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*The procedures in this staff manual are meant to be used by agency staff, as part of the broader services they provide, or under supervision of agency staff
Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my brother who has autism. Without your presence in my life, my journey and this thesis would not have been possible. It is because of you that I found inspiration in this thesis, as it is important to me that you learn in the most effective environment possible. Others like you deserve to have the same significant experience in order to gain the most from life and reach full potential. I also want to say thank you for your constant smile. It reminds me every day, that no matter what, everything will be okay—that each challenge can be overcome. I love you.
Abstract

The ‘Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual- A Guide to Managing Disruptive Behaviour, Attention Difficulties, and Social Skills Deficits in Children with Special Needs in Grades 6 & 7’ was developed by the researcher as a practical and educational resource for an educator. The content of the manual focused on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) theory and ‘best practices’ interventions for classrooms and students with a variety of behavioural concerns. This manual’s goal was to aid in promoting the use of ABA in the target classroom and decrease the instances of challenging behaviours exhibited by the students. The content of the manual was adapted to meet the needs of an individual teacher and her classroom. The classroom’s behavioural requirements were assessed through an adapted needs survey completed by the targeted educator. The behaviours identified were grouped into three main areas of concern: escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits. The manual addressed these topics by providing information on evidence-based ABA practices and techniques in these areas. It contained a range of interventions categorized by topic and then by group and individual interventions. Included were sections for information on Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), how to use it, an audio recording of a scripted PMR exercise, and finally, a list of educational resources available in the educator’s community. The manual was not assessed empirically or tested in the classroom. However, the utility of the manual was shaped by the feedback on each section provided by the educator. This was to ensure the applicability and usability of the manual for that particular individual and classroom. The results of these meetings supported the manual’s usefulness for the educator, and reflected a high degree of satisfaction with its content. The thesis addressed strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future research are addressed, as well as multilevel challenges in creating the manual. In particular, it is recommended that further research be conducted to assess the manual’s true ability to be used by the educator, its impact on behaviour in the classroom, and its impact on the behaviour of the educator using it.
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Table of Contents

Dedication......................................................................................................................... i
Abstract .............................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................... iii
Table of Contents .............................................................................................................. iv
Chapter I: Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1

Chapter II: Literature Review .......................................................................................... 4
  The Impact of Challenging Behaviours in Schools.......................................................... 4
  Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviours ............................................................................. 5
    Multi-Component Interventions ....................................................................................... 6
  Group Contingency Interventions .................................................................................... 6
  Functional Equivalence ..................................................................................................... 7
  Environmental Changes as an Intervention. ................................................................. 7
  Attention Difficulties and Self-Management ................................................................... 8
    Environmental Interventions. ........................................................................................ 8
  Modification of Teaching Approaches ........................................................................... 8
  Peer Interventions. ............................................................................................................ 9
  Token Economy. ............................................................................................................... 9
  Self-Management Strategies. .......................................................................................... 10
  Social Skills Deficits ....................................................................................................... 11
    Developing Social Skills ............................................................................................... 12
  Relaxation and Behaviour .............................................................................................. 12
    Relaxation as an Intervention. ..................................................................................... 13
  Summary .......................................................................................................................... 14

Chapter III: Method .......................................................................................................... 15
  Participants ......................................................................................................................... 15
    Educator......................................................................................................................... 15
    Students. ......................................................................................................................... 15
  Format/ Design ............................................................................................................... 15
  Setting ............................................................................................................................... 15
  Measures .......................................................................................................................... 16
Materials ........................................................................................................................................16
Instruments. ...................................................................................................................................16
DVD ...............................................................................................................................................16
Procedure ........................................................................................................................................16
Sections. .........................................................................................................................................16
Assessment. ....................................................................................................................................17

Chapter IV: Results .........................................................................................................................18
Needs Survey ....................................................................................................................................18
Manual Development Process ......................................................................................................18

Chapter V: Discussion .....................................................................................................................20
Overview .........................................................................................................................................20
Contribution to the Agency ............................................................................................................20
Strengths .........................................................................................................................................21
Limitations .......................................................................................................................................21
Contributions to Behavioural Psychology Field ............................................................................21
Multilevel Challenges ....................................................................................................................22
  Client Level. .................................................................................................................................22
  Program Level. ...............................................................................................................................22
  Organizational Level. ....................................................................................................................22
Recommendations for Future Research ........................................................................................23

References .......................................................................................................................................24
Appendix A: Classroom Behaviour Survey ....................................................................................27
Appendix B: Results of Classroom Behaviour Survey .................................................................29
Appendix C: Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual ..............................................................31
Chapter I: Introduction

Mrs. Dawson looks around her and is at a loss for what to do. In the classroom, to her left there is a student out of his seat and throwing a pencil into the air. An educational assistant (EA) is attempting to focus another student’s attention back to his academic work, even giving the child the answer to the question, yet still the child is asking the EA if she has ever had real green eggs and ham. To Mrs. Dawson’s right, there is a student yelling out questions repeatedly, not waiting to be called upon to speak, and another child is telling them how ridiculous he is and how no one cares about him. In front of her now, there is a student who is engaging in inappropriate behaviours to amuse his classmates, all the while calling out the EA’s name. There is even a child who has broken into tears from frustration because he cannot understand a question. Mrs. Dawson has some experience in working with children with special needs; however, how can she command the attention and respect of the class when there are so many inappropriate behaviours occurring at once and all with children who have entirely different needs than their peers? How can she begin to manage this classroom and help them to grow and learn?

The anecdote described above is fictional. It is based on conversations with the educator of the classroom that is the focus of this thesis, as well as observations made by the researcher of behaviours occurring in the environment. The anecdote gives perspective on the importance of considering this classroom for this thesis, and the teacher’s need for behavioural management resources and skills.

Alter, Walker, and Landers (2013) noted that managing behaviours in classrooms is a challenge many educators face daily. Challenging behaviours, such as those that are escape-related (typically disruptive in nature), attention difficulties, or deficits in social skills areas, are some of what Alter et al. (2013) found to be of most concern to educators in classrooms with intermediate-aged children who are between the ages 11 and 13 years old. They also described that if allowed to continue, such behaviours can negatively impact academic achievement, as well as personal growth in children.

In the past, applied behaviour analysis (ABA) had little place in the classrooms of typical Western schools (Maheady, Harper, Kanes, & Mallette, 1999). Recently, advancements have been made in making ABA’s practicality known to schools and educators. However, many educators maintain a prejudice that ABA is time consuming or concerned only with complicated data collection (Davis, Durand, Fuentes, & Blenden, 2014). There have been many resources and websites published that are ABA related, and developed for educators to assist them in managing behaviours in their classrooms. However, many of these resources are not useful for educators, as they are focused on listing intervention options, but lack ability to demonstrate to educators how to choose the correct techniques or make the needed adaptations of these techniques fit their particular classrooms. The resources are also often too lengthy to read, use technical language, lack adequate description of principles, and therefor can be difficult to comprehend for educators with little experience or knowledge in ABA. This furthers their unwillingness to believe in the success of ABA and to implement it successfully in their classroom. Maheady et al. (1999) explain that when ABA is modified to fit the particular classroom and is made easier to implement and understand, that more educators would be willing to learn and use ABA techniques.
The classroom that is the focus of this thesis is one that educates children with special needs in a private school with a ratio of a maximum of 10 children to 2 adults. At the present time, there is not a standardized set of techniques to manage challenging behaviours within this classroom. This creates difficulties in teaching and learning within the environment. The results of a survey conducted with the educator, showed three primary areas of concern to target for this thesis: escape-related disruptive behaviours, attention difficulties, and deficits in social skills.

Manuals have been frequently used in the ABA field to teach a variety of professionals how to properly implement interventions in order to produce successful behaviour change (Gulec-Aslan, 2013). At conferences and seminars, manuals are often used to help those in attendance learn the material and become comfortable enough to implement new techniques. Manuals also help professionals remain current with “best practice” interventions. Being knowledgeable on up-to-date practices is crucial, as behaviour change should progress at an increased rate, have a greater chance of being maintained if frequently utilized, and use of current research methods are employed (Gulec-Aslan, 2013).

With this information in mind, it should therefore be appropriate that the focus of this thesis be the creation of a manual for the intended educator to facilitate her learning and correct implementation of ABA in her classroom. This manual will allow her to utilize interventions that are current in research literature, and have been shown to be successful; which would give her the ability to effectively manage the children in her classroom.

It is proposed that the development of a manual of basic interventions adapted for the class that deals with the typical behavioural concerns exhibited, should reduce the frequency of those behaviours and increase learning, productivity, and personal growth of the individuals within the classroom. The creation of a manual for this educator would increase her knowledge and experience in ABA and give her the resources she needs to manage the variety of behaviours specific to her classroom. This should lead to an increase in successful learning experiences and an even more overall enjoyable environment for the children in the intermediate-aged special needs classroom, as well as a more effective and pleasant teaching experience for the educator.

It is hypothesized that the development of a manual for this educator should assist her in the future to reduce the amount of inappropriate behaviours in the classroom. This manual will detail a variety of specific interventions to reduce escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social deficits, and include step-by-step instructions on how to adapt them for the classroom or individual, along with a DVD of relaxation techniques with instructions on how and when to use them.

There are four subsequent chapters in this thesis. First, the research literature on each of the three behavioural areas of concern will be discussed, including evaluations of prior research, as well as discussion of the differences in the research. Relaxation techniques and their uses in relation to the behaviour management will also be discussed. Next, an overview of the method involved in developing this behavioural intervention manual will be presented. This section will include information on the participants (educator and students within the classroom), setting, materials, measures, and the evaluation component of the manual. In addition, the thesis will include a summary of the manual and the results of the evaluation. Lastly, will be a discussion of the thesis. This chapter will show the strengths, limitations, and multilevel challenges involved in the development of this proposed thesis manual. Implications and summary of the overall thesis.
and the value it will contribute to the Behavioural Psychology field will also be included in this section.
Chapter II: Literature Review

The Impact of Challenging Behaviours in Schools

Ducharme and Shecter (2011) estimated that between 12% and 22% of children in Canada engage in challenging behaviour in classrooms as a result of a variety of special needs. The increasing prevalence of autism, among other disabilities and disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, and mental health disorders increase the likelihood of teachers receiving several students who engage in challenging behaviours in their classrooms each year. This statistic is further supported through a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2014 that concluded a diagnosis of autism occurs in 1 of every 8 children by the age of 8 years old. This is a current statistic and shows that with the increase in autism alone, the percentage of children in classrooms exhibiting challenging behaviours reported by Ducharme and Shecter is likely to be higher in proportion today.

Alter et al. (2013) explain in their article how challenging behaviours often result in academic underachievement and teacher fatigue. When a student becomes distracted, emotionally unavailable, or outwardly disruptive, academics can fail to become a concern which in turn decreases their overall learning experience (Alter et al., 2013). Burnout is also a common side effect for educators that have difficulties managing challenging behaviours in their classrooms (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011); leading to an estimated 33% of teachers that have considered leaving the profession entirely as a result of these difficulties (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014). Teachers’ positive perceptions of students may diminish as well as their job satisfaction (Alter et al., 2013), resulting in increased use of punishment techniques. The latter furthers the children’s behavioural challenges, as teachers’ do not scan for positive behaviours or use reinforcement to promote them as often as they could (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011).

Historically, behavioural modification used in schools to decrease inappropriate behaviours in children with behavioural, emotional, and mental health concerns have focused on the negative end of behavioural treatments (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014). Punitive techniques can be a natural instinct for teachers to resort to when faced with challenging behaviours, as educators will often feel that a misbehaving child should not receive the reward they are seeking by engaging in inappropriate behaviour (Vujnovic et al., 2014). In some cases, this approach may work for a time; however, this response to a child’s behaviour often is not successful on other occasions (Vujnovic et al., 2014). Punitive approaches may also harm the view the child has of the educator, lowering their respect and responsiveness to them while also negatively impacting the way the educator perceives the student (Vujnovic et al., 2014). This negative perception increases the likelihood punitive measures will be used in the future and decreases the positive attributes the child displays (Vujnovic et al, 2014). Often, punitive techniques used to extinguish challenging behaviours may also inadvertently deliver the child the reinforcement he/she is searching for while engaging in inappropriate behaviour, such as escaping an aversive classroom experience or unwanted attention. The research literature has compared the effects of punitive versus reinforcing techniques to strengthen appropriate behaviours in classrooms. The results have time and again suggested that interventions using reinforcement are more successful in changing and maintaining behaviour and are preferred by educators (Vujnovic et al., 2014). The use of positive intervention techniques are currently the forefront of research and of behavioural recommendations in schools (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014).
Much of the current research literature promotes that positive interventions (such as those that utilize primarily antecedent interventions and/or positive reinforcement) are a key component to behaviour change. However, it remains that many educators are unaware of how to effectively apply these techniques in their classrooms (Vujnovic et al., 2014). The teachers’ lack of knowledge creates difficulties in their motivation to learn and implement such positive practices (Vujnovic et al., 2014). It is thus critical for educators to have access to resources that are practical for their specific classroom, so that choosing and adapting interventions does not appear as daunting and instead can be more realistic and exciting.

A needs survey (Appendix B) was developed and adapted from the “Child Behavior Checklist,” (Achenbach, 2000) to assess challenging behaviours that the students engage in within the classroom environment that are difficult for the educator to manage. The results of this survey led to the development of the behavioural areas that will be discussed in this research literature review. These areas will then become the focus of this manual’s development.

This literature review will discuss interventions that have been deemed “best practices” or empirically-based. The behavioural areas to be reviewed consist of behaviours within the broad subtopics that the educator (whose classroom is the focus of this thesis) indicated to be of high priority. These areas are important needs for the educator to have addressed. For this reason, the following subject areas are critical to review for this behavioural manual, so the educator may learn to manage these behavioural concerns for this particular classroom. The priority areas identified in the needs survey and discussed in subsequent sections are: escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits.

**Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviours**

There are several reasons why escape-related disruptive behaviours may develop in classrooms. Many of these behaviours, as discussed by Steiner, Sidhu, Pop, Frenette, and Perrin (2013), result from anxiety as a way for the person to escape a situation. Steiner et al. (2013) also affirmed the link between anxiety, escape, and disruptive behaviours, especially for children with emotional concerns, such as the students within the classroom that is the focus of this thesis. McKinney and Feagens (2001) describe how escape-related disruptive behaviours often result from learning disabilities and discuss how children will act out in frustration from anxiety about failing. This frustration leads to further impaired learning and engaging in inappropriate behaviour to escape tasks, which continues the cycle. The scope of the research literature on escape-related disruptive behaviours is wide; however, all research states that such behaviour can decrease the value of the learning environment (Cooper, 2001). Rispoli et al. (2013) report concerns not only with the learning of the student engaging in the inappropriate behaviours, but also with the students in the vicinity, whose learning may also be adversely impacted. As well, approximately 76% of educators have stated that the effectiveness of their ability to teach and manage disruptive behaviour have been inhibited when escape-related disruptive behaviour are exhibited in the classroom (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014).

Stage and Quiroz in 1997 compiled a meta-analysis that discussed the effectiveness of a variety of interventions used to reduce disruptive behaviours in adolescents with special needs in classroom settings. At the time, this meta-analysis concluded that the following behavioural methods were the most effective in reducing disruptive behaviours related to escape: educator behaviour, token economy, positive reinforcement, differential reinforcement of low rates of responding (DRL), differential reinforcement of behaviour omission (DRO), group contingency
methods, antecedent interventions, and self-management procedures. Of these interventions, Stage and Quiroz concluded that through analysis of the research on the subject, self-management, DRL, DRO, and multi-component interventions resulted in larger reductions in behaviour and were reported by educators to be most preferred.

Token economies are popular in research literature and are used frequently in classrooms as they are successful at managing a variety of problem behaviours. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the attention difficulties subsection of this literature review.

**Multi-Component Interventions.** The educator that this manual is to be developed for also indicated that “yelling out” or interrupting others was a behaviour of concern. Barkley (1997) noted that in children diagnosed with ADHD, this disruptive behaviour is common to observe in classrooms. It can be extremely difficult for those with the disorder to control their impulses, which in this thesis’ classroom, pertains to interrupting others often for the child to insert his/her own thoughts into discussions. The behaviour can arise from anxiety experienced by children in that they may not be heard or may not be given the chance to demonstrate to others that they have knowledge on the discussion topic (Barkley, 1997). It has been shown in more recent research, that contingent attention and prompting can be effective at reducing outbursts and controlling impulses (Flood, Wilder, Flood, & Masuda, 2002). Bloomquist, August, and Ostrander (1991) discussed that an experiment using a package consisting of modelling, prompting, and positive reinforcement with students can also have positive results in reducing interruption behaviours in classrooms. Interventions of these kinds for managing interrupting behaviours could demonstrate to be effective methods for this thesis’ manual. These methods are simple, interactive, and give opportunities to not only help the target student, but also prompt other students to behave similarly, effectively making the student’s peers role models for appropriate behaviour.

**Group Contingency Interventions.** Kowalewicz and Coffee (2014) assert that group contingency interventions (GCI) have been demonstrated to work just as well in classrooms as other techniques (i.e. individual contingency methods), especially those with multiple behaviour difficulties within the classroom. Stage and Quiroz (1997) noted in their research that independent and dependent group contingency interventions were found to be the most effective of the GCI’s. Interdependent group contingency interventions make each person in the team responsible for their work or contribution to the group in order for everyone to succeed. This method in relation to escape motivated behaviour would discourage an individual from behaving poorly, while also encouraging them to engage in more appropriate behaviour so he/she and the rest of the group may obtain reinforcement. For example, Kowalewicz and Coffee described the “Mystery Motivator” as an interdependent group contingency intervention that can help lower disruptive behaviours that are escape related. This is because the group as a whole must work together to achieve a goal and gain access to reinforcement. An intervention that could potentially manage multiple behaviours exhibited by individual children, while also addressing the behaviours of the class as a whole, could be an excellent addition to this thesis manual. This is so, as it can have the power to intervene and become an antecedent intervention for escape-related disruptive behaviours in this particular classroom.

Dependent group contingency methods have been reviewed in a meta-analysis of the GCI’s by Gresham and Gresham (1982). To date, this method is still utilized, as it requires that one individual in a group be responsible for their own appropriate behaviour in order for the
group to obtain reinforcement (Gresham & Gresham, 1982). This technique could also be an intervention that could be introduced into the classroom as well as in the thesis manual, as it holds a student responsible for their behaviour.

Independent group contingencies are implemented when reinforcement is dependent on the behaviour of certain group members, but the group is separate (or independent) from the behaviour of the rest of the class (Gresham & Gresham, 1982). In the past this method was used frequently in classrooms for special needs children to reduce disruptive behaviour (Gresham & Gresham, 1982).

Stage and Quiroz did not find significant support for interdependent group contingencies in their research. However, Gresham and Gresham indicated otherwise in their review of research of group contingencies. They noted that of the three group methods, independent contingencies were indicated to be weakest at obtaining and sustaining behaviour change. In saying this, Stage and Quiroz’s review is more current than Gresham and Gresham’s. The research seems to show an increased preference for dependent and independent group contingencies. However, in observation of this thesis’ classroom and its management attempts, independent group contingency methods have been randomly applied by the educator and have not been successful. However, consistency with the intervention was not maintained, possibly hindering the effects of the method on student’s behaviour.

**Functional Equivalence.** Research literature furthers the area of interventions pertaining to disruptive behaviour with what is called a “Keystone” approach (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011)—otherwise known as functional equivalence or functional communication training (FCT). The Keystone approach is a significantly researched and effective approach to managing escape-related disruptive behaviours. The theory involves matching an intervention that is functionally equivalent to a disruptive behaviour. This intervention can be positive for children and may also generalize the intervention to other functionally equivalent disruptive behaviours they exhibit without the need to be taught (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011). This could effectively decrease many classroom challenging behaviours with minimal effort on the part of the educator. This approach is successful, as it provides a socially and functionally appropriate means of escape that is related to the disruptive behaviour. For example, Ducharme and Shecter provided a situation where the student was engaging in a temper tantrum to escape challenging academic work. The functional equivalent alternative for the student was a “break card” that they could use to gain access to a break from work instead of having to engage in a temper tantrum. This same card could then be used to generalize other functionally related inappropriate behaviours this child engages in to attain a break. Thus, this technique seems a promising one to include in the manual for this thesis.

**Environmental Changes as an Intervention.** Guardino and Kirby Fullerton (2014) discussed how classroom environmental changes can impact disruptive behaviour as an antecedent intervention. Their study included a kindergarten classroom only; however, some of the techniques would be relevant for use in this thesis’ focus classroom to reduce the frequency of escape-related disruptive behaviour during transition periods. Several modifications were used by the authors to assist in successful transition periods in the classroom. They defined a transition period as the time it took for students to successfully move from one academic activity to another. The modification that would be most relevant for this thesis was the addition of a bag to the back of each student’s chair that would hold all books and materials for the day. The
classroom that is the focus of this thesis does contain a desk for each student with a storage area; however, the space is too limited to keep multiple binders. The children must leave their desks and walk past many peers to a bookshelf which holds their work binders. This is a source of disruptive behaviour, as many students will get up frequently to get a binder and stand talking to other pupils in order to avoid work. Using a bag in this way would allow them to not have to leave their desks, limiting the chances to avoid work through conversing with peers. Environmental changes are highly effective and efficient antecedent intervention strategies that would be useful to this classroom’s educator. This supports the inclusion of such strategies in this thesis’ behavioural manual.

