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The use of a Token Economy To Help Motivate Students

Shelley Hudachek

Northwestern College

An Action Research Project Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Education

Abstract

The purpose of this action research was to determine if a token economy would help motivate students to show appropriate behaviors. This action research was motivated by the researcher's own classroom observations of student behaviors and how students are motivated to show appropriate behaviors. The researcher is a special education teacher in her seventh year of teaching. Her own students participated in the implementation of a token economy intervention to help motivate them to show fewer disruptive and noncompliant behaviors. This study took place over a seven-week period where a token economy was introduced and implemented daily. The data reflects the inconsistency of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: token economy, classroom management, disruptive, noncompliant behaviors

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The use of a Token Economy to Help Motivate Students

It can be hard for teachers to establish a management system that is effective for all students. Effective classroom management requires awareness, patience, good timing, boundaries, and instinct. There's nothing easy about shepherding a large group of easily distractible young people with different skills and temperaments along a meaningful learning journey (Rabadi & Ray, 2017). When students show disruptive and non-compliant behaviors it starts taking away from the academic learning and skills being taught. The problem is there are only about 400 minutes in a school day and if teachers are constantly redirecting and trying to manage disruptive students it does not leave much time for learning. This study will help students by determining if a token economy intervention increases appropriate behavior.

The Dewitt Library's online databases were used to access published articles written in the last ten years to examine the significance of a token economy and the disruptive behaviors of students. Included in this literature review are descriptions and information on disruptive behaviors, classroom management, and token economies. The review of literature was made up of four main parts: classroom management, disruptive and noncompliant behaviors, token economies, and response to cost. Classroom management includes a wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to have an effective classroom, without disruptive and noncompliant behaviors from students. A token economy is one strategy teachers use to help their classroom management.

The purpose of this research project is to determine the use of a token economy as a behavior intervention. The research study will help answer the following two questions: When students earn "points" (token economy) are they more motivated to follow classroom rules and exhibit appropriate behavior? And will the external motivation of a prize be less effective over

time? In the review of literature, information will be detailed to help the reader understand why this action research is important to teachers in today's classrooms.

Review of the Literature

Classroom Management

Classroom management is intended to provide students with more opportunities to learn all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that students' learning can take place (Harris, 2019). Classroom management is regarded as the factor which decides if the classroom teacher succeeds or fails in the profession because it is essential to the teaching and learning process (Rowan, 2012). Students will have a hard time learning if others are showing disruptive behaviors. Disruptive behavior of students is also known as students' misbehavior or negative class participation (Samburgo, 2017). This kind of behaviors often disrupts classroom teaching and learning process since it affects teachers and other students as well (Khasinah, 2017). Disruptive behaviors may include talking in class (when a student talks to other students out of turn), excessive noise (loudly going through backpack or desk, pretending to cough or sneeze, making unnecessary noises with mouth or hands, or threatening (behavior becoming rude or disrespectful to students and teachers).

A study was done on classroom management to investigate the impact of classroom management training on classroom management, differences in attitudes toward classroom management between novice and experienced teachers, and differences between male and female teachers' beliefs toward classroom management (Martin et al., 2006). The data was collected by using the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory and a demographic questionnaire (Martin et al., 2006). The subjects contained more females than males. The majority of teachers teach elementary and secondary and a few who teach all-level grades. Data showed that there was a difference in male and female scores with females scoring more interventionist than males (Martin et al., 2006). Experienced teachers scored significantly more

controlling than the novice teachers. Experienced teachers have more realistic expectations on how to effectively manage their classrooms (Martin et al., 2006).

Classroom management helps teachers create a positive classroom environment. In 2019 a study was done on what factors are important for effective classroom management and how teachers motivate students (Harris, 2019). Qualitative analysis was done through interviews, where the researcher would interact with teachers and students daily. Overall, the interviews resulted in teachers needing more knowledge in feedback, praise, handling mistakes, and having clear lessons. Effective teachers had their work mostly ready and considered positive climate a main point (Harris, 2019). Their students like to go to school because of the positive classroom environment. Students also pay better attention if their teachers are prepared and offer sincere praise.

