

classroom, the preservice teachers reprimanded students for being off-task, calling out, getting

out of their seat without permission, not doing what was asked, or misbehaving in other ways. In

contrast, I observed a noticeable reduction in negative comments during the four observations in

which the participants used BDP. When I asked whether using BDP had changed their use of

negative comments, all three preservice teachers said they felt a difference. Kathryn said she

looked for more of the positives in her students and for opportunities to point out positive

examples of student behavior for others to follow. Dawn responded similarly; she liked

encouraging her students rather than reprimanding them and that BDP helps her do that. "If I

say, 'Hey, you were doing this right earlier' in front of the whole class, then they're like, 'Oh, I

need to keep doing that.'" Ruth said that so many of her students receive no positive comments

from home and that some of them use misbehavior as a method to get attention, even if it is

negative. "It's just so much better to point out a positive than a negative. Nobody wants to hear

how bad they are."

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Evidence of Quality

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As I designed and conducted this study, I focused on ensuring the procedures followed

protocols recommended in Creswell (2013) and Yin (2009). During classroom observations, I

remained a nonparticipant, documenting the preservice teachers' and students' activities and

comments without direct involvement. I followed the interview guide in Creswell's text,

including creating classroom sketches on which I numbered students and noted their gender. To address issues of interview asymmetry, wherein the interviewer controls the interview and the interviewee may hold back information, I followed Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009, as cited in Creswell, 2013) collaborative interview approach. I informed the preservice teachers of my own experiences with BDP as a teacher and intern supervisor, and I provided supportive comments as they voiced their concerns with using BDP and regarding classroom management in general. Once the seven interviews were transcribed, they were sent to the preservice teachers to check for accuracy. Throughout the study, I established a tone of openness, honesty, and collegiality, working with the preservice teachers in understanding BDP as a distinct type of praise and evaluating its effects, including any negative aspects they encountered or I observed.

Creswell (2013) noted the importance of ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research. Yin (2009) encouraged the use of a "convergence of evidence" (p. 117), citing an analysis by COSMOS Corporation (1983) that found that "those case studies using multiple sources of evidence were rated more highly, in terms of their overall quality, than those that relied on only single sources of information" (p. 117). I addressed validity concerns through triangulation of multiple sources of data, analyzing the content of the observations, individual interviews, and a focus group interview conducted with the three participants. By conducting research on BDP at all three school levels, I addressed concerns of reliability, as well as assumptions of generalizability, with evidence that the preservice teachers in this study shared many common experiences and perceptions, regardless of the grade level of their class. In addition, most of the students at all three grade levels appeared to react similarly to BDP, with smiles and increased engagement in the class. I also followed Creswell's (2009) suggestion of inviting peer review, finding an individual who "asks the hard questions about methods,

meanings, and interpretations" (p. 251). Throughout the study, I worked with my dissertation committee to address any errors, inconsistencies, or evidence of researcher bias, and I gratefully incorporated their feedback and recommendations.

V. DISCUSSION

Introduction

Over three decades ago, I gave my first delayed, indirect, embedded praise to Landon, a shy, learning-disabled fifth grade student in my preservice teaching internship. He raised his hand tentatively when I asked for someone to describe what happened when a pot full of spaghetti sauce was put on a burner on high heat. He said that the spaghetti sauce would make the stove top messy because of the heat causing bubbles to "spit" the sauce from the pot. I segued into a lesson on volcanoes, and during my review of content, I told the class how Landon had explained how the heat under the earth was like the heat under the pot on the stove. He smiled widely at my giving him credit for what the class had learned, and from that day forward, Landon raised his hand regularly, no longer shy about participating in class discussions.

Since that incident, I have used delayed, indirect, embedded praise as a middle school teacher and college instructor. As a university supervisor for nearly 400 preservice teachers, I have shared this method of praise, which I named "backdoor praise" since students did not expect it like they did direct and immediate forms of praise. Most teachers who used BDP told me they saw positive effects, including an increase in student engagement, a decrease in misbehavior, and ultimately a more positive classroom environment. While I had experienced and observed the effectiveness of BDP, this type of praise was not a strategy that was included in teacher preparation programs. A review of the literature for this case study confirmed a paucity

of research on praise that is delayed, indirect, embedded in teacher comments. Furthermore, research and reports on praise reviewed for this study overwhelmingly recommended the opposite, claiming that praise was most effective when given immediately and directly to students.

Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of BDP from preservice teachers' perspectives. I chose to work with preservice teachers, as opposed to experienced teachers, because final internships are intended to be a continuation and culmination of teacher preparation programs (Goldstein 2003; Szabo et al., 2002). During their internship, the preservice teachers were given opportunities to hone their skills, apply strategies learned in their education coursework, and determine the most effective methods for their teaching style, student population, and classroom situation.

The three preservice teachers who participated in this study practiced incorporating BDP into their repertoire of engagement and management strategies at the high school, middle school, and elementary school settings. Their perspectives and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of BDP reinforced my previous experiences and perceptions, but some of the preservice teachers' comments shed light on how difficult BDP can be for novice teachers to learn and incorporate. The findings culled from the BDP Observation Sheet and transcripts were examined with regard to the research questions posed for the study as well as existing research on praise in the classroom.

Research Question 1: What experiences and perceptions do preservice teachers have in using BDP as a method for increasing student engagement and decreasing misbehavior?

The three preservice teachers willingly incorporated BDP into their teaching on days they were observed. All three of them said they had also used BDP on other days when they remembered or identified opportunities in which they perceived the delayed praise would be effective. The participants agreed that they would use BDP for student engagement more than as a primary method for classroom management. Each preservice teacher stated individually during post-observation interviews as well as during the focus group that they felt that BDP would not be effective with certain students in their class, and Kathryn and Dawn, both at the secondary level, noted that some students might be embarrassed by public recognition. The consensus, however, was that all three participants had positive experiences using BDP and stated they were planning to incorporate BDP into their repertoire of teaching strategies.

Research Question 2: In what ways do preservice teachers perceive BDP—delayed, indirect, embedded praise—as having a different purpose and effect on students than immediate, direct praise?

The three preservice teachers recognized that the delayed, indirect, and embedded approach to praising students had a different purpose and effect than other forms of praise. Ruth noticed the long-term effect BDP seemed to have on two of her students who normally struggle to stay engaged. The students stayed on task for each of the activities they did in various learning centers for the remainder of the time they were in class. Ruth directly attributed their positive behavior to their receipt of BDP. She also said she planned to be more deliberate about infusing positive comments related to previous student successes she observed or conversations she had with her students. Kathryn had success using BDP as a segue as the students transitioned between lesson activities. She also used BDP in her review of the previous day's content, and she was curious as to whether BDP was shared between students in different

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classes. Dawn tried to use the subtlety of BDP to engage certain students who were often off-task with mixed results; two male students responded by doing work for the remainder of the class period, while a female student was "caught off guard" and did not stay engaged for more than five minutes post-BDP. All three preservice teachers admitted that immediate and direct praise was easier to use because it was in immediate response to student behaviors or comments. In contrast, they said their success in using BDP required them to be intentional about remembering prior student comments or behavior, which was not always easy to do when, as Ruth said, "as an intern you have so many things going through your mind to remember." The participants agreed that using BDP helped them decrease their use of negative comments and reprimands, and they said that using BDP had a positive effect on the classroom environment. Overall, each preservice teacher in the study felt BDP had unique qualities, different from immediate and direct praise, that were effective in engaging students in learning.

Research Question 3: What are any negative effects preservice teachers experience from using BDP?

The common response regarding negative effects of using BDP involved how students received the praise. Kathryn and Dawn, both at the secondary level, worried that some students would either be embarrassed and stop participating or overreact upon hearing their name, and Dawn experienced boisterous behavior from a few students in one class in which she tried using BDP. Dawn admitted, however, that any recognition, including immediate and direct praise, was not well-received by some students. All three preservice teachers recognized that BDP may not work with some students. They each said they often made quick determinations whether to use BDP with students who were disrespectful or, like Randy in Ruth's class, "don't really care either way" about the teacher or about receiving praise.

Preservice teachers can be overwhelmed by all that they are expected to do during the school day (Greenberg et al., 2014; Miller, 2008; Moore, 2003). As the observer and interviewer, I could sense that the participants felt obligated to find opportunities to employ BDP during my observations. Ruth commented about the stress of adding BDP to a daunting list of things to do. All three preservice teachers noted that general and specific praise were easier to use because those types of praise were based on students' current behavior or comments. They understood that identifying opportunities to use BDP—remembering students' previous behavior and comments and then finding ways later on to incorporate praise—takes practice and, as Ruth said many times, "being intentional about it."

The Findings Related to the Literature

Numerous studies have provided evidence supporting the use of praise in the classroom (Blaze et al., 2014; Burnett, 2002; Burnett & Mandel, 2010; Conroy et al., 2009; Dobrinski, 2004; Haydon & Musti-Rao, 2011; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Partin et al., 2010; Trolinder et al., 2004), yet Greenberg et al. (2012) reported on 122 teacher preparation programs that "while three strategies ('rules,' 'routines' and 'misbehavior') are addressed by more than half of teacher preparation programs, two are seldom addressed, including 'praise,' the strategy that is arguably the most strongly supported by decades of psychology research" (p. 13).

Balfanz et al. (2007) suggested that students who are encouraged to participate are more likely to continue participating. Dawn experienced this effect first-hand with some of her sixth grade students, including two males who normally did little to no work or slept in class. Her use of BDP with those students resulted in immediate engagement that lasted through the remainder of the class period. All the students receiving BDP in Ruth's class also remained engaged

throughout the observation. Kathryn reported a positive, friendlier demeanor in one of her BDP recipients days after the praise was given.

The use of BDP aligns with Billingsley's (2016) advice to incorporate "strategies and techniques designed to eliminate the trigger or modify the environment to prevent inappropriate behaviors" (p. 13). Ruth specifically commented that she planned to continue using BDP because of its proactive effects; she felt some of her students stayed on task as a result of receiving "surprise" praise. Similarly, Dawn and Ruth both said that learning about BDP helped them focus more on "finding the positives" in students.

Blaze et al. (2014) reported that 37% of students surveyed preferred quiet praise over public recognition; the percentage was even higher (52%) in research by Burnett and Mandel (2010). The preservice teachers in the current study, particularly Kathryn and Dawn, shared their concerns that some students might be embarrassed by being publicly praised. BDP may address some students' dislike for recognition because the praise is embedded in teacher comments as part of a greater conversation with students. The praise itself is casually given and does not give direct or prolonged attention to the targeted student.

