Walk the Line: Investigating how expectations and strategies impact the time and behavior of first grade students in the hallway

Maria Congelio
Emily McAleer
First Grade Interns
Gray’s Woods Elementary School
State College Area School District
mlc362@psu.edu and eem5118@psu.edu
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Description of Teaching Context

Miss Congelio’s First Grade Class

In first grade, a lot of our time is spent moving from one place to another. This could be from carpet to carpet for math stations, or from hallway to hallway for Book Buddies. No matter where we are going, transitions, particularly hallway transitions, are important in first grade. Much of our time in the beginning of the year is spent rehearsing and remembering transition procedures. Since so much of our time is spent reviewing poems, rules, and expectations, we expect our students to obey those words and follow along properly in order to be efficient and well behaved. When we see this hallway behavior deteriorate, or the poem and rules become less effective, it makes me want to make a change.

This urge to change my students’ hallway behavior has become my inquiry project. We want to know what goes through their minds. We want to know why they can sing our hallway poem and as soon as they take a step forward those words become meaningless as they skip and chat with their neighbor. We want to find strategies or techniques that can help them become intrinsically motivated to be better hallway students.

We will be looking to see if expectations, strategies, or daily routine have any impact of first grade hallway behavior. Throughout this inquiry project, we will also be installing new techniques into the classroom in order to judge what or if different strategies work better or reinforce better behavior.
Miss McAleer's First Grade Classroom

Every day in a first grade classroom consists of many important activities. With these activities come the transitions of getting from one place to another. Many of these transitions take place in differing parts of the school where it is often distracting to others to have a disruptive classroom walking through the hallways. Transitions throughout the school can be very costly to time as well as disrespectful to others if nearby classroom doors are open or if teachers are working quietly with a group of students in the hallway if students do not have the proper understanding of what is expected of them. With the proper strategies, perhaps students can find the motivation to improve their behavior.

We are interested in developing more efficient and effective hallway transitions options because it has been an issue we have been questioning since the beginning of the year. I began to take over transitions early in the year; however, hallway transitions have been a constant struggle for me. Students are jumping down the halls, talking to friends around them, and rubbing their hands and shoulders against the wall. Each of these behaviors is something that I believe a first grader is capable of improving upon.

Hallway transitions are a time when students do not always have the direct eye of a teacher, so it is a time where they are often able to get away with behavior that would not otherwise be acceptable. While transitioning to different activities throughout the day, I am constantly turning to check on our students and taking time to stop and correct those who need to be. My wonderings encase the ideas of how hallway transitions would be if students had a clear understanding of our expectations, and what strategies need to be developed to help students be efficient in the hallways (See Appendix A for Full Inquiry Brief).
Main Wondering and Questions

Main Wondering:
What impact do expectations and strategies have on the time and behavior of first grade students in the hallway?

Sub-Questions

• Does the destination of the transition affect the timeliness and behavior of students?
• Does a continual review of expectations help students stay focused on good behavior?
• Would good behavior last longer if a new routine were used each day?
• Why do some students need rewarded for appropriate behavior, while others just do it?

Data Collection

In order to gain a better understanding of what hallway transitions looked like and what students were capable of, we collected several different types of data. We began our data collection prior to implementing strategies to better compare results afterwards. Taking observational notes and videos while transitioning through the hallways helped us to understand where students were starting out and how and where exactly we should begin our implementation of strategies. We continued our data collection throughout the
inquiry process. We collected data through student surveys, systematic observation, class meetings, videos, and timing.

**Before:**

Prior to implementing our inquiry within our classroom, we began by taking baseline videos of our students walking through the hallways. We kept record of the day of the week and the time it took to get from the doorway of our rooms to the doorway of our destinations (Appendix C). The times for each day were averaged together due to three weeks of baseline data collection (three Monday times were averaged together for both Miss Congelio and Miss McAleer to get a baseline, Monday time). We noted behaviors within the hallway that stood out and specific students that seemed to be having more difficulty than others. In Appendix D, instances of bad behavior in categories such as talking, not walking, not looking forward, and hands not at our sides can be seen. All of those categories of bad behavior were included in every transition, so one can imagine the difficulty we had going down the hall. To get an average account for each bad behavior for both Miss Congelio's and Miss McAleer's class, a random 20 videos were analyzed to account for behavior. In order to collect the most natural baseline data, we decided that we were not going to inform our students of anything we were looking into. We simply continued our transitions as we had from the beginning of the year.

From the beginning of the year, Miss Congelio had used a poem to prepare her students for the hallway. It was her mentor's hallway strategy and the students picked it up quickly, as they picked up the tune and memorized hallway expectations. This short poem
was used from the start of the year with her class, and this was the only strategy she
continued to use with her classroom while we collected our baseline data.

“My hands are hanging by my side,
I’m standing nice and tall.
My eyes are facing forward,
Now I’m ready for the hall.”

Miss McAleer used a similar poem strategy with her class to prepare her students
for the hallway. It got the students ready for the hallway, while also stating short, concise
expectations for the students. This was introduced at the beginning of the year, and was a
routine strategy used each time before entering the hallways.

“Feet forward (Stomp Stomp).
Mouths are closed (Chh Chh).
Hands are Down (Chh Chh).”

Our intention of collecting baseline data while only using the poem strategy
implemented from the beginning of the year was to gain general knowledge of students’
routine behavior within the hallway prior to new strategies being introduced. We did not
want to intervene with the normal strategies, in fears that the data would not be authentic.
Though the students wondered why we were filming and timing them, we felt this
approach would give us the best baseline data to work with throughout the course of our inquiry project.

In addition to baseline videos, we designed and conducted student surveys for each of our classes. We designed these surveys to focus on students’ individual thoughts on their own behavior within the hallway. The surveys included five questions concerning students’ behavior in the hallway in regards to the daily poem we used (hands always at sides, mouths always closed, eyes facing forward). Our intention for creating this survey was to gather information on how students felt about their individual behavior in the hallway (See Appendix E for Student Survey-Pre-Implementation). Seeing how they felt about their own behavior would give us an idea about if they thought they were following the expectations, or if they saw room for improvement. Having the children see room for improvement would give our inquiry a boost, as children saw these strategies as something to help them reach their goal of following expectations. If children did not see room to improve, it meant that we would have to try that much harder to motivate the students to use the strategies.