Effective classroom management is an absolute must. It impacts your ability to be an effective educator and enjoy your job, and it impacts your students' success as learners. A study was conducted to determine if the classroom management game (Caterpillar Game) would reduce student disruptive behaviors and increase teacher praise (Floress et al., 2017). The Caterpillar Game was used as a classroom management system. The researcher observed the classroom teacher and answered six questions, to help determine if the Caterpillar Game was a successful classroom management strategy. (Floress, 2017). The implementation of the Caterpillar Game, observations of student disruptive behaviors, and observations of teacher praise were done in the classroom during regular school hours. The Caterpillar Game was an effective classroom management system (Floress, 2017). The results show that during the Caterpillar game teacher praise went up and student behaviors decreased during seat work and carpet time.

In 2017 a study was done to find the relationship between student engagement and disruptive behaviors and their teachers' classroom management implementation profiles (Gage et al., 2017). There were teachers from across several school districts ranging in size. In order to collect data, the Multiple Option Observation System for Experimental Studies, was installed in all teacher computers. The results from the study show that even when student engagement is high there is still a high rate of disruptions. Teachers continue to report that disruptions, noncompliance, and disengagement are among the most challenging and frustrating behaviors they deal with on a daily basis (Gage, 2017). The results suggest that teachers' classroom management, student engagement and student behaviors are related. Aspects of classroom quality show links to student behavioral outcomes (Griggs et al., 2013).

A 2018 study was done to determine if affirmative classroom management would improve student behaviors (Clair et al., 2018). The researchers collected data by using the behavioral observation of students in schools (BOSS) for direct systematic observations of the classroom (Clair et al., 2018). Teachers used Reach to instruct by peer modeling and then specific instruction. The results show that teachers used more corrective statements (Reach + reprimand) during the intervention phases than during the baseline statements (reprimand only). However, more Reach statements than reprimand statements are usually necessary to shape student behavior (Clair et al., 2018).

Disruptive and Noncompliance Behaviors

Students who display disruptive and noncompliant behaviors affect those around them including teachers and peers (Powers & Bierman, 2013). Powers and Bierman administered a study in 2013, to look at how disruptive behaviors impact peer relationships. There were ten items on a scale that describe the range of aggressive and oppositional behaviors (Powers &

Bierman, 2013). The 6-point scale ranged from 1 being almost never and 6 to almost always. Results showed that disruptive and aggressive behaviors were higher in male students than female students and that the students are not reacting to the environment but the rules of behavior across the environments.

Preference assessments allow students the opportunity to earn what they are interested in and motivated by. A study was conducted to see if a preference assessment in relation with a token economy could decrease disruptive behaviors (Romani et al., 2017). Students engaged in no disruptive or noncompliant behaviors during the more preferred token economy. Students showed higher rates of problem behavior during the less preferred token economy. The research suggests it is important to do a preference assessment to know what students are motivated by.

Similarly, a study was done to see the effect of incorporating interests or obsessions into a token economy to decrease disruptive and noncompliant behaviors (Carnett et al., 2014). The study was done during an alternative setting (P.E.) with a 10-minute observation period. Six conditions were the same in all three phases. Once the researcher moved settings the behaviors lowered. For problem behavior the student had low-level decreasing trend, and the last three sessions of training the student had 0 instances of problem behaviors.

Token economy systems are commonly used in classrooms to increase appropriate behavior. In addition, another study was done to look at the effects of preference conditions of a token earned versus token loss (Donaldson et al., 2014). A multielement and ABAC design where participants were given the choice to work in either earn or loss condition. All participants displayed higher rates of disruptive behaviors during the baseline phases (Donaldson et al., 2014). Often times there were no differences in the loss and earned conditions within the token phases. During the token phase half of the participants earned or kept more tokens (loss

session). One participant earned or kept more tokens on average in the earned condition and five participants earned or kept all 10 tokens during every session (Donaldson et al., 2014). The tokens earned were greater in the loss condition. When participants got to select the session several of the participants selected the loss condition.

