Abstract:

Middle school students can struggle immensely in the sixth grade. They tend to act out, be disruptive, not complete work, and slowly become disengaged in their own education. This research will take a closer look at possible causes of this behavior. Could the primary cause be due to a lack of communication skills or a lack of knowing how to appropriately communicate? If this is true, then the research would indicate that teaching students and training students to appropriately communicate would show that their struggles would decrease, their grades would increase and finally students would become more engaged in their own education. This research was done to help identify how middle school students, in a middle school setting were using the communication skills that they currently had. Then, after analyzing that data, specific communication skills were taught to further the communication skills needed to be successful. The results did support that the middle school students did benefit from communication lessons, and they were able to become more successful academically.
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Chapter 1

The Problem

Anyone who has taught in an area of poverty can attest that a teacher’s job is not just teaching the academic materials and that the students need more than just a teacher. Students in an inner city school setting struggle for many reasons. The list of reasons can include things like problems at home, lack of content knowledge, an inability to handle stress and frustration, lack of support, basic needs not being met, not to mention the changing hormones that come along with being a middle school student anywhere. This research project will examine how a select group of student’s behavior changes when they are taught how to communicate what they need, ask for clarification and how to work cooperatively within a group. The research conducted in this study was to see if improving student’s knowledge of how to communicate would improve school performance, improve social skills in an academic setting and decrease behavior problems while at school.

What is the impact of teaching communication skills to middle schools students?

The participants who were selected to participate in the study were a mix of ethnicities, gender, backgrounds, ages, current communication ability and academic abilities. The ranged from the low end of academic abilities to above grade level. Students were observed though out the first half of the school year. Then they were slowly taught the communication skills to see how the improved communication skills would impact their academic work, test scores, and behavior in and out of the classroom. If participants were taught the necessary communication
skills, how would this impact the academic achievement and behaviors of the participant in the classroom?

**Definition of Terms:**

**Effective communication:**

Constitutive Definition: the act or process of using words, sounds, signs or behaviors to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings to someone else.”

Operational Definition: For the purpose of this study effective communication is classified as clearly understanding an assignment or discussing any areas of uncertainty.

**Reflection Sheet:**

Constitutive Definition: a flow chart that is designed to help students think through their behavior in hopes of self-redirection.

Operational Definition: this form helps students to self-reflect on their behaviors and then also provides a platform for a conference between the teacher and student.

**Measure of Academic Progress Scores:**

Constitutive Definition: a test that determines Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for each individualized student.

Operational Definition: These tests are given three times per year, once in the fall, once in the winter and once in the spring. An exam that students are given to determine their academic abilities in math and Reading

**Office Discipline Referral Form:**

Constitutive Definition: Office Discipline referral form (ODR). This form is completed if students are unable to take the steps necessary to self-correct their misbehaviors.

Operational Definition: this form was used when the behavior was something that needed to be handled by administration. The most typically documented behaviors were destructive behaviors, physical aggression (fights), or disappearing from the classroom.
Positive Behavior Implementation System:

Constitutive Definition: Positive Behavior implementation system, (PBIS), this is a system that focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors instead of punishing misbehavior.

Operational Definition: this behavior management system was implemented so that the focus of classroom management was more focused on praising positive behaviors and moving forward from disruptive behaviors.

Chapter 2: Academic Literature

Literature Review

Middle school students are continually growing, adopting, and expanding their knowledge base. The participants in this study had a variety of home life situations. Every single student lacked appropriate communication skills and had very limited examples that they could learn from. Upon reading the research that was already completed on teenage communication strategies and skills, it became apparent that teenagers struggled with this for many reasons.

According to Dr. Patricia Fioriello’s research, (2001) teens that do not have effective communication skills are unable to maintain healthy relationships. Using this information it is an easy leap to apply this idea to the kids in a classroom setting. The students who were unable to express themselves clearly, will also be unable to express themselves when they are frustrated, struggling to understand, or going through something difficult with friends. On the opposite hand, perhaps once they are able to accomplish the task, they may struggle trying to figure out what comes next. All of these behaviors, if not understood, can easily lead to the student misbehaving in a classroom setting. Could it be then that a lack of communication skills can lead to students misbehaving in a classroom setting?

