

**CEP 832**  
**Jennifer R. Luyckx**

**Kyle: Student Case Study**

**A description of the particular problem you were addressing (What type of problem was it? How frequent/severe was the problem? How did it manifest itself in the classroom?)**

“Hyperactive students display the following characteristics: These children show excessive and almost constant movement, even when sitting. Often their movements appear to be without purpose. They: squirm, wiggle, jiggle, scratch; are easily excitable; blurt out answers and comments; are often out of their seats; bother other children with noises and movements; are energetic but poorly directed; and excessively touch objects or people.” (Brophy, 259) That description could have easily been written while observing a student named Kyle who is in my first grade classroom this year. To say that Kyle displays all of these characteristics equally and every day would not be fair, but to say that he has displayed them at one time or another at some point this year would be. Although Kyle is a wiggler, his wiggling is not the challenging behavior in the classroom and although he does touch objects and people more than the other students, the word excessively would not be the correct term for it, therefore, I do not see that as being a challenge for him in the classroom. The challenges started out as being distracted, not focusing on his work or completing his work, and blurting out answers during group discussions and work time. These behaviors were something that began very early in the year and usually only happened a few times a week. When I would see his parents after school I would let them know that he was a wiggler, which I had no problem with because it did not distract any of the other students, but that the fact that he was not always completing his work or using his work time wisely was a concern because it was affecting his academics. They really had no reaction, other than; we will talk to him about it at home. He would come back to school the next day a little more focused and able to complete his tasks in the

time allotted, but the next day the behaviors returned. This cycle seemed to happen every time I would talk to his parents; the next day better but the day after that showed the challenging behaviors. Over the next month the frequency of these behaviors increased and I decided that I would make note of it on his report and I would need to mention them to his parents at conferences in November. His parents did not seem surprised in the least and gave me the response that "his dad was a wiggler and had focus problems and he grew out of it so hopefully Kyle will grow out of it too". As the year went on the amount of time that he wiggled; although I really did not have an issue with this; did not focus, was easily distracted, and blurted out answers increased, as well as adding in some other behaviors such as distracting other students and making inappropriate comments and displaying inappropriate behaviors. The students in my classroom continued to do a wonderful job ignoring all of his wiggling and extra movements because this is something that he did in kindergarten last year and they are just "used to it", but the inappropriate behaviors and the blurting out were not as easily ignored and began to affect the other students both academically and behaviorally. Also, because he was becoming more distracted, he was missing the majority of his free time because he needed to use it to make up work that he had not completed during the day. It was when I noticed that other students were being affected and that his academic progress was slowing down that I knew the parents would need to become more involved and we would need to implement some type of home note/behavior contract.

**A discussion of your professional "stance" when you started working with this child? How effective (using Brophy's list from Module 1 or Chapter 2 of the text) were you when working with this student?**

My professional "stance" when I first started working with Kyle was I was not very consistent. When I say it was not very consistent, or inconsistent, I mean that the type of behavior I expected from him was not consistent. For example, there would be times when I would allow him to "blurt" out the answers, or let the whole class "blurt" out the answers, but then other times it was not acceptable. Another example of my inconsistency was that it was acceptable for him to talk to other students in a way that would distract them during certain work times but during other work times it was not acceptable. Another way that my professional "stance" was not effective was that I did not model the desired behavior. It was almost as if I would suddenly have an expectation for a classroom routine after Kyle showed an undesirable behavior. For example, when I would have the students sit on the carpet during certain activities I would expect them to sit in their assigned space but I never modeled this for them or told them what I expected. Instead, when Kyle, or any other student, did not sit how I felt they should be I would point it out to the whole class. I also do not think I was as positive with my reactions as I could have been. For example, I am sure that my facial expressions and verbal correction of his behaviors were more negative than positive. When I did praise Kyle, it was not very consistent, as it should be, and I know that it was not always given in a sincere way. It was almost as if I remembered that I should say something nice to him so I would just say something without looking at him or saying it as though I really meant it. (Brophy, p. 30) Brophy mentions that a teacher should save face and discuss the inappropriate behaviors in private with the student instead of

announcing them to the entire class. (p. 21) I am almost certain that I did the opposite in hopes that if he felt "embarrassed" that he would want to display more desirable behaviors. Instead of improving and stopping the undesirable behavior because I gave him a real reason to, such as a positive and sincere reaction, he continued to increase it, which eventually lead to the other students being distracted and less able to perform on their academics, as well as affecting his own academic performance. Because of his reaction, I was not very effective when working with Kyle in the beginning because he was not showing the desired behavior of focusing and completing his work, not blurting out comments or answers, and he began distracting other students in the classroom. I think if I would have taken the time to give him sincere praise and talk to him in private about his inappropriate behaviors, maybe the extent of the challenging behaviors could have been less than they were.