The research in relation to escape-related disruptive behaviour is vast, as behaviours that are disruptive in nature tend to be the most prevalent and difficult for educators to manage. In terms of interventions that would be appropriate for this manual, each of those mentioned above could be selected as viable candidates. The interventions would be simple to implement and able to be managed with consistency within the target classroom environment. These interventions are also quite easily adapted to fit not only the educator’s needs, but also the needs of the students.

Attention Difficulties and Self-Management

The educator that is the focus of this thesis indicated a primary concern that the children remain focused and on task. Many of the students do not remain seated and paying attention to their work. Instead, they become distracted by other students or objects in the classroom. Whitford, Liaupsin, Umbreit, and Ferro (2013), describe how classroom interventions can be successful enough to increase attention to school work, therefore making ABA intervention appropriate for the classroom. Below, find a review of research literature that shows current “best practices” interventions for managing attention in classrooms.

Environmental Interventions

Attention to the classroom environment can be quite important in keeping students’ focused on their academic studies (Kofler, Rapport, & Alderson, 2008). Modifications to the classroom in order to increase students’ attention to tasks can include several methods. Decreasing the amount of visually pleasing or distracting images is often the simplest solution, among removal of clutter and images within their personal environment (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). Often children with ADHD or symptoms of the disorder will become distracted by the items and images around them, steering their thoughts away from their studies (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). Removing as many visuals from their environment as possible, allows the children to have less unimportant items to concentrate on, and makes it more likely that they will attend to their work. Often music or others speaking may become a distraction (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). Turning the music off or giving the students earphones to help block out conversations that may become interesting to them may be a viable option for independent work time in a classroom. Reiber and McLaughlin (2004) conclude in their review of research literature on classroom interventions for children with ADHD, that cubicles, blank walls, and the removal of clutter were the primary environmental techniques used to keep children’s attention on their work. A classroom environmental change requires some trial and error, as well as observation of individual children; however, this intervention requires little effort and is relatively simple to apply.

Modification of Teaching Approaches

Another area Reiber and McLaughlin mentioned that can be modified to increase attention for students is teaching approaches. Varying
presentation formats, as well as use of larger fonts and colours on work pages, were said to be helpful for attaining and maintaining attention for students. Guided notes were recommended, as well as note-takers for individual students. Proximity to the educator and commenting on their work also appeared to improve attention in research literature Reiber and McLaughlin reviewed. In reference to the manual, many of these techniques could improve the attention of students in the thesis’ classroom, such as varying presentation and making pages visually interesting to the students. Guided notes may also be a good adaptation for this manual, as many of the children have trouble keeping track of answers that are verbally given to them.

**Peer Interventions.** Peers may also be used in interventions pertaining to focus. Reiber and McLaughlin described two different approaches to peer intervention: peer contingency, where peers are responsible for maintaining behaviour control and reinforcement; and peer tutoring, where peers work together in a cooperative manner and maintain each other’s focus. Peer tutoring may be a viable option for the thesis classroom. Often the students will work independently or work individually in small groups of two with staff support. However, the educator has not attempted the peer tutoring method to keep students focused. Often, pupils when working independently will converse inappropriately and joke to avoid work. The students are deprived from attention, which then allows for inappropriate behaviour to function as an establishing operation for attention maintained problem behaviour. The avoidance behaviours removes their attention from the task at hand and often it is difficult to refocus them back to their independent work. It may then be possible for the students to maintain attention to their academic work if they were given tasks to complete together. This is because working in pairs would potentially decrease the motivation to engage in inappropriate behaviour by providing them non-contingent access to attention. Teaching each other would also keep their conversation on work, as well as make the task load lighter for each individual child. It may even reduce students’ frequent sense of boredom when working if the children can accomplish the task with a peer they enjoy.

**Token Economy.** Previous research has shown that token reinforcement and response cost procedures have been effectively used to manage disruptive behaviours as well as increase students’ attention (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). A token economy is a positive reinforcement intervention that utilizes a token delivery system. It reinforces appropriate behaviour through positive presentation of tokens for the specific correct behavioural response. It does not involve punishment (i.e. the removal of tokens) unless the intervention also incorporates a response cost procedure. Response cost is the removal of tokens, points, or privileges contingent on behaviours deemed inappropriate by the educator; while token reinforcement is the addition of tokens, points, privileges, etc., when appropriate behaviour is exhibited (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). Reiber and McLaughlin insist that the research up until 2004 have shown more significant positive results with both systems used in conjunction with one another, than when token reinforcement has been used on its own.

As mentioned in the subsection on escape-related disruptive behaviour, token economies have been shown to decrease disruptive behaviour, as well as attention difficulties. This result can occur because children are given multiple opportunities to gain reinforcement. The more chances given to obtain reinforcement for appropriate behaviour, the more likely it is those positive behaviours will be reinforced instead of inappropriate ones. The rewards that are highly preferred must require the student to work hard on behaviours that are the most difficult for them
to engage in, as they are made the most “expensive” rewards to obtain. Collectively deciding the rewards available to the students for certain prices is also important, as items need to be highly preferred so the children will need work hard to obtain them. However, maintenance and generalization can become a concern with this procedure (Reiber & McLaughlin, 2004). Items used as backup reinforcers often need to be rotated to maintain interest in obtaining them, as preferred items can be rapidly obtained. With the absence of the token reinforcer or the token economy itself, the behaviour change may deteriorate rapidly, affecting generalization to other locations or eventual removal of the intervention. This is because students often can become reliant on the token economy, and with it absence, do not see the value to maintaining their appropriate behaviour change, as tokens are the main reinforcers.

Token reinforcement on its own when not in conjunction with response cost has been shown more recently to be dominating research in the area of token economy use in school settings to treat escape-related disruptive behaviours and attention difficulties. Tarbox, Ghezzi, and Wilson (2006) studied the effects of a positive token economy system with a 5-year-old boy diagnosed with autism and was said to have concerns with attention. The results were found to be positive as the participant’s observed attention to tasks was said to have increased. Similarly, Nelson (2010) explored the effects of token reinforcement in a token economy on participation of students within a classroom setting. Participation was shown to increase, which would also have had positive effects on the student’s attention behaviour, as they would have had to pay attention in order to participate in discussions in order to receive rewards. These studies demonstrate the power of positive reinforcement, compared to an unnecessary use of punitive measures such as response cost.

While positive interventions are the recommendation for behaviour management in schools currently, there is an exception to the rule that can be just as effective. Punishment procedures are generally used as a last resort; however, the “Good Behavior Game” (GBG), developed by Barrish, Saunders, and Wold (1969), is an intervention that has been supported by overwhelming evidence as a means to reduce challenging behaviour. Barrish et al. describes how this response cost procedure teaches students about negative consequences for their behaviour and mimics the naturalistic consequences of their community environment, but in a less severe manner. This can have a positive impact, in the sense that it reinforces appropriate behaviour, while preparing students for when they are in the community or when leaving elementary academic facilities. An outcome of this procedure may be that groups will learn how to work together and engage in more appropriate behaviours that betters others’ lives.

A token economy could be effectively used in the thesis classroom for managing attention control and disruptive behaviour if implemented consistently, with rules are clearly outlined. Under these circumstances, a token economy can be successful, as in past academic years it has been shown to have significant results with this group of students currently in the classroom. Both token reinforcement and response cost have shown to be on their own successful, while also used successfully in conjunction with each other. Use of either or both intervention strategies would be up to the thesis’ educator to decide on their inclusion or exclusion in this thesis manual.

**Self-Management Strategies.** Last of the “best practices” intervention strategies discussed in Reiber and McLaughlin’s review of literature pertaining to attention management highlights self-management strategies. This form of intervention includes two strategies:
contingency management and cognitive control strategies. Reiber and McLaughlin stated that their findings showed cognitive control strategies (i.e., coping mechanisms) to rarely elicit large improvements of behaviour or academic change in this age range and demographic; therefore, contingency management methods will be the only relevant intervention in self-management for this thesis manual. Contingency management involves the student monitoring and recording their behaviour, and then rewarding themselves if they have followed guidelines and achieved their goal. This procedure could be utilized with many students who have impulse control concerns with their attention during work, as they are of physical and mental age to understand the method and judge their own behaviour.

A study conducted by Barry and Messer (2003), showed the effects of contingency management on five sixth-grade students diagnosed with ADHD. The students were reported by their educators to have limited attention spans, trouble completing in-class assignments, as well as showing disruptive behaviours in the classroom. The study took place in a mainstream classroom and included a multiple baseline design across participants. The treatment design included two phases and formed an ABABAB design. The A phase consisted of educator monitoring of students on-task behaviour, disruptive behaviour, and academic performance. Praise was provided to the students for continued on-task behaviours and daily academic success. Phase B treatment was student self-monitoring of their behaviours in these three areas; however, the educator also took data to ensure proper student accuracy and interobserver agreement. Prior to phase B, training on self-management for each dependant variable was delivered. During each phase B, reinforcement was provided; however, prompting from the educator lessened. Results showed that for each student, each phase B resulted in higher academic performance and on-task behaviours, as well as lower instances of disruptive behaviour than phase A. This shows the efficacy of contingency management on not only attention in students, but on academic performance and decreases in disruptive behaviours as well, which could further benefit the target classroom.

Social Skills Deficits

Social deficits can cause a variety of concerns in a classroom with intermediate-aged children. At this stage in development, as reviewed by Boyd, Johnson, and Bee (2009), Erik Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development model shows how youth are attempting to develop who they are, and how they can succeed in the world. If therefore, there are deficits in the social domain, it can cause concerns in classrooms, such as initiating and maintaining social interactions (Boyd, Johnson, & Bee, 2009, pp.278-279).

Initiating and maintaining social interactions can be especially challenging for children diagnosed with autism, anxiety disorders, and many other developmental disabilities or emotional disorders. Social deficits are an important feature in these diagnoses (Rao, Beidel, & Murray, 2008). Many of these children are unaware of how to approach others with conversation, lessening the motivation to do so (Rao et al., 2008). Often, the child with social skills deficits may have difficulty generating discussion topics in common with others, or may have interests that differ greatly from those in their peer group. Some children with these diagnoses demonstrate a lack of interest in or awareness of others (Rao et al., 2008). It is of importance that all children are able to interact with others as it allows for relationship building, team work, and sharing (Rao et al., 2008). Socially appropriate interactions are important for all children to develop and maintain. This reasoning is because these behaviours allow individuals
to further develop relationships with others, as well as give them the opportunity to express themselves. An individual’s ability to learn social skills is also important in decreasing the social stigma related to disabilities themselves. Often social skill deficits cause conflicts with others because of a lack of understanding of why an individual is behaving in a socially awkward manner. For individuals with disabilities, instances of conflicts of misunderstandings can be avoided with the development and correct use of social skills in the community.

**Developing Social Skills.** Bellini, Peters, Benner, and Hopf (2007) reviewed the research literature available on social skills training in school environments. They made two key points that are supported by the research literature. Interventions should be customized to fit the individual child and developing the intervention around the type of skill deficit (performance versus skill acquisition) were both indicated to be critical to obtaining success in social skill development and use. The research found that many interventions for social skills training in initiating and maintaining social interactions involved the traditional methods of modeling, delivering prompts and reinforcement, as well as the practice of role-plays. Often peers and video-recorded interactions were used as models for the child to practice with and view. However, promoting generalization and maintenance of social skill training in children has been sparse in the research, which makes it difficult to report on these aspects of behaviour change. These are difficult to achieve in school settings—as Bellini et al. (as cited in Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001) state—for in general, research has shown that 30 hours of social skills training over at least 10 weeks is not nearly enough, and more is needed to achieve success. With this in mind, it makes it quite difficult for schools to find the time to be able to effectively develop social skills that are related to initiating and maintaining social interactions with others. It still remains that the most confidence in developing social skills with individuals are the two characteristics indicated by Bellini et al. (2007) above.

Following this information, it may therefore be appropriate to include group social skills training (in place of individual training) in this thesis manual. This approach has been applied successfully by Sazak, Pinar, and Sucuoglu (2013). Their research involved developing a social skills package for teachers to deliver to groups of students with special needs. The package included items explaining how to use modeling, prompting, practicing, giving directions, and delivery of reinforcement. The results indicated successful development of social skills in the children; which was indicated by pre-post and follow-up data from surveys that the educators completed. The modeling and practice data showed that when delivered in a group format with many peers to watch and practice with, while engaging in naturalistic scenarios; social skills are developed at an increased rate, with less time expense on behalf of the educator. The educator that will receive this thesis manual could utilize this delivery format of social skills training, as it would be more practical to do so in a formal class or small group. This method would be more likely to succeed if the right reinforcements and practice sessions were in place, and if these sessions started at the appropriate level to enable skill acquisition.

**Relaxation and Behaviour**

Relaxation is a key component to controlling our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Lopata (2003) concluded this by stating “the physiological reactions that accompany elevated arousal reportedly create an emotional imbalance that disrupt the ability to maintain self-composure, concentration, and poise” (p.163). These three elements are important when helping any individual cope with anxiety, frustration, and anger. This is especially true when attempting
to manage these emotions in children with special needs. Relaxation techniques are unique in their ability to produce a reduced sympathetic arousal, which in turn helps deescalate an individual’s physical and emotional responses to an aversive stimuli (Ghoncheh & Smith, 2004).

A reduction in sympathetic arousal is due to its control by the cognitive and behavioural influences the mind has on the individual (Goncheh & Smith, 2004). The Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) model explains that our thoughts have control over our emotions and behaviour, and in turn, our behaviours affect our thoughts and emotions (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). The CBT model shows how maladaptive patterns in thinking and behaviour work in a cyclic fashion, and are often difficult for an individual to escape or change (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). This model has three key components: thoughts, feeling, and behavioural response. When an individual is presented with an aversive stimuli or event, often the individual experiences automatic thoughts that perceive the stimuli or event as negative or threatening (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). Wright, Basco, and Thase (2006) explain how these events can then lead to the individual engaging in behaviours that will allow them to escape the situation or stimuli, instead of acting in ways that will help them overcome them. Since the individual did not face the perceived threat, the individual’s physiological responses decreased and allowed them to avoid continuing automatic thoughts and negative feelings (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). This is the negative reinforcement cycle. The individual avoided the perceived threat and the next time they are challenged by it, again they will attempt to escape it. This pattern, while adapted to serve as a short term solution, in the long term hinders an individual from engaging in appropriate behaviours and can even impede their lifestyle.

Relaxation allows an individual to depress the sympathetic response by decreasing the physiological reaction produced in the body. It does this by helping an individual control their breathe and heart rate (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). This in turn allows them to reduce the amount of perceived threat by the event or stimuli, and decreases the number of automatic thoughts and negative emotions they are experiencing (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). Relaxation techniques can also be used as a preventative measure for it can allow the individual to escape the CBT cycle and decrease the use of negative reinforcement when presented with threatening situations/stimuli (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). In response to challenging behaviours, those that are associated with anxiety, depression, or anger can be treated with relaxation, for such behaviours are driven by perceived threats and are accompanied by automatic thoughts, negative emotions, and maladaptive behaviours.

This thesis manual will include a DVD of relaxation techniques for the following reasons: some of the children escalate to becoming aggressive, many have difficulties coping with other peers and staff, anxiety and emotional imbalances are common, and the lack of concentration on academic work is a concern. Relaxation has been shown in research (described as such in Lopata’s literature) to improve and even act as a proactive measure to prevent these problems from arising.

**Relaxation as an Intervention.** Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is the slow tension and relaxation of each muscle group in the body from head to toe. Lopata’s research concluded that many relaxation techniques have been evaluated in research; however, PMR has been most successful. This technique has been found to both reduce an individual’s heart rate and decrease
their temperature when in an aroused state (Lopata, 2003). Lopata further describes PMR’s usefulness through the analysis of the method as an activity that is incompatible with problem behaviour, effectively ceasing that behaviour from continuing. PMR can effectively reduce breathing rate as well, by instructing the individual to breathe in while tensing a muscle and to breathe out when releasing it.

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that can be demonstrated to groups of students while also being simple enough for the students to remember its method. This will allow the students to be supported by the educator’s demonstration and also perform it with ease independently when necessary. This technique is then made appropriate for incorporation into the manual for it is an effective and “best practices” intervention that is simple and less time consuming to use for the educator.

Summary

This research literature review discussed some the challenges in behaviour faced by an educator in a classroom with special needs children. Also reviewed were “best practice” interventions that have been described in the research to have the most significant effects on managing and reducing the challenging behaviours expressed by the educator to be of most concern. These were escape-related disruptive behaviours, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits. This review indicated that behavioural psychologists and educators should implement positive based interventions instead of punitive ones. There are exceptions to this rule, such as the “Good Behavior Game,” which uses response cost instead of reinforcement to appropriately achieve behaviour change. Group contingency methods were also evaluated for effectiveness and comparisons and criticisms were explained for the three methods. Also discussed was the effects of relaxation techniques—specifically PMR—in reducing inappropriate behaviour through suppression of anxiety and anger provoking physical sensations.

The review also indicated why the interventions were shown to be successful, as well as why they could be appropriate for this thesis manual. Some of the interventions discussed above were presented in the behavioural thesis manual, as well as other appropriate interventions and techniques that are similar from other resources. Feedback from the educator on what she deemed valuable to her helped to develop what interventions are added to this manual.

In conclusion, this literature review indicates the necessity of developing a behavioural manual. As many educators discover, it is not an easy task to manage inappropriate behaviours in a classroom. This observation is especially true for the educator that is the focus of this thesis, as many challenging behaviours occur each day in a classroom containing a special needs population. The development of a manual consisting of interventions mentioned in the above literature review and including those from other sources, utilizing a step-by-step format which includes adaptations specific to her classroom and a DVD of relaxation techniques, should help this educator manage behaviours in her classroom in a positive and productive manner.
Chapter III: Method

Participants

Educator. This thesis manual was developed for an educator of a classroom in a private school. This school’s focus is the education of children with special needs. The grade levels this educator taught were Grades 6 and 7. The educator’s background in teaching children with special needs included special needs education courses taken when completing her teaching degree. She also taught for several years in school to community classrooms at the secondary education level in both Canada and the United States. Her knowledge of and skills in ABA interventions were limited. The ABA that she knew came from her past education in University and experience in her classrooms. At the time of this thesis, there was one EA in the classroom that assisted the educator in academic and behavioural management techniques that were in place; however, it was often found that one extra adult in the environment was not sufficient to reduce the frequency or intensity of the many behavioural concerns or consistently implement ABA interventions.

Before beginning this thesis, the educator expressed frustration with the multiple inappropriate behaviours occurring in her classroom. This frustration and a lack of knowledge regarding how to implement, use, and adapt ABA interventions correctly, underscored the need for the development of this behavioural manual.

Students. While this behavioural manual was not empirically tested with the students of this classroom, it is important to note their characteristics. This is to assist the reader in understanding the behavioural areas selected and described in the research literature review and to better understand the method used to develop this behavioural manual.

There were 10 students in this thesis’ focus classroom, and all were males with special needs. The students’ chronological ages ranged from 10 to 12 years of age, and the mental age of most was at a high enough level that self-monitoring of their own behaviour was possible. All of the males were verbal and had adequate reading and writing skills; however, some of the students’ academic skills were not at their classroom grade level. The topography of behaviours in emotional and behavioural areas was widely ranged, with escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits being the classroom educator’s primary concern. Many students did not have a clinical diagnosis of a disorder or disability.

Format/ Design

The chosen format for this thesis was a behavioural intervention manual. The reason for choosing this format was for the ease at which manuals allow others to learn about ABA and how to implement interventions. The manual was designed to present easy to follow step-by-step guidelines and to be used as a resource when the need for an intervention arises. For this educator, it was important that the development of an ABA resource for her classroom be easy to read and understand, as well as consist of interventions that she could research easily, when searching for an appropriate intervention to implement for a student and her classroom.

Setting

This manual was developed for the classroom described above, which was contained within the small private school for children and adolescents with special needs. These needs included but were not limited to children with psychiatric diagnoses; such as attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, and autism; and children without diagnoses
that had a difficult time behaviourally and/or academically in regular provincial schools. The layout and size of the classroom was similar to those in the public school system.

The children did not have access to much adaptive technology, sensory stimulation equipment, or communication software such as IPad and Dragon communication software. There were a few noise limiting headphones to help those who were sensitive to loud noises and computers at the back of the classroom for a maximum of four students to use at one time to do school work.