Miss Congelio conducted her survey in a small group setting. She reviewed each question with her students, explaining that if they felt they did a really good job at one question, they should color in a happy face. If they felt they could do a better job at a specific behavior, they should color in a sad face. Since Miss Congelio’s survey did not have a middle, neutral face, the option of drawing a neutral face or writing “sometimes” was given as an option to the students to express that feeling. The students were given privacy folders to encourage honest answers and to help students realize, in a private setting, that maybe there are a few behaviors they could improve upon.
Miss McAleer dispersed the students within the classroom, and conducted her survey in a whole group setting. She read and reviewed each question with the children, reminding them if they felt they always did a wonderful job at something they should color in a smiley face, if they did their best only sometimes they should color in a straight face, and if they really felt they could do a better job, they should color in a sad face. Students were encouraged to answer each question very honestly and were told that they would not be punished for putting a sad face.

After looking over the student surveys and collecting a sufficient amount of baseline data, we each decided to conduct a classroom meeting. The intention of this meeting was to explain to students what we were looking into, and obtain some ideas and suggestions from the class as to how we could go about improving our hallway behavior. Students were very interested and eager to help in our attempt to create and implement a variety of strategies.

Miss McAleer’s class suggested the idea of specifically ordering the students to line up. They also suggested that maybe we could have a ‘good chart’ and a ‘bad chart’. For each time they received a check in the good chart, it could be a step closer to a whole class reward. If their behavior in the hallway was not the best, they would receive a check on the bad chart. If they received five checks on the bad chart, that could take away one check from the good chart.

Miss Congelio began her meeting by informing her class of why she had been videotaping them in the hallways. She explained that her homework was to look at 1st graders’ behavior in the hallway and think of some ways to improve it. Her students suggested that not standing by their friends in line could possibly be a way to improve their
behavior. They also thought having designated special spots would be a good idea to help rid the temptation to talk to their neighbor.

We were both eager to hear our students’ suggestions and delighted that they were so interested and enthused at the topic of our discussion. We knew that we did not want this project to be all our own, and their input was important to us. Children often give significant input like this, when asked directly (Kohn, 1996). We gathered our students’ thoughts and began to think of various strategies to help better our students’ hallway behavior. We came up with a variety of techniques and strategies that would be implemented into our classrooms’ daily hallway routines. We chose strategies that offered positive reinforcement for good hallway behavior, because we found many studies where positive reinforcement, rather than punishment worked better when looking for specific results (Leedy, 2004).

During:

During the first week of implementation of new strategies, we started with a class meeting where we reviewed good hallway behavior, and what a good hallway student would look like. Both the students and we learned that a procedure is what a teacher wants the class to do, not what the students naturally do, so it is our responsibility to clearly state the expectations (Wong, 1998). After discussing with the class that there should be no talking, hands should be at our sides, we should be facing forward, and have walking feet, we introduced the RECESS strategy. This strategy was found on an online student behavior book called, “Student Hallway Behavior Book: Presented by the fans of The Organized
Classroom Blog” by Charity Preston. This was a strategy that focused on the entire class’ behavior according to the expectations we just discussed.

As we walked through the hallways, a whiteboard with the word “RECESS” was held up for the children to see. All the letters were safe, and stayed on the board until poor behavior was spotted. Once the poor behavior was spotted by the teacher (teacher would face forward and glance over her shoulder regularly or walk backwards with the board held over her shoulder facing the students) the transition was stopped, the behavior was explained, and then a letter was erased for all students to see. The letters were not replaced, and any letters that were left over at the end of the week were counted as an extra minute of recess on Friday afternoon. This was a reward for the good behavior they had in order to keep those letters on the board. This reward of extra recess motivated the students to be not only on their best behavior, but also to motivate and encourage their friends to do the same. This strategy addressed poor behavior, but also promoted self-discipline, so all students were affected by it (Bear, 2010). This strategy was used for one week, and we collected data from both videos (behaviors and times could be seen) of every hallway transition throughout the week and from assessing how many letters were left at the end of the week. Throughout the week, the word “RECESS” was seen in many shortened varieties due to letters being erased.

When thinking of our second strategy that we could implement, we wanted to focus on something a little different. The RECESS strategy depended strictly on whole group behavior. The students excelled as a whole group and had lapses in behavior as a whole group. We decided to introduce the Mystery Student strategy to the students. This strategy was found in the book, “Tricks of the Trade: In and Out of the Classroom” by Peggy
Hallway Transitions

Campbell-Rush. This strategy ultimately focused on individualized behavior; however, the students were not aware until the end of the day who the particular student was. This strategy provided a reward at the end of the day providing that the ‘mystery student’ had wonderful hallway behavior that day. This helped each student to focus on appropriate hallway behavior so that they could gain a reward of their choice for ten minutes at the end of the day. Had the child chosen not had a great day in the hallways, we simply let the class know that we had a mystery student in mind all day, but he/she could have made a couple of better choices throughout the day so he/she will not be getting a reward. We explained this new strategy to the students on a Monday morning, and brainstormed a list of appropriate hallway behaviors that we, as the teachers, would be looking for when keeping an eye on our mystery student throughout the day. Before walking in the hallway, we reminded students each time that we would be keeping an eye on the mystery student for the day.

We continued this strategy for the week, choosing a new mystery student each day. After certain students were already given the chance to be the mystery student, we worried that their behavior might revert back to the original behavior. We worked to prevent this by reminding the students that just because they were the mystery student once, that would not mean that they could not be it again. While monitoring the mystery students, and the rest of the class throughout this piece of the intervention, we also collected data by recording each transition in the hallway for this entire week. From that we got behaviors while the intervention was in place and the time of the transitions while this strategy was being implemented.
For the third week of implementation, we once again joined together for a class meeting. We talked about what the students thought they should be doing individually, to earn a hallway compliment. The students came up with similar ideas as they have in the past, such as no talking, hands at our sides, and walking feet. Once we reviewed expectations, we introduced a new strategy that would focus on each individual child’s hallway behavior. We called this strategy the Star Behavior Chart. This strategy was adapted from a hallway strategy seen in, “Student Hallway Behavior Book: Presented by fans of The Organized Classroom” by Charity Preston.