**A description of the changes you made in your practice with this student. What changed? Which specific intervention(s) did you employ? Include a description of any intervention(s) you made with the student's parent if you included that component.**

Although Kyle would display these behaviors throughout the day, there were times when they occurred more often and were more noticeable. The times of day when I notice Kyle having the most difficulty sitting or standing still is during reading. Although I normally did not mind if he wiggled around or stood at his desk, sometimes when he did this during reading it would completely consume all of his focus. Kyle does not have difficulty academically in any subjects, and actually is one of the higher academically achieving students in my class, but I have wondered if reading is just not a subject he enjoys and so he is frustrated with the fact that so much time is devoted to it. Brophy suggests giving students who are hyperactive special jobs to do. To help him be more

attentive during reading I often give him special jobs to do, such as letting him popcorn pick the student's sticks and having him hold the pointer and follow along with it when I am reading the large print poems that we go over as a class. I also keep myself positioned at the front of the room when giving instructions and do not walk around the room until the students are working, and when the students are seated around the board I have him in the back on the end so he can stand and wiggle but because the students are close to me, he is still in close proximity even though he is in the back row. Also, when I am stationed at a table working with other students, I stay at the front of the room at the table in front of his desk so that he is more accountable for his actions and he knows that I am aware of how he is doing. (Brophy, p. 272) Another modification I have made for reading is to go over the instructions with Kyle privately. Even though he is not challenged academically, this has helped him a great deal. During this time we underline the key words in the directions, I provide an example of the assignment to make sure that he understands what is expected for the assignment, I ask him if he has any questions, and I have him tell me what he needs to do. If there are multiple things for the students to work on, I write a checklist on the front board so that he can see what he needs to do and check them off as he completes each one. I have found that since I have been doing these modifications, the amount of mistakes that he makes has gone down a lot, he is able to focus on what I am saying since it is directed only to him, he knows where to look if there are multiple tasks to complete, and he is not distracting others by going to their desk and asking them how to complete the assignment. (Brophy, p. 301)

The time of day that I notice Kyle having the least amount of wiggling is during our morning routine. Every morning the students come in they have four tasks to complete:

Today's Questions, Journal, Math Sheet, and Handwriting. I set a timer for the class and if they have not completed the four tasks within the allotted time, then they have to complete it during free time. When the timer goes off, we move to the carpet. After we do our Carpet Routine; which includes calendar, weather, class rules, and money, we move to counting. When the students count they are able to move and do an exercise. In *The Tough Kid Toolbox*, it is suggested to have a planned level of physical activity for students, even if it is only a time when the students can stand and get a drink of water. (p. 188) Maybe since Kyle knows that he will get to wiggle around and it is something that is "allowed", it is enough motivation for him to stay on task for a short amount of time during morning work, get his work done, and not distract others with his excessive movement.

Another change that I have made with Kyle is to allow him to wiggle and move around as long as he isn't distracting the other students in the classroom. I also use a lot of verbal and nonverbal praise with him. (Brophy, p. 273) The praise consists of using him as an example to other students in the class who may not be following directions, giving him a pat on the back, giving him a thumbs up, or quietly telling him how proud I am of him and how much I like the way he is working.

Probably the biggest intervention that I have done with him is a home note/behavior contract. (Best Practices, p. 29) At the second conference his parents started to show concern about his behavior since I mentioned that it was now causing him to miss most of his free time each week, was now distracting other students and it was also happening more often during the week. On the home note/behavior contract is just one task that Kyle works on each morning and afternoon, and that is to "show

appropriate behavior". After talking to his parents we decided that if he showed appropriate behavior he would remain on task and get his own work done and focus better, as well as not distract other students, which would cause them not to complete their work or to show inappropriate behavior. Kyle was given a lot of examples as to ways that he has shown inappropriate behavior and guidelines to what is acceptable in the classroom. The note/contract is broken down into the morning and afternoon. He can earn either a plus or a minus for each part of the day. There is also a comment section at the bottom where I write each day explaining his day and any outstanding positive or negative behavior. His parents sign the note each night and he returns it in the morning.