For some students, simply hearing their name within a teacher's positive comments might help raise their self-esteem (Burnett & Mandel, 2010). All three preservice teachers shared stories of their students' positive reactions to BDP. Kathryn said her students seemed to "switch to almost a positive mode" and BDP "provoked them to ask more questions" with the hope of eliciting more praise from their teacher. Dawn noticed many of the students who received BDP sat up and appeared proud to be noticed for doing well in class. In Ruth's class, the students stayed on task longer due to the unexpected praise they received. Deci's (1971) research on motivation theory supported the preservice teachers' personal observations and experiences with

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BDP: "…rewarded behavior (especially if rewarded intermittently) persists even after the rewards are removed" (p. 114). Deci and Ryan (2008) explained that intrinsic motivation "involves doing a behavior because the activity itself is interesting and spontaneously satisfying" (p. 15). In addition, the authors posited that non-contingent and random rewards did not interfere with intrinsic motivation because the rewards were not expected or dependent on a specific behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Kathryn's comment that her high school students appeared to participate more after hearing their own or others' names in BDP related well to Fretz's (2015) conclusion that students who received encouraging comments from their teachers felt more competent in the work they were doing. While BDP can reinforce student participation, it can also help decrease off-task behavior because students who have heard their name are more engaged in the lesson. Middleton and Toluk (1999) noted that "it is clear there are no unmotivated students. Students constantly evaluate the requirements for participation in activities and choose to either engage or to find some other activity that better takes up their time" (p. 103). Dawn and Ruth used BDP with specific students to keep them on task, and Dawn's BDP toward the "sleeper" in her class resulted in the student completing all of his work for the first time in the month she had been in the class.

Coloroso (1984) explained that every person wants to feel successful at something. Some students who struggle academically will seek success and attention by being the "best" at misbehaving or getting into trouble. Teachers often react by giving misbehaving students negative attention, not realizing they are perpetuating the students' negative behavior. The preservice teachers in this study admitted their difficulty in "finding something good" certain

students had done that could later become BDP, but they said they would continue to try because they saw the positive effects of BDP.

Recommendations for Further Research

The three participants in this study experienced positive results from using BDP with their students. Each of them said they likely used BDP without realizing it but were pleased to have "an extra tool" for teaching that, as Ruth said, "no one's really taught me to use." The cooperating teachers working with the preservice teachers also agreed that BDP was an effective strategy, and I have seen its positive effects for over three decades.

The current study was a starting point from which further research is warranted. Kathryn, Dawn, and Ruth were exemplary preservice teachers who were well-able to add BDP into their daily routine. Having supervised hundreds of preservice teachers, I know that many of them would not be as willing to participate in this type of study, especially during an internship. Because BDP is not included as a strategy in teacher preparation programs, future field studies might best involve experienced teachers who are already confident and effective in their teaching and classroom management. If conducting another study with preservice teachers, research-based training on BDP should be provided in teacher preparation coursework prior to practicum or student teaching placements.

One discovery made during the current study was the noticeable number of negative comments and reprimands made by the preservice teachers during the baseline observations and the near absence of either during the observations during with they used BDP. Research by Burnett (2002) and Burnett and Mandel (2010) indicated students' positive relationship with their teacher was positively correlated with their perceptions of a pleasant classroom

environment. Additional BDP research should investigate whether the conscious and intentional use of BDP affects teachers' or preservice teachers' use of negative comments and reprimands.

There appears to be little to no research on praise that is simultaneously delayed, indirect, and embedded in teacher comments. In contrast, I found numerous studies and scholarly articles exist on teacher preparation and classroom management. Given the report by Greenberg et al. (2014) that noted the lack of attention to the positive effects of praise in the classroom, perhaps research on BDP will re-emphasize and reintroduce the benefits of all types of praise into teacher preparation programs and K-12 classrooms.

Further investigations on the effects of BDP should include both quantitative and qualitative research. Greenberg et al. (2014) noted the lack of attention toward including praise as an effective strategy in teacher preparation programs. I believe a quantitative study of negative and positive teacher comments before and after training on using BDP, as well as tracking teachers' use of general and specific praise, would provide evidence for the need to include praise in teacher preparation programs. Adaptations of the BDP Observation Sheet could be made to meet the needs of the qualitative researchers; the column titled "Behavior Pre-BDP" could be changed to "BDP Comment" to investigate whether students respond differently to teacher comments related to academic effort versus behavior.

In my review of the literature, only the studies by Dobrinski (2004) and Trolinder et al. (2004) explored the effects of delayed praise. BDP research on a larger scale would likely reinforce the authors' work and test the generalizability of their findings on delayed praise, just one of the characteristics of BDP. Burnett (2002) and Burnett and Mandel (2002) included student interviews in studies on teacher praise and feedback; further study of BDP could also be expanded to include interviews with students who received BDP. In addition, because BDP is

meant to engage students in learning, a semester- or year-long study of classrooms in which BDP is used could provide evidence linking BDP to students' academic improvements.

The current study was conducted in general education classrooms, but researchers suggest students with learning disabilities and/or behavioral disorders receive more negative than positive feedback from teachers (Balfanz et al., 2007; Billingsley, 2016; Conroy et al., 2009; Lewis et al., 2004; Marchant & Anderson, 2012; Partin et al., 2010; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001b; Van Acker, 1996). Field studies of BDP use in exceptional education classrooms may result in positive changes in teachers' approaches to discipline and students' feelings of self-worth and willingness to engage in learning.

Summary

I have been observing and informally documenting the positive effects of BDP for nearly three decades. I have seen students excited to participate in lessons and answering questions because they received BDP; I have seen preservice teachers, including those in this study, experience a reduction in use of negative comments as they intentionally incorporated BDP. All types of praise—immediate and behavior-specific as well as BDP—can have a positive impact on students and their motivation to learn. Greenberg et al. (2014) identified the five most important strategies preservice teachers should learn in their teacher preparation programs: how to establish rules, how to determine and set routines, how to use praise, how to impose consequences for misbehavior, and how to engage students in the learning process. Evidence presented in this study suggests that BDP is an effective strategy that may be worth incorporating into teacher preparation programs. Further study is warranted to establish generalizability of the findings and add to the bodies of research on praise, classroom management, methods for effective student engagement, and teacher preparation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

The College of Education at Southeastern University supports the practice of protection of human participants in research. Provided below is information about the study that will help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. If you agree to participate, please be aware that you are free to withdraw at any point throughout the duration of the study without any penalty. Your participation, or decision not to, will not affect your grade during your internship. Furthermore, this study and its results will have no impact on your grade during your internship.

In this study, you will be observed three times teaching a regular lesson in your internship classroom and interviewed after each observation. All information you provide will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name, your school's or teacher's name, or Southeastern University. If for any reason during this study you do not feel comfortable, you may withdraw as a participant and your information will be discarded. Your participation in this study will require approximately 45 minutes after each lesson observation and a one-hour focus group interview after all participant observations are complete, for a total time commitment of approximately 3 ½ hours over a three week period. When this study is complete, you will be provided with the results of the experiment if you request them, and you will be free to ask any questions. If you have any further questions concerning this study please feel free to contact us through phone or email: Cindy Campbell at cjcampbell@seu.edu or (813) 760-6926 or Dr. Janet Deck at jldeck@seu.edu (863) 667-5737. Please indicate with your signature on the space below that you understand your rights and agree to participate in the experiment.

Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary. All information will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any research findings.

_____   _____
           Signature of Participant   Cindy Campbell, Investigator

_____   _____
             Name of Participant   Dr. Janet Deck, Professor

Appendix B

BDP Observation Sheet

Preservice Teacher: _____ Date & Time: _____

Time	Student Initial, Gender, Seat Number	Behavior Pre-BDP	Immediate Behavior Post-BDP + Positive 0 No Change - Negative	Lasting Behavior Post-BDP (and minutes since BDP) + Positive 0 No Change - Negative

Appendix C

<u>Examples of Backdoor Praise (BDP)</u>

BDP is praise that is
        DELAYED by at least a few minutes,
        UNEXPECTED by the student named,
        INDIRECT, usually said to the whole class, and
        INCORPORATED into the teacher's dialogue while teaching or reviewing content.

"Remember how <u>Ian</u> reworked the problem on the side to confirm his answer? You'll want to do that in these next problems."

"<u>Adam</u>'s example from the homework reinforces what we're talking about here."

"<u>Kristin</u> brought up a good point yesterday when we discussed our predictions for the story."

"Think about <u>Kyle</u>'s answer to number 7 as you work on number 15."

"The step-by-step process <u>Bryant</u> did is a good way to remember how to do this."

"<u>Donavan</u> was on target with his response. What can we add to that?"

"Let's revisit how <u>Kyra</u> approached the situation, because I think she's on the right track here."

The key to BDP is to think about students who tend to get off task or misbehave. "Catch" them doing something **academically** good, and then embed praise for those good things into later comments. BDP is a way to casually <u>yet intentionally</u> engage or re-engage students through content-focused compliments embedded in teacher dialogue.

Appendix D

Post-Observation Interview Questions

1. To what extent do you feel BDP works as a method of classroom management?
2. How do you decide when to use general or specific praise versus BDP?
3. How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP?
4. Describe situations or students with which it does not work.
5. How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP?
6. What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comment/behavior and your use of BDP?

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Now that it's been a few weeks since your observations, to what extent are you using BDP as part of your repertoire of engaging students and for classroom management?
2. To what extent has using BDP affected your confidence with classroom management?
3. To what extent has using BDP affected your use of reprimands?
4. Have you "tweaked" the strategy to work better for you, and, if so, how?
5. To what extent have you tried to use it with students you weren't sure would be affected by it?
6. Some studies on praise incorporate a withdrawal period and then reintroduction of a strategy. Have you tried this (whether consciously or not) and, if so, what results have you seen?
7. Each of you works in a different school level – high school, middle school, and elementary. What do you think you have to do to tweak BDP to make it effective with your students?

Appendix F

BDP Observation Sheet Totals

PST		GP	SP	OTR Group	OTR Single	BDP	Immediate (Short-term) Effect	Long-term Effect	Totals
Kathryn HS	Baseline	5	0	0	2	0	---	---	---
	Obs. #1	5	0	0	0	2	F3+ F6+	2+, 15+ 4+, 15+	ST: 2+, 0- LT: 2+, 0-
	Obs. #2	6	2	11	11	1	F11+	25+	ST: 1+, 0- LT: 1+, 0-
							T= 3+, 0-	T= 3+, 0-	
Dawn MS	Baseline	15	0	20	20	0	---	---	---
	Obs. #1	24	4	19	8	7	M1+ M4+ M4+ M8+ M24+ M24+ M24+	3+, 4-, 6- 10+, 17-, 25- 4+, 15-, 19- 5+, 18+, 20+ 18+, 22+ 3+, 4+, 6+ 2+, 4+	ST: 7+, 0- LT: 4+, 3-
	Obs. #2	22	7	15	8	6	F3+ F9+ F12+ M8+ M8+ M15+	8+, 12+ 7-, 8+, 12- 2-, 7- 4+, 8+ 14+ 5+, 10+	ST: 6+, 0- LT: 4+, 2-
							T= 13+, 0-	T= 8+, 5-	
Ruth ES	Baseline	27	8	20	36	2	(F6+) (F8-)	(1+, 5-, 15+) (2-, 5-, 7-)	(ST: 1+, 1-) (LT: 1+, 1-)
	Obs. #1	18	16	16	22	5	F4+ F13+ F20+ M11+ M15+	2+, 5+ 2+, 50+ 40+, 45+ 2+, 5- 18+	ST: 5+, 0- LT: 4+, 1-
	Obs. #2	17	28	33	16	7	F3+ F3+ F11+ F13+ F18+ F21+ M23+	3+, 6+, 15+ 3+, 5+, 12+ 3+, 8+, 15+ 7+, 15+, 55+ 3+, 5+, 9-, 13+ 6+, 15+ 3+, 5+, 9-, 15+	ST: 7+, 0- LT: 7+, 0-
							T= 12+, 0-	T= 12+, 0-	
All PSTs									ST: 28+, 0- LT: 22+, 6-

Notes: GP = General Praise; SP = Specific Praise; OTR-Group = Opportunities to respond, call-outs allowed; OTR-Single = Opportunities to respond, specific students selected to answer; BDP = Backdoor Praise. In Immediate/Short-term Effects column, students were identified by F or M (Female or Male) and their seat number. In the Long-term Effects column, numbers indicate minutes since BDP was given. The + or – sign indicates whether the student was observed to be on-task (+) or off-task (-). In the Totals column are the on- and off-task totals for short-term (ST) and long-term (LT). Ruth's Baseline BDP use was not included in her totals or the grand total.