Dr. Fioriello (2001) additionally identified four easy steps to help guide students to improve their communication skills. The first was to help teenagers to identify social cues, this
helped them to identify the nonverbal piece of communication. Another suggestion was to help students act out all types of situations so that they are not put on the spot but are able to practice turning down friends or asking questions successfully. The third suggestion was to help students reflect on different situations so that they can build empathy. Finally, it is of the utmost importance to give the teenagers feedback. If appropriate feedback is given, teens are able to learn from their surrounding situations and are able to build knowledge that is necessary for teens to continue to adapt their behavior to various situations.

TeenInk offers another interesting insight from the teenager’s perspective. This teen identified as thaiatzickas blames the communication problem on social media. This writer suggests that the teenage generation believes, “Greatness is achieved just because thousands of strangers are familiar with your face.” Popularity is now determined by your social media and the need to interact with one another is fading quickly into something that is viewed as unimportant. Facebook users often post updates about their life, job or social activities. Thus creating a situation where interacting with that person has become unnecessary. This suggests that teens recognize the problem, however, with the ease of social media it makes it much easier for anyone to avoid having an in person conversation with anyone. Therefore, one can conclude that because social interactions have morphed into a situation that has become increasingly out of practice, teens avoid them in order to avoid being socially awkward.

Dr. Elkind, (2008), even went as far as to say that parents need to be more authentic when talking to their teens. Often times parents are assigning an incorrect emotion to behaviors which are causing students to misinterpret cues. This is then causing students to apply these emotions to situations when the emotion is not applicable. For example, when a parent tells their teen that skipping school makes them sad, the emotion is not sadness but anger toward the situation.
When a student then gets into a situation where they are feeling upset, they tend to apply an angry reaction. This is how they were conditioned to react in this type of situation. When parents are not authentic in different situations, teens do not learn how to react to situations.

There are many sources who suggest that middle school inner city students are disruptive solely due to their home lives. It could be something like they are being raised by a single parent, lack of role models, parents work too much, kids are not being challenged, kids haven’t been given the same opportunities as kids in other school systems. Student struggle has even been blamed on the school district. While it is obvious that students struggle and that there is enough blame to go around, that cannot be the solution. Teaching communication skills may be the first step in helping to mold successful students.

In Jordan, a study was completed on medical students and their communication skills. This study looked at the communication skills of medical students when they interacted with patients. Their skills were recorded and then evaluated for effectiveness. The medical students then underwent a communication skills training and were then put back into their field. Later, the same evaluation was given and once again the students were evaluated for how effectively they communicated.

There were numerous other studies that gave advice on how to best communicate with teens, how to settle arguments, as well as how to manage behavior; however, one area that was severely lacking academic literature was the viewpoint of the teenager. Somehow, that side of the problem was over looked. Not one academic article appeared to lend support to teenage students and how to best communicate with adults in different situations.
Chapter 3: Procedures

The issue of student misbehavior in inner city school has been evident for quite some time and it seems to be getting increasingly worse. The ripple effect of these behaviors can be catastrophic for students when the cause of these behaviors is not identified. The cause can be many things ranging from low academic skill, home struggles, peer pressure, low self-confidence, as well as over self-confidence. The aim of this research was not to diagnose every student need or even create a blanket fix. It is not a promised fix all, it is not a solution to every student, however, it is the stepping stone to diagnosing the problem for students.

Why a student is not achieving is unique to every single student. It is impossible to figure out why a student is not achieving academic success without the help and support from that student. This research was done in an attempt to see if the missing link was communication skills. Do the students know how to communicate? Do students know how to properly self-diagnose the problem? Do students know how to ask for help? Do students know who they can ask for help? Do students understand the importance of academic success? What resources and tools do they have to help themselves? What if the problem that is holding them back is a non-academic issue? Where can these students reach out?

For the first half of the school year, participant data were collected. Data such as MAP test scores, (Measures of Academic Progress), from this year and previous years, academic grades in core subject areas, behavior reports going back three years, and observations of
Communication skills in Middle School

anything that was happening in the home that could prevent academic progress. The careful observations were recorded and analyzed.