**Measures**

Items from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 2000) were adapted to create a needs survey (Appendix A) to present to the educator. The needs survey was designed to determine what the educator considered important behaviours that should be managed to improve her classroom. The survey also included items that reflected behaviours observed by the researcher. The survey consisted of 15 items in a Likert rating scale format. The Likert scale assessed how important a need a behaviour was for the educator, and ranged from 1 representing little or no need to 5 representing highest priority.

The survey helped to discover the more specific target behaviours preferred by the educator within the broad domains. Such behaviours included interrupting others, inattention and focus on school work, initiating and sustaining social interactions, distracting peers, and attention seeking of peers and adults through inappropriate behaviours. The survey data (Appendix B) supported the broad categories of interventions in this thesis of escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits.

The independent variable was the proposed manual and the accompanying DVD of relaxation techniques. However, the manual and DVD themselves were not be experimentally assessed to determine their effectiveness in modifying the students’ target behaviours. No data were taken at any point in this thesis. Consent for students was not necessary.

**Materials**

**Instruments.** Materials included in the manual were printable worksheets of reward menus, data collection sheets, and examples of hypothetical resources needed for certain programs. Many interventions required adaptations to the instruments to make the program entertaining and motivating for students in the classroom. In some instances, hypothetical materials were created to display the crucial parts to an instrument, as well as how do design the materials to be individualized to the students’ preferences.

**DVD.** Accompanying the manual was a DVD of relaxation techniques. It showed the researcher demonstrating the techniques in an effective manner. A script of the PMR technique used in the DVD appeared in its own section in the thesis manual.

**Procedure**

**Sections.** Sections of this manual had varying formats. In the introduction to the manual, its purpose, and contents were explained. Next, an overview of ABA and tips on implementing it, how to remain consistent in the delivery of consequences and reinforcement, and other general guidelines followed.
Subsections were created for each targeted behavioural area, determined by the needs survey that was adapted from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 2000) the educator completed. As a result of the needs survey, the following areas were selected for targeting and made subsections of this manual: escape-related disruptive behaviours, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits. These subsections included an introduction to the particular behavioural challenge area and interventions that have allowed for the challenge to be managed in the classroom in research. Each intervention was described in terms of a brief background on the intervention and why it works, what students the intervention can be used with and with which behaviours, as well as materials needed and reward strategies. The method for each was described in two stages: preparation and implementation. These two stages were outlined in a step-by-step format and included several adaptations that could be used at different steps to suit the educator’s classroom and students. Following this were troubleshooting ideas and fading procedures.

Another subsection included in this thesis behavioural manual was implementing PMR and breathing techniques. This section was added, even though it was not identified by the needs survey directly, because the educator stated to the researcher that she felt that relaxation may help the students with many of the key behaviour problems noted in the needs survey. These techniques were demonstrated in the DVD that accompanied the manual, and scripts of the same techniques were included in the manual to assist the educator in verbally implementing the programs with the students, instead of showing them the DVD, as the demonstration was created to be a learning material for the educator.

A list of teacher resources was also developed for inclusion in this thesis. This manual was developed specifically for a focus classroom; however, the educator may have different challenges that arise in the future. This was the purpose for an added resource list; to assist the educator in locating sources for finding programs or techniques after the manual was created to further its usefulness as an educator resource in the long-term.

**Assessment.** The educator that was the focus of this thesis was consulted during the development of each section to ensure that each would provide maximum effectiveness to the educator. This was to ensure the manual’s contents were presented in the most effective manner to optimize her individual style of learning and understanding. This informal feedback by the educator on draft sections of the manual was the only form of assessment used to evaluate the resource.
Chapter IV: Results

This thesis focused on the development of a behavioural intervention manual for an educator in a grade 6/7 split classroom whose population was that of students with special needs. As there was not an empirical evaluation of the contents of this manual, there were no data to be analysed in this thesis. However, the manual was informally assessed through collaboration and discussion with the educator who was to be the primary user of the manual (See Appendix C for manual).

Needs Survey

The results of the adapted needs survey provided to the teacher provided the data needed to understand what behavioural concerns were of highest priority to the educator to have addressed in the manual (See Appendix B). The categories were formed by assessing which data was ranked level 4 or 5, and then were broken down into categories where they all shared similar characteristics of behavioural concern. These categories were called escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits. Items that were ranked high for escape related disruptive behaviours were numbers 1, 2, 8, and 14. Items related to attention difficulties were numbers 9, 12, and 14. Social skills items were mostly ranked level 5, and these items were numbers 3, 4, 5, and 13. Item number 14 was categorized in both escape-related disruptive behaviour and attention difficulties categories, for the item described could have fit either depending on the current environment and situation. All other items were rated level 3 or lower in need for the educator and were not addressed in the manual or placed in a category.

Manual Development Process

During the development of each section of the manual, the researcher met with the educator to discuss the possible contents of each section and how to best format the manual to suit the educator. Each meeting had a similar agenda that covered a variety of topics. These topics included a short review of the programs or techniques that could be added to a particular section of the manual, and what behaviours could be addressed by each program. The educator was also given a chance to decide which behavioural techniques she would like included and which ones she felt did not suit her needs. Then, feedback was solicited from the educator on how she wished each section to be formatted. Lastly, at each meeting, the educator was asked if she felt that each of the needs that were assessed in the initial survey were addressed by the programs available.

After the meeting, the researcher took the feedback given by the educator and applied it to the section assessed, and where applicable, to each of the consecutive sections of the manual. The meetings helped to develop the manual into a resource that the teacher would be functional and practical for her to use, as it was tailored to her needs and personal style.

Table 1 shows the feedback provided by the educator on each major section of the manual. In general, the educator felt the researcher had been thorough and made only minor adjustments to the formatting or program consideration. The educator also appreciated the addition of the “Teacher Resources” section.
### Table 1

**Sectional Meeting Educator Feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to ABA concepts</td>
<td>- Clear and specific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No content suggestions added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape-related disruptive behaviour</td>
<td>- Program content was approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No removal or addition of programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asked for the addition of populations of students she could use each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>program with or requirements the students should meet to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention difficulties</td>
<td>- No concerns about programs or content formatting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There was no removal or addition of programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td>- Removed the maintaining conversation program planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Liked the example Skillstreaming script.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>- Removed deep breathing exercise from the section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Approved the PMR script.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the meetings to discuss the social skills and relaxation sections, the educator had the researcher remove programs for maintaining conversation and deep breathing. During the social skills meeting, the educator felt that the students were becoming better at maintaining conversations appropriately. This then warranted the removal of the program for the educator. When the meeting for the relaxation section commenced, the educator read through the two relaxation programs (deep breathing and PMR) and decided that deep breathing was unnecessary to add to the manual, as she insisted to the researcher that she knew how to teach this technique.

At the last meeting, the educator was asked by the researcher how she felt about the manual overall. The educator’s response was that she felt that with the formatting and the content covered in the manual, she would be provided with a resource that she could use to learn about and how to utilize ABA in the future in her classroom. The full Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual is presented in Appendix C.

Upon last inspection, the educator asked for an audio recording of the PMR technique instead of a visual DVD. The change from a visual recording onto a DVD to an audio recording on a CD was made as it was a more practical tool for the educator to use either by herself to practice delivery of the PMR technique, or to play it in class as a delivery tool.
Chapter V: Discussion

Overview

This thesis focused on the development of a behavioural manual for the educator of students with special needs in Grades 6 and 7. The purpose of developing the manual was to create a resource bank of information and specific interventions for use by the educator of that classroom. This manual’s goal was to attempt to aid her in managing a wide variety of concerning challenging behaviours exhibited by the students in the environment. It was designed to fit the needs of the educator in terms of her personal learning style, as well as the needs of the classroom, by targeting the behavioural need areas, and adapting behavioural interventions to suit the environment in the best possible way. Behavioural areas were assessed through a needs survey, and the researcher attempted to target those categories through adaptations of best practices in the manual’s interventions. The behavioural areas targeted were escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits.

At the time of this thesis, there were concerns about the underutilization of ABA in classrooms. Much research noted that while this is true, many commented on the lack of practical resources that could develop a thorough, yet easily understood knowledge and practice of ABA interventions and techniques for educators. Furthermore, the current resources for educators also lack the ability to demonstrate how they may adapt suggested materials and interventions to suit their personal, classroom, and student needs. While the research literature stresses the need to have ABA present in classrooms, and that further manual and resource development is necessary for educators, little has been suggested on how to improve upon these concerns. This manual focused on addressing these concerns by being developed to be adapted to a specific educator and receiving feedback on her needs to improve her learning and ABA skill acquisition for the manual. Through this development and investigation it became clearer on how manuals can be created to support educators with little time or knowledge of ABA to help facilitate an increase in ABA in classrooms to manage challenging behaviour.

Meetings with the target educator were conducted in order to provide feedback at the completion of each section in the manual to assess satisfaction, usability, and readability. These meetings allowed changes to be made based on the educator’s preferences and classroom needs. Content assessed during these meetings included the addition or removal of interventions, layout, formatting, addition of content headings and exemplars. These meetings indicated high levels of satisfaction by the educator with the manual content and formatting, and resulted in only minor changes in content.

Contribution to the Agency

Applied behaviour analysis manuals for educators to date are not customized to fit the particular needs of the individual educator or their classrooms and/or students. Much of the time, educators become overwhelmed with the variety of information provided to them about behaviour management, and often do not know where to begin with their students. Adoptions to interventions are challenging to develop as well for educators, for without a beginning direction, it is often difficult to know what will work and what will not. This manual attempted to solve these concerns by becoming an aid to managing the variety of behavioural challenges, as well as increase the consistency and accuracy of the interventions used in the classroom in an applicable and currently redefined way.
Strengths

The ‘Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual—A Guide to Managing Disruptive Behaviour, Attention Difficulties, and Social Skills Deficits in Children with Special Needs in Grades 6 & 7’ manual was developed to suit the needs of an individual educator, behavioural concerns, and classroom. The structure of the manual therefore, could aid in the promotion of the use and correct implementation of ABA principles, as the informal assessment of the manual supported its suitability for use by the educator. The formatting and layout of the manual was designed to meet the needs of one educator; however, it may still be applicable to use for other educators in the same school. The readability of the information and interventions may suit them; however, it may be found that the adaptations do not accomplish the needs of their individual classrooms.

Limitations

The ‘Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual—A Guide to Managing Disruptive Behaviour, Attention Difficulties, and Social Skills Deficits in Children with Special Needs in Grades 6 & 7’ manual was customized to meet the needs of one educator, and not tested with other teachers. Therefore, the manual may not be as useful in other classrooms, and thus may be seen by others to act as other applied behaviour analysis manuals have. However, the difference between this manual and others is that while they are too general, this manual may be too specific for broader use.

Economic barriers are also a limitation to this thesis. Much time is necessary to be dedicated to the development of individual educator manuals, and with the increase in the number of special needs students in classroom settings, hiring professionals, adequate time, and sufficient funds are not feasible when one wishes to develop manual for different needs. This manual was created with the educator’s future students in mind; however, it addressed this solely through listing other behaviours that could potentially be targeted by an intervention, and by the listing of other educator resources.

Developing the manual to include up-to-date and best practice interventions in an individual way is a unique challenge that was faced. However, perhaps the most difficult challenge will be its effect on the educator and staff at the agency. A manual can teach an individual the theory and strategies of how to implement a program. However, if the user requires practice with certain techniques, feedback on how they implement them, or if training of other staff on the manual and its contents is required, these needs go beyond the scope of the document itself. The manual attempted to prepare the educator and staff to implement ABA practices; however, implementing ABA practices in a dynamic classroom environment is very different from reading about it and also requires guidance by an experienced professional who is ‘on the scene’ to ensure its appropriate use.

The final limitation of the manual is its utility could not be tested empirically, as there were not pre/post measures conducted of change in classroom behaviour of the students, nor of the educator.

Contributions to Behavioural Psychology Field

This thesis development has yielded several contributions to the behavioural psychology field. The manual provided further evidence for the importance of ABA manuals for educators as resources of information on behavioural management within their classrooms. This was
determined by the informal positive feedback provided by the targeted educator on the perceived practical application of the manual. This thesis demonstrated importance by providing support for ABA in classrooms, because by providing educators with a resource they may use effectively, it could lead to the increased use of ABA in classrooms in the future, which in turn could lead to overall increased learning of students and career satisfaction of educators. The thesis was an original contribution to the behavioural psychology field for the customized manual showed ways that other manuals may be further advanced to allow for other applicable adaptations to be made in the future that may more effectively promote ABA in classrooms for educators.

**Multilevel Challenges**

There are many challenges that arise when developing an ABA educator classroom manual for children with special needs.

**Client Level.** At the client level, an educator may have little prior knowledge of ABA principles and techniques. As a result, the manual may need to become more in-depth and course-like, making the resource a longer companion that will need to provide more information than may otherwise be necessary. It is also challenging to gauge the formatting and layout suitable for the individual educator, as everyone has different preferences. It is important to understand what level of knowledge an individual possesses and have feedback on the manual, so that the resource becomes one that the educator may use effectively and upholds the manual’s utility.

**Program Level.** It can be challenging to develop a customized manual when being involved with many other staff members of an agency. It is difficult to work on a project that will possibly only be applicable to one staff member, when there is the desire to help everyone. It is important to the researcher to remain focused on their project, but lending a hand to other staff when able is important in developing a working relationship and becoming a part of the agency community.

**Organizational Level.** Agencies have their own way of running their business, and a lack of communication can become a concern. The knowledge of which individuals outside of the agency can be spoken to and how activities, interventions, etc. are run within an agency, if not effectively communicated, may challenge one’s professional skills. It is important to observe and ask questions related to these items in order to maintain professionalism, but also to incorporate oneself seamlessly into the agency environment.

As well, behaviour analysts and teachers have different values and education when it comes to classroom behaviour management, and their priorities are therefore influenced by different sets of contingencies, which makes it difficult for each to understand the other’s perspectives.

**Societal Level.** The societal level is important to consider when developing a behavioural manual for educators of children with special needs. Society has behaviour norms, and in regards to children with special needs, it can become important to ensure that they encouraged and taught acceptable behaviour to use in the community. In developing this manual, it was important to remember this and ensure that each intervention could be helpful in generalizing to other environments or that a fading component was a part of each intervention, so that the desirable behaviours could be maintained and naturally reinforced in the community.
**Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to time constraints, the thesis manual was not tested for its true ability to be used by the educator or its impact on the behavioural areas targeted in the best practice interventions. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted to assess these matters to test the utility of the manual for the educator, its ability to alter the educator’s behaviour and the impact customized manuals have in managing children’s behaviour in the classrooms.

A potential tool to be included in the manual in the future to promote its use would be a questionnaire asking how other staff members found the information and interventions, and if they believed that the adaptations and customizations could work in their classrooms. As well, an ‘intervention review’ sheet could be added, so the educator could reflect on each intervention used in the classroom in terms of how the students responded, if it fit well within her classroom, thoughts on or changes she would make to an intervention, and if she felt positive about an intervention. This could aid in the manual’s future use, for the educator could quickly decide on an intervention to use based on her self-assessment and it could potentially reinforce additional thinking on how to adapt ABA concepts to meet the needs of her classroom.

**Literature Review Word Count: 6338**

**Overall Word Count: 11721**
References


Appendix A
Classroom Behaviour Survey

The items on this survey have been adapted from the “Child Behavior Checklist” and from observations of behaviours in your classroom. This survey is to help give a picture of what you, as the educator, feel are the behaviours of most concern and would like help to manage.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the priority of the problem behaviour in relation to the needs in your classroom. 1 is of little or no need, and 5 are of highest priority.

1. Demands a lot of attention from teachers

   1  2  3  4  5

2. Demands a lot of attention from peers

   1  2  3  4  5

3. Difficulty initiating social interactions

   1  2  3  4  5

4. Difficulty maintaining social interactions

   1  2  3  4  5

5. Trouble making friends

   1  2  3  4  5

6. Bullying

   1  2  3  4  5

7. Nervous/tic movements

   1  2  3  4  5

8. Yelling out in class

   1  2  3  4  5
9. Inability to focus on school work

   1   2   3   4   5

10. Too anxious

   1   2   3   4   5

11. Subpar academic work

   1   2   3   4   5

12. Trouble sitting in seat for periods of time

   1   2   3   4   5

13. Lack of social skills

   1   2   3   4   5

14. Inability to self-regulate and work independently

   Describe:

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   1   2   3   4   5

15. Other behaviours not mentioned (please be specific):

   a. ________________________________________________________________

      1   2   3   4   5

   b. ________________________________________________________________

      1   2   3   4   5

   c. ________________________________________________________________

      1   2   3   4   5
Appendix B
Results of Classroom Behaviour Survey

The items on this survey have been adapted from the “Child Behavior Checklist” and from observations of behaviours in your classroom. This survey is to help give a picture of what you, as the educator, feel are the behaviours of most concern and would like help to manage.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the priority of the problem behaviour in relation to the needs in your classroom. 1 is of little or no need, and 5 are of highest priority.

1. Demands a lot of attention from teachers

   1  2  3  4  5

2. Demands a lot of attention from peers

   1  2  3  4  5

3. Difficulty initiating social interactions

   1  2  3  4  5

4. Difficulty maintaining social interactions

   1  2  3  4  5

5. Trouble making friends

   1  2  3  4  5

6. Bullying

   1  2  3  4  5

7. Nervous/ tic movements

   1  2  3  4  5

8. Yelling out in class

   1  2  3  4  5

9. Inability to focus on school work
10. Too anxious

11. Subpar academic work

12. Trouble sitting in seat for periods of time

13. Lack of social skills

14. Inability to self-regulate and work independently

Describe: Keeping students on task

15. Other behaviours not mentioned (please be specific):

   a. 

   1 2 3 4 5

   b. 

   1 2 3 4 5

   c. 

   1 2 3 4 5
Appendix C

Classroom Behavioural Treatment Manual


Developed by Kristen McNeely

Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology

St. Lawrence College

2015

1 Image found on Google Images and reprinted with permissions of free to use or share, even commercially; on November 19, 2014, from: http://www.nextstepcg.com/new-school-development/

2 This manual was designed to be used only by the educational agency that participated in this thesis. Permission must be obtained by the author, Kristen McNeely, at krismcneely@gmail.com if others wish to use it.
# Table Of Contents

**Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 35
- Purpose of the Manual & Rationale ......................................................................................... 35
- Description of Contents ......................................................................................................... 36
- Materials Required ............................................................................................................... 36
- Using this Manual Effectively ............................................................................................. 37

**Basic Principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis** ................................................................. 38
- Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 38
- Defining a Behaviour ............................................................................................................. 38
- ABC’s and Function of a Behaviour ...................................................................................... 39
- Prompting .................................................................................................................................. 40
- Rewarding .............................................................................................................................. 40

**Before We Get Started** ...................................................................................................... 42

**Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour** ............................................................................... 43
- Introduction to Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour ............................................................. 44
- Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... 45
  - Classroom Programs for Managing Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour ....................... 45
  - Token Economy .................................................................................................................. 46
  - Token Economy with Response Cost .................................................................................. 50
  - The “Good Behavior Game” ............................................................................................... 52
  - Mystery Motivator ............................................................................................................... 56
  - Classroom Environmental Changes .................................................................................... 59
- Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... 60
  - Individual Programs for Managing Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour ...................... 60
  - Self-Management ................................................................................................................. 61
  - Functional Equivalence ....................................................................................................... 66
  - Model... Prompt... Reward! ............................................................................................... 69
  - Behaviour Contract ............................................................................................................. 72

**Attention Difficulties** .......................................................................................................... 75
- Introduction to Attention Difficulties ...................................................................................... 76
- Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... 77
  - Classroom Programs for Attention Difficulties ................................................................. 77
  - Classroom Environmental Changes .................................................................................... 78
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Modifications</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Token Economy</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Programs for Managing Attention Difficulties</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Contract</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Skills</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Social Skills</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components of Social Skills Training Through the Use of Skillstreaming</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-Plays</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of Training</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Tips for Teaching Social Skills and Mini Strategies</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Initiating Conversation through Quick Skillstreaming</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example Skillstreaming Script for Teaching Initiation of Conversation</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relaxation</strong></td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Relaxation Techniques and Their Effects on Behaviour</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Muscle Relaxation</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Resources</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: ABC Chart</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Good Behaviour Game Points Chart</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Reward Chart for Mystery Motivator Intervention</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Mystery Motivator Chart</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Example of a Self-Management Frequeincy Recording Sheet for Teacher</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: Self-Management Points Sheet</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G: Self-Management Rating Scale Sheet</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H: Self-Mangement Checklist</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I: Break Card</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix J: Example Behaviour Contract</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Teacher Skillstreaming Prompting Card

Appendix L: Points Card
Introduction

Purpose of the Manual & Rationale

Classroom management of inappropriate behaviour is a task that teachers face daily.\(^3\) Enforcing rules, teaching academic materials, and helping students behave appropriately so they can grow into young adults is a long and complicated list that can seem daunting. These tasks can be very challenging for teachers whose classrooms include students with a variety of special needs. Many teachers are unsure of where to start in managing behaviour or how to maintain the changes achieved.