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #1

Interviewee: "Kathryn"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 9:54 a.m. to 10:01 a.m.

Date: March 9, 2017

Place: High School X

Kathryn is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a ninth grade English classroom in a high school in Florida. She was observed on March 6, 2017, to gather baseline data on her use of "backdoor praise." The following transcript is from the interview conducted on March 9, 2017, after the second observation, in which she was observed using BDP.

CC – This is Cindy Campbell, and I'm interviewing Kathryn, who teaches high school English, 9th grade. <u>Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP works as a method of classroom management?</u> (0:14)

Kathryn – What I noticed today specifically—I haven't gotten to use it very much yet, but I'm still trying to incorporate it. But I noticed that, especially in this class, they can get particularly rowdy and kind of pick on each other, but once I called out [using BDP] a group specifically for something, they all seemed to switch to almost like a positive mode of, like, "Oh, she noticed something *good* about them, so let's focus because now we have something to work for," or, "She pointed something out, so let's work *for* that with her." (0:45)

CC – <u>Q2: How do you decide when to use general or specific praise versus BDP?</u> (0:51)

Kathryn – I'm still trying to figure out how to do that at this point, and it might be that I need a little bit more practice to figure it out. I think that general or specific praise, I kind of do that more one-on-one, like, "Hey, I noticed you did this. That's pretty good." Kind of as an encouragement, and then BDP I've used more, especially today, as a whole class, singling out a group of students or one student to kind of 'make it known,' I guess. So, general praise might be more for the specific student for the one-on-one, then BDP, kind of for, back to the first question, kind of as that classroom management, to bring that focus in. (1:29)

CC – <u>Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP?</u> (1:36)

Kathryn – One thing I've learned is that students are pretty unpredictable, especially high schoolers, more than I thought they would be. So, I perceived it going one of two ways. Either they're very encouraging and "Oh, yeah. It's good that she noticed that." Or they're kind of

picking on the students because they got called out [with BDP], but it seemed to go more to the positive side, from what I've seen so far, and kind of like a pat on the back. (2:03)

CC – Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work. (2:07)

Kathryn – I think particularly that there are a couple of students that they just might not like to be called out, and it might not work for them. They might be too embarrassed by it, or it might kind of thrive that attention-seeking, and they might continue the behavior I was trying to extinguish almost, so it might not work in those situations as well. (2:32)

CC – I'm going to ask a follow-up question that's not on the list. Would you be thinking of maybe trying [BDP] with one of those students between now and the next time I see you so that we can talk about that? (2:43)

Kathryn – I think that I could. I think that there's a particular student that I've seen behavior issues with that I could try that on over the next week and see how that works, see if it thrives that student and makes him more 'out there' and attention-seeking, or if he kind of focuses more and gets more on task. (3:03)

CC – Good. Thank you. Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP? (3:09)

Kathryn – From what I noticed today specifically, because I think that this is the most I've used it, tried to incorporate it, it seemed they were overall on task more, and I had to ask them to focus less [often]. Usually, this class can be kind of hyper and lose focus pretty easily, and today it was like, "Hey, guys, we're going to move on." And once I pointed out a group that was on task and did something well, everybody else kind of focused with them, and they were engaged in what we were doing. (3:41)

CC – And I will interject that the groups that I saw—I saw two BDPs specifically today which was with this first group that was sitting closest to me, the three students. I don't know if you had noticed it, but when you first mentioned that they were a good example of doing citations correctly, the girl sitting right in front of me, "First Initial I," had done a peace sign [two fingers in a V-shape] with a smile on her face. Of course, she seemed to smile a lot anyway, but she did the peace sign, and then later on when you mentioned them again, with regard to the fact that they had brought in their own citations, as the two girls sat down, they high-fived each other over that, that you had mentioned them again. Last question, Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comment/behavior and your use of BDP? (4:51)

Kathryn – I'm still trying to gauge this, so today I was testing it out a little bit. When I noticed that that particular group had already come in with citations and they were just trying to tweak them or just get approval on them, I figured that would be a good time to use BDP for them, because they went above what I was expecting. So, I was gauging, okay, maybe I can wait until they present, and then they're up front and the center of attention, and then call attention to what I noticed. It's still kind of a process for me of figuring it out, but, like you said, I think it needs to have at least a couple of minutes' span. Maybe point it out to them individually and then call attention to it through the whole class. (5:32)

CC – That brings in the "unexpected" aspect of BDP, and, in addition, I felt that what you did also worked as an example of the other type of praise that I've been documenting—Ripple Effect Praise—where one of the reasons you brought that up [students coming in with citations already done] was not only to let them know, for the whole class, what they'd done right, but as an example of "Hey, everybody else, you could do this too." So, it worked. It praised them while letting other students know this was a good thing to do. (6:00)

Kathryn – And I think what I noticed also was that it kind of provoked the other students to ask more questions. Yesterday, they didn't know what to ask; they were kind of lost in their research. Today, they were like "Hey, I need help specifically with citations *because* you called out that other group on their citations. How do I get mine to that level, because you're noticing them?" I think that's what I noticed more today; there were a lot more specific questions and kind of honed-in questions. (6:25)

CC – Good. Thanks. Those are the six questions. This was recorded on March 9, 2017. (6:40)

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #2

Interviewee: "Kathryn"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 9:58 a.m. to 10:14 a.m.

Date: March 16, 2017

Place: High School X

Kathryn is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a ninth grade English classroom in a high school in Florida. The following transcript is from the interview conducted on the third and final observation on March 16, 2017.

CC – Today is March 16, 2017, and I am with Kathryn, 9th grade English. We're going to go over the same questions we did before with some additional ones embedded into those six plus a few others. Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP serves as a method of classroom management? (0:21)

Kathryn – I think that it can kind of gain the attention of the classroom when you notice you a specific student. "Okay, this person mentioned this." And then everybody thinks of that student, and it kind of gets the focus back on "Oh, well, what if I get noticed" or "What if I'm picked out for doing something good, so what can I do to get noticed." (0:43)

CC – Okay. Q1A: How easy or difficult is it to use BDP? (0:49)

Kathryn – I think for me it depends on the nature of the class. So, today, this class was a little bit harder for me because they were doing a lot of reading on their own and kind of reading for the class [selected students reading scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*], so it wasn't as easy to put it in a lot of places, whereas last time you were here, there was more room to do that because there was more presenting and feedback from me with it. (1:13)

CC – Okay. Q1B: How easy or difficult was it to find opportunities to use BDP, even over the last couple of days? (1:20)

Kathryn – So, we started reading on Tuesday, and I think it was a little bit easier when we first started reading because they were moving a little bit slower, so it was easier to pause in the middle of a scene and then give feedback or take some more time to split up and give that feedback. And even on Monday, we were still going over the background, so it was easier to relate to "Oh, well, remember we talked about this with last week's presentations because we did the research on it." But, as we get more into it—It's a little bit more challenging, not that it's impossible to do, because I was able to do it, I think, with the last class before you started. (2:00)

CC – Right as I came in, there was one that I saw that you did. (2:04)

Kathryn – Um-hm. So, it's a little more challenging, not that it's impossible. (2:07)

CC – Q2: How do you decide when to use general or specific praise instead of BDP? (2:14)

Kathryn – I think that in this case today, I think it was a little bit easier for me to use the general praise to say, "You did a good job reading" or "That's a correct answer. Good job with that." And less easy for me to use that backdoor praise and kind of think back to "Okay, what can I pull out that the student did?" and maybe try to relate back to an answer that they said before. So, it was a little bit more challenging today to figure that out. (2:41)

CC – Okay. Q2A: To what extent do you use BDP as compared to general or specific praise? (2:49)

Kathryn – I think for me it's still more of that general or specific praise to the students just to kind of encourage them and keep them going. I have been trying to figure out how to use BDP more and kind of tie that in, so it's still that experimental process for me, but I'm working on it. (3:06)

CC – Good. And that covers Q2B as well [How do you decide to use BDP?]. Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP? And again, it can be based on today or any other day you've been doing it. (3:17)

Kathryn – I thought it would go one of two ways. I thought it would either change all the students' perspective and go that positive route of "Oh, she noticed something good. Maybe I should do something good and go with that" or "Oh, let's pick on that student that got praised because, why did they get picked out?" So, it could have gone positive or negative for me. (3:43)

CC – Okay. Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work. (3:50)

Kathryn – So, that, I guess, would be that negative side. It could be that in a particular classroom, if I do give that BDP, or even specific praise to a student, that the other students will just go for that student, and instead of having that positive effect on the class, it kind of changes the dynamic of it. So, knowing that, but also I think those students that might react that way themselves and kind of not want the praise and not want the attention from that or take the attention and run with it. (4:21)

CC – Right. And one of my intentions for BDP to make it different from general and specific where, you're right, some students might be embarrassed by that, would be exactly how you did it at the end of that last class period, where you simply said, "As she mentioned earlier…" and you just moved right on. You didn't hover over that compliment or that student; you simply gave *her* credit for having said something as opposed to you just saying in general "We learned…" You said *that person* mentioned it, and that's where it's really—it's meant to be under the radar so that it's not necessarily pointing out a particular student or making them feel that they're being singled out as having done something that could be embarrassing to them. You're just saying, "Oh, and she said…" and you're moving on. Questions 4A, B, and C: What makes BDP work or not work in your internship classroom? Have you had any difficulties with the fact that you're in an internship as opposed to having your own classroom? (5:30)

Kathryn – I don't think that it's been—I think every time I've used it, it's worked in the sense of it got the attention of the students in the room. I mean, the last time you were here, you noticed that most of them were on task for the rest of class, and they're one of my more energetic classes. They can get off task easily, so I've noticed that impact, and even the last class that you saw, they were a little bit chatty because it was the end of the period, and as soon as I mentioned that comment, they seemed to kind of "Oh, you pointed somebody out!" So, I think that it has worked really well with this internship class. (6:07)

CC – Good. Q4B: To what extent, and in what ways, do you feel BDP could be overused? (6:12)