Starting in January 2016, communication skills were taught slowly over four weeks. Participants were expected to actively participate in a communication class daily for an hour. The most used resource for creating these lessons was Dr. Lawrence E. Shaprio’s book, *101 Ways to Teach Children Social Skills*. This book contained many valuable activities that went along with the skills that are necessary for the participants to be successful. It also addressed a wide range of social skills that are applicable in different areas. Some of the social skills that were found in this book and taught are applicable to social settings, some skills were more applicable for an academic setting, and some were geared at how to ask for clarification.

The first week focused on asking for help. The communication skills that were taught were tone of voice, voice volume, body language, personal space, facial expressions, eye contact, identifying emotions, seeking help from adults, and finally the problem solving section of Shaprio’s book. Students were taught a minimum of two lessons per day and the problem solving section of Shaprio’s book was taught over a 90 minute class period. Class was extended that day to accommodate the importance of the lesson. The lessons were also condensed into a format that transitioned smoothly from one lesson to the next with a practical application.

The second week focused on group skills. This week focused on a short review of the problem solving section from Shaprio’s book, as well as the beginning part of a group section, expressing your feelings section, caring about yourself and others section, and finally getting to know one person lesson, getting to know each other section, accepting and giving compliments and finally we have something in common section.
The third week focused on active listening skills. These lessons included Shapiro’s Listening: A two way street section, managing conflict, and Caring about yourself and others section. Participants were then encouraged to use the skills that were taught in different classes throughout their day and week, they were also encouraged to provide feedback of what they experienced when using the communication skills.

The fourth week was used as a reflection and review week due to amount of information shared the previous weeks. Classroom discussions were held and feedback from students was encouraged. Finally, as a result from these discussions the communication skills of empathy, self-control, anger and stress were taught. These were taught partially due to participant request, and partially due to an apparent need for understanding on the participant’s part.

Each lesson was structured in a very similar way to promote continuity. The students were all given a notebook that was designated only for the communication classes. At the beginning of each class participants were expected to review the previous lesson’s notes, graphs, charts, and then reflect on what they hoped to learn about or any questions they had. The researcher walked around the classroom and observed what was being reflected upon or if there were any questions they had. The reflection encouraged documentation of the participant using any of the previous skills that were used leading up to the current day. So if a participant noticed they were using the taught problem solving skill in science class, this was documented. Perhaps the participant noticed that they were using group skills during a group project, then that would be documented. The documentation would include things like what worked, what didn’t work well for that participant and what could they do differently next time for a more effective outcome. Then during the lesson the participants were expected to take notes, participate in activities which included detailing what they learned and what they did during these activities,
and fill out charts that accompanied each lesson. Finally, at the end of each lesson participants were expected to reflect on what they learned, what questions they had, then where and how they could apply the taught skill.

After the social skills were taught, the researcher collected more data. Office visits due to misbehaviors were documented, grades were documented, and behavior in group projects as well as individual projects were observed and documented. Surveys were distributed prior and after any group assignment to see what communication skills if any were tallied and documented, interactions with other staff members were observed and documented. At times when a selected participant did get called to the office due to misbehavior, the researcher was able to accompany the student to observe the communication strategies being used. All of this information was gathered on a designated form for each student to track the student’s progress.

In order to see any progress it would have to be from multiple data points, to qualify for academic progress then the participant would have to demonstrate improvement in classroom grades, improvement on the MAP test and finally improvement in classroom group projects. In order to demonstrate progress in a social setting, the participant would have to demonstrate a decrease of Office Discipline Referrals, (ODR), decrease in office visits for misbehavior, an increase in self-reflection redirection, and an increase in self-problem solving skills.

**Limitations**

There were a few limitations to this research. The first limitation is that the teacher could not coach the students through every single situation. Unfortunately, the teacher was unable to be at home, at recess and in every class. However, to combat this when a conflict arose during the school day, the teacher made every attempt to help coach the student through the situation.
Another limitation was a lack of reinforcement at home. Parents of the participants did not have the same communication skills that were being taught at school. When the participants did not see these skills reinforced, it slowed the participant’s progress toward mastering the skill.