Disruptive behaviour that is a result of attempting to escape something, difficulties in maintaining attention, and deficits in social skills can all be extremely challenging behaviours to manage. It is for that reason that these areas will be the focus of this behavioural manual. Each of these areas requires much attention and management on behalf of the educator; otherwise students’ learning and academic achievement may begin to decline. Other student’s learning may also be affected, as well as educator career satisfaction.

Burnout is a common side effect for educators that face challenging behaviours in their classrooms on a daily basis\(^4\). Statistics have shown that as a result of this burnout, 33% of educators have considered leaving their profession\(^5\). This burnout effect may cause a rise in punitive techniques as a result of frustration experienced by the teacher. If the amount of punitive measures increase, the educator’s perception of the student may alter and as a result, the student may begin to view their teacher in a negative way.

For these reasons, it is important to have alternatives to managing behaviour in classrooms that are positive. Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) has been demonstrated time and again to be effective at developing and maintaining behaviour change in classrooms. However, it can be challenging for educators to know where to begin in achieving these goals.

This manual has been developed to give a practical understanding of some of the basics of ABA in a concise and easy-to-read manner. This is so that the educator can learn where to begin and where to go with decreasing escape-related disruptive behaviour and increasing attention and social skills within their classroom. Step-by-step instructions are provided in preparing and implementing programs, as well as adaptations, troubleshooting, and how to maintain and fade out the program from the classroom environment.

---

\(^3\) See article by Alter, Walker, and Landers for more information on teacher demographics and perceptions of student behaviour.

\(^4\) See Ducharme and Shecter article.

\(^5\) See Kowalewicz and Coffee article.
Description of Contents

*Disclaimer: This manual is meant to be used by the teacher and staff of the original agency. It is intended to be used with students in grades 6&7 with special needs. Using this manual in any other way is not recommended by the author.*

In this manual the reader will find resources to assist in managing classroom behaviour in the present and the future. The programs in this manual are designed to fit a specific classroom now and for years to come. This manual focuses on management of escape-related disruptive behaviour, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits; however, it can continue to be a resource for helping educators find programs that may be needed in the future for other behaviours that may not be associated with these areas that arise. There is a section for additional teacher resources (see page 127) that lists ABA websites for teachers, library resources, and community resources that may need to be accessed to find more information on ABA, disabilities, disorders information, or general reading to continue to education in ABA practices for classrooms.

This manual contains information on how to define behaviours and understand why they are happening, as well as what may be sustaining them. From there, other tips that are important to consider when using ABA with students.

Sections on each of the three behavioural areas—escape-related disruptive behaviours, attention difficulties, and social skills deficits—are broken down in this manner: background of the program and why it works, students to use it with, behaviours it targets, materials needed, rewards, preparation for implementation, implementation, troubleshooting, and fading of the program. This method is used to ensure comprehension of the program in a way that makes the process encouraging, easy to understand, and make use of.

Additional resources that can be found with this manual are examples of the materials needed for each program and a CD with an audio file delivering the relaxation technique Progressive Muscle Relaxation. The example materials show the crucial parts to a program, and suggestions are made on how to adapt them to meet students’ and teachers’ needs. The CD is another resource that is meant to show how to demonstrate the relaxation technique. The exercise is also scripted in the manual for use with students verbally.

Materials Required

Materials required for executing each program in this manual will vary. Each program is unique and requires different materials and instruments to be effective. However, there are examples of each of these materials in the appendices of this manual and a list of materials is provided in each program’s section for the reader’s benefit.
Using this Manual Effectively

In order to utilize this manual in the most effective manner for learning ABA, where to start, and how to implement the programs for managing behaviours in the classroom, it is important to follow these steps:

- **Read this manual in its entirety.** This is important, as it will allow the reader to become familiarized with its contents visually. This will allow for increased focus on what the manual has to offer, as well as introduce the reader to the concepts of ABA and behaviour that are important in selecting programs for a particular classroom.

- Before selecting an intervention, always read the sections of this manual pertaining to understanding the function of a behaviour (pg. 40) and defining behaviours (pg. 39). This is important to do in order to be able to select an appropriate program from this manual that will work effectively in managing the challenging behaviour occurring in the classroom.

- Follow the procedures in the step-by-step directives as they are outlined, but also be creative where possible. Changing materials to match the current interests of students can greatly influence their motivation to behave as directed and increase their participation in the program.

- It is important that procedural steps are not skipped. They all have a purpose in some way.
Basic Principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis

Introduction

Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) is the scientific study of behaviour. This field of psychology is useful to teachers in classrooms because behavioural challenges—such as those of the disruptive, attention, and social skills nature—inhibit student’s learning and educator’s teaching abilities. Managing challenging behaviours through ABA can therefore increase learning and morale, allowing a classroom to be a pleasant environment and students can grow to develop the skills they need to enjoy life to the fullest.

Defining a Behaviour

This is an important step to do before deciding on an intervention and implementing it in a classroom. Defining can help a teacher clarify what behaviours they are seeing and what they would like to change or see more of in the future. This step also helps to avoid confusion when explaining to the student what is expected of them to obtain a reward and so the teacher knows what should be rewarded. The behaviour can be one to be reduced or a behaviour that is desired to be increased. Defining a behaviour does not need to be difficult.

The first step in defining a behaviour is to recall what the behaviour looks like that is to be increased or decreased. Then define the behaviour. To do this in a simple manner, apply who, what, where, when, and what the behaviour is not. The behaviour being defined needs to be one that is observable. Can the behaviour be experienced with one of the five senses? If so, it can be described and defined. Avoid attempting to define behaviours that are cognitive, such as thoughts or feelings, things that cannot be seen or witnessed by someone other than the student themselves.

- **Who:** “Johnny.”
- **What:** what does the behaviour look like? A variety of examples can be noted if applicable. “Hitting: hitting another person, animal, self, or object.” It is also pertinent where applicable to include if the student will or will not do the behaviour.
- **When:** when will the behaviour occur? “During recess.”
- **Where:** where the behaviour should occur. “On the school yard.”
- **What it is not:** examples of exceptions. “Hitting does not include high-fives.”

An example of a simplistic behavioural definition can look like this:

“Johnny will keep his hands to himself at all recess times. This looks like any behaviour that is not a strike (open or closed palm against another person’s body). This behaviour does not include giving or accepting a high-five.”

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6 Content in this chapter adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services ABA manual: *Changing Behaviour: A comprehensive Manual of Applied Behaviour Analysis.*
ABC’s and Function of a Behaviour

Determining the function of a behaviour is the next important step in choosing the correct program for a student(s). When a behaviour is occurring, the teacher need only to observe two things: What happened before (A) the behaviour (B), and what happened after it (C). Another option is reflection. An educator can reflect back on what they observed in the day and make the ABC connections that way. However, the results of doing an ABC after the fact may not be as accurate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Antecedent (before)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Consequence (After)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Appendix A for a copy of an ABC chart.

What happens before (antecedent) a behaviour occurs is important. This is the “trigger” for the behaviour. It is what says to the student, “Okay, now that this has happened, it’s time to do this behaviour.” Changing the antecedent to a behaviour can stop it from occurring altogether. This is because if the trigger for the behaviour does not occur, the behaviour is less likely to occur. If changing an antecedent is not possible, the consequences (C) can be altered so engaging in the inappropriate behaviour is a less desirable option.

After the student has engaged in the behaviour, what follows it (consequence) is what maintains the behaviour. The student will often be “triggered” for a behaviour; however, the student’s learning history may determine if they engage in the challenging behaviour. If in the past the student has benefitted from engaging in the particular behaviour, they will expect the same favorable outcome.

The consequences that follow a behaviour can determine the behaviours function. Most behaviour is exhibited to help the individual gain something. The possible functions of behaviour are as follows:

- Gain tangible items
- Gain the ability to escape something/one
- Gain positive and/or negative attention (from peers, staff, family, strangers)
- Gain pleasant stimulatory sensation (rocking, singing, flicking, etc.)

If the student, after engaging in the behaviour enjoys access to any of the above areas, that is likely the behaviours function. It may be necessary to observe the student several times to be able to see the ABC’s involved and find the function.
Prompting

Prompts are cues that are delivered to the student from a staff member to remind the student to do something. Prompting is a necessary part of learning for any student, as it takes time to remember when or how to do something new. Prompting should be used from least to most intrusive measures. Gesturing is the least intrusive measure of the levels of prompting; it is a simple point at the student or object that will remind the student to do something. Partial physical prompting is a gentle touch to a body part, such as a finger or arm. Full physical contact is where the staff member guides the student’s body directly, using hand-over-hand or grasping and moving the student’s body as to how it should respond when given a directive. Lastly, is verbal prompting. This method should be used as a last resort as it can be hard to eliminate. Students become reliant on the instruction. It is a simple, verbal directive.

Levels of Prompting

Least (Try First)

Gesture

Partial physical

Full physical contact

Verbal

Most (Try Last)

Rewarding

There is a rule of thumb when it comes to behaviours and consequences/rewards. It is, if the consequence of a behaviour is pleasant to an individual, the more likely it is that the individual will use that behaviour again in the future. Generally, we consider consequences to be a negative word. However, in ABA, consequences can be both negative and positive. The more positive a consequence is, the more likely the student will use that particular behaviour again, and choose not to engage in inappropriate ones. This is how to change student behaviour, make the positive behaviours more rewarding to use than the negative/inappropriate ones.

Positive consequences are also called rewards. Teachers can use many types of rewards to help manage the behaviour in their classrooms. However, there are important items to consider when using rewards.

- **Consistency.** Consistent delivery of rewards is important so the student learns that behaving appropriately is more beneficial than not.
- **Individualized.** Not all students are the same or like the same things. Rewards need to be individualized so they will be motivating to the student.
• **Immediacy.** The longer the teacher waits to deliver rewards, the more confused the student will become, and will grow less willing to behave appropriately.

• **Appropriate.** It is important that the teacher consider how the reward will affect their classroom. The rewards should fit seamlessly into the classroom and not become a burden to deliver for the educator.

• **Mix it up!** Changing the rewards occasionally is a great way to ensure the student is still motivated to behave appropriately. Occasionally students may get bored of their options.

• **Pair with praise.** Telling the student what they did right alongside delivering rewards helps the student to remember and understand what they did right and what they should continue to do in the future. Praise can be more than just, “Good job Johnny!” If the teacher states what the student did right with the praise, it becomes a greater positive and there remains no confusion as to what the teacher liked. **For example,** “Great job staying in your seat Johnny!” and the teacher hands him a token.

**Reward Ideas**

- **Praise**
- **Tangibles** (toys, preferred items, etc.)
- **Edibles** (candy, small pieces of preferred food)
- **Activities** (games, free time)
- **Passes** (No homework or no recess in the winter)
- **Social** (sitting with a friend at lunch or during an activity)
- **Privileges** (taking breaks, sitting out during something they do not like)

Rewarding generally occurs after a certain amount of time of correct behavioural responding or number of correct behavioural responses through the use of tokens, points, stickers, etc. A number goal can be used with these small rewards, as well as a schedule. In the beginning, tokens for example should be limited to after every time a correct behaviour occurs. As time goes on, the token goal number can be increased in reasonable, small increments, and schedules for giving them increased to every 2, 3, 4, etc., times a person responds. Alterations to these are suggested and explained in each program in this manual.

To know what rewards will be effective at motivating each student, the teacher can ask the pupil directly and come to a compromise. This can be done by asking the student to list the rewards they would most like to work towards, then have them arrange them in order from most to least preferred. Then the teacher and student work together to come up with a solution that will work for both of them in the classroom.
Before We Get Started

- **Medical History.** Before beginning any program with a child, be sure to get what history possible from the student’s parents about any medical conditions or concerns. Much behaviour can occur as a result of a medical condition, meaning it may not be appropriately managed through ABA.

- **Be Positive!** The teacher should try and focus on positive behaviours that can be increased and are opposite or alternatives to the behaviours wanting to be decreased. Focusing and rewarding positive behaviour helps the student practice good behaviours and keeps the program from becoming negative for them.

- **Be Consistent.** This means being consistent on the delivery of both rewards and consequences/ignoring that is a part of any program. This also means consistency in implementation of the program chosen for the classroom. Consistency in these three areas is important for developing and maintaining the behaviour change made by the program. If an educator does not follow through on the procedures outlined in the program steps, challenging behaviours will likely continue to occur in the classroom.

- **Wait Out the Storm.** Behaviours will sometimes become worse at early or middle stages of a program, than what may have been seen before. However, if consistency in implementing the program exists, the behaviours should be short lived and improve.

- **No Means No!** When a directive has been given, the teacher should not give into the student’s inappropriate behaviour to alleviate the stress the behaviour creates. The teacher needs to stick to what they have said so the student does not expect him/her to give in next time they do the same behaviour. At the same time, do not threaten students with a punishment that cannot be carried out, for the same reason.

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7 Content in this chapter adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services ABA manual: *Changing Behaviour: A comprehensive Manual of Applied Behaviour Analysis.*
Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour
Introduction to Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour

Disruptive behaviours are a challenge for any teacher to manage. A student’s inappropriate behaviour can disrupt the students around them and limit a teacher’s ability to educate. Often, the reason a student behaves in a disruptive way, it is because they want to escape a task or individual. They wish to do this to reduce a negative feeling associated with that task and individual, for behavioural learning has taught them that if they behave inappropriately, they may be allowed to escape.

To manage this behaviour in a classroom, the disruptive behaviour can be replaced by a more appropriate behaviour for achieving what the student wants, or rewards are given for absence of a behaviour and compliance. These methods work because they both show the positives of behaving appropriately and the student is likely to be more motivated to engage in the appropriate behaviour. The programs following this introduction show many methods to manage disruptive behaviour in these two ways. The programs are split into programs for use with groups of students and ones that can be used with individuals.

Often, group programs are used more frequently in school settings, as they can have an effect on much disruptive behaviour with a variety of different students at the same time.

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8 See articles Rispoli et al., 2013 and Steiner et al., 2013
# Table of Contents

**Classroom Programs for Managing Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour**

1. Token Economy........................................................................................................60
2. Token Economy with Response Cost....................................................................63
3. Good Behavior Game............................................................................................65
4. Mystery Motivator................................................................................................68
5. Classroom Environmental Changes.......................................................................71
Token Economy

“Show Me the Money-Good Behaviour!”

Background

Token economies have been used frequently in classrooms to manage behaviour. The reason for its success is that it gives each student multiple attempts to gain rewards, and the teacher many opportunities to deliver them. This increases the chances students will be noticed for positive behaviours instead of negative ones (such as remaining on task and not escaping work), and will learn the value of behaving appropriately. This is a class-wide system where students are assessed individually and not within a group. The challenging condition with this intervention is that at least one adult in the classroom should remain as vigilant as possible of the behaviours of each student at all times.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This intervention can be used with any population of students.

Behaviours

This intervention can be used with any challenge in the classroom that is related to a behaviour difficulty, including those that are escape-related and disruptive. It is not appropriate for use with teaching a new skill or to manage emotional difficulties.

Materials

- Token Economy Chart (optional)
- Stickers/pictures/tickets as tokens or a dry erase marker (if using token economy chart)
- Poster board for rules
- Reward menu (Appendix C)

Rewards

Rewards in this program are given in two ways: daily tokens and weekly rewards. Daily tokens are given as an immediate reward for the students’ behaviour so they can experience the benefits of behaving well and they can see that they are moving closer towards their goal. The daily tokens act as the currency in the “economy” aspect of this program. At the end of the week the students are allowed to “cash in” what tokens they have accumulated that week for a series of “larger” prizes that all have different amounts of “currency” attached to them (see Appendix C for an example). It is important to note also, that some students may not be able to wait a week to

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exchange their tokens in the beginning. To solve this, change the amount of token’s needed for certain rewards and change the cash-in date to be maybe in the middle of the week and so on.

**Preparation**

1. **Behaviours.** Decide which positive behaviours to target and define them clearly (see pg. 39 on defining).
2. **Rewards.** Decide what the tokens will look like and how they will be given.
   - If the decision has been made to give points, make a points chart. Make the chart with all the students names down the left hand side and at the top will be written “points for the day” or for each week. An adaptation could be adding a laminated strip of paper to each student’s desk to write points down on.

   **Example Points Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Points For The Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   - If using tokens/pictures or stickers, give each student an envelope to put them in.
   - Then decide on the end of the week larger rewards and how much each will cost (see Appendix C for a sample reward menu).
   - The rewards do not have to be physical objects like prizes. They can be as simple as more free time or access to a game, etc.
   - It is recommended that tickets be given out as tokens, for they are easily kept in an adults pocket and therefore given out quickly.
3. **When.** Decide when the tokens will be given out and when the students will be allowed to cash them in. If the tokens can be cashed in for more time for something, decide when that time will be given as well. Morning periods may be best to give tokens unless another staff member is trained to carry on the program in the afternoons.
4. **Poster board.** Create the rules poster to put up in the class. Clearly outline the positive behaviours that will earn the students tokens. Make it visually appealing.
5. **Reward menu.** Write down the prizes and how many tokens will be needed for each on a separate poster (or both posters could be combined so the students will be more likely to review the appropriate behaviours when looking for the cost of the prizes).
Implement

1. **Introduce**
   a. Tell the class that they will now be able to earn prizes for following the new classroom rules.
   b. Show them the rules poster and explain each behaviour thoroughly, possibly asking them to explain what is meant by each, or to demonstrate them.
   c. Then, show them the token chart or the tokens that will be given out, along with the chart of how much each prize costs. Let them know at what points in the day they will be able to access the tokens and when they will be able to cash them in.
   d. It may be a good idea to consider giving a prize to the person who earns the most tokens at the end of the week, as an extra incentive for participation.

2. **Start Program.**
   a. Carry tokens or a dry erase marker in a pocket during the times when the students can receive tokens.
   b. Prompt the students by saying they can receive tokens now and throughout the rest of the time period if they need a reminder.
   c. Give a token to the individual or group of students for each instance of correct behaviour.
   d. Praise should also be given, along with telling the student what they did right. For example: a student raises their hand and waits to be called upon. Call upon the student and immediately give them a token or point and say “great job raising your hand, thank you.” Then let them speak.
   e. At the end of the week allow the students to cash in their tokens for their corresponding reward. Reward the student who has collected the most tokens as well if applicable.

**Troubleshooting**

If there seems to be a decline in motivation to participate in the token economy, think about changing the rewards. The students may find their disruptive behaviour more motivating than the rewards available; therefore, a change will need to be made. You may also consider changing the schedule of when they receive rewards to one where they get them more often in the beginning, some students are slower than others to warm up to an intervention.

**Fading**

Token economies can be difficult to fade from the classroom. Sometimes the students become reliant on the intervention. It may be more successful if it is not announced that the frequency of the delivery of the tokens/points will be faded. See if they notice first. How this program would be faded is after seeing a change in behaviour that has been maintained for a few weeks, change how often the tokens are given to every couple of times they respond correctly.
The reward menu prices may need to be altered if the frequency of giving tokens does not allow them to possibly receive the highest reward. Keep doing this until you’re giving the tokens infrequently, but behaviour change is still maintained. This can take time and patience. If the program is faded too rapidly, the frequency of disruptive behaviour is likely to increase.
Token Economy with Response Cost
“Teacher Givith, Teacher Taketh Away”

Background

This procedure is implemented in the exact same steps as described previously for token economy. The catch is, now that the tokens have been given for their good behaviour, the teacher now has the power to take the tokens back for disruptive behaviour. This method has been tested several times, and many professionals believe that token economy is enough to produce behaviour change without the negative consequence for inappropriate behaviour in a classroom. However, occasionally it has been demonstrated in research that it may be appropriate to start a response cost procedure to motivate students to behave appropriately.

What Students Can I Use This With?

See token economy section.

Behaviours

See token economy section.

Materials

See token economy section.

Rewards

See token economy section.

Preparation and Implementation

The only change that is made to the token economy program described previously is that now at any time a student is not behaving as outlined in the rules to be followed poster, a token or point can be removed from their collection.

If it has been decided that both token economy and response cost procedures will be used together, explicitly describe to the students the behaviours that will get tokens or points both given and removed. This is to ensure there is not any confusion and will help keep the students motivated to engage in the program.

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Troubleshooting

Occasionally, in the middle of a token economy a behaviour can worsen compared to how it was before starting the program. Try and wait it out, the disruptive behaviour may decrease on its own if consequences and the delivery of tokens/points is constant. The response cost portion of this program may be dropped to attempt to target appropriate behaviours and ignore inappropriate ones. This would require returning to giving tokens/points only and not taking them back.

Another way to see a change in motivation and behaviour is to use a 4:1 ratio of a student earning points to their losing them for inappropriate behaviours. This will help not only the teacher from using “negative scanning” (a process by which an individual is more concerned with the negative behaviours and characteristics of an individual then with observing and noting their positive behaviours or characteristics) and helps the students from getting discouraged at the removal of some or all of their points or tokens.