During this strategy, we would watch the students closely through each hallway transition, and if we saw anyone doing an exceptional job, or showing us their “star behavior” we would put a star next to their name. We did this through an entire week, so students had an opportunity to accumulate a number of stars. The students knew from the beginning of the week that stars were positive, and that the more they got the bigger their prize would be. We only gave them that information, and did not give specifics, but by Friday we determined that students with 1-3 stars would get one item from the prize box, while students with 4-7 stars would get two items from the prize box. The students definitely were proud of their prizes and behaviors. The behavior chart and videos that provided times and proof of behavior were collected during this intervention.

During our fourth week of strategy implementation, we chose to focus on something that did not revolve around a reward. We wanted to determine if students’ behavior was strictly reward-driven or if behavior could be altered by simply pre-determining assigned spots in line. As this was one of our student’s suggestions, we wanted to also incorporate their idea into how things could be improved.
We explained to students the strategy for the week, and made them aware of their spot in line. We organized the line in a way that the ‘chattier’ students were around those who were more reserved, and those who needed some extra ‘help’ in the hallways were closer towards the front rather than the middle or end of the line. When determining students’ ‘special spots’ we kept in mind that some days students would be absent, and took that into consideration when placing our students. We used this strategy each time we left the room and came back to the classroom, while also still incorporating the poem we used from the first day of school. We used video recordings to collect data for this intervention.

After:

We did a follow up survey with the children. This survey was almost identical to the survey given to the children while we collected baseline data. The questions about their behavior were pulled right from our hallway poems, which we say each time we leave the room in order to remind us of hallway expectations. The children once again had to color in or circle a happy face (if they felt they did a good job) or a sad face (if they felt they could still improve) (See Appendix F for Student Survey-Post-Implementation).

The last thing we did were interviews with both first grade teachers and second grade teachers. We wanted to get their ideas and reactions to hallway behavior in order to judge where our students were developmentally, and where they would need to be in order to succeed with second grade expectations. We thought this would give us a clue as to how much we helped and prepared the students for not only our classroom, but for their future experiences in the hallways of Gray’s Woods (See Appendix G for Interview Questions).
After we had enough data to understand our main wondering, we stopped timing and filming the students during hallway transitions in order to analyze our data. Although we were done collecting data from the children, we still implemented hallway strategies in order to keep the routine of hallway transitions. The strategies were only implemented a few days per week, and we minimized the strategies throughout the weeks in order to put the responsibility more on the students intrinsically, rather than extrinsically.

**Data Analysis**

When we began collecting data, we collected all the information that we could. We filmed, timed, observed, and took notes on our students through every hallway transition throughout the several week timeframe. With this information readily available to us, we could easily analyze the topics of (1) time and efficiency, (2) behavior and (3) destinations.

Before collecting any information, we explained to the students the strategy we would be using for that week. We did this each Monday morning, in order to set expectations and make it clear to students what the strategy was and how we would be collecting information. Over the timeframe of our inquiry project we implemented four different strategies each lasting a week. We analyzed our data based on the time and efficiency of students and the behaviors exhibited by students. Due to the amount of data and how we planned on analyzing it, at some points we focused on combined data, while other times we focused on individual aspects of data.

For time and efficiency, we looked at our classrooms separately. We had different specials on each day of the week, and we did not want our data to be skewed. To start with
Miss Congelio, she collected transition times for each day of the week. She did this every week with each new strategy. At the end of each week when the strategy was finished being implemented, she averaged each day’s times together to get a conclusive, average time for each day (Monday through Friday). By averaging these times at the end of each week, she had an idea how each strategy (RECESS, Mystery Person, Star Behavior) compared to one another on each individual day of the week in accordance with time and efficiency (See Appendix H for Miss Congelio’s Time and Efficiency Chart).

Miss McAleer’s data collection for time and efficiency was conducted in the same way as Miss Congelio’s. She also collected transition times for each day of the week for every strategy implemented (RECESS, Mystery Person, Special Spots) (See Appendix I for Miss McAleer’s Time and Efficiency Chart).

Once our data was collected and averaged separately. We chose to display our data in two separate bar graphs to easily compare the effectiveness of each strategy in regards to time and efficiency. We wanted to see how long it took the students to get from destination to destination. We started timing as the front of the line entered the hallway and finished timing when the front of the line arrived at the doorway of our destination.

The next aspect we analyzed was behavior. Before implementing new strategies, we wanted to get an idea of what students’ hallway behavior was like naturally in order to compare our results after strategies had been implemented. While collecting this baseline data, we collaboratively noted how many times students’ hands were not at their sides, eyes were not facing forward, students were not walking, and how many instances students were talking for each hallway transition. We collected this baseline data for one week (See Appendix D for the baseline Hallway Behavior Chart).
After collecting our baseline data, we implemented four strategies, which were the RECESS strategy, the Mystery Person, Special Spots, and Star Behavior. We once again collected data by videotaping and timing our students through every hallway transition. After looking through our data, we separated the videos according to the strategy. While watching the videos, we noted how well each strategy affected the behaviors we wanted to monitor. We once again noted how many times hands were not at their sides, eyes were not facing forward, students were not walking, and in how many instances the students were talking in each classroom. We then averaged these numbers together (See Appendix J for Behavior Chart).

The third aspect that we analyzed was whether the destination and the strategy combined affected the time and efficiency of our hallway transitions. We both timed our classrooms’ hallway transitions throughout the four weeks. From this we gathered the time it took to get to each destination from our respective classrooms, while using a different strategy each week. After this, we averaged our times together according to the destination (art, music, library, lunch and recess). From there we used these times to create a bar graph, which compares and contrasts the timeliness of hallway transitions from our rooms to a specific destination while using a specific strategy (RECESS, Mystery Person Special Spots, Star Behavior). Some of the destinations are further from our classrooms than others, which is a contributing factor in why some destinations are significantly higher than other (See Appendix K for Destination Chart).