In order to fully understand what each participant was undergoing in personal limitations, combined with what level their communication skills were at during the beginning of this study, many observations, conversations, and data collecting took place for nine weeks. The next nine weeks were spent teaching and enforcing different communication skills. Finally, the last nine weeks were spent coaching, observing and reinforcing the communication skills. Even though some students resisted throughout this process, many of them showed great improvement just after the second nine weeks.
Chapter 4

Results, Analysis and Data

When this research was first being considered the most apparent problems in this particular middle school was the problem of students refusing to do their coursework, an inability to communicate their needs, a frustration on behalf on the educators on the immaturity of students and finally students acting out and causing disruptions in the classroom. This research was not conducted as a fix all for inner-city schools. It was conducted in hopes to help identify a part of the problem, even if it is just a small part. What if all these major disruptions could in part be due to a student’s inability to communicate what they didn’t understand?

After spending the first semester of school observing these participants, many observations were made. Participant W4, was prone to lashing out, yelling and physical fights. Participant W1 entered the middle school with a reputation of disrespect and lack of effort. Participant H3 was academically smart, but lacked confidence to push her learning further. Each participant chosen for this study struggled to communicate for at least one reason.

When these participants were chosen, specific criteria was taken into consideration. The criteria consisted of Grade Point Average, (GPA), academic support at home, age, and finally office discipline referrals. An Office Discipline Referral form is a form that staff uses to communicate the problem to parents and document any disruptive behaviors. There are two areas on the forms to indicate if the behavior is either a major behavior disruption in which administration will typically intervene, or a minor behavior disruption which is typically handled between teacher and parents. This is documented in the following chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
<th>Student Struggles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student struggled academically and behaviorally due to major changes at home. There was much uncertainty and this student also lacked parent support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Even though the student did not put forth effort into their school work, it is very evident that their communication skills have improved throughout the year. This was demonstrated through multiple meetings with administration due to behavior problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student was responsible for several thefts. However, this behavior has improved throughout the school year. There were relapses but each time what was taken was less valuable and took less time to resolve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student is very dedicated to pleasing adults, however, does tend to get frustrated and can at times have a short temper. When she is seen as credible she is able to state her concerns. When they feel that they are not being taken seriously then they tend to lash out and get in both verbal and physical fights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student suffers from anxiety, by the end of the school year, they were able to advocate for himself when a break was needed and was also able to clearly communicate what needs were necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student started the year off as manipulative. Throughout the year they tried to be honest and the manipulation did not completely stop but it did happen less often.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Student does not speak English as their first language and tends to joke rather than take things seriously. Struggles academically due to a lack of English proficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>This student was more focused on academics than social interactions. However, by the end of the year this student was able to develop many close personal relationships.</td>
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The first realization I had as a result of this research was that middle school students do not realize that different situations require different forms of communication. When a student responds to a teacher, they should not respond in the same way they would if a friend would ask them a question. It did not seem to matter what their background was, or what academic support they had outside of the classroom. The formality of answering an adult did not exist.

Example:

A student is upset and refusing to work.
Teacher: “Can you tell me what is upsetting you?”

Student: No response

Teacher: “Is there something you don’t understand? Would you like me to explain what you are supposed to do again?”

Student: puts head down on desk and still refuses to work

Teacher: I would really like to help you work through this problem, but I cannot help you if you can’t tell me what is bothering you.

Student yelling: “I DIDN’T EAT BREAKFAST!”

While this seems like an irrational response, to the student it could be the same way they talk to a peer. They recognize that a teacher is not a peer but do not realize that there is more than one way to talk to someone. When this problem was addressed students began to use more formal language. The exchange became more polite.

A student is upset and refusing to work.

Teacher: “Can you tell me what is upsetting you?”

Student: “I was late today and wasn’t able to get breakfast.”

Teacher: “I can write you a pass and you can go get breakfast, later during work time please see me so you can catch up on what you missed.”

Student: “Ok, thank you.”
The second finding was centered around types of communication. There are several different types of communication, in person conversations, social media including email, as well as communication with people of different types of conversation, social, professional, and formal conversation. Most people recognize the different types of conversations and use them when it is appropriate. These students however, not only failed to recognize the differences in types of communication they also fail to use them. These students not only failed to recognize the hierarchy communication, the students also use the same types of conversation regardless of who they are talking to, as well as regardless of where they are. They do not recognize the differences between talking to a peer or talking to a teacher. They also disregard the social expectations for conversation levels in a social setting. For example, it is considered rude to talk loudly during a play; the students did not recognize that difference. They also do not recognize the need to use quiet hushed tones in a library. This communication skill was included in the tone and volume lesson during the teaching portion of this research, however, previous knowledge was not present.