A study was done in 2018 to examine the effects of a token economy on decreasing problem behaviors (White et al., 2018). The researcher used a frequency count to measure the occurrence of the target behavior and used social stories to introduce appropriate behaviors. Token boards were used to help reinforce students and lower behaviors. A token board can be used to encourage targeted behavior and can be flexible based on students' needs (Osewalt, 2016). The researcher found that the disruptive and noncompliant behaviors decreased in all three settings.

A recent study was done in order to compare the Good Behavior Game on disruptive and social behaviors (Wiskow et al., 2021). The researcher used four aspects for the study to help determine which aspects would lower student behaviors. The Good Behavior Game had the lowest rate of disruptions. Once the GBG was over the rate of disruptions increased to higher rates (Wiskow et al., 2021). Classroom 1 had low to stable behaviors during the GBG. The Caught Being Good Game had higher rates of appropriate behavior. Classroom 2 had elevated rates during the Modified Good Behavior Game and for Classroom 3 the rates lowered during the MGBG. Classroom 4 had a low rate of disruptions during the GBG and slightly higher rates occurred during the MGBG. Lastly, Classroom 5 had an increase of high rates during the Standard Teacher Contingencies but behaviors were lowered during the CBGG and even lower rates during the GBG (Wiskow et al., 2021).

In 2016 a study was done to see how student-level factors and environmental factors interact to predict students' subsequent externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, and classroom environment (Griggs et al., 2016). Teachers completed a questionnaire. Teachers reported that boys had higher levels of externalizing behavior. Disruptive behavior had increased in the spring and had a slight difference when it came to gender and grade. Results also show that classrooms with high emotional support reduced the stability of students' internalizing behavior (Griggs et al., 2016). Student behaviors vary across classrooms and conditions (Wiskow, et al., 2021).

The frequency and forms of classroom disruptions are associated with the teacher's functions (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). A study was conducted to determine to what extent do the students of a class agree in their ratings of classroom disruptions (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). Data was examined by using a multilevel analysis and intraclass correlation to distinguish students' individual perceptions from students' shared perceptions (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). The study was done by using a questionnaire survey, video observations, and interviews. The results from the questionnaire showed an agreement between students' ratings of classroom disruptions, the teacher-student relationship and classroom management. Video observations showed that the students disrupted the class most frequently through nonaggressive disruptions such as talking instead of working, interrupting the teacher, or creating a deliberate disturbance (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). The students' and teachers' ratings show agreement on different forms of classroom disruption (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018).

Many times, when students exhibit disruptive and noncompliant behaviors the schools provide a paraprofessional to help support that child and implement the Individualized Education Plan. In 2020 a study was done by Bronstein to determine what student behavior concerns

paraprofessionals had. There were three phases for the study. The research showed that the most frequent behavior reported among paraprofessionals was disruptive behavior (Bronstein et al., 2020). In some cases, students with disabilities feel stigmatized because they receive targeted paraprofessional support. For students with behavior problems, the paraprofessional support put in place to assist them may actually provoke behavior outbursts (Giangreco, 2003).

Token Economy

There are a variety of ways classroom teachers manage their students. A token economy is one of a handful of interventions found in classroom settings (Soares et al., 2016). “A token economy is an intensive, in-class positive reinforcement program for building up and maintaining appropriate classroom performance and behavior” (Samburgo, 2017). An example of a token would be a piece of paper, points, chip, etc. where the students would then be able to ‘buy’ an item such as a toy or an edible substance, like candy.