We also used student surveys to collect data on how students perceived their personal hallway behavior. We decided to give this survey to students before implementing any strategies and again after the strategies and expectations had been put into practice.
We each implemented our surveys within our own classrooms, so we created separate charts representing our data. Miss McAleer's class was encouraged to fill in a happy face, a straight face, or a sad face regarding their thoughts on their hallway behavior. Miss Congelio's class had the opportunity to fill in a happy face or a sad face based on their feelings of their hallway behavior. They were to make their own neutral face in between the happy and sad face if they felt as if they were in between.

Miss Congelio's results show that overall, that students generally felt fairly positive about their hallway behavior. Talking seemed to be the section where students felt as if they could use the most work. One student felt like they were in between when it came to rating themselves on overall hallway behavior. However, 18 students felt they regularly did a great job in the hallway, while three rated themselves negatively in regards to their hallway behavior. Though they may have been confident with their hallway behavior, we hoped their actions within the hallway would depict their true understanding of what it meant to have proper hallway behavior. Students might not have known that their behavior was inappropriate for the hallways. (See Appendix L for Miss Congelio's Pre-Implementation Survey Results).

Miss McAleer's survey contained the same questions as Miss Congelio's survey. Miss McAleer's students did not rate themselves quite as highly as Miss Congelio’s students. Seven students were in the middle with their thoughts about their hallway behavior. Fourteen students gave themselves a happy face for overall hallway behavior. There were no students who rated themselves with a sad face. Again, Miss McAleer hoped that after this inquiry project, the students' understanding of the hallway expectations would become more meaningful (See Appendix M for Miss McAleer’s Pre-Implementation Survey Results).
Miss Congelio’s Post-Implementation Survey showed that students felt a great deal better about their hallway behavior than before our strategy implementation began. She did not have any students that gave themselves sad faces for their hallway behavior. Eighteen students rated themselves with a happy face when thinking overall hallway behavior. Three students were neutral in this category. The most concerns some students had were in the talking category. Some students still felt like they could do a little better job with the talking aspect of hallway behavior. However, the overall results of students’ feelings about their hallway behavior dramatically improved (See Appendix N for Post-Implementation Survey Results).

Miss McAleer’s Post-Implementation Behavior Survey contained the same questions as Miss Congelio’s. Overall, her students rated themselves much higher on their hallway behavior than during the pre-implementation survey. Some students did showed some concern in the talking category, as did Miss Congelio’s class; however, overall students felt much better about their hallway behavior. Seventeen students rated themselves with a happy face when thinking about their hallway behavior, and five students rated themselves with a sad face. These students were encouraged to be honest with their thoughts on their hallway behavior, and some of them rated themselves a little harder than I would have (See Appendix O for Post-Implementation Survey Results).

We also analyzed our interviews. The first interview was with Colleen Sheehan, Miss Congelio’s mentor. We asked the questions (1) What are your hallway expectations? (2) What are common, hallway behavior problems for your grade level? (3) How do you handle hallway transitions in your class? Mrs. Sheehan told us that her expectations for the students were very similar to the hallway poem she sings with them each time they leave
the room. She wants them to have their hands at their sides, stand nice and tall, eyes facing forward, and be prepared for the hall. When asked what typical first grade hallway behavior problems were, she mentioned spinning and dancing around rather than walking forward. She also said talking was a problem that she has seen through the years. When asked how she handles the problem, Mrs. Sheehan said friendly reminders often work, but if it seems like a bigger problem that the entire group needs to work on, then she will have a whole-class discussion (See Appendix G for Interview Questions).

We chose to interview a 2nd grade teacher, Meghann Pavone, to get an idea of what hallway behavior was like in 2nd grade. We asked her the same three questions that we asked Mrs. Sheehan. Miss Pavone generally set the same expectations for hallway behavior. Her ‘poem’ before she walks out the door is “Eyes up front, Hands by your side, Zippered lips, and Optional smile.” She waits for her class to be ready before entering the hallway. If Miss Pavone sees a problem while walking throughout the halls, she stops, mentions that she will wait for the person who is talking to be ready and then continue again when that student is ready. She stops as often as she needs. The common issues that she sees while transitioning in the hallways are clumps of students walking together rather than a straight line, talking, hands on other students, and students hands rubbing up against the wall (See Appendix G for Interview Questions).

While looking at this information, we could identify our first grade classes as somewhat the norm when it comes to hallway behavior. We definitely see similarities, and can relate to common problems that Mrs. Sheehan and Miss Pavone have seen over the years. We thought about what Mrs. Sheehan and Miss Pavone said, and tried to think about if what we were doing was appropriate for our students, since these problems seem to
always occur. We also thought about whether or not students were provided with the same expectations for 2nd grade. We realized that teachers still expect the same, if not more while in 2nd grade. We decided that our strategies and motivation for our students to become better in the hallway were appropriate, because they proved to us over and over again that they can behave and follow expectations—they just needed the extra push. This thought help to support our thoughts on our first claim.

**Claims and Evidence**

After reviewing and analyzing our data, we have noticed some patterns and trends that have allowed us to feel comfortable in making some general claims regarding first grade students and their hallway behavior.

**Claim #1: Hallway behavior of first grade students improves when hallway transition strategies are implemented.**

Throughout our inquiry project, our main question was how will transition strategies and expectations affect the behavior of first grade students while in the hallway? After collecting and analyzing data, we can clearly make a claim that any strategy, no matter what it is, had a positive effect on the behavior of first grade students in the hallway.

When looking at Appendix J, it is evident that the strategies greatly improved the behavior of students when looking at where their hands should be, where their eyes should be, whether they are walking, and if they are talking. Before hallway transition strategies
were implemented, the levels of negative behavior were at least 4 instances each of hands in the wrong place, eyes not facing forward, students not walking, and students talking in the hallway. That meant we were up to 16 misbehaviors every time we were in the middle of a hallway transition.