The results of this study were decently conclusive. Middle School Students at Harrison Park severely lack communication skills. There were several misconceptions that became the focus of the communication skill lessons, a lack of hierarchy when communicating with others, a lack of differentiation when it came to different forms of communication, and a lack of recognizing the importance of one’s tone when communicating.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Future Study

After analyzing the results of this research project and coming to the conclusions that teenage middle school students severely lack communication skills, it appeared to be necessary to implement a curriculum in school that would teach the necessary communication skills. It seems as if in an inner-city middle school, there is a communication gap that has the potential to be bridged by communication skills.

If there is no curriculum to teach students how to communicate, or how to react to one another, then the students will continue to not have an understanding of how they should act, or communicate their feelings. If a school district’s overall goal is to help prepare students for the future, then communication skills are an absolute necessity but are not being formally taught.

Additionally, this research project could be compared to other middle schools to see how large of a communication problem actually exists. Once that data has been collected, it would be beneficial to examine communication skills within their home. One wondering that has resulted from this research is how closely linked is education level to communication skills.

Finally, knowing how important communication strategies and skills are, how do we target appropriate communication skills and design the communication curriculum to best serve the students and then design appropriate opportunities to help students use and improve these skills.

In summary, three items have been identified as next steps, the first, to compare communication skills to other districts to see if it is a generational problem or a district based problem. The second step would be to determine how far the lack of communication skills has
infiltrated the student’s home life. Finally, the third step would be to design a curriculum to teach communication skills to middle school students, complete with opportunities to use these communication skills outside the classroom.
References


**Appendix**

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Appendix A1
Pre-Survey

Name:

Assignment Title:

1. What are you expected to do?
2. What questions do you have about this assignment?

3. What worries you about completing this assignment?

Post-Survey

Name:

Assignment Title:

1. How would you rate your work on this assignment? (Please remember to use evidence)

2. How did you address your concerns?

3. What would you do differently next time?

4. What communication strategies did you use during this assignment?

Appendix A2

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Communication skills in Middle School

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Behaviorally due to major changes at home. There was much uncertainty and this student also lacked parent support.

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</tbody>
</table>

Student is very dedicated to pleasing adults, however, does tend to get frustrated and can at times have a short temper. When she is seen as credible she is able to state her concerns. When she feels that they are not being taken seriously then she tends to lash out and get in both verbal and physical fights.

Student suffers from anxiety, by the end of the school year, he was able to advocate for himself when a break was needed and was also able to clearly communicate what needs were necessary.

Student started the year off as manipulative. Throughout the year they tried to be honest and the
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sex</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Manipulation</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

- Student does not speak English as their first language and tends to joke rather than take things seriously. Struggles academically due to a lack of English proficiency.

- This student was more focused on academics than social interactions. However, by the end of the year this student was able to develop many close personal relationships.

- Student does not understand the importance of school, and has many significant environmental factors that inhibit them from communicating their needs.
Communication skills in Middle School

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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Enthusiasm</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
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</table>

They are more focused on their family.

Student gets frustrated easily. Mother lacks formal education, does not communicate well.

Student lacks academic support at home.

Student is very defensive and started the year off thinking that everything could be solved by a physical fight.

Student prefers to see himself as a favorite. When he thinks he is a favorite he performs well academically. If he thinks someone doesn’t like him then he shuts down and refuses to work.

Student is very intelligent, also suffers from depression and a lack of self esteem.
### Communication skills in Middle School

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<th></th>
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<td>Student has multiple medical problems, an absent mother, and lives with their grandmother</td>
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Appendix A3

Active Listening Lesson Plan

Erica Dams

**Common Core State Standards:**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.B**
  Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2
Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

Unit Outcomes:

After students are taught how to Actively Listen, they will be able to be more successful in the classroom. They will be know what skills are needed to be successful when listening, when gathering auditory information and also be able to use this information to help them gain a deeper understanding of what is being asked or presented.