Fading

See above in token economy section.
The “Good Behavior Game”
“Attack on Bad Behaviour”

Background

The “Good Behavior Game” is a unique intervention strategy for a classroom. It was developed for teachers that wanted a classroom-wide behaviour management resource to help keep their students on-task with academic work or to follow behavioural rules of the classroom. This is an effective strategy for reducing escape-related disruptive behaviour because it groups students together and forces each individual student to behave appropriately in order for their group members and themselves to gain rewards. The students must work as a team to be successful, but must also be responsible for themselves as well.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This intervention can be used with most students, including those with emotional, behavioural, or developmental/intellectual disabilities or disorders.

Behaviours

This game has been used typically with reducing behaviours that are considered off task or disruptive; however, it should be appropriate to use with any behaviour that the individual can reasonably control and is engaging in them to gain access to or escape things. Inappropriate behaviours would be those that are not observed to be under the control of the individual (such as tick behaviours) or those that are related to skill building (social skills).

Materials

- A laminated points chart (Appendix B)
- Erasable marker
- A piece of construction paper for description of inappropriate behaviours that earn points
- Visual schedule (optional)

Rewards

Rewards should be given daily, but weekly rewards are also suggested. Both choices can work together by giving a small token to be placed in a jar for each team and deciding on a certain amount of daily points they must obtain that will amount to a larger reward at the end of the week. If it is decided to give a reward each day only, this needs to be given consistently. Reward options can be anything deemed appropriate by the educator.

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11 Content of the “Good Behavior Game” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central.
If the rewards are given **only daily**, it may be appropriate to give the winning team/s a certain amount of free time each day, where they are given the opportunity to engage in activities that are social or educational, or even just time to do whatever activity on their own.

If points are given daily, but saved towards an **end of the week larger reward**, a token may be appropriate to be placed in a jar for the end of the week by a student the winning group elects together. No matter what the rewards end up being for this intervention, one thing is important to remember, **consistency!**

**Preparation**

1. **Decide which behaviours to target and define them.** For the purposes of this game, the behaviours need to be inappropriate ones. These do not have to only be ones that are escape-related disruptive behaviours. Any behaviour that is disruptive or challenging to manage can be used for this game. For example: Talking out of turn is defined as speaking when another person is talking or when the teacher has not called upon the student to speak.

2. **Create a rule poster.** This will describe what inappropriate behaviours have been decided will earn the students points against their team. Make this poster bright and very clear, using large writing and even visuals such as pictures indicating the inappropriate behaviour. Place all posters in a position that the students can see (somewhere at the front of the class would be best).

3. **Decide when the game will be played.** The game can be played multiple periods a day, but typically include periods where behaviours are most likely to be at their worst.

4. **Design the points chart.** Make it visually appealing so that the students will want to play, but design it also around things that they collectively enjoy. However, because the accumulation of points is intended to be negative, design a chart that revolves around the negative aspects of the things they enjoy. For example:
   
   a. **Mario:** images of being defeated by Bowser or another character, or make the accumulation of points the lives that Bowser has taken from their group.
   
   b. **Smash Bros:** being beaten in the ring by an opponent... same idea as above.

5. **Decide the rewards and the reward schedule.** (See information on rewards above).

**Implement**

1. **Introduce the game to the class.**
   
   a. During a time when each student is present, mention that throughout the school days this week the class is going to play a game.
   
   b. Indicate to them when the game will occur in the day.
   
   c. Divide the students into two groups (it is suggested for score keeping purposes that groups are divided down the middle of the classroom configuration).
   
   d. Let the teams decide on a name.
e. Tell the students that certain types of behaviour will earn their team points against receiving a reward—be specific and clear about this. Show them the rule and points chart.

f. Tell the students that the lowest number of points at the end of each day will get them the reward that has been chosen or a token to save towards a larger reward at the end of the week. Let them know also that if the teams tie or if one or both teams remain under a maximum amount of points (such as 4) they will also receive a reward.

g. If an appropriate behaviour chart was not made, it may be a good idea to practice with them what appropriate behaviours will not earn them points away from the reward. Another option is to model either type of behaviour and ask with a show of hands who thinks the behaviour should be given or not given points.

2. **Play the game!**

   a. Go on with the day as normal, only now when inappropriate behaviours (as defined on the rules chart) occur, publically announce a point or publically place a point under the offending team’s side on the points chart.

   b. At the end of the day (and week if applicable) give the team with the least amount of points, points below the maximum number of points allowed to receive reward, or both teams with tied points their reward. Remember, if using tokens to designate successful days in a week toward a larger reward, these tokens are the daily rewards.

**Troubleshooting**

Occasionally, there may be a student or students that will deliberately engage in the behaviours that are outlined as those earning points for teams, causing their team to gain a large amount of points. This can be changed by making the student or students a group on their own in the classroom. That way if they want a reward at any time, they will have to work to gain it and will not cause other classmates to become discouraged during the game and lose interest. This could also be remedied by altering the rewards given to make them more motivating for the students. This may need to be done periodically to maintain motivation.

If the game seems to be losing effect, the delivery of points to groups may not be consistent or the rewards may need to be changed. It is very important that the teacher sticks to their rules and award points for every instance of inappropriate behaviour that has been outlined on the rules chart. It is also helpful to avoid arguing with students about the awarding of points.

**Fading**

When the students’ behaviour reduces to a more appropriate level and has remained low consistently for a couple weeks, it can be beneficial to start to fade the intervention. The game can still continue, but the amount of maximum points to stay below to get a reward can be
reduced to make it more challenging. The number of times they are able to access rewards can be reduced as well. If the students get rewards each day, change the rules to be that they have to be successful for two days to get a reward, and so on. If they get daily points and weekly rewards, increase the amount of daily rewards in the week they must obtain in order to get the larger reward at the end of the week. Continue to do this in a slow and progressive manner.
Mystery Motivator\textsuperscript{12}

“Solving the Mystery of Good Behaviour Everywhere!”

**Background**

This is an intervention strategy that can be used with individual or groups of students to manage behaviour. This intervention can be successful because it is unpredictable and is a game in nature. The students work as one group to be able to earn a reward at the end of the week based on their collective behaviour.

**What Students Can I Use This With?**

This intervention is appropriate to use with students with special needs.

**Behaviours**

Mystery Motivator can be used with students who exhibit a wide range of challenging behaviours, from minor to more challenging behaviours. This program is not for use with increasing behaviours that involve skill building.

**Rewards**

Rewards are accessed through a reward menu. The students gain access to rewards by uncovering days on a chart that has randomly assigned points or no points. Each day if they have followed the rules as a group or individually as outlined, they may uncover a Mystery Motivator day on the chart. Some days will have points hidden beneath them; however, not every day will they be given points to go towards a reward, causing them to need to behave just in case that day has points designated to it. At the end of the week they may cash in the points they have earned for a collective prize that corresponds to the amounts on the reward menu. The more points they have, the better the prize. Rewards can be extra free time or an extra game at the end of the week—whatever the educator deems appropriate. The number of points could correspond to the number of minutes of free time the class is allowed as an example.

**Materials**

- Reward Menu (Appendix C)
- Mystery Motivator Chart (Appendix D)
- Post-it notes

**Preparation**

\textsuperscript{12} Content for “Mystery Motivator” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central.
1. **Select 1-3 behaviours to target.** This will make it easier for determining if the class earns the right to have a day revealed. Make sure the behaviours are defined clearly (see pg.39).

2. **Create the reward menu.** Decide what rewards are going to require what amount of points to be cashed in. Make this colourful and possibly theme related to something they like. Post somewhere visible to the students.

3. **Decide what period of the day the game will be played.** This should start out as one period a day so that the educator can keep track mentally of their behaviour and have an easier time deciding if their behaviour allows the day on the Mystery Motivator Chart to be revealed.

4. **Decide on the minimum criteria.** In order for the students to reveal the Mystery Motivator of the day, a minimum requirement should be decided. This needs to consider all of the students’ abilities. **An example** of this is the minimum requirement of fewer than 3 reminders from the teacher on their behaviour.

5. **Prepare the Mystery Motivator Chart.** Decide on how many days the students should be able to earn points (start with 4 times a week and reduce when fading the game). Then each week randomly assign the days on the chart they will get a point. Write them on the chart (to make it easy, laminate the chart and use an erasable marker). Cover the days of the week with Post-It notes and tape the bottoms or use paper and tape.

6. **Determine rules for earning bonus points.** On the Mystery Motivator Chart there is a box for bonus points to be earned and redeemed at the end of the week if the students earn them. The guidelines for earning this can be as simple as the students need to uncover a minimum of 3 days that week on the chart.

**Implementing**

1. **Introduce to class.**
   a. Tell the students that they can earn points for good behaviour that will lead to them being able to uncover a day on the Mystery Motivator Chart.
   b. Explain that the chart does not have points under each day, and so to gain maximum points they will need to follow the guidelines outlined for their behaviour every day.
   c. Tell them the criteria for gaining bonus points and then show and explain the reward menu.
   d. Explain to them the behaviours they need to engage in, such as staying in their seats during the work period.
   e. Lastly, let them know what their rewards can be and when they will be able to redeem (Show the students the reward menu).

2. **Bonus Points?** At the end of the week determine if the class has met the criteria to gain access to the bonus points to add to their redeemable points. If they do not, they do not receive the points.
3. **Reward.** Let the students redeem their points and allow them to have their reward corresponding to the reward menu.

**Troubleshooting**

If a student behaves inappropriately so that the rest of the class does not get to reveal the Mystery Motivator for the day, this is solved by making the student a team on their own. When the rest of the class gains access to the reward at the end of the week and the one student doesn’t, their behaviour is more likely to change, and the other students will not be sabotaged.

**Fading**

To fade out this program from the classroom, there are a few strategies that can be used to do so. Increase the number of points the students have to earn a week (including bonus points) and change the reward menu accordingly. The points could also be raised and add on an additional week before rewards are able to be redeemed. This could mean the minimum criteria for the bonus points may need to be increased as well. Whatever way that will help the students to work a little bit harder on their behaviour and for a little bit longer will help eliminate the program from the classroom but maintain their behaviour within it.
Classroom Environmental Changes
“Environmental Changes Are Good For Behaviour Too”

Background

Making changes to the classroom environment can reduce opportunities for a student to use disruptive behaviour to escape tasks or situations.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This technique can be used with individuals or groups of students. It is appropriate to use with any population of students.

Behaviours

This method can be used to reduce disruptive behaviours in the classroom, or limit opportunities for the behaviours to occur. However, the disruptive behaviours need to be those that are affected by the environment, such as conversing with students at inappropriate times by getting materials from other areas of the classroom. This chatter can be reduced by limiting the times students need to get out of their seats.

Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Environmental Changes</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking to students when out of seat getting supplies</td>
<td>Put a bag on their chair or attached to their desk that can be used to store all binders and possible supplies.</td>
<td>- A large bag for each student or for just one. - A way to attach to chair or desk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to students while sitting at desk.</td>
<td>Turn their desk to face a wall that is not directly beside another student.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

**Individual Programs for Managing Escape-Related Disruptive Behaviour**

1. Self-Management......................................................................................................................73
2. Functional Equivalence............................................................................................................78
3. Model... Prompt... Reward!.....................................................................................................81
4. Behaviour Contract..................................................................................................................84
Self-Management\textsuperscript{13}  
“\textit{I Think I Can, I Think I Can, I Think I Can... Behave}”

Background

There are a couple of benefits to using this program. Self-management is an effective tool at reducing disruptive behaviours a student exhibits, but it also makes the student aware of their behaviour at all times in order to gain rewards. Therefore, this intervention can be a very powerful technique to use with individual students in a classroom, especially those with special needs. This intervention does require some data collection on the part of a staff in the room, so “cheating” does not occur. This program then should only be used with periods of time where an adult can record or when the teacher is not giving instruction.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This intervention should only be used with students with a mental and physical age where they are aware of themselves and consequences. Special needs students are appropriate if they fulfil these requirements.

Behaviours

Self-management can be used with a variety of challenging behaviours within a classroom. Increasing the absence of behaviour is also appropriate to use with this method. Behaviours not appropriate for use of this intervention would be those that require skill building.

Rewards

Rewards can be given daily or both daily and weekly. If it is decided that the preferred reward from the student is too “large” of a request to be given daily, then weekly rewards are appropriate with the use of points. A sit down with the student will be required in order to determine what reward he/she wants to work toward and how many points will be required to get it. The reward needs to be a powerful motivator for the student. It may also need to be changed from time to time if motivation towards the program decreases.

Materials

- Recording sheet for the teacher (Appendix E).
- Dry erase marker for indicating daily points on students recording sheet.
- Students points/recording sheet (Appendix F, G, H).

Preparation

\textsuperscript{13} Content for “Self-Management” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central.
1. **Define the behaviour.** The behaviour chosen can be either increased or decreased. Follow the guidelines on pg. 39 for defining behaviours.

2. **Choose a recording format.** There are 3 formats that are convenient to use for both the teacher and the student using this program. They are: rating scale, checklist, and frequency count. Choosing the correct recording format is important and is based on what the specific disruptive behaviour is.

   - **Rating Scale:** Rates the level of someone’s skills or performance on a targeted behaviour in a format similar to satisfactory (3), needs improvement (2), and poor (1). **For example:** 1. stayed quiet (1, 2, 3), 2. Raised my hand (1, 2, 3), 3. Only spoke when spoken to (1, 2, 3). (See Appendix G for an example sheet). Use this method if the behaviour to be improved upon is one the student already knows how to do, but is lacking in using consistently.

   - **Checklist:** Is a list of tasks involved in correctly performing an activity or behaviour. It should be a resource the student checks periodically while doing an activity. **For example:** steps involved in editing writing or preparing for lunch. (See Appendix H for an example). Use this method for behaviours that involve steps that the student knows how to do, but frequently forgets to do or does the steps out of order.

   - **Frequency Count:** Student keeps a running tally of the number of times he/she performs a behaviour (See Appendix E for an example). This should be used with behaviours to be increased (if a behaviour is to be decreased, choose a different but more appropriate alternative behaviour for the student to increase with frequency count).

3. **When.** A self-management program can be run at any time of the day, as long as the student is aware of when it is occurring. Decide what time of the day the program will run, and then think of the interval of time the student needs to monitor their behaviour. This interval can be as short or as long as needed, but it should correspond to the frequency the inappropriate behaviour occurs in, so that the student is rewarded for not engaging in the behaviour. **For example:** a student is interrupting others that are speaking at an average of 5 times in 3 minutes. An appropriate interval length for the student to monitor their behaviour is roughly every 30 seconds.

4. **Cue.** Decide how the student will be reminded to monitor their behaviour. Convenient options for a classroom include: Beep tape, timer, teacher-delivered cue, and student-delivered cue.

   - **Beep tape.** This is an audio file that can be played on a music player that plays MP3 files. This audio file is soundless except for occasional beeps that play at a pre-set time interval. When the student hears the beep it is their cue to monitor how they did with their behaviour since the last beep. This beep tape can be downloaded in any time interval needed up to 5 minutes in length. The beep tape can be downloaded from this website: http://www.interventioncentral.org/free-audio-monitoring-tapes.
• **Timer:** This acts the same as the beep tape, only in a timer format. The catch to a timer is that it needs to be one that makes noise or vibrates. Cell phones often have timers on them that will vibrate at certain intervals, or certain apps can be downloaded that can perform the same function. There is also a product called a MotivAider that will vibrate quietly at a pre-set interval of the user’s choice. If using a regular timer, the student is required to reset it when the interval is over.

• **Teacher-Delivered Cue:** This method is simple in the way that the teacher tells the student when to monitor through a cue of his/her choice. It could be a simple touch on the shoulder, hand signal, or verbal cue. If this method is chosen, make sure the cue is delivered each time the student needs to monitor their behaviour.

• **Student-Delivered Cue:** The student cues themselves to monitor their behaviour at some point in a period without another cue device. This method is more helpful if the student is monitoring their behaviour with a checklist.

5. **Choose Rewards.** Rewards need to be individualized to the student to motivate them, but also need to be reasonable for the classroom. Points are suggested to be used (see students point card Appendix F) and is used as a reward at the time for their behaviour, and also indicate how much closer they are to a larger reward. A point goal will need to be decided upon. When the student reaches a certain amount of points (the goal), give them the agreed upon reward. It does not need to be a tangible item; it could be “free time” or extra time to play before working, etc.

6. **Make materials.** Make both the data collection sheets for a student and teacher, as well as a point sheet if points are being used instead of tokens.

**Implement**

1. **Meeting.** Have a private meeting with the student involved and discuss:
   a. What the program is
   b. The behaviour the student should work on
   c. When it will be occurring in a day
   d. How they will monitor
   e. How they gain rewards.

   Practice of the appropriate behaviour or absence of a behaviour should be considered.

2. **Accuracy.** In the beginning it may be important to take data along with the student to make sure they are accurate in noting the behaviour change and deserve access to a reward. If the student is accurate, with the exception of a couple mistakes in the beginning, they should earn a reward. The focus of this program is to make the student aware of their behaviour, which in turn reduces disruptive behaviour. Mistakes in their behaviour can be accepted in the beginning as long as they are appropriately marking their points sheets. When they get a hang on managing their behaviour, the rule can be changed to giving points only if the student is not engaging in a disruptive behaviour.
This needs to be done with caution, for it can encourage the student to cheat to get their points. Graduate to this only when they have established a pattern of correct responding or being absent of disruptive behaviour.

3. **Start the program.**
   
a. **Prepare the student.** Notify the student that they will need to monitor their behaviour soon. Try and do this a few minutes prior to the program start time so they can prepare themselves. They will need the materials required for their cueing method, recording/points sheet, and a dry erase marker to mark down their behaviour on their sheet.

b. **Start the self-management period.** During the first few times, the student may need to be observed to make sure that the process is working and they are either not engaging in a behaviour or are changing their behaviour. Depending on the cueing method being used, either observe the student marking their progress and mark down on the teacher data sheet how they did, or when the timer goes off, mark down their progress. **Remember to have the student reset the timer after each interval if they forget.**

c. **Reward?** At the end of the recording period, check the teacher data sheet against the students recording sheet. If they have correctly monitored their behaviour, give them a point on their recording sheet in the reward box. The first couple of times the student begins this program, if they incorrectly record their behaviour, forgive this and give them the point they need anyway. This is so the student does not get discouraged with the process, but do not continue to do this for longer than a couple days. Remind the student to focus on what they are supposed to be doing. **Remember:** the student’s data sheet is being checked against the teacher data sheet so that it is apparent or not if the student is becoming more aware of their behaviour.

d. When the student has collected the points required for a reward, deliver the reward at the decided upon time.

**Troubleshooting**

If a student does not want to take part in the program, try changing the reward to something that will be more motivating for them, or lessen the amount of points needed to gain the reward for a short time in order to get the behaviour rolling and prevent the student from becoming discouraged.

**Fading**

This program can be slowly removed from use by the student depending on the form of self-management implemented.
• **Condensing items on a checklist.** Slowly eliminate steps until the list has only one prompt, such as “Edit my work.”

• **Changing the monitoring cue to be more independent.** This means moving the cue from being a teacher-delivered cue to a student-delivered one.

• **Make monitoring less frequent.** This means the time between monitoring will increase, so the student will need to monitor their behaviour for longer.

• **Increase points.** Increasing the amount of points needed to gain a reward will take the student longer to receive it. This lengthens the reward time, making the reward less of a concern to the student while maintaining the behaviour change.

• **When fading a program, remember to do it slowly or the disruptive behaviour may return.**
**Functional Equivalence**

“**No Need to Do That, Do This Instead!”**

**Background**

The purpose of this technique is to reduce escape-related disruptive behaviour by examining the reason for its occurrence and replacing the disruptive behaviour with an appropriate alternative. In many cases, when a student is trying to escape something such as work, staff working with them, or any other negative situation, they will engage in disruptive behaviour. This is the case because they feel there is not another choice to the situation they are put in. As a result, the student will behave negatively to try and force a staff member to let them escape. So, we can then come to a kind of compromise with the student by allowing them to escape; however, in an appropriate manner. This positive alternative will help maintain the relationship with the student, which will help to increase their willingness to do as asked and limit their use of disruptive behaviour.

**What Students Can I Use This With?**

Functional equivalence can be used with any student.

**Behaviours**

Functional equivalence can be used with any behaviour that is suspected to be occurring because the student wants to escape something. Examples of this could be saying inappropriate things, interrupting a staff member, ignoring requests to be quiet and speaking to other students, throwing items, etc.

**Rewards**

Rewards may not be necessary in this program for some students. The alternative behaviour is still giving the student what they are wishing for—to escape. This could be reward enough to motivate the student to continue to use the method. However, if the student needs more motivation to use the program, give them tokens for each time they use the program alternative, decide on a token goal, and lastly, decide on a reward the student can work toward. Make sure to include the student in deciding the reward.

**Materials**

Materials will vary depending on the function of the behaviour and the situation the student wishes to escape. In most cases, break cards work well (Appendix I). These give the student the ability to break from the activity or situation they wish to escape, on a time condition. A time limit for the break is an important part of this procedure.