Once the various strategies were implemented, and we took another look at the children’s behavior, we discovered that each strategy dramatically enhanced their behavior positively, as shown in Appendix J. The RECESS strategy brought each instance of poor behavior (hands in wrong place, eyes not facing forward, not walking, talking) down to 2.5 from 4 every time we were in line. The Mystery Person strategy brought the instances of poor behavior down to below 2 each time we were in line. The Star Behavior brought the instances of poor behavior also down from 4 to below 2.5, while the Special Spots brought the instances down slightly to 3.5 every time we were in line.

**Claim #2: First graders are more motivated to exhibit positive hallway behavior when a reward is incorporated into a strategy being used.**

When thinking of strategies that could have been implemented during our inquiry process, we wanted to vary the types being implemented. For one of our sub-questions, we were wondering whether students were directly influenced by a reward for proper hallway behavior, or if their behavior could be improved by simply arranging a situation where students would be less likely to misbehave in the hallway.

The majority of our strategies provided some type of reward for students whether it was individual or in a group setting. We found that strategies with rewards worked fairly
well, as students’ behavior and the timeliness was improving from the time we collected our baseline data. We then implemented a strategy which considered environmental factors, such as friends in the classroom and being in the front or the back of the line rather than rewarding students in the end. We placed each student in a ‘special spot’ in line, which we had pre-planned. We kept in mind while placing students in these special spots other students in the classroom that may have negatively affected students’ behavior. We also considered whether a student did better at the front of the line knowing that a teacher was closer by rather than in the back of the line where there was not as much attention being paid (See Appendix J for the behavior chart, which includes strategies with and without rewards).

After comparing our results from the strategies, which involved a reward, and the Special Spot strategy, which did not, we came to the conclusion that students generally performed better in the hallways when a strategy, which caused students to work towards a reward, is in place. Our results showed that the times of hallway transitions are generally higher during the week of the Special Spot strategy. Appendix J also shows that instances of negative behavior (particularly eyes facing forward and hands by sides) are more prevalent during the week of the Special Spot strategy. Eyes facing forward more than tripled during the Special Spot strategy implementation compared to the week of the Mystery Student.

As shown in Appendix J, the Special Spot strategy did help to improve students’ hallway behavior when compared to the data collected prior to strategy implementation; however, the results were not as strong when considering how much hallway behavior improved with a strategy that gave a reward. The rewards helped our behavior, but if we
had the opportunity to continue this inquiry, we would be wary that too many rewards would alter the actual learning. We still would want the students to be intrinsically motivated, so the rewards would decrease if the project continued for a long period of time (Pressley, 2003).

Claim #3: The most effective results came from data gathered while the Mystery Student strategy was being implemented. The least effective strategy was found to be the Special Spot strategy.

While implementing all of these strategies into our classrooms, we noted that each strategy improved hallway behavior and timeliness to some extent when compared to our baseline data. With that said, one strategy stood out as a very effective and motivational strategy to help first grade students with their hallway behavior. This strategy lowered instances of inappropriate behavior (Appendix J) and made for more efficient transitions when looking at destinations and day of the week (Appendices H,I,J).

The Mystery Person strategy seemed to help the students the most when transitioning through the hallway. This strategy lowered the instances of poor behavior to the lowest levels during the entire inquiry project. It also provided the most efficient transitions (by a few seconds) to four of our five destinations (music, library, lunch, recess). The Mystery Person efficiency continued when looking at each day of the week's timeliness. Looking at the charts below will help visually represent this data in a way that will allow the efficiency to be seen.

Of the four strategies implemented, each improved students’ hallway behavior when compared to the baseline data we collected; however, not all of the strategies were as
strong as the others. The Special Spot Strategy produced results that were often far below those of the other three strategies. For example, when looking at Appendix I, the results of the Special Spot strategy show that for the majority of the days, the time of hallway transitions was at least 5-15 seconds longer per day.

In regards to behavior, the Special Spot strategy results show that for hands at sides, eyes facing forward, and walking in the hallway, students’ behavior was as much as three times worse compared to other strategies. Each of the behaviors improved compared to our baseline data; however the improvement was not as drastic as the other three strategies.

Appendix I shows that when transitioning to recess, library, art, and music, the Special Spot strategy required more time in the hallway compared to the others. Although some of the results are rather close, at some points the Special Spot strategy took more than ten seconds more than the other three strategies implemented.

Each of the strategies was effective in improving hallway behavior; however when comparing results from each strategy involved, we noticed a similarity between the strategies used and the results produced. The Mystery Student strategy seemed to produce the best outcomes, whereas the Special Spot strategy was not as strong when it came to time and efficiency for 1st grade hallway transitions.

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**
As a result of this inquiry project, we both discovered strategies and expectations that helped first grade students transition through the hallway in a timelier manner, as well as with better behavior. We lowered instances of poor behavior, and made transitions more efficient when looking at both destinations and days of the week. Although the strategies were not equally effective, they each added helpful ideas to our main wondering.

Our inquiry project was not only helpful to our current first grade placements, but also useful to our future classrooms. We can use and interpret this information in a way that can be implemented into any elementary classroom. We can add to this project through the years as we have time to learn about different classrooms, children, and strategies. This will be an ongoing lesson to ourselves as we spend our careers continually wondering about how to help and improve our students.

Throughout the process of this inquiry, we came across results to our own wonderings and learned how to better handle hallway transition and hopefully continue to build upon them. Although strategies involved this year may not produce the exact same results in the future, we now have a strong foundation on what is needed to better prepare students for the hallway. When thinking about how we could incorporate this process into our future classrooms, we came upon some future wonderings:

- To what extent would a transition strategy that was implemented towards the beginning of the year be effective the entire year?
- Does hallway behavior improve with age?
- Does hallway behavior reflect classroom behavior?
We are interested in continuing our exploration of hallway behavior strategies. As a result, we will continue to implement and discover transition techniques throughout our career as future educators.

Appendices

Appendix A: Inquiry Brief

Walk the Line: Investigating how expectations and strategies impact the time and behavior of first grade students in the hallway.