Rationale:

With the understanding of how to be active listeners, the students will be able to have a more complete understanding of what is being asked of them. With these skills, they should also be able to fully comprehend the information needed to complete assignments or identify what information is missing.

Assessment:

I will be assessing this learned skill by observing the students demonstrate the learned skill and applying it to their classwork assignments. It will be an observational assessment.

Resources:

Messages: The Communication Book. By Matthew McKay PhD, Martha Davis PhD, Patrick Fanning

Introduction: 10 minutes

I will write the following question on the front board, “Think about a time when you knew someone was really listening to you. How did you know that they were listening to you?” I will then ask the students to discuss and answer that question in their group. Then in small groups we will discuss what it looks like when someone is not listening to you. Then I will pose the question, “How do you know they are not listening to you?”

Procedures: 15-20 min

Once the students have had adequate time to create a list of materials, we will create a master list of what it looks like when someone is listening.

Prepare with a positive, engaged attitude

- Focus your attention on the subject
  - Stop all non-relevant activities beforehand to orient yourself to the speaker or the topic
Communication skills in Middle School

- Review mentally what you already know about the subject
  Organize in advance relevant material in order to develop it further
  (previous lectures, TV programs, newspaper articles, web sites, prior real life experience, etc.)
- Avoid distractions
  Seat yourself appropriately close to the speaker
  Avoid distractions (a window, a talkative neighbor, noise, etc.)
- Acknowledge any emotional state
  Suspend emotions until later, or
  Passively participate unless you can control your emotions
- Set aside your prejudices, your opinions
  You are present to learn what the speaker has to say,
  not the other way around

**Actively listen**

- Be other-directed; focus on the person communicating
  Follow and understand the speaker as if you were walking in their shoes
  Listen with your ears but also with your eyes and other senses
- Be aware: non-verbally acknowledge points in the speech
  Let the argument or presentation run its course
  Don’t agree or disagree, but encourage the train of thought
- Be involved:
  Actively respond to questions and directions
  Use your body position (e.g. lean forward) and attention to encourage the speaker and
  signal your interest. Notes taken from [http://www.studygs.net/listening.htm](http://www.studygs.net/listening.htm)

After we have created a master list of helpful hints and techniques, we will do a little role
playing and act out what it looks like to be a good listener as well as what it looks like to be a
poor listener.

**Closure/Reflection: 5 minutes**

Students will reflect on their own behavior and then they will write down a 2-3 of the
suggestions of an Active Listener that they could apply to their classroom setting.

**Evaluation:**

I will be observing their classroom behavior to see what impact if any the Active Listening
lesson has had on their classwork and behavior.
Appendix 4
Behavior Reflections

Reasons for My Behavior

Name ________________
Date ________________

Description of My Behavior

Consequences of My Behavior

How do I feel?

How has my behavior affected others?

Other Consequence(s)

Plan for Improvement ________________________________________________________________

Student ____________________________
Teacher ____________________________
Parent _____________________________

Developed by Laura Candler -- Teaching Resources Website -- www.lauracandler.com
Communication skills in Middle School

Appendix A5
Behavior Reflections

Reasons for My Behavior

Name __________________________

Date January 18, 2020

Consequences of My Behavior

How do I feel?

Frustrated

How has my behavior affected others?

Interrupted them from learning

Other Consequence(s)

Behind on assignment

Plan for Improvement

Student __________________________

Teacher __________________________

Parent __________________________

Developed by Laura Candler ~ Teaching Resources Website ~ www.lauracandler.com
Pre-Survey

Assignment Title: Literature Circle - The Book Thief

1. What are you expected to do?
   To discuss the book

2. What questions do you have about this assignment?
   None

3. What worries you about completing this assignment?
   Reading the book

Post-Survey

Assignment Title: Literature Circle - The Book Thief

1. How would you rate your work on this assignment? (Please remember to use evidence)
   8, I read the book and completed the assignment.