Kathryn – I think if you start—maybe if you make it too large of a group, and just kind of say, "As we all mentioned earlier" or also if you—I think if you point out "As they said, and they said, and they said…" and you tie in too many at once, I think it can be overused. But I think if you use it sporadically throughout and say, "Oh, that's a good point. Somebody else tied into that earlier" instead of trying to tie everything back to students. Kind of make it more sporadic so then it doesn't become worn out. (6:50)

CC – And you did mention too, and I didn't write it down here because it wasn't something I could watch, but you did mention that an earlier class had done something. That served as a backdoor praise, that if you were to check the next day. If you had mentioned a particular student, like "Heather in third period said…" Well, watch and see if Heather comes back in and see if she's more on task because maybe she's heard through the grapevine that her example was used in a different class. Q4C: What might you need to help you use BDP more often and more effectively? (7:29)

Kathryn – I think for me it's just something from the students. I need to make sure that I have some kind of student input that I can take and relate back to later in the class. Today, there wasn't as much student input; there was a lot of reading from the students, so that could have been praised and complimented, depending on how they did. You know, "Oh, we saw this person read this way" or even mentioning that they read this particular line. But I think it's easier when there's student input when it's the answer to a question or a thought to relate back to. (8:07)

CC – Right. And that's one reason why in my documentation [BDP Observation Sheet] I've added the lines along the bottom for OTR, which is "opportunities to respond." Where, if it's all lecture-style, then there's nothing to report back because you were the only one talking, but the fact that you had 22 either open or specific-to-students opportunities for students to answer questions—that certainly opens it up. And something else: it engages the students. Even if you don't use BDP, you're still making sure students are responding to your questions, and that keeps them engaged. Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP? Have you been able to notice anything over a day or more? (8:48)

Kathryn – What I've noticed—Other than, I think I had one day with the class you just saw where they were just way off task and kind of lost focus, but that was when we first switched the seats. They were used to sitting in the exact same rows all year, so I think that was contributing to it, but other than that, especially today, they were very focused, more than they usually are, and I think that can be from just that positive comment toward them and that feedback. (9:20)

CC – Okay. <u>Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's comment or behavior and your use of BD?</u> (9:29)

Kathryn – Kind of like you said, if I mention a student in another class period, so if I said, "You know, So-and-so from third period mentioned this…" sometimes I'll have students in other classes come in and say, "Hey, I heard you talked about So-and-so in class." So, I can tell that it would expand, depending on how I brought it up or used it. (9:52)

CC – Good. The additional questions I have… <u>Q7: To what extent do you see yourself using BDP when you get your own classroom?</u> (10:03)

Kathryn – I think that in certain cases for me it comes naturally, like, I didn't plan to do the one in second period. It just kind of happened, and I was like, "Oh! That was backdoor praise." So, I think that can be something that can happen naturally and then maybe try to "Okay, how can I use this?" and kind of build on that. The same way with general and specific praise; you start off with "Okay, what do I find to compliment?" and then you compliment it. So, I think it's just kind of taking the time now to figure out how to use it and then building on that when I get my own classroom. (10:37)

CC – <u>Do you think you ever used it before you ever heard of it?</u> (10:39)

Kathryn – I think I had one instance when Professor O was in here observing, and she had mentioned, "Oh, I like how you mentioned that student and you called that particular student out after she had said something." (10:54)

CC – Good. <u>Q8: To what extent do use BDP with certain students as your primary method of behavior management?</u> (11:01)

Kathryn – I think that it would depend on the students, but I think that there are some students that, if I could pull something from them to compliment, I think it would change their focus. And I kind of noticed it with the group that you saw last time you were in here, with those three students. Even now, the one girl, "I"—I think that's what we called her—she has been greeting me a lot more and more positive overall in that way. So, not that she was ever an issue, but she was very quiet or goofy, so I noticed that kind of change with her. (11:40)

CC – Good, good! <u>Q9: Do you find that BDP is more effective for getting students engaged/re-engaged or in stopping misbehavior?</u> (11:52)

Kathryn – I think it could be a combination of the re-engagement and stopping misbehavior. In that sense, if everybody's off task or it's kind of a crazy day where everybody's a little unfocused, just that noticing one student in particular, and then everyone kind of stopping the misbehavior—the talking or whatever they're doing—and then re-engaging in what we're doing because they have that desire to get that feedback as well. (12:22)

CC – Good. An additional question that's not on my list, even beyond the list that I've done here, is something that I've noticed over the first observations I've done with the four of you. It's that, and it's not even necessarily you, but it's over the four total that I noticed that, from my baseline observations to watching all of you institute BDP, is that any comments that before had been focusing on the negatives of students, saying, "So-and-so, get back on task" or "Roger, get on the

right page" or things like that… I've noticed—I didn't document it or tally-mark it—but I noticed a replacement of positive comments to the behaviors that you want versus pointing out the negatives. I've seen all four of your guys, again more the others than you—I didn't notice anything negative from you in the three times I've seen you. But for some of the others, I did see that the reaction was "Get back on task" where, with the backdoor praise, I saw them either doing a proximity praise, where you're praising the kid right next to the one that's off task, and that drew things back in, or you're using general or specific praise or backdoor praise on a student who was off task. And I like that; I like seeing that. The whole demeanor of you guys teaching—I've seen that changed. I'm going to be asking the others if they've seen it. Do you feel like you're more likely to focus on positives? (14:07)

Kathryn – I feel like, because I'm watching out for those things to pull out later, that I'm looking for more of the positives and then not focusing as much on the "Okay, I need you to do this, I need you to do that," but "Let's all work together and go off of each other. I noticed that this student is doing well, so follow after that student. Let's follow the example," instead of "Don't do this, don't do that." (14:30)

CC – Good. And that would be one of the reasons for incorporating BDP or any of the praises in there, including the Ripple Effect Praise, which my son who is now in college said, "Ripple Effect Praise does not work in high school. Don't do that in high school!" The "I like the way…" is done more in elementary school, not as obnoxious, but at the high school level, it's more subtle. But that's where BDP sometimes can be used instead, especially when you've got a lot of conversation going, and allowing them to give their opinions and ideas and perspectives on things. And you can tap back into that as you continue on. The key to BDP is embedding it in so that it's not so obvious, because you do have high schoolers who maybe don't want to be called out. Hopefully it's something that you'll at least, as someone else mentioned, put it in your toolbelt as an idea to try. We'll see. This has been the final observation for Kathryn on March 16th. Thank you so much. (15:37)

Kathryn – Thank you. (15:41)

Appendix I

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #1

Interviewee: "Dawn"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview #1: 1:20 p.m. to 1:25 p.m.

Date: March 9, 2017

Place: Middle School X

Dawn is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a sixth grade math classroom in a middle school in Florida. She was observed on March 6, 2017, to gather baseline data on her use of "backdoor praise." The following transcript is from the interview conducted on March 9, 2017, after the second observation, in which she was observed using BDP.

CC – This is Cindy Campbell. I'm doing Observation #1 with Backdoor Praise with "Dawn," who is a math teacher, 6th grade, at a middle school. Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP works as a method of classroom management? (0:19)

Dawn – Well, I actually felt like my kids were more engaged when I was saying their names. They were like, "What? I said that?" And it was just nice because, I mean, they did forget I said that, but it was nice because then they were listening more because they were listening for me to say their name and something they had said. (0:42)

CC – Q2: How do you decide when to use general or specific praise versus BDP? (0:48)

Dawn – Well, I can't really answer that fully right now [this was her first day trying it, after being out sick for two days], but like today, as I was doing it, if I noticed somebody wasn't paying attention but they'd answered a question beforehand, then I would say their name and how they had said something. Or if they weren't quite understanding something, then I would call on them because I knew…but, I mean, I didn't really…I kind of just decided spot-on, like, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to just generally say "Good job" to this kid, but then that kid, I'm going to say something. (1:18)

CC – Right. And as you can see on the [BDP Observation Sheet] paperwork, the notes I took today, you had lots of general praise, some specific, a couple of Ripple Effects—those other things that I look at—lots of opportunity to respond [OTR] with just whole group, which is kind of like an open response kind of thing, plus also calling on kids. So, you had tons of…let's see…almost 25 general praises, so you were doing a mix of praises. Very good. Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP? (1:49)

Dawn – So, is that kind of like how did I perceive how they were…?

CC – How did you…as you did it, what was your perception of how the kids reacted to it?

Dawn – Okay. I think they liked—some of them liked me calling their names, saying their names, and some of them were like, "Oh, no, I don't remember saying that." You know? Because some kids don't really like being called on all that much and being put out there, but others were like, "Oh, yeah. I said that. That was me." (2:16)

CC – Okay. And that goes along with Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work. (2:22)

Dawn – Yeah. Like I just said, some students just don't necessarily like being called out in class. They don't like answering questions; they don't like being put out there as much, so… (2:33)

CC – So, I'm going to do a follow-up question on that. Do you tend to not do open praise with them in general because you know that about them already? (2:43)

Dawn– It depends on the student. If I know that they are extremely shy and extremely put back in themselves, then I don't typically. I'll go over to them one-on-one, and be like, "You're doing a great job." Also, sometimes, if I say a student's name and "You're doing a good job," like whole group in class, then they start getting a little rowdy, every once in a while, because they're like "Oh, yeah, that was me, you guys! Look!" You know? It just depends on the student, but there's maybe one of those in every class. (3:13)

CC – Okay. Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP that you're seeing? (3:20)

Dawn – I feel like it worked really well when I was up there actually direct teaching them. But as I was going around in the small groups, they got—they can get a little out of control, but, I mean, that's them. That's sixth grade class, so… (3:38)

CC – Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comment/behavior and your use of BDP? (3:47)

Dawn – Is that like…? (3:49)

CC – How long between, like, if you've noticed a kid being good, how soon after do you feel like you need to it? Rather immediately or do you feel like you're still being effective if you it five, ten, fifteen minutes later? (4:01)

Dawn – I feel like I'm still being effective if I do it a little later on. I think they're still paying attention pretty well, because they never know what I'm going to say, so that works. (4:10)

CC – Good. All right. Those are all the six questions. Is there anything else that you feel like you want to add to the conversation today? (4:16)

Dawn – Not at the moment, no. (4:18)

CC – Okay. I'll turn the recorder off. (4:25)

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #2

Interviewee: "Dawn"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 1:20 p.m. to 1:33 p.m.

Date: March 16, 2017

Place: Middle School X

Dawn is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a sixth grade math classroom in a middle school in Florida. The following transcript is from the interview conducted on the third and final observation on March 16, 2017.