**How effective was the intervention? How has the student's behavior changed (if at all)?**

So far the interventions that I am using have been very successful. Allowing Kyle to wiggle and stand when he needs to has helped him focus more on his work. I also think that going over the directions with him, underlining the key words, and providing him with an example have helped him to better complete his reading work. At the beginning of the year I had him sit at the back of the room because I knew what a wiggler he was, but this was not the best place for him as I quickly learned. By placing him at the end of the first row, going across, he remains on task better, and he even looks for my approval. Also, I think he feels more comfortable having me closer so that if he does need the directions repeated he can give me a cue. Another intervention that has worked wonders is giving him a special job during some of our reading activities. So that the rest of the students in the class do not feel they are cheated of being the special helper, I give them special jobs during other subjects or during



different times of the day. This also doesn't make it so obvious that Kyle needs to have something extra to do in order to help him remain focused and not distracting other students. The final intervention that I feel has made the biggest difference is the home note/behavior contract. Because the consequence at home is one that holds a lot of meaning, he is so determined to get two pluses each day. To help him be more accountable for his pluses, I have decided to make them big or little. This lets his parents know that he had a good day but that it was not as well as some have been in the past. Kyle still has his days where he does not focus and complete his work as quickly as the other students, but he does complete it in the allotted time. He hardly ever blurts out answers or comments when we are having group discussions or during work time and he is no longer making inappropriate comments or showing any inappropriate behaviors. Occasionally he will distract other students, but I have noticed that it is on days that we have extra activities going on or that our daily routine is off schedule.

**A critique of the intervention and your practice. What did you do well? What would you change next time? If the intervention wasn't effective, to what do you attribute that?**

One thing that I felt I did well after I had the interventions in place was to give Kyle verbal and nonverbal cues and praise for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Although I think he always wanted to please me, I don't think that the reaction I gave him ever made him feel like what he did was pleasing, therefore, maybe he stopped trying to when he did try he did not give as much effort. The other part of the intervention that I think went well was the amount of time that I have spent with Kyle during reading. Not only does this include the extra time I take with him to explain the assignment, but also the special jobs that I give him. He is so excited when

he gets to have a special job and I must admit that when he was able to do anything "extra" or "special" at the beginning of the year he would get so excited that I would have to give the task to another student. Now he is able to control himself, to the best of his ability, and do the job without distracting others and getting himself completely off task. The last part of the intervention that I think has gone well is the home note/behavior contract. Even though I worried about this being too vague for Kyle, he has done a wonderful job with it. One thing I do make sure that I do every day is tell him why he received the plus or minus and ask him what he could have done better, if anything. Some things that I would change for the next time would be to make sure that I give sincere praise and that my negative verbal comments are done in private. I also think that I need to work on my nonverbal cues for signaling him to stop an inappropriate behavior, as well as how I react to them. I need to remember that sometimes the behaviors that a student displays in the classroom are not always within their control. The last part of the intervention that I would have changed was the timeliness of the home note/behavior contract. Although it really did not affect Kyle or any of the other students to a great degree, I think if I would have talked to his parents sooner about this that maybe it would have helped him sooner. Since I knew he was a wiggler, and I had seen him in different situations in the classroom when he was in kindergarten, I think it would have been wise if I would have suggested to his parents that we had this in place at the first conference instead of waiting until the second one.

**A discussion of your professional "stance" at the end of the intervention. What aspects of your stance did you work on to increase your effectiveness with this student? What do you notice has changed in your attitudes/thoughts/attributes/behavior as you've focused on effective socialization with this student?**

The stance I now have with Kyle is to be more patient with him and to recognize when he is truly trying his best and when he is not. I also very hard to make sure that I offer Kyle consistent praise and when I do need to talk to him about inappropriate or challenging behavior that he is displaying in the classroom, I do it in private so that I am not embarrassing him or calling attention to him or the behaviors. When I catch myself not being as patient with him as I need to be or want to be, I find myself closing my eyes and taking a deep breath so that I can gather my thoughts and use the intervention strategies that work best with him. Since starting this case study I have been able to differentiate when Kyle is doing his absolute best and when he is not. I have developed a better teacher-student relationship with him and I have realized that he does want to please me, but that he doesn't always know the best way to do that because in the past I did not do a good job or recognizing when he was doing a good job or being consistent in praising him. I have also worked on modeling what my expectations are and I have found that this has not only been beneficial to Kyle, but to a number of the other students in my classroom as well. I also make sure that when we are having a group discussion and I want the students to answer the question that I use the phrase "raise a quiet hand" to help avoid any blurts that I may get from Kyle.