Context

One July morning, the 2011-2012 PDS interns received an email that included a list of the schools and the interns placed in those schools. Two interns in particular looked at their school, Gray’s Woods, to see whom else they would be working along side this year. They each saw the other intern’s name and thought to themselves, “Never heard of that person.” The interns never made an effort to get to know each other before heading into the Jump Start week.

One August morning during Jump Start, at Mt. Nittany Middle School, the two interns who had never met before arrived at a mentor-intern breakfast. They looked familiar to each other, but had never had class or come into contact with each other. They sat at different tables. The room seemed to be divided into LLED block groups instead of any other organizational pattern. The thought of sitting together never crossed their minds, until the room started to separate into school buildings. The interns were brought
closer together. The interns socialized with some familiar faces from their school, but the familiar faces were in different grade levels, but as far as they knew, all the teachers in the school worked together. They were sure they would be able to get away with talking and working with people they were used to working along side. As the morning went on the interns began to participate in activities that were more grade-level orientated. This brought the interns another step closer together.

Their mentors started talking about the upcoming year, laughing about past experiences, and catching up on their first grade routines, but the interns still felt indifferent towards each other. They slowly started to realize that their mentors were more than colleagues; they were friends and partners in their profession. Collaborative planning sessions, synchronized lessons, and a constant partner to look for advice, ideas, justification and reflection was what the mentors had right off the bat modeled for them. The interns, Emily and Maria, never realized how involved or committed they would become to each other and to one another’s student teaching experience.

**Miss McAleer’s Context**

In Miss McAleer’s first grade classroom, there are fifteen boys and eight girls. Two of the children in her classroom have Individualized Education Programs for Learning Support and Emotional/Behavioral Support. One student is in the process of being observed due to lack of attention/processing issues. The other student is on the Autism spectrum with Asperger’s Syndrome. Two children have IEP’s in speech, and three others are in the process of being tested to determine if they qualify for speech and language assistance. Three students within the classroom attend Jumpstart every morning for writing. Four boys attend Learning Enrichment activities. The majority of her class was
reading a level D/E book when beginning first grade in September. There are two students who began the year instructionally at B, and two other students who started the year instructionally at K. Three students need some extra “thinking” help in math.

Five children are new to the school this year, coming from other schools within the district. Her class is made up of entirely Caucasian students, and there is one girl who is from Russia. This is her second year in America. She is in ESL; however, her parents do not want her to attend an ESL school, so she is not receiving the total support that a usual ESL student would be receiving. One boy transferred to the school at the end of September, and he is currently without a home. He is the only student in the class who receives free lunches.

As a whole, her classroom gets along very well. There are almost twice as many boys as girls in the classroom, so when it comes time for recess, the girls usually play with the girls and boys stay together. However, during whole group activities and class time, the students are always respectful of each other. The boys require more reminders concerning behavior, however, all of the students together make up a wonderful class.

**Miss Congelio’s Context**

In Miss Congelio’s first grade classroom there are fourteen boys and eight girls. Of the fourteen boys, six stand out with above grade level academic skills. Of the eight girls, one in particular is a high achieving student. There are seven children who attend RTII every morning for an hour. These children have been going to RTII, or Jump Start, since the beginning of the year, but currently three students now come back to the classroom a half hour early due to their progress.

There are mostly typical, first-grade children (hyper, sweet, caring, ready to learn)
in Miss Congelio’s class, but a few stand out. There are around five or six in particular that have constant behavior issues. The issues aren’t disruptive or unmanageable, but the behaviors need to be corrected in order to show the students that rules are everywhere in the world, and people need to respect and follow the rules to be a good citizen. One student is on the Autistic spectrum, but is included in most of the day’s activities. There is one student in the class who has been diagnosed with anxiety. According to the child’s previous teachers, and from his past reports, this child has come a long way in previous years. He has great strategies to pull himself together in tough situations, but through the school year Miss Congelio and her mentor have learned about this child and have been able to help steer him in the right direction when he needs comforted. There is another child that is also suspected to have anxiety, but the behaviors aren’t what you would expect from anxiety. Instead it seems like a movement and attention problem.

Miss Congelio’s class seems to have a nice community of well-rounded students who get along for the most part. The children seem to have a wide range of friends throughout the classroom, instead of a few best friends that they are constantly hanging around. The class has had some issues with girls being a little bossy here and there, or forming clicks, but nothing too serious. What has caught Maria and her mentor off guard is the fact that the boys seem to have more difficulty with one another at times. It seems to be a constant battle of jealousy, rivalry, and tattling between a select few. They use fighting, bickering, and constant back and forth gestures to one up the next person. The boys are never getting along. There is also one child who seems to have a dark personality, as he enjoys saying harsh or mean things at inappropriate times, such as laughing when something goes wrong or talking even when he has nothing nice to say to the person.
Miss Congelio’s Rationale

In first grade, a lot of our time is spent moving from one place to another. This could be from carpet to carpet for math stations, or from hallway to hallway for Book Buddies. No matter where we are going transitions, particularly hallway transitions, are important in first grade. Much of our time, in the beginning of the year, is spent rehearsing and remembering transition procedures. Since so much of our time is spent reviewing poems, rules, and expectations, we expect our students to obey those words and follow along properly in order to be efficient and well behaved. When I see this hallway behavior deteriorate, or the poem and rules become less effective, it makes me want to make a change.

This urge to change my students’ hallway behavior has become my inquiry project. I want to know what goes through their minds. I want to know why they can sing our hallway poem and as soon as they take a step forward those words become meaningless as they skip and chat with their neighbor. I want to find strategies or techniques that can help them become intrinsically motivated to be better hallway students. I will be looking to see if the wording of expectations matter, if the person who sets the expectations matters, and whether if the time of day or where we are headed has an impact on hallway behavior.

Throughout this inquiry project, I will also be installing new techniques into the classroom in order to judge what or if different strategies work better or reinforce better behavior.