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14 Content adapted from Ducharme and Shecter (2011).
Preparation

1. Find the function of the disruptive behaviour and if the result is escape, this method is appropriate to use (see pg. 40 on finding a behaviours function).
2. Define the behaviour so an alternative behaviour may be found (see pg. 39 on defining behaviour).
3. Choose the alternative behaviour. Most common use of functional equivalence is a break card. This is the alternative the student can use to escape. It is also appropriate to consider a verbal or physical signal that the student can use themselves. This is where creativity comes into play. As long as it helps the student communicate that they need some time and staff accepts it, then it should be effective.
4. Decide when the student can use the signal.
5. Decide how long the break will last. It does not need to be for very long, just enough time for them to settle themselves back down and get into working mode again. Consider 5 minutes, more or less, as long as it is enough time for the student and not too much time away from the activity they are supposed to be involved in or working on.
6. Decide if rewards will be necessary and used, then decide on what they will be and how they will be used.
7. Have a meeting with the student to explain why their behaviour should be changed to an alternative form of getting what they would like, and compromise with them on the break. Also, it may be pertinent to practice using the alternative behaviour at the specific activities the student will be able to use the card in so that they know how they should be using it.

Implement

1. Set timer and break card/other materials they may need to use as their alternative signal on their desk.
2. Remind the student what to do and when.
3. If the student starts to use the disruptive behaviour instead of the alternative, simply remind them to use it and they can have their break from work, etc. Also remind them that they cannot have a break unless they use the alternative signal. It is very important that staff commit to only allowing them to get a break if they use the appropriate method. Try not to give in, or the program will not work, and the disruptive behaviour is likely to continue when the student wants to escape something.
4. When the student appropriately uses the alternative behaviour, immediately accept it, set the timer, and let them have their break. Give them a token as well if they are being used.
5. When the student reaches their token goal, allow the student to have their reward.
Fading

Like any program, fading the use of a break card or signal requires a slow removal. Once the student is using the card or signal effectively and has reduced their level of disruptive behaviour, begin to limit the number of breaks the student is allowed to have during each period that this program is in place for. An example of this would be student X was allowed to have a maximum of 5 breaks in one period, but fading resulted in a reduction of 1 break per week. Next week student X will be allowed a maximum of 4 breaks in one period a week, and so on. Fading can also occur by reducing the time frame of the break slowly. Weekly or every few days may work nicely.
Model... Prompt... Reward!\textsuperscript{15}  
Interrupting Behaviour

Background

Interrupting others can be quite the disturbance to the classroom. Often students interrupt others because they feel a stress that they want to say something and worry if they will get to express themselves. This stress leads them to wish to escape such a feeling, causing them to interrupt others so they may have the opportunity they need to speak. Some students with special needs interrupt so often that it can be difficult to teach, have conversations with other students and staff, or even with the student themselves. This behaviour can be reduced; however, through the use of a multi-component approach. Modelling and prompting are two techniques that help students with special needs learn, and when used with rewards, the three components can be very effective at reducing disruptive behaviours (such as interrupting) in the classroom.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This program can be used with any student as long as they do not have a cognitive or medical disorder that may be causing the student to unintentionally interrupt. Be sure to get a medical history from a family member/guardian to ensure there is not a medical reason for the occurring behaviour.

Rewards

Rewards can be used in the same manner as a token economy program (see pg. 41). Points or tokens are given to the student for each instance of the use of the appropriate behaviour that has been chosen to replace the interrupting behaviour. At the end of the week let the student cash in their points for a reward, or it can be decided that the student gets only one choice of a reward. When they accumulate a certain amount of points/tokens, this is when they receive the reward. Be sure that whichever method is in use, consider how many times the student will be given the appropriate opportunity to speak, as this will dictate how many points/tokens the student will need to obtain to get their bigger reward and how often they can use the alternative behaviour to interrupting. The educator decides, but a conversation and compromise involving the student themselves may work out best because the student may be more motivated for they may get what they really want to work for. Remember to consider non-tangible reward options.

Materials

- Tokens (if using them—try to be creative, put images of things they really like on them).
- Point sheet (if using points instead of tokens—see Appendix L for an example).
- Dry erase marker (if using points board only).

\textsuperscript{15} Content adapted from Bloomquist, August, and Ostrander (1991).
• Reward menu (only applicable if letting the student choose from a variety of rewards
based on how many points/tokens they earned—see Appendix C).

Preparation

1. Decide on an alternative behaviour that the student can use to gain staff’s attention
   instead of interrupting. This can be as simple as a hand raise without emitting a noise or
talking, leaving their desk to talk to a staff, or giving a different signal. Be sure to think
about how the signal will affect the classroom environment.
2. Decide on the reward method (see reward section above).
3. Decide which will be given, tokens or points; then, create the tokens or the points sheet.
4. Decide when they will be able to earn points/tokens.
5. Prepare to choose the student to answer questions or to express themselves in discussion
   more often in the beginning so that they can practice using their new signal. This will
help the students to not become discouraged that they are not earning enough
points/tokens to gain their reward.

Implement

1. Have a meeting with the student.
   a. This meeting is to explain that you want to help them to not interrupt others and to
   be able to express themselves in a more efficient way. Tell the student what
   behaviour is appropriate that they need to use instead.
   b. Then, discuss and compromise with the student on what kind of reward they
   would like to work toward.
   c. Tell the student how he/she can obtain the reward: through a minimum amount of
   points/tokens or by cashing them in for whatever they can afford at the end of the
   week.
   d. Let them know when they can earn points/tokens and that they can only gain
   points/tokens by using the alternative signal if they want to say something.
   e. Tell the student exactly what is not appropriate to do and what will not gain them
   points/tokens.
   f. Lastly, model the alternative behaviour for the student, and then let the student
   practice a couple times to make sure they understand what to do.
2. Begin program.
   a. Remind the student at the beginning of the day what they are working towards
   and what they need to do to earn points/tokens.
   b. At the start of the period that the student will be working on their behaviour
during, prepare by carrying a dry erase marker and point’s sheet or tokens.
   Prepare the student with their points sheet as well.
c. For each instance the student gives the alternative signal, call on them to speak and give them a point or token for performing the correct behaviour instead of interrupting.

d. If the student does interrupt, prompt them to use the alternative signal. Call upon them when they do.

e. There is the option of ignore the interrupting behaviour after the student gets used to using the other behaviour, but reminding the student to use the alternative behaviour should always follow an interruption.

f. At the end of the week or when they reach the minimum points/tokens needed to receive a reward, reward them as per the method decided upon by the student and the teacher.

Troubleshooting

If the student does not decrease their interrupting, it may be because they are not being called upon to speak often enough when they are using the signal and the student may be getting discouraged, or the reward is not as motivating as interrupting is for them. This can be changed by calling on the student a little more often, or by changing the reward to be more exciting to the student.

Fading

This program can be faded by increasing the amount of points/tokens needed for a minimum number goal or price for different rewards. Increasing these will help the student to have to work harder and be consistent nearly 100% of the time in order to gain a reward. Do this in small increments until the alternative signal has seemed to replace the student’s interrupting behaviour. If the behaviour appears to have returned, implement the program again (giving a point/token for each instance of behaviour) and then later try and fade the program once more.
Behaviour Contract

“I Solemnly Swear That I am Up To All Good”

Background

Behaviour contracts are used in many classrooms by many teachers to produce positive behaviour change in their students. The student involved collaborates with their teacher on the terms of the contract and the reward for following it, so the student is more involved. This will help the student to be more motivated and invested in not breaking the contract.

What Students Can I Use This With?

Students most appropriate to use behaviour contracts with include those with learning and many other disabilities or diagnoses, as long as they are mentally aware of themselves and their behaviour.

Behaviours

Behaviours selected for behaviour contracts should be positive ones. Behaviours appropriate to target in managing disruptive behaviour should be those that are easily observed, such as: completing the work day on the student’s clipboards, finishing X number of pages in X number of time, or focusing on a staff member while they are speaking, etc. In other words, any behaviour that is positive, related to disallowing the student to use escape-related disruptive behaviour, and is easily observable by staff is appropriate.

Materials

- Behaviour Contract (see Appendix J)
- Tokens/dry erase marker for marking points
- Points card (if using points—see Appendix L)

Rewards

Reward the student involved with tokens/points for maintaining or changing their behaviour as per the contracts specifications, each time they do so. Choose a token/point goal for the student to reach in order to obtain a reward that is decided upon by both the teacher and the student at the time of the writing of the contract.

Preparation

1. **Define.** Decide on the behaviours to be listed and worked on in the contract for the student to work on. Remember that the behaviours should be positive and easily

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16 Content for “Behaviour Contract” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central
observable. Clearly define the behaviour and the expectations involved in it. See pg. 39 on defining behaviour.

2. **Rewards.** Decide how the student will be monitored, if they will use tokens or points and what rewards will be given. Create the points chart if points are being used. Decide on a token/point goal the student must reach to obtain a reward.

3. **Meeting with student.** This is where the student and the teacher collaborate together on the contract terms and the student becomes invested in it. The teacher needs to inform the student on why they would like to create this contract, that they want to decrease the disruptive behaviours the student is engaging in and the reasons why, but in a way that the student likes and agrees upon. The contract’s contents should include the following:
   a. The behaviours the teacher chose and the clear definitions. Definitions of the behaviours need to be present so the student does not become confused with the expectations.
   b. A section that says under what condition the student will earn points/tokens. **For example:** “during each language period, Tony will receive 1 point for each section of the period he completes.”
   c. When the student will be able to redeem his/her points/tokens for a certain reward. **An example** of this is, “when the teacher is present at the school and before lunch has started, if Tony has reached 20 points, he may redeem them for 10 minutes of free time before lunch.” The student needs to be collaborated with on this to motivate them to abide by the contract.
   d. The contract can optionally contain a bonus and penalty clause. Bonuses (such as extra points or tokens) can be achieved for not engaging in disruptive behaviours for a period of time (such as a whole school week) as per the contract. Penalties can be enacted for serious breaches of contract behaviour. The teacher decides if these will be added and what they may be.
   e. Signatures area. Both the student and the teacher need to sign the document and agree to adhere to their duties as stated in the contract.

**Implement**

1. Each time the student engages in the appropriate behaviour outlined in the contract, give the student a point/token. If the student reaches the bonus in the contract, give the student the extra points/tokens.
2. If the student engages in disruptive behaviour and there is a penalty clause, follow what the clause states in the contract.
3. When the student reaches the point/token goal, give them the reward agreed upon in the contract.

**Troubleshooting**

1. What do I do if it seems like the behaviour contract is not working?
a. This could be for several reasons:
   i. The student did not have enough input into the contract, and so is not motivated to abide by it. The teacher can try drawing up a new contract and include the student in more aspects of its creation.
   ii. The rewards are not motivating enough to cause them to want to focus on their work and not disrupt others. The teacher should consult the student and rethink the rewards in the contract.
   iii. The points/tokens are not being given at a rate that fits the student’s needs. Some students require frequent rewarding to be able to stick to some programs, such as a behaviour contract. To resolve this, the teacher can change the terms in the contract outlining how frequently the student can get a token/point and lower the amount of tokens/points needed to obtain the reward.

Fading

Fading the rewards from this program needs to occur at a slow pace, unless the student follows the contract without needing to be rewarded. In most cases this won’t be, at least not in the beginning, so it is appropriate to remove the rewards and tokens/points when the student’s behaviour is stable. Start by rewarding the student with points/tokens for every 2 times they follow the contract, then every 3 once 2 goes well without the student becoming disruptive, and so on. It is appropriate for the teacher to let the student know that they will be receiving tokens/points at a different rate so they know and can prepare for it. The student may want the teacher to draw up a new contract. If this is the case, change only the part of the document that states how often the teacher will give the student a token. The teacher and the student should both sign the new behaviour contract.
Attention Difficulties
Introduction to Attention Difficulties

Attempting to get a student to focus on a task, worksheet, or individual can be a daunting task for many teachers. A teacher’s job is to educate the students in their classrooms, and yet, getting the students to focus so they can learn is often difficult. A student’s ability to focus depends on many factors: how the student is feeling, what stimuli are present around them, their motivation to stay attended to work, and clinical diagnosis. Every student’s difficulty in attending is also very different from one to the next; different students are sensitive to different things.

A clear understanding of the student’s medical and clinical history and a founded relationship with the student can be important pieces to solving one particular student’s focusing concern. These are important to have and know before beginning any program or modification in this section, for they prepare the teacher for how to change or adapt an aspect or item for the student correctly. Trial and error may also need to be accounted for. Finding what works for a particular student can take some time and a variety of methods may need to be assessed. This can be reduced; however, if the teacher can observe the student and determine the function of their inattention (see pg. 39), understand their history, and have a positive relationship with them.

Most programs (including those that follow this introduction) manage attention through changing/adapting the student’s environment or the educator’s teaching style to accommodate the needs of the student. This section’s programs use rewarding of the student for sustaining attention while using a change or adaptation to encourage its use. The programs in this section will show a variety of related methods that can be used to help a student increase their attention in simplistic ways.

17 See Whitford et al. 2013 article for more information
# Table of Contents

## Classroom Programs for Attention Difficulties

1. Classroom Environmental Changes
   ........................................................................................................90
2. Teaching Modifications
   ........................................................................................................92
3. Token Economy
   ..........................................................................................................94
Classroom Environmental Changes\textsuperscript{18}  
“Hey Look At That Awesome Border!”

Background

Managing students’ attention to their academic work can sometimes be as simple as changing aspects of their environment in the classroom. This approach has been validated in research and as it can be simplistic to put in place it can be a great technique to help students regain their focus on their work.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This method should be able to be used with any student, especially those who have difficulty focusing on their work. It may even be beneficial to use this method with students who have learning or intellectual disabilities. This method can also be helpful with more than one student, either by one method change or through multiple changes.

Behaviours

Behaviours acceptable to be reduced with this method are those that are not conducive to focusing on work, such as: eye location on individuals, ceiling, or other objects that are not task related, or day dreaming.

Behaviours to be increased can also be affected by this method. Such behaviours could be: eyes on a work paper or a staff member for X amount of time, X number of work sheets completed, or correct execution of a task.

Methods

Here are some of the possible changes that can be made to the classroom to help keep students focused and attentive to their work. This list is not a complete list of all the possibilities for every classroom. The reader should use these as examples to think of more ways to make the classroom less stimulating.

- Reduce visuals in the classroom (posters, artwork, or colourful boarders).
- Reduce visuals in the vicinity of the student, including their desks.
- Face student’s desk to a blank wall.
- Put a cubicle desk somewhere in the classroom so that the student may go there to work if needed. Providing a pair of noise cancelling earphones would also be helpful to clear out the environmental external noise and promote focus.
- Make a cubicle from poster board and tape.

\textsuperscript{18} Content adapted from Reiber & McLaughlin (2004).
- Exercise balls that the student can use as a chair (this helps to keep their body stimulated and the mind focused).
- Restricting the movements of desks or chairs (desks and chairs that are made joined together, taping wood blocks around chair legs so the chair can only move forwards and backwards a short distance).
- Fidget seats (cushions that have material in them that squish and move to stimulate the student’s body so their mind can focus).
- Tape a piece of white, blank paper to the wall in front of a student’s desk (they can use it to visualize what they are focusing on when looking at the paper, and it will keep the student from being interested in other things).

Troubleshooting

Every student is different. It is important to remember this, and the original method of change, may not be the one that best suits the student’s needs. It may be required that a few methods be tried before finding the right change to fit a particular student.

Fading

Fading these methods from the classroom may not be easily done or possible. The student may work or focus best with the change and develop it as a coping mechanism for staying focused. As long as the change does not create an issue for the classroom, it is recommended to continue the change for the student if it is working.
Teaching Modifications
“Colours, and Videos, and Cover-Ups, Oh My!”

Background

Capturing and maintaining the attention of students who have difficulties with their attention span is often hard to accomplish while teaching. Making modifications to teaching approaches has been described in the research literature as being highly effective at accomplishing this task. Modifications to materials or teaching formats can be highly stimulating and can encourage students with difficulties focusing on their work to be able to do so.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This method should be able to be used with any student, especially those who have difficulty focusing on their work. It may even be beneficial to use this method with students who have learning or Intellectual disabilities.

Behaviours

Behaviours acceptable to be reduced with this method are those that are not conducive to focusing on work, such as: eye location on individuals, ceiling, or other objects that are not task related, or day dreaming.

Behaviours to be increased can also be affected by this method. Such behaviours could be: eyes on a work paper or a staff member for X amount of time, X number of work sheets completed, or correct execution of a task.

Materials

Materials will vary depending on how the teaching methods are adapted.

Rewards

Rewards should be considered to increase motivation in focusing on academic work. Tokens and a token goal can be used to reach a reward. Each time the student completes the task given with the right attention given to it, give the student attention, praise, and a token. When the student reaches the token goal, let them have the decided upon reward.

Methods

Here are some of the possible changes that can be made to teaching materials and methods to help keep students focus and attend to their work. This list is not a total list of all the possibilities for every classroom. The reader should use these as examples to think of more ways

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19 Content adapted from Reiber & McLaughlin (2004).
to make materials and learning more interactive or visually appealing for students with attention difficulties.

- Vary presentation formats: video, tactile, etc.
- Fonts: different colours, sizes, and shapes
- Coloured pictures/arrows
- Highlight words/phrases
- Guided notes
- Note-taker
- Staying in close proximity to student
- Give praise often
- Different coloured paper
- Colour code instructions: one section is one colour, the next is a different one, or each instruction is a different colour
- Cover up sections of the student’s work pages so they will focus on only one thing at a time

After seeing success with the student on completing work or remaining focused on a staff member or direction, praise the student for what they did well on and give them a token. When the student reaches the token goal, give them their reward.

**Troubleshooting**

If a student is not responding well to the method being used, it may not be the right method for that student. Every student is different, so try many methods until one works. It will be worth the effort if it helps the student.

**Fading**

It may not be possible to fade out this strategy. For students that have significant difficulties with attention, they often will need to continue with these adaptations or their attention span will decrease. However, a good technique to use is to train the student to use some of these strategies themselves. This can relieve the duty for staff to maintain the strategy, while helping the student build coping mechanisms to increase their success in the future.
Token Economy

“Don’t Focus... At Your Own Peril”

Background

Token economies can be effective in increasing attention in students. Research has indicated this and as a result, the program has become a classroom favorite for teachers to use for its ability to improve attention in students. This method can be used with a whole class or individual students. However, it is important for each staff member in the classroom to remain vigilant of all the students’ involved behaviour, so each student that is a part of the program is earning tokens/point for their attention to work and appropriate behaviour, while remaining motivated in continuing the program.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This intervention can be used with any population of students.

Behaviours

This program can be used to manage any behaviour that related to inattention. It is not appropriate for use with teaching a new skill or to manage emotional difficulties.

Materials

- Token Economy Chart (optional)
- Stickers/pictures/tickets as tokens or a dry erase marker (if using token economy chart)
- Poster board for rules
- Reward menu (see Appendix C)

Rewards

Rewards in this program are given in two ways: daily tokens and weekly rewards. Daily tokens are given as an immediate reward for the students’ attention to work so they can feel the benefit of attending and they know that they are moving closer towards their goal. The daily tokens act as the currency in the “economy” aspect of this program. At the end of the week the students are allowed to cash in what tokens they have accumulated that week for a series of “larger” prizes that all have different amounts of “currency” attached to them.

Preparation

6. **Behaviours.** Decide how attention will be defined for the student(s). The behaviour(s) defined will need to be positive, so pick attention related behaviours that the student

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20 Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services ABA manual: *Changing Behaviour: A Comprehensive Manual of Applied Behaviour Analysis*
should use more of. **For example** attention is defined as a student completing X number of questions or pages during X amount of time without taking a break. (See pg. 39 on defining).

7. **Rewards.** Decide what the tokens will look like and how they will be given.
   - If the decision is to give points, make the token economy chart. Make the chart with all the students names that are participating down the left hand side and at the top will be points for each day or for each week. An adaptation could be adding a laminated strip of paper to each student’s desk to write points down on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Points For The Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   - If using tokens/pictures/stickers give each student an envelope to put them in.
   - Then decide on the end of the week larger rewards and how much each will cost (see Appendix C).
   - The rewards do not have to be physical objects like prizes. They can be as simple as more free time or access to a game, etc.

8. **When.** Decide when the tokens will be given out and when the students will be allowed to cash them in. If the tokens can be cashed in for more time for something, decide when that time will be given as well.

9. **Poster board.** Create the rules poster to put up in the class. Clearly outline the attention-related behaviours that will earn the students tokens. Make it visually appealing. If using this method with one student, post rules on their desk instead.

10. **Reward menu.** Write down the prizes and how many tokens will be needed for each on a separate poster (or combine both posters so they will have to review the focusing behaviours to see the cost for the prizes).

