

Intervention Case Study 1

This case study looks at the effect of a self-management system consisting of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-recruitment of praise on problem behaviors.

Introduction

Kyle is a fourth-grade student diagnosed with a learning disability. He also walks with a slight limp due to a physical disability. Kyle's teacher is concerned with Kyle's inability to stay on task and Kyle's interaction with his fellow students. Kyle will tease the other students and make sexually inappropriate comments to them. His problem behaviors have increased over time as have his referrals to the office.

Kyle's classroom is a mixture of third and fourth grade students. During class period A, students read a story in groups of seven to eight students and one teacher. They then complete a writing assignment. During class period B, students work on a project in groups of two to three students. The projects typically consist of doing research on a topic, writing about it, and presenting it to the class.

Measurement

Observers measured problem behaviors, on-task behavior, and teacher praise twice during period A and once during period B. Problem behaviors include talking to other students, touching the other students, invading a student's space, making faces at other students, making noises, playing with objects in the classroom, and leaving the desk without a teacher's permission. On-task behavior includes organizing materials, moving from one assignment to the next, reading, working on the assignment, listening to the teacher, and participating in class discussions. Observers also measured whether Kyle completes his assignments.

Functional Behavior Assessment

The team began with functional assessment, which included interviews and observation. The team concluded that the attention from peers and teachers, although largely negative, maintained Kyle's inappropriate behavior. Since attention maintained the problem behaviors, the team designed a support plan where attention would come in response to appropriate rather than inappropriate behaviors. Since the teacher could not devote a large amount of time to one student, the team designed a self-management system.

Intervention

The first part of the self-management system was self-monitoring of behavior. Kyle had a walkman that prompted him every four minutes to record a plus when he remained on task and did not interfere with students or a zero when he did not work quietly and did interfere with other students. The second part of the system was self-recruitment of praise. When Kyle recorded three pluses, he raised his hand or walked up to the teacher to receive positive feedback. If Kyle had two or fewer zeroes he received a self-manager sticker. All the students in the class had the same opportunity to earn the stickers. The stickers were used together to earn rewards for the class as a whole. This way, Kyle's fellow students would also give positive attention for Kyle's appropriate behavior.

Results

Before the self-management intervention, Kyle engaged in problem behaviors an average of 57% during class period A and 63% during class period B. During the intervention, the problem behaviors decreased to an average of 2% in class period A and 7% in class period B. With the discontinuation of the prompts the problem behaviors rose back to their original level, but with the reintroduction of the self-management system, the problem behaviors decreased to 4% and remained there.

Observers indicated that before the system, Kyle interfered frequently with the other students at his table, teasing and kicking them as well as disrupting their work. With the self-management system Kyle would read silently and participate during class discussions. Kyle's on-task behavior, work completion, and subsequently his teacher's positive ratings of him increased as well with the self-management system.

Todd, A.W., Horner, R.H., & Sugai, G. (1999). Self-monitoring and self-recruited praise: Effects on problem behavior, academic engagement, and work completion in a typical classroom. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 1*, 66-76.