CC – It is March 16th, and I am talking with "Dawn." We're going to do the same questions plus a few others. Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP serves as a method of classroom management? (0:19)

Dawn – Well, I feel that it's the same [as how I answered before]. The students pay attention more because they want you to call their name, they want to hear their name in front of the class and be like, "Yeah, I answered that question. That was me." So, I feel that, to an extent, I would say it helps a lot, but for some students not so much. (0:37)

CC – Q1A: How easy or difficult is it to use BDP? (0:41)

Dawn – I feel like it's kind of difficult when the students aren't really on task, because it's hard to find a student that's actually doing well to where you feel like, "Hey, look at So-and-so doing this…" Sometimes it's the same student over and over and over again, and then after a while, I think they get tired of hearing that student's name. (1:01)

CC – Right. And I saw today that you were trying to get our young lady in the back—you gave her a few opportunities to do that. (1:06)

Dawn – Yeah, I tried! (1:07)

CC – Yes, yes! And I wrote down that it did work. Initially, she seemed to be caught off-guard, she wasn't really on task—. (1:15)

Dawn – She wasn't ready yet—. (1:16)

CC – Then for a few moments she was [on task], and then she was back off task. But at least you were working with her, and I could tell she really struggles with math. But I did see you targeting her to see if you could praise her for academics to try to keep her on task. That is one of the reasons that I'd come up with this idea of backdoor praise. And that goes with how easy or

difficult was it to find opportunities to use BDP—trying to vary it up and not call on the same kids all the time. (1:46)

Dawn – Right. (1:47)

CC – <u>Q2: How do you decide to when to use general or specific praise instead of BDP?</u> (1:52)

Dawn – Well, with the girl in the back, when I saw her doing something off task, that's when I tried to call on her to make sure. It's like "Hey, I'm paying attention to you; you need to be paying attention to me." That's when I usually decide to; otherwise, it's just a kid answers, and "Good job. Well done." (2:10)

CC – Right, right. And here are your numbers today. For general praise, you had 22, specific, seven, Ripple Effect Praise—that other one that I do of just "I like the way So-and-so is doing something"—you had at least one of those. Opportunities to respond, whole group, you had about 15, and then calling on individual students, about 8. And I'm sure I'm off on that because sometimes I forget to tally-mark those, but as you were going over things, even when you sometimes said to raise hands, some of the kids were so excited—. (2:41)

Dawn – They get so excited—. (2:42)

CC – And that's a good thing! It's a good thing they were trying to call out answers because they wanted to beat everybody else at doing that. Number 3, because I think we've already covered questions 2A and B…yeah, we already covered those. <u>Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP?</u> (3:02)

Dawn – A lot of them enjoy it because they like having their name called out in class. They're like, "Yeah, I answered that. That was me." I didn't have any this time that didn't really like it. I didn't think the girl in the back really wanted to get called on because she doesn't think she's good at math. She didn't really want to get put out there because, even though I wrote down the answers down for her so she could say them in class because I knew I was going to call on her, she still didn't remember to look at it [her paper] and realize that was the answer because she was caught off guard for a few minutes. So, I feel like her reaction to it was a little less than stellar than the others. (3:35)

CC – And that's where another—a non-backdoor praise thing—I've seen done is to tell a student like her, when you're working with her. If you're working with her on ten problems, and you say, "I'm going to call on you for number seven, so be ready for it." That way, when you go over things [as a class] and you get to number seven, you call on her, and she'll go, "Okay. That one I know I have right, and I know I'm ready." And that way, she's prepared to be called on and knows she's going to be—knows that it's going to be a safe environment. So, that's another method to think of using. <u>Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work.</u> The other questions that went with it—what makes BDP work or not work in your internship classroom. Have you found with regard to your classroom that would help or hinder things because you're an intern? (4:27)

Dawn – Yeah, actually I tried it earlier in my third period class—uh, no, second period—and my second period just does not respect me because I'm not their teacher. As much as my other classes, that's my worst one. There's 27 of them in there— (4:46)

CC – That's a big class. (4:47)

Dawn – So, they're just always talking, and every time I try to incorporate backdoor praise and say somebody's name, they're like, "Well, I had that [answer] too." And then they all start talking and they all start arguing with each other, "Well, I had it first…" So, it's just that they don't respect me as much because I'm the intern; they know I'm not their teacher, even though they know I can give them detention and everything. They just don't respect me as much. (5:12)

CC – Is there anything that you might need to help you use BDP more often or more effectively? Question 4C. (5:20)

Dawn – Not—I don't think anything. Just the students' willingness to be called on in class would help me more, but, you know. I can call on them anyway; see how they do. (5:32)

CC – Right. And there will be a follow-up question to that when we get toward the end. Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP? (5:40)

Dawn – Depends on the student. A lot of them stay on task more, but the ones that aren't good in math or don't think they're good in math or just want to talk all the time… Because it is chilly outside today, so that was a little factor in their craziness— (5: 55)

CC – And spring break is coming— (5: 56)

Dawn – Yes, they're really excited about that. (5:57)

CC – But I noticed that some of the kids you used it on—"J" with the hoodie and "V" in the front of the room. Both of them were solid on task, and you'd brought them both into the conversation, and the two girls whose names both start with "D." The one at the very front, she was very good; the other one got off task a little bit— (6:25)

Dawn – The one who talks a lot— (6:27)

CC – Oh, yeah, she's active. (6:29)

Dawn – She's a mover and a shaker! (6:29)

CC – I think I actually saw her shaking at some point! But you're right, it does depend on the kids. Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comment/behavior and your use of BDP? (6:46)

Dawn – I'd say I tried to watch within— At first, in the very beginning, I tried to watch their behavior in, like, the first minute or two, and then after, I'd keep going on, and then I'd wait maybe five to ten minutes to kind of bring it back in. (7:00)

CC – I think that's probably a pretty—I think if you were to graph it, that's when you'd have your biggest— (7:08)

Dawn – Downfall…? (7:09)

CC – No, the biggest impact is that five to ten minutes because it's still fresh in the kids' mind. The students should still be on task, or if the fact that they've said something earlier, it's hopefully still fresh in their heads. (7:20)

Dawn – So, they remember saying it. (7:21)

CC – Right. And of course content-wise it makes sense to bring something back in that you've just recently been talking about with the students. You're bringing them right back in. It's like that spiral learning of scooping up what you've already done and bringing it back into the conversation. So, five to ten minutes sounds like a good—it seems to me that's working well for this age group and for this group of students. The additional questions today… Q7: To what extent do you see yourself using BDP when you get your own classroom? (7:49)

Dawn – I really like it. I like the effect it has on the students, and I think they like the effect it has on them too, because they love the attention. They're just middle school students; they love the attention, and I'll probably use it a lot. (8:01)

CC – Good. As part of a repertoire— (8:03)

Dawn – Right. (8:04)

CC – It's obviously not the only thing, but it's one that's good to know about. (8:07)

Dawn – Right. (8:08)

CC – Q8: To what extent would you use BDP with certain students as your primary method of behavior management? (8:14)

Dawn – I would say not totally for behavior management. It works really well for behavior management, but a lot of these students need to be, I don't want to say threatened, but they need to have a consequence. And by just saying, "Hey, great job doing this…" and they're like, "Yeah, I know." And they go back to doing what they do, so… I would use it, yes, but I wouldn't use it a lot for behavior. (8:44)

CC – Okay. Q9: Do you find BDP is more effective for getting students engaged/re-engaged, like maybe they're daydreaming, versus for stopping misbehavior? (8:53)

Dawn – Absolutely, because once they hear you saying stuff up there, and then they hear their name next to it, then they're like, "What is she saying about me?" and so then they start paying attention more. So, they do stop. They might go back to it, but that's when that five to ten minute—like, after ten minutes, it's like, hey, you know, say it again, and they're like, "Oh, she *is* paying attention to me." (9:17)

CC – Good. A question that's not on here but I asked with another intern the other day: What did your teacher think of it [BDP]? Has your teacher noticed it or…? (9:29)

Dawn – Last time we met, after our first observation, she said, "What did she think? Did you do well? Did you say it a lot?" So, I don't think she's actually paying attention so much, but when she does, she's used it before without knowing that it was backdoor praise. She said, "Oh, yeah! I do that all the time!" You know? So, she likes it. (9:49)

CC – <u>Do you think you had ever done it before?</u> Because, again, there's no research on this, so I'm the first person that I know of that's putting a name to this thing. (9:59)

Dawn – Yes. Right. So, I have used it before, just without knowing that… You know, because I just like encouraging my students. And I felt, I didn't know anything about the classroom management type, like, with behavior and everything, but I just like to encourage and lift up my students, and by saying their names, it makes them feel important. (10:14)

CC – <u>Do you think, and this is the last question to ask, do you think that you'd be more likely to use fewer negative statements? Do you think this leads to balancing things out? Do you think that your number of negative statements could end up flipping over to the positive side because you're finding ways of drawing the kids back in through a positive method?</u> (10:41)

Dawn – Yes, I do, because not only can I say, if a student got something wrong, then I could be like, "Hey, this is probably the way that we shouldn't do this." And that could decrease because the students will be getting it right because they'd be paying attention more. I feel the negatives would go down, because then I wouldn't have to threaten them with "I'm going to have to call your home." If I say, "Hey, you were doing this right earlier" in front of the whole class, then they're like, "Oh, I need to keep doing that." (11:08)

CC – Right. And that's where your most talkative student—he's one that I don't know that it would necessarily work, because the backdoor praise—he may go overboard with it and kind of get an attitude about it. (11:25)

Dawn – Got it. I tried to do backdoor praise with him, but he just wouldn't do his work today, so I was just… "Let's write things down" [to the student]. (11:32)

CC – And he's probably better with the one-on-one, the quiet praise versus the loud praise in this case. (11:37)

Dawn – Yes, yes he is. (11:38)

CC – And once in a while you could maybe bring him in if you needed to, but he will be probably more effective with the one-on-one praise than the out-loud praise, whether it be general, specific, or backdoor. He needs that lower focus, so he's not being recognized as the star of the class. (12:00)

Dawn – Because if he thinks that, he'll run with it. (12:03)

CC – Right. You could still try it, but I don't think he would be one you'd want to use it a whole lot on. I think it probably would go overboard on him. But, again, what I'm trying to do with this is provide another tool in the toolbelt for doing things, so thank you for participating in this. This was Dawn and it's March 16th, and thank you for participating in my study. (12:37)

Dawn – Of course. I loved it. (12:38)

CC – Thank you! (12:41)

Appendix K

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #1

Interviewee: "Ruth"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 1:30 p.m. to 1:41 p.m.

Date: March 14, 2017

Place: Elementary School X

Ruth is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a sixth grade math classroom in a middle school in Florida. She was observed on March 2, 2017, to gather baseline data on her use of "backdoor praise." The following transcript is from the interview conducted on March 14, 2017, after the second observation, in which she was observed using BDP.