Implement

3. **Introduce**
   a. Tell the class that they will now be able to earn prizes for following the new classroom rules.
   b. Show them the rules poster and explain each behaviour thoroughly, possibly asking them to tell explain what is meant by each, or to demonstrate them.
   c. Then, show them the token chart or the tokens that will be given out, along with the reward menu of how much each prize costs. Let them know at what points in
the day they will be able to access the tokens and when they will be able to cash them in.

d. Consider giving a prize to the person who earns the most tokens at the end of the week as an extra incentive for participation.

4. **Start Program.**
   a. Carry tokens or a dry erase marker in a pocket throughout the times when the students can receive tokens.
   b. Prompt the students by saying they can receive tickets now and throughout the rest of the time period if they need a reminder.
   c. Give a token to the individual or group of students for each instance of correct attention and focus as outlined in the rules.
   d. Praise should also be given, along with telling the student what they did right. **For example:** a student has been focused on their work for 5 minutes. Give the student a token and say, “great job staying focused on your work.”
   e. At the end of the week allow the students to cash in their tokens for their corresponding reward. Reward the student who has collected the most tokens as well if applicable.

**Troubleshooting**

If there seems to be a decline in motivation to participate in the token economy, think about changing the rewards. The students may find their inattention more motivating than the reward; therefore, a change will need to the reward needs to be made.

**Fading**

Token economies can be difficult to fade from the classroom. Sometimes the students become reliant on the intervention. It may work better if the fading of how often the students get points/tokens and rewards is not stated to the class. Wait and see if they notice first. How this program is faded is after seeing a change in behaviour that has been maintained for a few weeks, change how often the tokens are given to every couple of times they respond correctly. The reward menu may also need to be altered if the frequency of giving tokens does not allow them to possibly receive the highest reward. Keep doing this until tokens are being given infrequently, but behaviour change is still maintained. This can take time and patience. Fading the program too rapidly may cause the frequency of inattention to increase.
Table of Contents

Individual Programs for Managing Attention Difficulties

1. Self-Management

2. Behaviour Contract
Self-Management

“I Will Pay Attention...ZzZz”

Background

This program requires the student to become aware of their focus and be able to manage their attention on their academic work independently. A student’s attention span and work completion in running this program can be increased. This method should be monitored by a staff member in the classroom to prevent a student marking their behaviour inappropriately.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This program is suggested to be used with individual students only. This program should only be used with students with a mental and physical age where they are aware of themselves and consequences. Special needs students are appropriate if they fulfil these requirements.

Behaviours

Self-management can be used with students who find it difficult to focus on their work. It can help decrease behaviours such as wandering eyes and not completing tasks. It may also have an effect on what questions students ask by keeping the questions on topic for they will be focused on the academic material.

Rewards

Rewards can be given daily or both daily and weekly. If it is decided that the preferred reward from the student is too “large” of a request to be given daily, then weekly rewards are appropriate with the use of points. A meeting with the student will be required in order to determine what reward he/she wants to work toward and how many points will be required to get it. The reward needs to be a powerful motivator for the student. It may also need to be changed from time to time if motivation towards the program decreases.

Materials

- Recording sheet for the teacher (Appendix E).
- Dry erase marker for indicating daily points on students recording sheet.
- Students points/recording sheet (Appendix F/G/H).

Preparation

1. **Define the behaviour.** The behaviour chosen can be either increased or decreased. Follow the guidelines on pg. 39 for defining behaviours.

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21 Content for “Self-Management” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central.
2. **Choose a recording format.** There are 3 formats that are convenient to use for both the teacher and the student using this program. They are: rating scale, checklist, and frequency count. Choosing the correct recording format is important depending on how the student would best be able to manage their attention.

- **Rating Scale:** Rates the level of someone’s skills or performance on a targeted behaviour in a format similar to satisfactory (3), needs improvement (2), and poor (1). **For example:** 1. Kept my eyes on my work (1, 2, 3), 2. Asked questions related to my work (1, 2, 3), 3. Did not speak to other students (1, 2, 3). (See Appendix G for an example sheet). Use this method if the aim is to improve upon a behaviour the student already knows how to do, but is lacking in using it consistently.

- **Checklist:** Is a list of tasks involved in correctly performing an activity or behaviour. It should be a resource the student checks periodically while doing an activity. **For example:** steps involved in getting ready for math. (See Appendix H for an example). Use this method for behaviours that involve steps that the student knows how to do, but frequently forgets to do or does the steps out of order.

- **Frequency Count:** Student keeps a running tally of the number of times he/she performs a behaviour (see Appendix E for an example sheet). This should be used with behaviours to be increased (if decreasing a behaviour, choose a different but more appropriate alternative behaviour for the student to increase with frequency count).

3. **When.** A self-management program can be run at any time of the day, as long as the student is aware of when it is occurring. Decide what time of the day the program will run, and then think of the interval of time the student needs to monitor their behaviour. This interval can be as short or as long as desired, but it should correspond to the number of times the student does not pay attention, so that the student is rewarded for not engaging in the behaviour. **For example:** a student spends 30 minutes in an hour period not attending to their work. An appropriate interval length for the student to monitor their behaviour is roughly every 5 minutes or so.

4. **Cue.** Decide how the student will be reminded to monitor their attention. Convenient options for a classroom include: Beep tape, timer, teacher-delivered cue, and student-delivered cue.

- **Beep tape.** This is an audio file that can be played on a music player that plays MP3 files. This audio file is soundless except for occasional beeps that play at a pre-set time interval. When the student hears the beep it is their cue to monitor how they did with their attention since the last beep. This beep tape can be downloaded in any time interval for up to 5 minutes in length. The beep tape can be downloaded from this website: http://www.interventioncentral.org/free-audio-monitoring-tapes.

- **Timer:** This acts the same as the beep tape, only in a timer format. The catch to a timer is that it needs to be one that makes noise or vibrates. Cell phones often have timers on them that will vibrate at certain intervals, or certain apps can be
downloaded that can perform the same function. There is also a product called a MotivAider that will vibrate quietly at a pre-set interval of the user’s choice. If using a regular timer, the student is required to reset it when the interval is over.

- **Teacher-Delivered Cue:** This method is simple in the way that the teacher tells the student when to monitor through a cue of his/her choice. It could be a simple touch on the shoulder, hand signal, or verbal cue. If this method is chosen, make sure to deliver the cue each time the student needs to monitor their behaviour.

- **Student-Delivered Cue:** The student cues themselves to monitor their behaviour at some point in a period without another cue device. This method is more helpful if the student is monitoring their behaviour with a checklist.

5. **Choose Rewards.** Rewards need to be individualized to the student to motivate them, but also need to be reasonable for the classroom. Points are suggested to be used (see students point card Appendix F) and is used as a reward at the time for their attentive behaviour, and also indicate how much closer they are to a larger reward. A point goal will need to be decided upon. When they reach a certain amount of points (the goal), give them the agreed upon reward. It does not need to be a tangible item; it could be “free time” or extra time to play before working, etc.

6. **Make materials.** Make the data collection sheet for teachers and students, as well as a point sheet if points are being used instead of tokens.

**Implement**

4. **Meeting.** Have a private meeting with the student involved and discuss:
   a. What the program is, that you want them to work on their attention to _________
      (insert academic work, staff, etc.)
   b. When it will be occurring in a day
   c. How they will monitor
   d. How they gain rewards.

   Practice the self-management process with them.

5. **Accuracy.** In the beginning it may be important to take data along with the student to make sure they are accurate in noting the behaviour change and deserve access to a reward. If the student is accurate, with the exception of a couple mistakes in the beginning, they should earn a reward. The focus of this program is to make the student aware of their behaviour, which in turn increases attention to staff and tasks. Mistakes in their behaviour can be accepted in the beginning as long as they are appropriately marking their points sheets. When they get a hang on managing their attention, change the rule to giving points only if the student is paying attention to staff and tasks. This needs to be done with caution, for it can encourage the student to cheat to get their points. Graduate to this only when they have established a pattern of correct responding.
6. **Start the program.**
   a. Notify the student that they will need to monitor their attention soon. Try and do this a few minutes prior to the program start time so they can prepare themselves. They will need the materials required for their cueing method, recording/points sheet, and a dry erase marker to mark down their behaviour on their sheet.
   b. Start the self-management period. During the first few times, observe the student to make sure that the process is working and they are staying on task. Depending on the cueing method being used, either observe the student marking their progress and mark down on the teacher data sheet how they did, or when the timer goes off, mark down their progress. **Remember to have the student reset the timer after each interval if they forget.**
   c. At the end of the recording period, check the teacher data sheet against the students recording sheet. If they have correctly monitored their behaviour, give them a point on their recording sheet in the reward box. The first couple of times the student begins this program, if they incorrectly record their behaviour, forgive this and give them the point they need anyway. This is so the student does not get discouraged with the process, but do not continue to do this for longer than a couple days. Remind the student to focus on what they are supposed to be doing. **Remember: it is important to check the student’s own recording against the teacher data sheet so it becomes apparent if the student is becoming more aware of their behaviour.**
   d. When the student has collected the points required for a reward, deliver the reward at the decided upon time.

**Troubleshooting**

If a student does not want to take part in the program, try changing the reward to something that will be more motivating for them, or lessen the amount of points needed to gain the reward for a short time in order to get the behaviour rolling and prevent the student from becoming discouraged.

**Fading**

This program can be slowly removed from use by the student depending on the form of self-management implemented.

- **Condensing items on a checklist.** Slowly eliminate steps until the list has only one prompt, such as “Finish work on page.”
- **Changing the monitoring cue to be more independent.** This means moving the cue from being a teacher-delivered cue to a student-delivered one.
• **Make monitoring less frequent.** This means the time between monitoring will increase, so the student will need to monitor their behaviour for longer.

• **Increase points.** Increasing the amount of points needed to gain a reward will take the student longer to receive it. This lengthens the reward time, making the reward less of a concern to the student while maintaining the behaviour change.

• Whenever fading a program, remember to do it slowly or the attention difficulties may return.
Behaviour Contract\textsuperscript{22}  
“My John Hancock says, I Will Pay Attention”

Background

Behaviour contracts are used in many classrooms by many teachers to produce positive behaviour change in their students. Examples of this include increased attention to school work and instruction. The student collaborates with their teacher on the terms of the contract and the reward for following it, so the student is more involved. This will help the student to be more motivated to and invested in not breaking the contract.

What Students Can I Use This With?

Students most appropriate to use behaviour contracts with include those with learning and many other disabilities or diagnoses, as long as they are mentally aware of themselves and their behaviour.

Behaviours

Behaviours selected for behaviour contracts should be positive ones. Behaviours appropriate to target in managing attention should be those that are easily observed, such as: completing the work day on the student’s clipboards, finishing X number of pages in X number of time, or focusing on a staff member while they are speaking, etc. In other words, any behaviour that is positive, related to maintaining and sustaining attention, and is easily observable by staff is appropriate.

Materials

- Behaviour Contract (see Appendix J)
- Tokens/dry erase marker for marking points
- Points card (if using points—see Appendix L)

Rewards

Reward the student involved with tokens/points for maintaining or changing their behaviour as per the contracts specifications, each time they do so. Choose a token/point goal for the student to reach in order to obtain a reward that is decided upon by both the teacher and the student at the time of the writing of the contract.

\textsuperscript{22} Content for “Behaviour Contract” implementation provided by, but not copied from Intervention Central.
Preparation

1. **Define.** Decide on the behaviours to be listed in the contract for the student to work on. Remember that the behaviours should be positive and easily observable. Clearly define the behaviour and the expectations involved in it. See pg. 39 on defining behaviour.

2. **Rewards.** Decide how the student will be monitored, if they will use tokens or points and what rewards will be given. Create the points chart if points are being used. Decide on a token/point goal the student must reach to obtain a reward.

3. **Meeting with student.** This is where the student and the teacher collaborate together on the contract terms and the student becomes invested in it. The teacher needs to inform the student on why they would like to create this contract and that they want to increase the student’s attention, but in a way that the student likes and agrees upon. The contract’s contents should include the following:
   a. The behaviours the teacher chose and the clear definitions. Definitions of the behaviours need to be present so the student does not become confused with the expectations.
   b. A section that says under what condition the student will earn points/tokens. **For example:** “during each language period, Tony will receive 1 point for each section of the period he completes.”
   c. When the student will be able to redeem his/her points/tokens for a certain reward. **An example** of this is, “when the teacher is present at the school and before lunch has started, if Tony has reached 20 points, he may redeem them for 10 minutes of free time before lunch.” The student needs to be collaborated with on this to motivate them to abide by the contract.
   d. The contract can optionally contain a bonus and penalty clause. Bonuses (such as extra points or tokens) can be achieved for consecutive attention related behaviour for a period of time (such as a school week) as per the contract. Penalties can be enacted for serious breached of contract behaviour. The teacher decides if these will be added and what they may be.
   e. Signatures area. Both the student and the teacher need to sign the document and agree to adhere to their duties as stated in the contract.

Implement

1. Each time the student engages in the attention behaviour outlined in the contract, give the student a point/token. If the student reaches the bonus in the contract, give the student the extra points/tokens.

2. If the student engages in inattention-like behaviour and there is a penalty clause, follow what the clause states in the contract.

3. When the student reaches the point/token goal, give them the reward agreed upon in the contract.
Troubleshooting

1. What do I do if it seems like the behaviour contract is not working?
   a. This could be for several reasons:
      i. The student did not have enough input into the contract, and so is not motivated to abide by it. The teacher can try drawing up a new contract and include the student in more aspects of its creation.
      ii. The rewards are not motivating enough to cause them to want to focus on attending to their work. The teacher should consult the student and rethink the rewards in the contract.
      iii. The points/tokens are not being given at a rate that fits the student’s needs. Some students require frequent rewarding to be able to stick to some programs, such as a behaviour contract. To resolve this, the teacher can change the terms in the contract outlining how frequently the student can get a token/point and lower the amount of tokens/points needed to obtain the reward.

Fading

Fading the rewards from this program needs to occur at a slow pace, unless the student follows the contract without needing to be rewarded. In most cases this won’t be, at least not in the beginning, so it is appropriate to remove the rewards and tokens/points when the student’s behaviour is stable. Start by rewarding the student with points/tokens for every 2 times they follow the contract, then every 3 once 2 goes well without the student becoming unfocused, and so on. It is appropriate for the teacher to let the student know that they will be receiving tokens/points at a different rate, so they know and can prepare for it. The student may want the teacher to draw up a new contract. If this is the case, change only the part of the document that states how often the teacher will give the student a token. The teacher and the student should both sign the new behaviour contract.
Social Skills
Introduction to Social Skills

In grades 6 and 7, children are at the age where they are attempting to understand who they are and how they can succeed in life. Grasping social skills is important for those with special needs to learn because it will help them to develop a greater sense of self and involvement in those around them. With the success at teaching social skills comes allowing the student to be able to communicate effectively and form bonds with those they interact with. In various intellectual, communicative, or emotional disorders often a core feature of the diagnosis is a deficit in communication and social skills. Therefore, in a classroom where most of the students have diagnoses of these types; challenging behaviours, bullying, and disruptive behaviour can be prevalent. The deficits in social skills can be common and often a difficult skill to teach effectively and promote its use in the classroom. It is suggested in research that schools should utilize groups to teach social skills, and that the groups need to be run frequently. Often, this is not possible for schools, as free time for groups is not allotted for various reasons.

Initiating conversation is a typical social skill deficit and often is especially difficult for those with special needs to learn to utilize effectively. Many barriers appear and block their ability to interact with others. Some of these barriers may include: not knowing how to introduce one’s self or how to show interest in an individual and what they like, and may feel others will not like them for not knowing how to use these social skills appropriately. Therefore, the person with special needs will not interact with others, further limiting their chances to practice social skills. Teaching social skills can help reduce the anxiety and confusion related to initiating conversations. Increasing the practice of such skills and enabling the student to feel heard and accepted is important at such a crucial stage of emotional development.

Social skills, as important as they are to teach to special needs students, remain difficult to maintain and generalize the skills at home and in their community. Teachers often find it difficult to find the time to train students and maintain what they have taught them. The subsequent sections and programs are designed to help relieve these concerns and ease the teaching of initiating conversations through what is known as Skillstreaming.

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23 See Boyd, Johnson, & Bee (2009)
25 See Gresham, Sugai, & Horner (2001)
Components of Social Skills Training Through the Use of Skillstreaming

There are 4 components of Skillstreaming that are crucial to learning social skills. These are modeling, role-playing, feedback, and transfer of training. It has been suggested in research that in order for social skills training to be successful, it is important to use each of these components.

Modeling

This component involves the teacher showing the student the correct behaviours involved in a certain social skill, and the student imitates what the teacher has modelled. Modeling is a very powerful technique; however, it is often found that its strengths are short lived if not combined with the other components of Skillstreaming. When possible, the teacher should use rewards for when the student correctly initiates a conversation. Praise can go a long way, but tokens are helpful as well when combined with praise and other rewards. The technique for this is described further in the initiating conversation program.

Role-Plays

Role-playing is where the student really learns to use the modeling techniques the teacher taught them. A role-play involves the student and the teacher/peer taking on a role and practicing the correct social skills that were modeled to them. A script is often used; however, in a situation where group social skills training cannot occur, it is okay to not use one. Discussion and on the spot hypothetical role-plays are fine to use, as long as role-plays are utilized in some way. Rewarding the student for correctly role-playing may be considered.

Role-plays combined with modeling make a good first step in helping a student learn a social skill, for now they would know what and how to use a skill with another individual. However, as with modeling, role-play’s effects are short lived as well, and combining the two components have been shown in research to still not be enough. The next two components and the use of rewarding will help to stabilize the use of the social skill.

Feedback

Feedback is about providing the student with information about how they did in their role-play or how they are doing during it. It includes prompting, coaching, and rewarding. This step is one that is incorporated into all other steps. When providing feedback, the teacher should be sure to tell the student what they did well, before advising them on how to change their performance so they are more accepting of staff advice and not become discouraged.

When delivering rewards in giving feedback, use material rewards, but try and limit these. Try and use praise and more social rewards with the student more often. This is because in

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their natural environment, these will be what they receive from the community. Material rewards may be necessary for some students do not respond as well to praise or social rewards.

Ways to utilize rewards:

- Use praise for each correctly enacted part of the Skillstreaming method.
- Use praise and tokens toward a token goal for a larger reward or a short break for some free time after teaching the social skill.
- Any combination of these—whichever fits the student.

A teacher should always give feedback during or after a role-play to help a student learn the targeted social skill correctly and avoid the student developing “bad habits” related to social communication.

**Transfer of Training**

This concept involves moving the skills the student has learned in a contrived environment to a natural setting where they can use what they have learned practically. This concept has been described in research to be hard to accomplish and maintain. There are several methods that can be used to help with this process and keep within time constraints for the classroom and teacher:

- Using every real opportunity where a student is not engaging in or doing a skill properly to teach the skill. Creating a contrived situation to teach a skill is not as effective as teaching the skill when the problem actually is occurring. Use that opportunity so that the student learns to use the skill in their natural environment, and the possibility of generalization occurring with other environments becomes increasingly more likely.
- Include peers in the teaching. When the incorrectly demonstrated skill occurs, use the individual the student is attempting to interact with in the use of modeling, role-playing and feedback to teach the appropriate skill.
- Discuss with the student where, when, and with whom else they may be able to use the social skill taught within the same context that is occurring at the moment. If the student is playing by themselves out of fear of introducing themselves for example, go through the other Skillstreaming concepts, and then ask them at what other places they could use this skill to play with someone, etc.
General Tips for Teaching Social Skills and Mini Strategies

- Make every instance of inappropriate use of a social skill a teaching moment. When an opportunity arises to teach how to initiate conversation (such as a student often does not play or interact with other peers), call the student(s) involved over and use the learning strategies discussed in the next section to help teach the student(s) how to appropriately initiate a conversation.

- Use rewards each time a skill is taught or the student uses a skill correctly. This will help motivate them to learn the skill and use it.

- Model the social skills taught in the classroom each day and in between skill teaching. This further reminds the students of the use of correct social skills.

Mini Strategy

- Ask the students questions about how they may use different skills in different situations or settings randomly and fairly often. Quizzing them on the answers helps them to remember what to do at the moment a situation arises where they should use the particular skill. When they get the answers right, reward them.
Teaching Initiating Conversation through Quick Skillstreaming

“I Love To Sing, Dance, and Be Merry On My Own”

Background

Skillstreaming concepts are involved in training social skills to students with special needs. Initiating conversation is included in the very long list of social skills that can be taught using this method. Initiating conversation is an important skill for every student to learn so they can make friends and create bonds with others while getting to feel included and accepted.

What Students Can I Use This With?

Students that are being taught social skills in this way need to be verbal and not fall into the diagnosis of profoundly intellectually disabled. Students in a grade 6/7 split classroom with special needs in the areas of communication disorders and who have trouble initiating conversation should all be appropriate to use with this program.