2. How did you address your concerns?
   I asked clarifying questions.

3. What would you do differently next time?
   I would complete the study guide while reading the book.

4. What communication strategies did you use during this assignment?
   Clarifying questions, group work, active listening.
Pre-Survey

Assignment Title: Explorer project

1. What are you expected to do?
   Research and Explorer Report

2. What questions do you have about this assignment?
   None

3. What worries you about completing this assignment?
   Having enough time to complete the project

Post-Survey

Assignment Title: Explorer project

1. How would you rate your work on this assignment? (Please remember to use evidence)
   I struggle to research

2. How did you address your concerns?
   I asked clarifying questions

3. What would you do differently next time?
   Ask questions sooner

4. What communication strategies did you use during this assignment?
   Clarifying questions and active listening
**Facial Expressions**

**Activity 14**

**Learning Objective:** To teach children the difference between facial expressions; to identify possible causes for these expressions

**Skill:** Emotional communication, self-awareness

Ask the children, "When you look at people's faces, what do their expressions tell you?" Brainstorm ideas and write them on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper.

Tell them:

*People's facial expressions show how they feel. The way their faces look can tell you more than what they are saying. You can often tell whether a person is angry, sad, or happy, even if you can't hear her words.*

*When someone is talking to you, it's important for you to use an appropriate facial expression. If she is saying something funny, you would probably smile; sad, you might look serious; scary, you might have an alarmed expression on your face; and so on. If you look bored or stuck-up, that person probably won't want to continue talking with you.*

Distribute Activity Sheet 14. Children can either write in the answers or raise their hands and take turns guessing the facial expressions. Reinforce the concept that they can tell how each child is feeling even without any words being said. When asked the reason for each child's feelings, children can invent scenarios—there are no right or wrong answers.
Facial Expressions

What is this girl's facial expression saying?
Why do you think she feels that way?

What is this boy's facial expression saying?
Why do you think he feels that way?

What is this girl's facial expression saying?
Why do you think she feels that way?

What is this boy's facial expression saying?
Why do you think he feels that way?
**Learning Objective:** To teach children the meaning of gestures in nonverbal communication

**Skill:** Emotional communication

Ask the group what “gesture” means, and choose volunteers to show gestures with their arms and hands. Ask others to tell what they think these gestures indicate.

Tell the group:

> Gestures play an important role in communication. Many people use their hands to emphasize what they are saying. For example, clapping or giving a “thumbs up” shows your approval. Waving is a gesture of greeting or a way of saying goodbye. Other parts of the body are also used to convey the meaning of our words. Shrugging your shoulders is a way to say, “I don’t know,” or “I don’t care.”

Even though we usually pay more attention to the words people are saying, it’s important to recognize what signals and gestures mean so that we can communicate effectively.

Distribute Activity Sheet 15. After the children have completed it, discuss what each gesture means and when it might be used.
**Gestures**

**ACTIVITY SHEET 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What does this gesture mean?**

Describe a time this gesture might be used:

**What does this gesture mean?**

Describe a time this gesture might be used:

**What does this gesture mean?**

Describe a time this gesture might be used:

**What does this gesture mean?**

Describe a time this gesture might be used:
Personal Space*

Learning Objective: To teach children the concept of personal space

Skill: Self-awareness

Ask the children to talk about personal space. Have them focus on the word "personal" when they are thinking about the concept.

Tell them:

Personal space refers to the distance between two people. Your personal space is the space around your body that helps you feel comfortable near other people and helps them feel comfortable near you. It's like an invisible bubble you carry around with you. People who have studied personal space say that there are four space zones.

The first is called the "intimate" zone, which starts where someone can almost touch you and goes out about eighteen inches. This zone is where your family and closest friends will stand to talk with you about something personal or to be near you. If someone you don't feel close to stands in this zone, you will probably feel uncomfortable.

The second zone is called the "personal" zone. It goes from eighteen inches to four feet out from your body. People you know well stand in this zone for everyday conversations.

The third zone, the "social" zone, ranges from four to twelve feet from your body. Acquaintances stand in the social zone to talk to you.

The fourth zone is the "public" zone. It starts at twelve feet and goes as far as you can see. People stand in this zone to speak in public, for example, if someone were running for school office and had to give a speech in assembly.