CC – Today is March 14, 2017, and I am interviewing Ruth who is in a 5th grade classroom. Today was Language Arts and Reading. <u>Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP works as a method of classroom management?</u> (0:16)

Ruth – I think it can be very helpful to get kids that are off task on task, but you have to find an opportunity where you can talk about when they were on task to get them back on. So, if they weren't on task to begin with, it can be hard to use it in that way. But also it can be used when the students see you praising the one student who is doing well, then the other students might get on task, so I think it works really well in that sense. Also, I've noticed if the students see you doing that, then they're like, "Oh, she remembers! She likes me, so I'm going to perform better!" So, sometimes it works in that way. It kind of depends on the student, though. (0:51)

CC – Right. And be aware, too, that one of my theories on this is that it doesn't always have to be catching good behavior in order to keep good behavior. It can be catching them doing something academically good that can draw a kid back in, because you could have a really bright child who says, "I already know all this so I don't have to pay attention now." Bring that kid back into the conversation by reminding—by saying indirectly, "Oh, So-and-so did really good earlier with…" or "Remember how So-and-so did an example of…" or "…showed their work on this…" or "…knew the definition, remembered the definition from the other day." When you bring something like that back in, that can help a kid get back on task as well. <u>Q2: How do you decide when to use general or specific praise versus BDP?</u> (1:37)

Ruth – It depends on the situation. I'm trying to figure out how to word this… For example, if—I have to really be, you have to be super intentional when using backdoor praise. You have to really think about what the students are doing and then remember to bring it up later. So, sometimes, it's very hard to remember those things, so you just automatically go to the general and specific praise because it's what you're used to doing. But, when I have an instance where,

like when we walked in the class and I saw Amy [not the student's real name] doing really well, I told her immediately. Oh, she did really well, she came in the room quietly, began what she needed to do. And then afterwards, later on, when the whole class was in there, then I mentioned Amy again. Amy is known for not being on task, so the fact that she was on task, that was a big thing, and then I mentioned it to the classroom. So, in that instance, I found, "Oh, I can use that!" So, it kind of depends on whether there's an opportunity or not, like, sometimes you have to find those opportunities in the middle of everything else. (2:35)

CC – Right. And like you said earlier, sometimes it's difficult to find those opportunities. And that's the difficult part about this—remembering what happened and finding the right spot to— (2:48)

Ruth – To put it in, yeah. (2:49)

CC – Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP? (2:58)

Ruth – I think that they tend to get—when they hear the positive, they tend to sit up a little bit more. Amy, it took her a little bit longer, but eventually she was sitting up and paying attention. And that's hard for her, so that was a big growth with her that I found. (3:18)

CC – And she was the one at the end of the class who was sitting up at the teacher's desk? That's who that was? (3:22)

Ruth – Yes, she was reading. By the end of the class, she was on task and reading independently, and she struggles to do that sometimes. She gets distracted and loses focus. Sometimes we allow her to walk around or sit at the teacher's desk and read. She'll actually do it if she's in a different place or if she's away from other students, because she gets distracted. But I think that backdoor praise led her to have a better day today than she usually does because she heard, okay, we can start out the day positive and we can end it positive. I even talked to her during the reading, when I had them all talk [within their table groups], and I said, "Hey, we started out really good. I want to see more of that. You're doing a really good job so far. Keep it up." And she got back on task. (4:02)

CC – Good. (4:03)

Ruth – So, it's working with some students, and I'm seeing it with a lot of students. They see a positive reaction. I have to pay more attention to see the long-term effect, because sometimes I get distracted and I'm doing other things and I don't pay attention to the long-term effects of that specific student. (4:17)

CC – Right. And for the purposes of this [study], I'm trying to watch for that too. If I can figure out which kid you're talking about, then I'm able to watch that child too. Just as a fly on the wall, I can do that. For you, if you end up using this more often, what you're hopefully going to see is that it's going to naturally occur to you. "Huh! I haven't had to speak to So-and-so in a number of days" because that student has been on task. Hopefully it continues to be a "I want to be recognized; I want to get praise from my teacher, so I want to make sure I'm on task all the time." We'll see. Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work. Have you experienced that at all? (5:00)

Ruth – The student you saw me today struggle a little bit with [Randy, not his real name] in small group, he responds to encouragement, but it depends on the day. Some days, he could [sic] care less what you say to him, good or bad. And, so, with students like that, that it doesn't matter what you say to them, good or bad, it doesn't faze them, doesn't change them. They're going to do what they want to do regardless. That—the method—I don't see working as effectively. I think he could potentially do better with it, but he's having some medication issues right now, too, on top of it. They haven't been able to get the medication in, so that could be part of it. But, yeah, he—students that really don't care what you—don't care about the teacher, if they don't care about what the teacher thinks about them, then they're not going to respond well to it as a result. (5:51)

CC – And that's where I'm hoping that backdoor praise, because it's so unexpected, the kids are not thinking, "I'm going to good; I'm going to get praise right after it," which is what the research says we're supposed to be doing. My idea is to delay it a little, catch the kids off guard, going, "Whoa! She remembered that from before." And that may be something that works. Again, it's another tool to try; it's not meant to be the only one. <u>Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP?</u> And that kind of lends itself to what we were just talking about. (6:24)

Ruth – Yeah. Amy, like, the whole class, she seemed to even get better throughout the class, so I think they [effects of BDP] can be either for the entire class or days at a time, end up being weeks, depending on how often it's—how consistent it is. (6:40)

CC – And that's where the other child we were talking about, the boy [Randy], if we started out, if you were able to see some short-term effects of it, it might be that you'll maybe start seeing some of that positive effect lasting longer for him. <u>Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comment/behavior and your use of BDP?</u> (7:06)

Ruth – Oh, so, the time span between when I—? (7:10)

CC – Are you feeling like you need to do it within a few minutes, or can you do it twenty minutes later and it works? Or the next day? (7:17)

Ruth – Typically, for me to remember, as an intern, when you have so many things going through your mind to remember. For me to remember to do it, it has to be within probably a shorter period of time. Probably within five to ten minutes for me to remember, but there are some things I praise a few days later, like, we do chipping away at AR [reading tests]. They have to get their AR points throughout the week; they have to take a certain amount of tests. Then on Monday, they get a reward for doing it, so we're praising them later. Same thing when we hang up student work. They do the work the week before, we go through it, we hang up student work, and then we talk about what was good about it. They all go up to the boards and try to find their names on the boards. So, *that* I can do a few days later, and sometimes at the end of the day, I'll reflect and go, "Okay, this small group really worked hard." I did that at the beginning of the class; I talked about one small group that worked really hard, and so I can do that. But when it happened in class, it's easier for me as an intern just to do it [BDP] right after. I would say probably more for a well-versed teacher, a teacher that's been there teaching for a while, she probably could wait a little bit longer than I could, because the teacher isn't thinking as much about every little thing you're doing. So, I think as you get more experience, you can wait longer, but for me right now, it's like— (8:30)

CC – And it may come easier to you to do this if you're seeing some good responses from students. It could be something that you decide to build into your repertoire, and the more you practice it, the more it becomes more natural for you to do that. (8:44)

Ruth – Yeah, that's the other thing it that practicing is the biggest part, like, this needs to become kind of like my nature. It needs to be my automatic response, so as I practice it, I think I'll get better. (8:56)

CC – Right. Okay. Do you have anything else to add for today's interview? Any questions about what we're doing or any other experiences you've had over the last few days since I first saw you about using backdoor praise? (9:09)

Ruth – Nothing in particular, but I think it's a really nice tool to have, an extra thing to have in my tool belt as a teacher, because I need everything I can get right now. And so, having the extra tool that no one's ever really taught me to use periodically or even more consistently as I better with it, I think—I'm seeing positive results from some of the students, so I think it's going to be good. (9:36)

CC – I have a side question that I don't know if I'm going to include in the interview or not, or in my data… Has anyone asked you what my study is about—anyone who's not involved with it? (9:47)

Ruth – One of the other interns asked me—she's not doing it [not part of the study]. She asked me about it, and she has some students that are a little rambunctious, and sometimes they just don't want to work, don't care what you say, they're not going to do it. And I was like, "Well, you can try it [BDP] and see…" So, I had her ask me, and she's seeing what she can do to try it. I haven't heard anything yet, but I'll let you know if I hear anything. And Ms. H [CT] told Ms. W, who is another teacher, so she's trying it in her classroom. So, there's a couple of the teachers that have done it; it's kind of gotten around a little bit, so they're going to at least try it with some of our challenging students. We have one that's in Ms. W's class, and he'll make finger puppets during class, just completely—doesn't, won't pay attention, but she's going to try it with him and see if it will help. (10:39)

CC – Good! I'm glad I asked! Okay, I'm going to end the recording. Again, it's March 14th, and this was Ruth. (10:53)

Appendix L

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Interview #2

Interviewee: "Ruth"

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 1:12 p.m. to 1:29 p.m.

Date: March 29, 2017

Place: Elementary School X

Ruth is a preservice teacher completing her final internship in a fifth grade classroom in an elementary school in Florida. The following transcript is from the interview conducted on the third and final observation on March 29, 2017.

CC – Today is March 29, 2017, and I'm meeting with "Ruth" on her second observation for my work on backdoor praise. Q1: To what extent do you feel BDP serves as a method of classroom management? (0:18)

Ruth – I think it is a *very* effective way of classroom management. It really helps bring the students back if they're off task in a positive way, or just mention that they're doing really well and keep them on task throughout, and they're more excited. I noticed in my small [reading] group today that, as I used it more, all of them were craving it more, so they tended to kind of come closer in and get more involved in the discussion. So, I think it's very effective. (0:46)

CC – Good. A tangent question to that…Q1A: How easy or difficult is it to use? (0:53)

Ruth – It's getting easier as I'm using it more. At first, I found it to be a little bit more difficult as an intern, because I'm already having to think about so much of what I'm doing; not all of it comes naturally yet. But as I've been using it more, it's comes a lot more naturally, and I really intentionally try to find those opportunities, because I see the effectiveness of it. So, I would say it kind of depends, but would say it is getting easier as I'm using it. Once you're aware of the opportunity, it becomes easier. (1:26)

CC – Good. Q2: How do you decide when to use general or specific praise instead of BDP? (1:33)

Ruth – Usually, it just depends on what I'm doing at the time or if there's an opportunity. There's not always an opportunity for backdoor praise; I don't always see an opportunity for it, so, if there is a better opportunity for general or specific praise, then I'll quickly do that. Or if I happen to not—if I'm thinking about what I'm doing, it's easier for me to use general or specific praise just because I'm thinking so much as the teacher. But backdoor praise seems to be more effective than specific or general praise, but it just depends on "Okay, does this relate to what that student said to me earlier?" or "I noticed that student was on task when they were working

independently. Can I bring that up when they start working with me and they're still on task?" Something like that, I have to really think about the opportunities. (2:19)

CC – And the student had to have done something earlier to spark that idea of using it. (2:25)

Ruth – Exactly, so it had to have been a previous incident. It could have even been at recess when they talked to me or something. It might not have necessarily been in the classroom; it might have been some crazy Einstein thing they did. Maybe it was some connection they made at recess. (2:40)

CC – Well, tell me about the situation with the gentleman in your earlier class. (2:44)

Ruth – Well, Nick [not his real name], yesterday, he really—he's been struggling to stay on task. But a lot of it, I think, some of it is just building confidence in him, because it's really helped him. As he gets to know that we're rooting for him, he is getting better as a result. So, that morning he came in, he was so excited. It was his dad's birthday, and he had made a card for his dad, and he was talking about how he'd wanted to do something special for him. And we were praising him and trying to give him ideas for what to do for his dad, Ms. H and I. Later on in class, I was reading a book in class called *Frindle*, and in the book, the main character does something generous for his parents and for his brother. At that same time I noted that, I said, "Oh, Nick did something very generous for his father this morning." I was showing examples to help them learn the vocabulary. "He made a card for his father." And his face just lit up, and for the rest of class, he was on task. He—I believe—we give him a number system from one to five. He got a four that day, which is very good for him. Most of the time he gets twos or threes. So, that was very good for him; it worked amazingly with him, so I'm going to keep using it with him. (3:51)