Miss McAleer’s Rationale

Every day in a first grade classroom consists of many important activities. With these activities come the transitions of getting from one place to another. Many of these transitions take place in differing parts of the school where it is often distracting to others.
to have a disruptive classroom walking through the hallways. Transitions throughout the school can be very costly to time as well as disrespectful to others if students do not have the proper understanding of what is expected of them. With the proper strategies, perhaps students can find the motivation to improve their behavior.

We are interested in developing more efficient and effective hallway transitions options because it has been an issue we have been battling with since the beginning of the year. I began to take over transitions early in the year; however, hallway transitions have been a constant struggle for me. Students are jumping down the halls, talking to friends around them, and rubbing their hands and shoulders against the wall. Each of these behaviors is something that a first grader is capable of improving upon.

Hallway transitions are a time when students do not always have the direct eye of a teacher, so it is a time where they are often able to get away with behavior that would not otherwise be acceptable. While transitioning to different activities throughout the day, I am constantly turning to check on our students and taking time to stop and correct those who need to be. My wonderings encase the ideas of how hallway transitions would be if students had a clear understanding of our expectations, and what strategies need to be developed to help students be efficient in the hallways.

Main Wondering
What impact do expectations and strategies have on the time and behavior of first grade students in the hallway?

Sub-Question
• Does the destination of the transition affect the timeliness and behavior of students?
• Does a continual review of expectations help students stay focused on good behavior?
• Does a daily routine or absence of a daily routine affect hallway transitions?
• How long can one strategy keep the students enthused and excited to use good behavior?
• Does hallway behavior deteriorate through the week?
• Would good behavior last longer if a new routine were used each day?
• Why do some students need rewarded for appropriate behavior, while others just do it?

Data Collection Ideas

• Timing transitions as baseline data - The timing will start from when we begin to ask students to line up at the doorway until we arrive to the doorway of our destination.
• Recording students during every hallway transition
• Observation/Field notes – We will take notes on hallway transitions before, during, and after interventions.
• A survey for students questioning their thoughts on transitions in the hallways.
• Follow up interview with a few students from each of our classrooms concerning their answers and responses to the survey and hallway transitions in general
• Interviewing our mentors and second grade teachers- asking what they think about hallway transitions
Timeline

February 1st-3rd
• Begin to collect baseline data (transition times, observational notes)

February 6th-10th
• Continue collecting baseline data
• Begin to use videos to capture data while in the hallways
• Develop teacher and student surveys

February 13th-17th
• February 13th - Initial brief and Annotated Bib due
• Give students survey
• Continue to time transitions and collect data with hallway transitions

February 21st-24th
• Have a class meeting with students concerning transitions in the hallway. Share with them some of the data we have been collecting (times, behavior in the hallway) and talk about what they think a transition in the hallway should look like.
• Set expectations for students - ask them if they have any ideas to improve upon their hallway behavior
• Begin researching different transition strategies

February 27th- March 2nd
• February 29th - Revised versions of Brief and Annotated Bib due
• Interview mentors concerning hallway transitions
• Continue to research transition strategies
• Begin implementing strategy #1

March 5th-9th Spring Break
• Continue researching and planning new strategies
• Compile results from surveys and interviews
• Organize data (notes, videos, etc) that has been collected so far

March 12th-16th
• Continue to time transitions and collect data
• Implementation of strategy #2

March 19th-23rd
• Continue to time transitions and collect data
• Implement strategy #3

March 26th-30th
• Continue taking notes and collect data
• Implement strategy #4

April 2nd-4th
• Miss Congelio implements new strategy every day
• Miss McAleer explores how long a strategy works
• Start writing paper

April 11th-13th
• Continue working on revising and writing paper

April 16th-20th
• Revise paper
• Prepare for Presentation

April 23rd-27th
• Continue preparing for presentation
• Presentation April 28th

Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography


In this previous inquiry, Katie Allen discusses how she studied transitions within her classroom, and how she helped to make them more efficient. Her strategies involved her students’ voices in what they thought should be done to help their community become more effective at transitions, which worked out well. The students had a say and a thought with what she was working on. This inquiry project is very similar to Maria and I’s. While
Katie focused her transitions more in the classroom, our main focus is the hallways; however, her strategies and goals are similar to what we're working towards.


In this book, George Bear describes and explains different approaches to school discipline. He provides a comprehensive guide to the theory and benefits of addressing bad behavior while also promoting self-discipline. This book will help in our inquiry by letting us understand how we should handle negative behavior in a positive manner. This will help us deal with the behavior in a way that will show the students what is expected and also how they can manage their behavior through self-discipline. These strategies will flow from the classroom into the hallway to help with our hallway transitions and the behavior that goes along with it.


This book was a great help to our inquiry, as it provided several ideas for hallway strategies. This book gives suggestions for helping not only hallway behavior but also classroom problems such as tattling, off task behavior, interruptions, cleaning up, and lunchtime. It is full of new, fun ideas that will grasp students’ attention and allow the teacher to be happy with the results. We used this for our inquiry to come up with motivating, yet exciting strategies to get the students back on track in the hallway.

This book goes over an overview of management strategies and techniques for a classroom. He begins the book by explaining why establishing rules and regulations is important and really essential in a classroom. It discusses how to use appropriate language with students and also what body language is important when conveying direction towards students. Using effective, genuine praise towards students when you really mean it really means a lot and can go a long way. This book will aid significantly in our research and strategy planning part of our inquiry. The sequence of steps described will help when thinking about planning our strategies and management techniques of transitions throughout the hallways. Also, as we work with our students in trying to alter their behavior in the hallway, positive reinforcement is a reward system we are looking to follow. The section in *Managing Your Classroom* discusses the importance of genuine praise and how to properly give that.


This book discusses the importance of classroom management and reviews basic strategies for thinking and rethinking to reflect a positive management approach. It stresses the fact that strategies for managing student behavior are not that different than strategies used for
teaching subject matter. They are both teaching the children how to do something or about something. This book opened our eyes to the similarities between teaching classroom instructional material and teaching school wide behavioral expectations. This could aid our thinking in our inquiry by helping us involve strategies in our interventions that go right along with our strategies in the classroom.