In 2017 a study was done by Samburgo to see if a token economy system would increase appropriate behaviors. The delivery of the tokens/tickets took place to students who showed behaviors such as sitting in their seats, raising their hands, and on task behavior. There were three different data collection tools to administer the study (Samburgo, 2017). By the implementation of the token economy system, an evidence-based behavior management strategy, students’ behaviors during classroom instruction in science were impacted positively. The results of the intervention showed a reduction of disruptive behaviors, specifically out of seat, off task, and talking (Samburgo, 2017).

A single student research study was given to see if a token economy would improve student behaviors. The study was done throughout 6 weeks in an A-B-A design. The first two weeks were allocated for baseline (A), two weeks for intervention (B) and the last two weeks

were allocated for the procedures without intervention (A) (Aziz & Yasin, 2018). A token was given if there were no disruptive behaviors and pasted on the token economy chart. The results showed that the first week there were behavior occurrences and mistakes were made. On the third and fourth week, the implementation of a token economy was applied. Errors in tasks and disruptive behaviors show a decline (Aziz & Yasin, 2018). In the sixth week, total frequencies increased with errors and disruptive behaviors. The token economy played an important role in the behavior modification (Aziz & Yasin 2018).

A token economy study was conducted at a university with undergraduate students to see if they were more motivated (Gomez et al., 2020). Tokens (tickets) were earned by arriving to class on time, bringing completed work, bringing the book, answering questions, and completing in-class task. A little over half of the students indicated they would have completed their homework without receiving tickets (Gomez et al., 2020). Almost all the students reported that the tickets did motivate them to complete their homework assignments and the rewards were an incentive to earn tickets. Nearly all students would recommend a token economy in other classes (Gomez et al., 2020).

A quantitative study was done in an elementary physical education class to determine if a token economy was effective during a throwing skill lesson (Alstot, 2012). Students could earn up to 10 tokens by performing the skill correctly. Once a week they could exchange their tokens for the token store. The more tokens they turned in, the larger the prize. Results show all seven students increased their skill during the token economy system (Alstot, 2012).

Token economies can be exchanged for backup reinforcers and function as conditioned reinforcers. Another research was done in 2015 to determine if a token economy reduced behaviors (Becraft & Rolider, 2015). The researchers looked at the correct target responses. A

token was given, and verbal, gestures, and physical prompts were given. The researcher used a conditioned reinforcer assessment, ABA reversal design. A (alternated with no reinforcer), B (both reinforcement and no reinforcement), and A (no reinforcement). The researcher found that the students completed work tasks at a low rate in the no reinforcement stage and high levels of responding when observed in the reinforcement stage (Becraft & Rolider, 2015). The student responded to work tasks more when earning a reinforcement.

Researchers compared the effectiveness and ease of implementing a token economy in an elementary classroom (DeJager et al., 2020). The researcher used data collection sheets and observation forms. Systematic direct observation data was collected for problem behavior and academic engagement. When delivering a token, the teacher would state the behavior that was appreciated and how the token was earned. Results show that during the token intervention both classrooms had a decrease in problem behavior (DeJager et al., 2020).

An intervention was conducted to determine the effects of a token economy on a student with autism (Argueta et al., 2019). After the baseline of FR (fixed ratio) and VR (variable ratio), exchange schedules alternated in ascending order by the ratio value, then returned by baseline. The data shows that the rate of responses for appropriate behavior was higher during the fixed ratio and slightly lower during the variable ratio (Argueta et al., 2019).

Additionally, a study was done by researchers to find the value of a token reinforcement (Fiske et al., 2019). The researchers used an intervention with a token without reinforcement and a token with reinforcement. The total number of task responses per session was recorded using a frequency count and converted to a rate. The data was collected from videos for the task responses and sessions were divided into 10's intervals, while the responses were recorded and

observed. The research shows that the response rate was higher during the token with reinforcement and lower during the token without reinforcement (Fiske et al., 2019).