Distribute Activity Sheet 16 and have children give examples of whom they would usually talk to in each zone. Besides friends and family members, they should think of people at school and in the community.
Appendix A8

I am sending you this form to verify your consent to be a participant in my research project titled “Exploring how improving communication skills between teachers and students impacts student effort.” This research project’s goals are to improve the communication between teachers and students by teaching communication skills in the classroom. We will be focusing on active listening, working in a group setting, effective questioning and study skills. I will then be observing your student’s effort on their assigned course work to see if the taught communication skills have had any impact on your student’s classwork. All of the results from this research project will be completely confidential. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty if you choose not to participate. I am currently working on my final project for my Masters in Education from Aquinas College. I am being supervised by Dr. Carol Winkle at Aquinas College.

All information from this study will be kept completely confidential and no names will ever appear in the research documents and no individual question answers will be included in the study. Only group findings will be reported. Please feel free to let me know via email damse@grps.org if you have any questions. We will make sure that your questions or concerns will be addressed fully and you will be satisfied with our answers. If you would like a copy of the research results I will get that to you. Thank you so much for your willingness to help me in my study.

Participant signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________
Estoy enviando este formulario para verificar su consentimiento en ser participante de mi estudio de investigación titulado "Explorando cómo el mejoramiento de habilidades de comunicación entre profesores y estudiantes afecta el esfuerzo estudiantil." Los objetivos de éste proyecto de investigación son: mejorar la comunicación entre profesores y estudiantes por medio de la enseñanza de habilidades de comunicación en el aula. Nos concentraremos en escuchar activamente, y trabajo en grupo para formular preguntas y habilidades de estudio. Observaré el estudiante y su esfuerzo en su curso asignado para ver si la enseñanza de habilidades de comunicación ha tenido algún impacto en el trabajo del estudiante.

Todos los resultados de este proyecto de investigación serán completamente confidenciales y ningún nombre aparecerá en los documentos de investigación y ninguna de las respuestas a las preguntas se incluirán en el estudio. Solo se compartirán la conclusiones del grupo. Por favor, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo a través del correo electrónico a damse@grps.org si tiene alguna pregunta. Nos aseguraremos de que sus preguntas o cuestiones se tendrán en cuenta completamente y usted estará satisfecho con nuestras respuestas. Si desea una copia de los resultados de la investigación conseguiré esto para usted.

Muchas gracias por su voluntad de ayudarme en mi estudio.

Firma del Participante: _____________________ Fecha _______________
Appendix A9

Harrison Elementary
Behavior Report

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tier II Behavior (choose one)</th>
<th>Tier III Behavior (choose one)</th>
<th>Possible Motivation (choose one)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pushing / rough housing</td>
<td>Fighting/Physical Aggression/Assault/Harm towards others</td>
<td>Obtain peer attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect/Defiance/Disruption (fourth intervention) (Write times)</td>
<td>Abusive/Vulgar language or gestures towards staff</td>
<td>Obtain adult attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive/profane language or gestures toward other students</td>
<td>Major Defiance/Disrespect/Disruption (fourth offense) (record the dates of the 3 tier II behavior reports)</td>
<td>Obtain items/activities</td>
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<td>Property misuse</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Avoid task or activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Theft/Destruction of property</td>
<td>Avoid peer(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Avoid adult</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coping with anger/Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others Involved: [ ] None [ ] Peers [ ] Staff [ ] Teacher [ ] Substitute [ ] Unknown [ ] Other

Teacher Action/Interventions for Tier II Behavior

White copy to office

No Administration signature or review required for a Tier II behavior Report

[ ] Loss of privilege (recess or other) [ ] Parent contact number
[ ] Conference with student/corrective plan set up [ ] Attempted [ ] Left message [ ] Talked to
[ ] Other [ ] Detention/time out

Teacher Signature: ____________________________

Other comments/notes on the incident: Just the facts

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<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
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Office use only

Administrative Decision (Tier III Behaviors)

[ ] In-school suspension (___ days) [ ] Bus suspension (___ days)
[ ] Out-of-school suspension (___ days) [ ] Other

Administrator Signature: ____________________________

Parent Signature: ____________________________

[ ] I need to talk to my student’s teacher [ ] I need to talk to an administrator

PINK-PARENT YELLOw-TEACHER WHITE-OFFICE

GRPS135-3/15