Behaviours

This program is appropriate to use when a student does not demonstrate the ability to be able to initiate conversations appropriately. This requirement includes, but is not limited to:

- Avoiding others
- Playing by themselves
- Interrupting other individuals conversations
- Student talks to another person without letting them know they are trying to talk to them (other person is unaware they are speaking to them).

Materials

- Teacher Skillstreaming card (Appendix K)

Rewards

As discussed in the section on Skillstreaming, rewards can be a combination of praise, tokens, and a token goal for a larger reward. When the student demonstrates they have learned something correctly from the modeling, role-playing, etc., then reward them with a token and/or praise. If a token goal is being used, when they reach the goal, give them the decided reward. Rewards can also be used for motivating the student to use the skill by letting them have tokens for going and telling a staff member when and how they used the skill, so they are more likely to keep using the social skill appropriately and in their natural environment.

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27 Content adapted from McGinnis et al. (1984).
**Preparation**

1. Decide on how the particular student should initiate a conversation appropriately based on a part of a social skill they are lacking.
2. Decide if rewards will be used beyond only praise.
3. Meet with the student and let them know you would like to work on this social skill with them and what rewards, if any, will be available and how they can gain them. Explain to them what will happen in the Skillstreaming process when they demonstrate an inappropriate initiating conversation method. Tell the student that each time they use the skill you taught them, the way you taught them to, to come and let you know when and how they used it and that they can earn extra tokens for doing so.
4. Create the Teacher Skillstreaming card.
5. Make as many copies as may be needed to be available in one or more locations to prompt the Skillstreaming concepts.
6. Review the concepts on the Skillstreaming card.

**Implementation**

1. Ask the student (or students if using their peers to help in the modeling and role-playing steps) to join you in the hallway or off to the side of the classroom or yard when the student incorrectly initiates a conversation.
2. Grab the Teacher Skillstreaming card as a reminder, or attempt to remember the steps.
3. Tell the student that you understand that they are only trying to converse with (name), but that the way they went about it was not the best way.
4. **Define.** Tell the student what it was that they did, why it was incorrect (or ask the student why they think it may have been incorrect), and offer them an alternative solution or work together to come to an agreement on an appropriate behaviour.
5. **Model.** When an alternative appropriate behaviour to the social error has been decided on, model yourself or have a peer model that behaviour for the student. Then ask them to model it back for you.
6. **Role-play.** Ask the student to approach you (or a peer) in the manner modeled. To ensure understanding, role-play that you (or the peer) are several other individuals and ask the student to perform the alternative correctly.
7. **Feedback.** Give the student constructive criticism. This step should occur throughout the Skillstreaming process. Prompting the student when they forget a step, and praising and rewarding them for what they do correctly is also an important part of giving feedback in all stages.
8. **Transfer.** Finally, ask the student with who else, when else, and where else they can use this alternative appropriate social skill. This will help the student remember to use this particular skill in other areas in their environment and community.
Fading

When it feels like the student has successfully learned how to initiate conversations in most situations, or at least in the situations they have been taught, start removing the process of teaching Skillstreaming to them whenever they have made an error (a couple of errors made in a week still means you can consider fading Skillstreaming). This also means that any rewards being used will discontinue with the removal of Skillstreaming. Praise should still continue to be used, for it is encouraging and acts as a reminder that they are still acting appropriately.

Troubleshooting

1. My student does not want me to help them with their social skills.
   a. The student may not want to act. See role-playing section in teaching using Skillstreaming (pg. 97).
   b. May need more rewarding. Consider using rewards, or if they are already being used, consider making the rewards something more motivating for the student to work toward.

2. My student is not learning the social skill.
   a. Consider using rewards.
   b. Individualize the method for the student more by using examples in the modeling and role-playing that incorporate things that they like (such as, “You are playing Minecraft and a friend comes over...”).
   c. Is the student being caught often enough using the wrong skill to give enough teaching time and opportunity? Using Skillstreaming once is often not enough. It may become taxing, but the more practice at the skill they have, even as quickly as this method runs, the better the chances are that the student will learn the skill and use it.

*Below is an example of a quick Skillstreaming teaching lesson for initiating conversation.
Example Skillstreaming Script for Teaching Initiation of Conversation

Teacher: “Hey Johnny, can you come into the hall with me quickly, please?”

*Student follows teacher into the hallway and they face each other.*

Teacher: “I noticed that you were trying to get __name’s attention, but it just was not happening and you ended up yelling across the room at them instead. There has to be a better way to get the attention you want from them. Do you agree?”

Student: “Yes.”

Teacher: “Okay, so let’s brain storm then. How do you think you can get __name’s attention in a better way next time?”

Student: “I guess I could walk over to them.”

Teacher: “Yes, I think that is a good idea (teacher is using tokens and so she gives one to the student now). So I am you (teacher moves toward the end of the hallway and faces the student), am I going to (teacher puts her hands around the sides of her mouth and fakes a yelling voice) yell, ‘HEY __name__?’ or am I going to walk toward you until I am next to you before I say your name?”

Student: “You’re going to walk until you are beside me, and then say my name.”

Teacher: “Right! Very good,” (Teacher gives the student a token) “So now you show me what you are going to do when you get back to class and still want to tell your friend something. Get my attention appropriately.”

*The student should walk to the end of the hallway, turn around to face the teacher, and walk back until they are beside them, and then says the teacher’s name quietly. The teacher hands them a token.*

Teacher: “Excellent! That was very good. I have no complaints about how you did that at all. Now when else and who else could you use this same way of starting a conversation?”

Student: “I could use this outside with my friends.”

Teachers: “Very good, yes you could (gives the student a token). Could you also use this at home with your family? Or here when you want to get the attention of other staff? Do you see the similarities in the situations, that you can always use this to get others attention?”

Student: “Yes, I guess that I could.”

Teacher: “Excellent job Johnny, continue to use this and let me know when you do and you can earn extra tokens.”
Relaxation
Introduction to Relaxation Techniques and Their Effects on Behaviour

Relaxation is a key component to controlling our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Lopata (2003) concluded this by stating “the physiological reactions that accompany elevated arousal reportedly create an emotional imbalance that disrupt the ability to maintain self-composure, concentration, and poise” (p.163). These three elements are important when helping any individual cope with anxiety, frustration, and anger. When a student’s thoughts lead to considering being disruptive to escape something, become unable to sustain attention, or unsure of how to initiate conversation with someone, they become emotionally aroused, causing their heart rate to increase, pours to sweat, and their breathing to increase; which then leads to the need to escape these feelings, and then they act out.

Anxiety and stress are actually an important part of everyday life. They help us to get out of bed in the morning and help students go to school. These emotional states; however, can become so intense that they affect our behaviours and lives in adverse ways. For students in grades 6 and 7 too much anxiety can show its ugly effects in the classroom. It is important that students be taught how to bring down their anxiety and stress to a manageable level so they are able to behave and feel safe in their skin in environments such as the classroom.

The technique explained following this introduction has the effect necessary to bring down the physical characteristics that effect the emotions, thoughts, and behaviours of a student. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is simple to teach students and can have the potential to show quick results. The accompanying CD teaches the educator how to deliver the technique to students and a transcript of the technique is included for easy delivery (see pg. 110).
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
“Ahhhhh, Much Better”

Background

Some stress and anxiety can be good for students. They can motivate them to work so they can get a good grade or achieve a goal. However, when the stress becomes too high for the student, using progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) can help them cope appropriately in the classroom and reduce their anxiety/stress to a manageable level.

What Students Can I Use This With?

This technique is appropriate to use with individuals or groups of students. The student(s) should be physically able to control their body and be able to understand directions from others.

Behaviours

This technique is appropriate to use in reducing a variety of behaviours that may have an emotional response behind them (as almost all behaviour does), such as:

- Behaviours aimed at escaping something the student finds unpleasant.
- Behaviours that enable the student to be unfocused on work.
- Anxiety involved in communicating with others
- Behaviours in response to anger, rage, or frustration
- Extreme happiness (unable to control voice volume level, body movements, or attend to someone else’s words)
- Sadness (unresponsiveness or crying)

*This is a small list. Consider how the person may be feeling when they are engaging in the behaviour so it becomes clearer if PMR is a technique that can be used.

Materials

- PMR script (see after this fading section)
- PMR chart (written instructions showing body parts and how to use each step of PMR)

Rewards

To increase the use of this technique, the teacher could offer individual students who are most likely to benefit most from this technique—based on the frequency of some of their behavioural concerns—a token towards a token goal for a reward each time they use PMR.

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28 Content adapted from Young (2013).
Preparation

1. Decide if this technique will be taught to the class, a small group of students, or one student.
2. Decide if tokens will be used with the student(s) and decide on the token goal and reward for reaching it.
3. Listen to the accompanying CD with the PMR technique to hear how to deliver this method to both groups and individual students.
4. Review PMR script.
5. If applicable, make PMR chart and put it up in the classroom.

Implement

1. Have a small meeting with one student, or meet with the class and explain what PMR is and that it is a way to help people cope with their emotions, both positive and negative ones. Come up with a list of 3 or so emotional situations that they could use this technique with. Then explain to them how the rewarding for using PMR will work, but also explain that they will need to come and tell a staff member that they used it and for what reason they did. This is so that they can stay honest about using PMR, but the teacher may not have to be vigilant all the time about watching each student.
2. Turn off any lights and close any blinds.
3. Do PMR with the student(s). Use the script and the chart as visual aid for the students while they go through the exercise. Practice this twice, and then once a day for a week.
4. After a week and it feels like the students could do the activity on their own, start giving out tokens to students for going and telling a staff they used PMR.
5. The teacher in the beginning may need to prompt an emotional student to use the technique. If their head is down, verbally tell them to use PMR. If their head is up, try pointing to the PMR chart or physically doing the technique briefly. When the student finishes using the technique, ask them how they feel and give them a token.
6. When the student(s) reach the token goal, deliver their reward at some point that day when appropriate.

*The technique may be effective to use in the morning to settle the students in to start their day. Another option is turning the technique into a “Simon Says” game.

Troubleshooting

What if my students are not using the technique when I’ve explained to them that they can and am willing to deliver rewards for its use?
The students may not want to use the whole technique. Tell them they can use as much of PMR as they wish as long as it is helping them to calm down. If they feel embarrassed by doing certain parts of PMR, tell them they do not have to do those parts. They may also be instructed to tighten their whole body at once instead of progressively tensing, and hold it for 6 seconds a couple of times if they would rather. Adapt the technique to the student.

The reward being used may not be motivating enough, consider changing it.

The technique may not be the right thing to help the student calm down, and that’s okay.

**Fading**

This techniques reward system can be faded from the classroom slowly. Begin to reward the student every couple of time they use PMR instead of every time. Then fade it to every 3 times they use PMR and so on. Do this slowly though, for the student may lose motivation for using the technique if you start this too soon and not learn its value.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Note: This version of PMR has been shortened and adapted from Young (2013). It has been created to be efficiently used by teachers with their students in a classroom setting. This PMR only involves aspects that the students can do while standing, so that they may be taught how to relax in environments that may not allow them to sit.

- Turn off all lights and close any blinds.
- Ask your students to find a comfortable position in their chairs.
- Indicate to them that this is a quiet time and that they need to attempt to refrain from speaking or giggling.
- Ask them to follow your instructions and move through the movements on this script while reading them. Speak in a soft, relaxing, slow voice. The idea is create a peaceful environment. You may play relaxing music to help the atmosphere.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Hands and Arms

“Put your arms by your sides and clench both fists. Feel the tension and breathe slowly.”

*Hold this position in silence for 5 seconds.

“Release your fists.”

“Now, with both arms held out, face your palms up and then bend your wrists down towards the floor. Breathe slowly.”

*Hold this position in silence for 5 seconds.

“Now release.”

“Bend your arms so your fingers touch your shoulders. Tense your bicep as if you are showing off your muscles. Breathe slowly.”

*Hold this position for 5 seconds.

“Release your arms and drop them to your sides.”

Head and Face

“Raise your eyebrows up as high as they will go. Breathe slowly and deeply.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Release them.”
“Next, turn your eyebrows down as far as you can in a frown and hold them there. Breathe deeply.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Release your eyebrows gently.”

“Shut your eyes and squeeze them down as hard as you can, while also crinkling up your nose. Breathe.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Now keep your eyelids shut, and roll your eyes left, right, up, then down.”

“Open your eyes slowly when you have finished this.”

**Neck and Shoulders**

“Put your chin to your chest and press down on it.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Relax.”

“Pull your chin back and tilt your forehead backwards to drop your head back.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Relax.”

“Now roll your head from side to side slowly.”

**Chest, Shoulders, and Upper Back**

“Take a breath and pull your shoulder blades back as far as you can towards each other.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Release them and pull your shoulders up as high as you can.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Release your shoulders and pull them as far back as you can and hold.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.

“Now relax and pull your shoulders as far down as you can.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.
“Release them.”

**Lower Back and Stomach**

“Close your eyes and take a deep breath in. Sit/stand up straight. Pull back your shoulders and arch your back. Your stomach may stick out a bit, but that is okay.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.*

“Exhale all the breath you took in.”

“Now, bend forward so your forehead is down to your knees or close to them. Try and touch your hands to the ground. Breathe.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.*

“Release your back and stomach muscles and sit up.”

**Feet**

“Tense and squish up all your toes and the muscles in your feet.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.*

“Release your toes, but then spread them out as wide as you can and hold them like that. Breathe.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.*

“Release.”

“Now tense your entire body all at once and hold it, but breathe.”

*Hold for 5 seconds.*

“Release.”

“Now take a moment and close your eyes. Think about how your body feels now that we have done this exercise. Compare it to how you felt before. How does it make you feel on the inside now? Is your heart beating fast? Do you feel relaxed?”

“Open your eyes. Remember how you feel now and use this when you feel overwhelmed or stressed out.”

**End of Exercise**
Teacher Resources

Websites

- Intervention Central: www.interventioncentral.org
- Behavior Advisor: http://www.behavioradvisor.com/
- A special website with videos and brief handouts on Least Restrictive Behavioural Interventions, which includes topics like contracting praise and token economy is at http://www.iseesam.com/teachall/text/behavior/LRBI.htm

Library Resources

St. Lawrence College

To become a community member of the SLC library the cost is $15 per year. This allows the member access to all the library’s resources except for their databases.

Books on Reserve Relating to ABA and School Environments

- Changing Behaviour. Rabino, K.

Queens University

To become a community member of the Queens library the cost is $50 per year, $30 for 6 months, or $20 for 4 months. This allows the member access to all resources the library has including their online databases.

Community Resources

Autism Ontario: www.autismontario.com

- Kingston Community Links:

Pathways for Children and Youth: www.pathwaysschoolyouth.org
- Suite 215, 1201 Division St., Kingston, ON

Ongwanada: www.ongwanada.com

- 191 Portsmouth Ave., Kingston, ON

Apps **(free)**

**Play Store (Android)**

  - Behavior Status: Records daily behaviour of 1 student or a whole class, records notes, specific behaviour tracking, stats, graphing, and more.

  - Behaviour Tracker: Records behaviour for entire classrooms, easily allows recording of observations, stats and graphs, and more.

  - Behavioral Timer FREE: Set different time intervals and set vibrations or tones.

**App Store (Apple)**

  - Conversation Coach Lite: Teaches students to converse with others in appropriate ways.

  - Social Skill Builder: Offers programs related to social skills for all ages including high school.

  - Rethink Behavior Tracking: Assesses and tracks behaviours and is suitable for use in schools.
References


# Appendix A

## ABC Chart

Client: ____________________  Setting: ____________________

Date: ____________________  Observer: ____________________

Operational Definition of Behaviour:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
“Good Behaviour Game” Points Chart

Lives Taken By Bowser!

Team MARIO vs Team LUIGI

*Adapted from Intervention Central

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29 Image found after an advanced search on Google Images with its permission of items that are free to use, reprint, or share, even commercially; on November 19, 2014. Author: RatchetMario. From: http://ratchetmario.deviantart.com/art/SFM-High-Definition-Bowser-463890345
## Appendix C

**Reward Chart for “Mystery Motivator” Intervention**

### Reward Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 free time minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 free time minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 free time minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 free time minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12 free time minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15 free time minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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30Image found after an advanced search on Google Images with its permission of items that are free to use, reprint, or share, even commercially; on October 28, 2014. Author of work: Daniel Girarte, 2014. From: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Super-Smash-Bros-WiiU.jpg
Appendix D
Mystery Motivator Chart

Mystery Motivator Monthly Calendar

BONUS POINTS FOR THIS WEEK!

31

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Appendix E
Example of a Self-Management Frequency Recording Sheet for Teacher

Name: ___________________ Date: ___________________ Observer: ___________________

Setting: Classroom
Time Started: ___________________ Time Ended: ___________________

Interval Length: 5 minute intervals during a 25 minute period

Target Behaviour: **Off-Task Behaviour:** Off-task behaviour in (student’s name) is when during morning working periods, (student’s name) is speaking to other students when the peer is not getting item (student’s name) needs or is answering a question (student’s name) is asking them about a math or language problem. (Student’s name) is not considered to be off task if they are asking a teacher a question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval (minutes)</th>
<th>Frequency Count of Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math Period</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Period</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
Self-Management Points Sheet for Student

Name: ___________________________  Date: ______________________________

My Behaviour: In order to reach my goal of 50 tokens so I can get **10 extra** minutes of free time on Fridays, each day during MATH and LANGUAGE time I need to:

- Speak only to my teacher or another staff member
- If a student is speaking to me during these times, I must ignore them
- Speak only to another student if they can help me answer a problem in math or language, or if they can get me something near them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Did I Speak To Someone? (How many times?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokens/Points Earned Today</th>
<th>Tokens/Points Earned This Week</th>
<th>Token/Point Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix G
Self-Management Rating Scale Sheet

How to Use My Rating Scale

Write each behaviour you are working in separate rows on in the “How Well I Did Working On...” column. Next, write in the date in the next row that is blank under the word “Date.” Throughout the period, notice how often you are and are not doing the behaviours you are working on getting better at. AT THE END OF THE PERIOD, check the box that you think best represents how well you did with each behaviour.

Student Name: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Well I Did Working On...</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Good</td>
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</table>

*Self-Management Rating Scale Sheet adapted from Intervention Central*
Appendix H
Self-Management Checklist

How to Use My Checklist

Write each behaviour involved in an activity in separate rows on in the “Did I Do These?” column. Next, write in the date in the next row that is blank under the word “Date.” Throughout the period, check off each step you completed. AT THE END OF THE PERIOD, if there is a step that has not been checked off, it means you did not do the step and check the “No” box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did I Do These?</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Self-Management Checklist adapted from Intervention Central*
Appendix I
Break Card

I NEED A BREAK PLEASE

___________ MINUTES

[Image: Israeli Stop Sign.png]

32Image found after an advanced search on Google Images with its permission of items that are free to use, reprint, or share, even commercially; on December 5, 2014. Author: Epson 291. From: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israeli_Stop_Sign.png
Appendix J
Example Behaviour Contract

Behaviour Contract

Students Name:  

Teachers Name:  

Effective Dates:

Teacher Responsibilities

Each time Michael completes his whole work day (has each section on his clipboard signed off), Mrs. _____________ will give him a token toward his token goal of _____________.

Student Responsibilities

Michael will do his best to complete his work day, and when he has collected ______tokens (as per the token goal), he will receive one of these rewards:

- 10 minutes of extra computer time in the morning
- A one-time use homework pass
- Be allowed to pick the morning game to be played each day for the next week

Bonus: If Michael completes his work day for 5 days in a row, he will be able to choose a prize from the ‘Prize Bag’.

Penalty: If Michael demonstrates behaviour that is distracting to other peers 6 times in one period, he loses the chance to earn a token that day. Distracting peers will include the following behaviours:

- Talking to a peer when the conversation does not have to do with work
- Speaking loudly
- Speaking inappropriately

Michael was collaborated with in creating this contract, and therefore, understands its terms and conditions.

Student Signature: ____________________________________________

Mrs._______________ signs this contract with the understanding and agreement that she will give Michael a token for each day he completes his work day, and upon reaching the token goal, will allow Michael to receive one of the rewards listed in this contract. Mrs. ______________
will also ensure that if a bonus is achieved, that she delivers the reward stated in this behavioural contract.

Teacher Signature: ________________________________

*Behaviour Contract adapted from Intervention Central
Appendix K
Teacher Skillstreaming Prompting Card

Skillstreaming for Social Skills

**D.M.R. F.T.R.**

**Define:** The behaviour that the student did incorrectly, decide upon an appropriate way to apply the social skill.

**Model:** Demonstrate the appropriate social skill to the student.

**Role-Play:** Pretend you are the student and perform the skill correctly, then have them pretend you are the person they were trying to converse with.

**Feedback:** Let them know what they did right and incorrectly through each step.

**Transfer Training:** Ask the student where, when, and with whom else they could use this skill.

**Reward:** Give praise and/or tokens each time the student demonstrates the skills learned correctly, during the Skillstreaming and in their daily lives at school.
Appendix L
Points Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Points I’ve Earned</th>
<th>Point Goal</th>
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