CC – Good. Have you noticed anything long-term with him? Was this a few days ago? (3:55)

Ruth – This was yesterday when I did it. Today, he struggled a bit, but as he went on, he got better. So, we'll have to see. (4:06)

CC – So, over a single day, you saw a difference in him. (4:07)

Ruth – Yes. (4: 08)

CC – Good. Q3: How did you perceive students' reactions to receiving BDP? (4:17)

Ruth – Oh, they light up. Their face lights up, they start smiling, generally they sit up. If they weren't on task, they start looking around. "Oh? My name was called?" So, I mean, you see an immediate, positive reaction, and a lot of students will show a continuous, positive response throughout class. (4:39)

CC – Good. Q4: Describe situations or students with which it does not work. (4:46)

Ruth – It's hard to use it with students who, like we talked about earlier—you have to have some kind of previous incident in order to use it. Sometimes I struggle using it with students that aren't necessarily on task at all, ever. Or who refuse to speak. If they refuse to participate in a discussion, it's really hard—or even talk to me at other times—it's really hard. For example, Randy [not his real name] has had a rough few days; sometimes he doesn't even want to talk, so

it's really hard to pull him in. I try to use some more general and specific praise with him. You know, "You're doing really good." Sometimes I'll mention, "Oh, you made the 50-point club AR [reading program] last week!" or whatever. So, I try to do that a little, and that's a little bit of the backdoor praise, and I try to do that. But with him—and he also doesn't respond or seem to care whether you encourage him or not. Positive or negative consequences, he doesn't seem to have a response to either. So, we're working with parents on getting [help for] him. For most students, I would say it works, but with the students—you really have to have something previous to pull from. And if you don't have anything positive, or anything, even if it's a little tidbit from recess; if you don't have anything to pull from, then it's kind of hard to use it. And then also students who don't respond to encouragement, which I haven't seen very many, but he is one. He doesn't always respond today. (6:11)

CC – And as you said earlier, as you get more practice with this, you'll be finding more opportunities to ask questions that you think might lead to being able to involve them later on in backdoor praise. That's something that you can almost be proactive about later on as you get used to using it. (6:29)

Ruth – Yes, like if I know my lesson is on this topic, then I can talk to the students when we're waiting in line for the bathroom or something like that. I have noticed I am doing it more often. I've been able to notice those moments where, "Oh, man, this really fits in." (6:46)

CC – Good. I'm glad. A tangent question to that. Q4C: What might you need help with to help you use BDP more often and/or more effectively? (6:59)

Ruth – I think it helps to have someone that—I don't know. Like, having you observe me and reflecting with you helps me know what I'm doing, when I'm doing it, how to do it more effectively. Having examples to pull from. I know you gave me some examples, so that gave me ideas for opportunities that I can use it. So, having ideas and, I think, having someone observe myself or somebody else who needed help with it, they would need someone to help them reflect, because sometimes we don't realize what we're doing until afterwards. And we don't even see some of the things—like, sometimes I didn't even realize it, so it helps, I think, to have a second opinion. (7:41)

CC – Good. Q5: How long-lasting are the positive effects of BDP? (7:46)

Ruth – From what I've noticed, they for sure last for the whole class, and even for Nick, it lasted the whole day. And that's big, because I see him for two hours in the morning, so for it to last through math and science and lunch, that's—that's big for him. So, it for sure could last for a whole day and a whole class. As for long periods of time, as I do it more, I probably see more students craving that and noticing what I'm doing, and they're going to want it, and so then I'll see a longer long-term effect. But I haven't been aware of it long enough to really know (8:25)

CC – Right. What about our young lady that you had worked with before? (8:29)

Ruth – Amy [not her real name]. She's really gotten on task! She is doing her homework every night, and some of this is due to now she gets to play in recess, so she's getting some other positive benefits to her—positive consequences to her doing her homework and staying on task. She met her AR goal, so I *have* noticed that over the past few weeks, she has really stepped up,

and I'm seeing an improvement in her. And I believe she improved on her STAR testing too, so… (9:00)

CC – And, of course, you had a backdoor praise with her before and you had one with her today, so that's helping to reinforce that. (9:04)

Ruth – Yes. (9:05)

CC – Wonderful! Q6: What do you find is the most effective time span between noticing a student's positive comments or behavior and your use of BDP? (9:15)

Ruth – Typically, sometimes I think before class of certain things I can point out from the previous class, so it might be from the previous day that I say, "Hey, you guys, Amy and Nina [not her real name] met their AR goals. They worked really hard to make their AR goals." So, I was able to think of it at the beginning of class before I really began my lesson, but usually, I think I typically do it within five to ten minutes of the action because it's easiest for me to remember. (9:42)

CC – Good. Okay. Additional questions…Q7: To what extent do you see yourself using BDP when you get your own classroom? (9:51)

Ruth – Oh, I'm excited to use it. I plan on using it as much as I can. I feel like it's another tool in my back pocket, to help with classroom management, help build rapport with students, to make them more confident in themselves. For some of them, it's just a confidence battle. They don't think they can do it, and so then they struggle. Like Jessica [not her real name], she was struggling on Achieve [online assessment], and I said, "You can do it! Just try again." And she did. She did well the next time, and same thing with her STAR testing, she did really well the next time. So, I think it's just another way to build confidence in students, especially in classrooms with lower students, students who struggle and don't have the best home life. They don't get that at home; they don't hear their names in a positive way. So it's another opportunity to do that. (10:38)

CC – Wonderful. Thank you. Q8: To what extent would you use backdoor praise with certain students as your primary method of behavior management? (10:46)

Ruth – Well, students like Amy, who generally struggle to stay focused, that would probably be my primary way. I'd have to be very intentional, but with students that really struggle with that, I would try that more, just because… I'd rather do that than say something negative. And it's surprising, so it will surprise them. They're like "Oh, wait! I'm surprised in a positive way; I'm not surprised because I'm in trouble." So, students who really—not necessarily the bad kids, but the kids who really have trouble focusing. It's not like they're trying to be bad; they're just having trouble focusing. Using that with those students, that would probably be my primary method. (11:30)

CC – And that was the primary reason for the question. Without really—I worry that sometimes that people would think that they need to answer it positively because I'm the one collecting the data, but what I was hoping is exactly what you just said. That you would hope that you could switch to using that versus calling a child out for a misbehavior. Instead try to find something good to say to get the kid to realize that you notice the good things. (11:57)

Ruth – Yeah. Even if it's just general or specific praise. But the difference with the backdoor praise is that it's out of the blue, and especially if they're off in La-la Land, doing it in a positive manner kind of helps. (12:10)

CC – Good. <u>Q9: Do you find BDP is more effective for getting students engaged or reengaged or in stopping misbehavior?</u> (12:19)

Ruth – Hmm… I actually think it's more effective with getting them engaged or reengaged. Um. I don't know. Man, that's hard… Yes, I would say engaged or reengaged. I think that sometimes stopping a misbehavior, it's not—or at least in my experience, has not always been effective. Like Randy's the one who tends to have the misbehavior, and it's not effective with him, although it could just be his personality. But I really have noticed it's really helped students stay engaged. Like in my small group today, they were glued to the page. They were super engaged, and I was using a lot of it during that time period. So, I think it keeps them reengaged. And they might not necessarily be doing something bad when they're zoning out, but it really helps them reengage and get back in. (13:06)

CC – And as you said, with the idea of it being another tool in the belt, you have really good classroom management already. Misbehavior is not happening because you're circulating, you're making eye contact, you're stopping misbehavior in other ways, like simply a hand on the shoulder, standing near somebody. You're keeping the kids on task, so it makes sense that—I can understand that you would not see it being used for stopping misbehavior because you already have that under control. (13:35)

Ruth – Yeah, generally I don't have behavior issues in class, so… (13:38)

CC – Good job, by the way! (13:39)

Ruth – It's a good situation. Although I walked into a really awesome classroom to begin with! I walked into a really good situation. But I have learned a little bit about behavior since I've been here! But, like you said, I don't necessarily have a kid throwing a chair or stomping around or throwing his paper, so generally I'm not needing it for that reason. (14:00)

CC – And of course the reason for using backdoor praise with behavior—as a form of classroom management—is that if you've got the kids engaged on the academic stuff or the good stuff, then you're less likely to have them doing the bad stuff. (14:13)

Ruth – Exactly. (14:14)

CC – <u>Q10: Do you see the use of praise—general, specific, backdoor, or any other—as a way to replace or circumvent negative comments?</u> (14:23)

Ruth – Oh, of course! I mean, these kids, they never— Rarely at home do I hear positive things at home. They never hear any of this; it's so sad. They never hear anything positive at home, so

when they hear something—when they learn that they can get attention in a positive manner…
A lot of them have learned "Oh, if I want attention, I have to do something bad" to get negative
attention. So, if they can get attention in a positive manner, their confidence gets built. They
know that I'm rooting for them, so they're feeling confident, so they're being more successful.
Their grades improve as a result; their scores improve. I was praising Jessica right before she
took her STAR test, and as she was taking it, I kept going over there, and I would say something.
"You're doing really good! Keep going! Keep working hard! I'm seeing your passages get
bigger." And that means that they're improving on their tests. And as a result, she was more
successful, and she lit up. (15:22)

CC – I saw! That was great. (15:23)

Ruth - And she lives with a lot of negativity at home, so it's just so much better to point out a
positive than a negative. Nobody wants to hear how bad they are. (15:33)

CC – Even as you had her choose a different place to sit, and the way you worded it—"I know
you're really successful when you work at *that* part of the room"—versus where she was sitting.
And she moved to the new place, and sure enough, she stayed on task, at least from what I could
see. (15:46)

Ruth – Yes, so, even if I might be moving a kid because they're distracting others, I'm going to
tell them that they want to be— Well, I want them to be successful, honestly. And they're going
to be more successful when they're not around other people, and the other people are going to be
more successful, so that's why I try to word it "I want you to be successful, so we're going to sit
here." And typically it works better than saying "You're being distracting. Go move over here."
(16:11)

CC – It's proactive instead of reactive. (16:12)

Ruth – Yes. (16:13)

CC – Good. Do you have any other questions or comments for me as we finish up this project?
(16:21)

Ruth – I'm just thankful to have this opportunity, because now I have another tool I get to use,
and I've seen that it's really effective. I'm excited to continue using it. (16:29)

CC – Well, it thrilled me to have gotten the chance to observe your classes and that you found it
effective. It was wonderful. Thank you so much! I appreciate it. This was Ruth, and it's March
29, 2017. (16:44)

Appendix M

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions on Their Use of Backdoor Praise

Focus Group Interview

Interviewees: Kathryn, Dawn, and Ruth

Interviewer: Cynthia Campbell (CC)

Time of Interview: 5:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Date: April 11, 2017