In the book, *Beyond Discipline,* Alfie Kohn talks a lot about student choice. He talks about meeting the needs of both the teacher and the students without just demanding students to do something. He mentions that most of the time students respond or react to teachers in ways that we want them to, but in reality they don’t understand why they do certain things or act certain ways. I thought this would be useful to our inquiry, because as we come up with transition procedure ideas, we want to make sure our students understand why they are acting a certain way or following a certain procedure. We want them to put thought into their actions and behaviors and be able to identify why their actions have consequences and benefits. We thought this book gave us enough tips to have a class meeting and discuss what we need from each other in order to get down the hall in a timely, well-behaved manner. Teacher and student input could have a great effect on this inquiry project, and the meaningful benefits that students get out of the procedure.

This journal article studies the effects of positive behavior supports (PBS) with children and focuses its study around the transitions for children through the hallways. It discusses the possible outcomes of PBS along with the positive effects that can come from implementing it in a school setting before discussing the study. The study took place in a K-5 elementary school in Ohio. A PBS plan was implemented throughout the entire school that focused on positive hallway behavior in which the teachers as well as the principal were involved. The team collected baseline and post intervention data, and positive reinforcement was used to support children's' behavior. Through the behavioral plan that was implemented for the entire school, findings show an increase of positive behavior in all six-grade levels. The study choose to use positive reinforcement towards students behavior, and strategies that we've talked of so far utilize positive reinforcement strategies as well.


We conducted interviews with a first and second grade teacher at Gray's Woods. We used this information to evaluate our students as to what expectations usually are in first grade, and what they should be ready for in second grade. This information was helpful in evaluating how well our inquiry project helped students overcome obstacles in the hallway.

In this book, the authors do case studies in order to find out how primary students are the most motivated and engaged. They compare their findings with past beliefs and parenting ideas. They warn that if too many tangible objects are used as rewards, children will become less intrinsically motivated to learn and behave. They guide teachers and parents towards enthusiastic praise and other verbal responses in order to let the child know of a job well done, but also keeping their mind on the right track. The authors list a series of situations that will lead to weakening motivation in students. This part of the book will be particularly useful through our inquiry project, as we can take advice and expertise when trying different motivation strategies for hallway behavior. Not only will we get good ideas of how to motivate students, but also of what to be aware of. This will give us a good foundation of what works for primary-grade students.


This little online booklet gave us a ton of ideas for hallway strategies. It was written by teachers and fans of the Organized Classroom, so it was truly helpful to see what other professionals in education had to say about each intervention. It provided ideas that could easily be replicated, along with ideas that could be adapted to fit any particular classroom and grade level.
(See Pavone, 2012)


Authors Wong and Wong explain school procedures and their importance, need, real-life application, and approaches through their books, The First Days of School. They start off by saying that a procedure is what a teacher wants the class to do, not what the students naturally do, so it is our responsibility to clearly state the expectations. This helpful to know and to help explain why our students aren’t following transition procedures. The students may not have clear expectations of what they should be doing, or another behavior could be more natural. Wong and Wong also explain that students want and need procedures in order to make themselves more efficient and successful. Through this inquiry project, that information will allow us to implement procedures that will benefit children in a variety of ways through transitions. Another element that Wong and Wong make clear is that procedures can be seen through the classroom (getting quiet, walking through halls, what do if you come to school late, how to pass in papers) and outside of the classroom (how to get on an airplane, traffic lights, wedding ceremony). This explanation will allow us to prove to our students that procedures are everywhere in this world, they are meant to help us, and that we must follow them in order to be good citizens. Showing them the relationship between the classroom and the real world will motivate them and us
to make the most of transitions through the halls. The last point that Wong and Wong make about classroom procedures is the fact that there is a step-by-step approach of how to teach them. This will be a big part of our inquiry project, as we try to adjust, maintain, adapt and instill hallway transition procedures.

Appendix C: Baseline Efficiency Chart
Appendix D: Baseline Hallway Behavior Chart
Appendix E: Student Survey (Pre-Implementation)

Student Survey – Please mark a smiley face for doing a good job at that hallway task, or sad face for not doing a good job/could do better at that task.

My behavior in the hall

😊 😊 😎

Following the hallway poem

😊 😊 😎

Not talking in the hallway

😊 😊 😎

Facing forward

😊 😊 😎

Hands at my sides

😊 😊 😎

Walking feet

😊 😊 😎
Appendix F: Student Survey (Post Implementation)

Student Survey – Please mark a smiley face for doing a good job at that hallway task, or sad face for not doing a good job/could do better at that task.

My behavior in the hall

Following the hallway poem

Not talking in the hallway

Facing forward

Hands at my sides

Walking feet

Which hallway strategy was your favorite? Why?
Appendix G: Interview Questions

1. What are your hallway expectations?

2. What are some common, hallway behavior problems you face in your grade level?

3. How do you handle hallway transitions?

Appendix H: Miss Congelio's Time and Efficiency Chart

Miss Congelio’s graph shows the averaged timeliness per strategy of her transitions for each day of the school week.
Appendix I: Miss McAleer’s Time and Efficiency Chart

Miss McAleer’s graph shows the average timeliness per strategy of her transitions for each day of the school week.
Appendix J: Behavior Chart

Below is a graph showing behavior of children before and during the implementation of each strategy.

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[Graph showing behavior of children before and during the implementation of each strategy.]
Appendix K: Destination Chart

The graph below depicts the destination throughout the day and how each strategy worked with each destination.
Appendix L: Miss Congelio’s Pre-Implementation Behavior Survey Results

The chart below shows Miss Congelio’s results from her student hallway behavior survey before implementing strategies.

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Appendix M: Miss McAleer’s Pre-Implementation Behavior Survey Results

The chart below shows Miss McAleer’s results from her student hallway behavior survey before implementing strategies.

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Appendix N: Miss Congelio’s Post-Implementation Behavior Survey Results

The chart below displays Miss Congelio’s results from her students’ post strategy hallway behavior survey.

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Appendix O: Miss McAleer’s Post-Intervention Behavior Survey Results

The chart below displays Miss McAleer’s results from her students’ post strategy hallway behavior survey.

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