Place: University X

CC – It is April 11th, and this is a focus group with Dawn, Ruth, and Kathryn. I've got seven questions for you, so just pipe in as you feel, and feel free also to tangent off each other's comments. You don't have to just answer to me. Q1: Now that it's been a few weeks since your observations, to what extent are you using BDP as part of your repertoire of engaging students and for classroom management? (0:37)

Dawn – I use mine with certain classes. Like, certain classes it's not as effective, but I've been using mine quite frequently, actually…the backdoor praise, so… (0:48)

CC – Are you doing it with the class I had visited? (0:49)

Dawn – Yes. (0:50)

CC – Good. Because I know there was one other class that you said was…the behavior. They were not respecting you as the teacher very well. (0:58)

Dawn – Right. (0:59)

CC – So I can understand you not wanting to—Have you tried it at all in that class? (1:02)

Dawn – I have; it just doesn't go over well. (1:04)

CC – Gotcha. Okay. How about either of you [Kathryn and Ruth]? (1:07)

Ruth – I tend to use it usually at the beginning of class, when it's in the forefront of my mind and it's easier to bring up things from the previous day. And I try to use it. Like I've said in the past interviews, I have to make sure I'm super intentional. Some days I'm not as intentional as others. I'm not necessarily finding something, remembering something that happened with a student and having my mind on that. So, if I can get to that mindset, I find it to be effective, especially at the beginning of class. It starts things off with a positive note from yesterday. (1:43)

Kathryn – I noticed, one time specifically in the past week or so, that I've done it with leading into a new activity. The student actually brought up something before I was going to bring it up, and it kind of led into the activity, so I used it as a way to segue into what I was doing. And then

I could keep relating to that student, relate to what she dragged into the conversation before I could. So, it was kind of in a different way than you had intended, but it worked. (2:10)

CC – Good! Is it something that you would have thought to do on your own anyway, do you think? (2:16)

Kathryn – It could have been. It kind of just happened with what she said, but it led into me thinking back to the backdoor praise and then trying to work it in further. (2:24)

CC – Okay. Following up to that, have you noticed any long-term effects with any of your students? I know that you and I, Ruth, have talked about a few students that you had seen a few days' worth of effectiveness with a few students. Has that maintained with our little girl with the wavy hair? (2:45)

Ruth – Amy has struggled in the last few days; she really has. We're actually going to touch base with home, talk with the parents to see if something happened at home, because she lives with two different parents. So, I don't know which house she's in; it depends. I don't know, but that could have an effect. The last few days, she's struggled. She did reach her AR [reading] goal, which is really good for her, and she's continually reading. She did all of her Achieve this past week, and she didn't do it the week before, so she's getting there. It's just a process. Nick is continually improving. (3:21)

CC – That's the boy with the birthday card. (3:22)

Ruth – Yes, the boy with the birthday card for dad. He's continually improving, really working hard, even in math on the other side [other classroom]. And I've talked to him, like "How do you think we did today? I think you did fabulous." And I point out a few things that he did fabulous and he was really on, and then I talk to him about math. "How did math go?" And I even hear it from the other teacher, and actually—he had a really good day—the assistant principal came in and gave him a special card, and they were laughing, and it was a really good day in reading. It was kind of backdoor praise. I know, it's still delayed. (3:56)

CC – Right! It was delayed, unexpected. It wasn't indirect because he got it directly, but still the delay and being unexpected, that's what does make the kids perk up. And it's something that you've noticed in your classroom, Dawn, seeing the kids perk up. "Wait, wait. That was me?" (4:13)

Dawn – Yep! (4:14)

Ruth – She came and gave him a card, and as well as the reading, it's really boosted him. He really thrives off of that encouragement, especially when it's unexpected like that. (4:23)

CC – Good, good. Q2: To what extent has using BDP affected your confidence with classroom management? [3 second pause with no response] It's okay if it hasn't, because you all were really good anyway, but do you see any changes in how you approach classroom management? (4:40)

Ruth – I feel like I'm talking a lot… Okay, I think it's made me more aware of being encouraging and focusing on the positives, because sometimes when you're in the swing of things, you just want them to put whatever they have out, whatever they're playing with, away and get on task. And you want to just snap, "Okay. Put that away." But it's made me turn my focus onto the positive, so I think it's not necessarily—I think my confidence is kind of the same, but I think it's changed my perspective on classroom management. (5:21)

CC – Okay, and this goes along with the next question too, which may tap more into for you, Kathryn and Dawn. Q3: To what extent has BDP affected your use of reprimands? Have you seen a change in—are you looking at, not even necessarily using BDP, but are you looking at using positive comments, trying to bring kids off task back in through positive measures maybe a little bit more than automatically going to a reprimand? Have you seen any difference in that? (5:54)

Kathryn – I think that I would agree with what Ruth was saying, kind of maintaining the confidence but almost switching the mindset to "Okay, what good can I look for instead of…I don't want to focus on the negative and keep reprimanding but focus on the positive and find something good to look for in students." (6:17)

Dawn – Yeah. I agree. Today I used it in my third period class, and I have a student. He sleeps, just, all the time. He just sleeps. And he doesn't do anything because he says he doesn't get it, but I know he does. And today I said some kind of BDP toward him because he did a problem and I was so proud of him. So, I said, "Look how So-and-so did this problem. He did it a little bit differently, but it's going to be right every time. It's a good strategy to use." And when I collected his paper at the end—he's never finished a paper for me in the whole month I've been there—everything was done. He showed all his work so I know he didn't copy anybody. There was work all over the place [on his paper], and it was just…nice… (6:54)

CC - Good! Excellent. Q4: Have you tweaked the strategy to work better for you, and if so, how? I think you mentioned, Kathryn, that you did sort of a backdoor praise. (7:08)

Kathryn – Um-hmm. And instead of being maybe a method of classroom management or student engagement, this one kind of worked for me to, I guess, flow the class a little bit better? So, they run into the next portion without having that awkward transition, so it worked as a transition method for me, just from what the student said. (7:29)

CC – Right. One of the components of BDP is meant to have it embedded so that it does become part of the conversation when you bring the kids' names into it, and that sounds like what you did. Part of your transitioning into the new content, it happened to be that you mentioned what a student had done, and you gave that student credit for something. Q5: To what extent have you tried to use it with students you weren't sure it would be effected by it? Have you tried that at all? (7:54)

Dawn – Yes. I've used it on my students that—they're just so bad. Bad kids, all around. One came in to my class today and said, "I'm going to be terrible today." And I said, "Okay…That's good to know." And he was. And I've used it on him before, and he was just so cocky with it.

Like, he went on the whole class saying, "Well, I already got a question right" and "You already said something about me," and it just did not work with him. But on some other students that I didn't think it would work well, it has. (8:28)

CC – Well, your sleeper. Was that third period—was that the class I was in? (8:31)

Dawn – No. You were in fourth. (8:32)

CC – So, the fact that you had someone in a different class—the sleeper—that worked. That was a new one for you. (8:38)

Dawn – Right, right. (8:39)

CC – So that's good. And, again, this is meant to be one of many strategies that you use. You're going to go through lots of them as you work with your students. Q6: Some studies on praise incorporate a withdrawal period and then reintroduction of a strategy. Have any of you tried this? Whether consciously or not, do you think you've ever done that? (8:58)

Kathryn – Like we'd stop for a period of time and then implement it again? (9:04)

Dawn – I think I've done it subconsciously, like, just forgetting but then "Okay, I need to start looking at this." Like Ruth was saying earlier about not reprimanding so much and using praises more, and I've stopped for a couple of days and then picked it back up. "Oh, need to be looking at this, not the bad things that they're doing." Highlighting the good parts. (9:30)

CC – And are you seeing positive effects from it? (9:32)

Dawn – Yeah. (9:33)

CC – Good. Last question, Q7: Each of you works at a different school level—high school, middle school, and elementary. What do you think you'd have to do to tweak it to make it more effective with your students, the age group that you're with? (9:47)

Ruth – To be honest, I don't think I have to tweak it that much. My age group, they really respond well; they want the teacher to like them. I mean, they're starting to get to that phase where some of them don't care as much, but for the most part, most of them want the teacher to like them. So, I think for my level [fifth grade], I don't really have to tweak it, but I think there are some other opportunities I have to use it, like at recess. You guys don't have that at the middle school and high school levels, not necessarily walking their kids to lunch and to the bathroom, where I'm doing these things and I have more opportunities to talk to my students about—it might not even be about class, but it might relate to it. (10:35)

CC – And you have your students all day long versus 45 minutes to an hour [at the secondary level]. (10:36)

Ruth – Well, it's two classes, but I do have them for two and a half hours per day. That's a long period of time, so I have more opportunities to use it and to target specific students because I spend more time with them. (10:50)

Dawn – Well, I actually do have to walk my students to lunch and pick them up from lunch because they're not responsible enough. They're middle school students, and they're just crazy! Today I should have used BDP, but I did not. I just reprimanded instead, because this girl—she's supposed to be in eighth grade, and she's still in sixth, and she's still being held back again. She's just a bad child. (11:20)

CC – And she's probably angry too. (11:21)

Dawn – Yes, she's very angry. That's why. I mean, she pushed this kid down and then stepped on his back, so I reprimanded her, but she doesn't respond to that at all. She just does not care. So afterward, when we went back to the class, I realized, I was like "Okay, I liked how everyone waited for me to reach door before you walked out and waited for me to get back to the classroom, and you didn't go play in the grass like a lot of the other students. So you did really well. I wish that some of you would have done a little better." And I didn't say any names, but…it worked well in that situation. (11:57)

CC – And we've discussed with you before, and this may be relevant in high school as well, the idea that some kids will—you mentioned already the one boy, "Well, I've already got my praise today, so I don't need to be good anymore." And I'm sure you've got a few kids that are like that. They definitely crave the attention, but not like they do in elementary school. They're not craving it because they want the teacher to like them; they're craving it because they want peer attention, not teacher attention. There's definitely a difference, and that's where BDP, or really any kind of praise—there are a lot of techniques that don't work for that. <u>Kathryn, do you find anything that you would need to do differently or that you tweak for the high school level?</u> (12:36)

Kathryn – That's kind of what you were just talking about with the students who just take the praise and run with it and don't— It doesn't work as a classroom management technique. It does the opposite, so I'm still trying to balance that out with, "Okay, which students will this work on and which students do I need to find another strategy for that *might* work as a classroom management technique for them?" (12:58)

CC – Right, but overall, as we finish up here, whenever you can try to find ways of dealing with discipline and student engagement through some kind of positive method, whether it be general praise, specific praise, BDP…just something, proximity, moving around the room, scanning, following through with your directions, and so forth. All of those things—whenever you can do those things ahead of any reprimand, you are more likely to get a positive response from the students. And when you've got angry students? I'd be angry too if I were in sixth grade for the third time and not feeling any support. She probably doesn't feel like she's smart. She's got her defense mechanisms up, so any time we can sort of bring that down a little bit through some kind of positive method… It's just something to try. Thank you again so much for participating. Thank you for participating in this study and for stay late today to meet with me. Again, it's April 11ᵗʰ, and this has been my focus group interview with Kathryn, Dawn, and Ruth. Thank you. Thank you so much. (14:17)