A study was done to determine if a point and level system would reduce severe problem behavior (Pritchard et al., 2017). The study was done with male participants who had severe problem behaviors. Preference assessments were given to each student during first period to determine what was motivating and what they wanted to earn. They then could use their points to buy from the school shop depending on how many points were earned. The intervention had a level system that consisted of five levels and required gradual increases in performance criteria to be eligible for promotion (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). Results indicated that school attendance increased during the point system, and almost all students showed a reduction in their severe problem behavior as they progressed through the level system (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018).

Numerous studies for token economy systems have been tested through different grade levels from preschool to college. The review of research supports token economies motivating students and lowering their disruptive behaviors. A token economy is one strategy teachers can use to help with classroom management and can be used at all grade levels.

Response to Cost

A study was tested to compare the effectiveness of differentiated response and response cost procedures for on-task behavior of individuals engaged in solitary work task (Jowett et al., 2016). The intervention used token boards to determine response cost. Students had a slightly higher level of off-task behavior during the response cost compared to the differentiated response. The majority of students had higher levels of on-task behavior during the

differentiated response and for one student there were higher levels of on-task behavior during the response cost (Jowett et al., 2016).

Lastly, a study was administered to find the effects of response cost to a token economy (Soares et al., 2016). There was coded data for each setting, special education, and general education classroom with observations in outcome, engagement, disruption, and verbal cueing. The outcomes show that eight studies were coded with task engagement and twenty studies were coded as behavior outcomes. The response cost varied significantly among settings. The response cost rate was higher in the special education setting (Soares et al., 2016).

Classroom management is an important skill to help with disruptive and non-compliant student behaviors. Without a classroom management system in place, students will be off-task and show inappropriate behaviors. It can be inferred that a token economy is one strategy that can help students show less disruptive and non-compliant behaviors.

Methods

Participants

This study took place in a special education classroom setting with four students, one girl and three boys, second and third grade. Students ages ranged from 7-9 years old. Three students are Caucasian, and one student is African American. All students have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) with at least one behavior goal. Students receive 30 minutes of social skills daily including a five-minute check-in and a five-minute check-out time. The students have a total of 405 minutes of paraprofessional support throughout their school day. Each student spent the majority of their day in the general education classroom setting.

Procedure

This study took place in Iowa during the 2020-2021 school year. This school year faced many challenges due to Covid-19 and the inconsistency's it came with. The school had seen many different models of learning this school year including hybrid (A and B days), virtual, and in-person learning. During the 7 week-time period of collecting data (January 2021-March 2021) the students were in-person learning. An IRB exemption form was filled out and approved. The participants in this study were not individually named or documented and the research poses minimal risk to the participants. There was no disruption in their regular school day.

Data Collection

The research project was a total of seven weeks. However, the two weeks leading up to the study, were preparation. There was training, baseline assessments, and goals established before the study took place. The questions the researcher sought to answer were; When students earn “points” (token economy) are they more motivated to follow classroom rule and exhibit appropriate behavior? And Will the external motivation of a prize be less effective over time? The variables analyzed were as follows. The independent variable the researcher implemented into the study were the daily points being given to students and the definitions of disruptive and non-compliance behaviors. The dependent variable was how the students respond to the points and the behaviors students show.

Before the research project began, the researcher created a behavior definition rubric. The rubric had a definition for disruptive behaviors and non-compliance behaviors. In the rubric there was also examples. A pre-assessment was given to the students by the associates. This gave the researcher the frequency baseline of behaviors for each student. There was training for the associates on how to tally a defined behavior as well going over different practice scenarios. Associates were also getting training on the token economy, point system. There was a point sheet for each student with their daily schedule. The associates gave 1 to 4 points for each part of the student’s day (specials, math, lunch, etc.). There was a point rubric shared with associates that was attached to the student point sheets for reference (see Appendix A).

The researcher then provided the students with their IEP goal. This was done during social skills. This was so the students were aware of their goal and what they were working on in order to get points. During social skills, before the study took place, the researcher gave preference assessments to each student. This was to help the researcher know what types of

prizes to buy (candy, stuffed animals, squishy, etc.) The prizes were bought with the special education classroom funds. Once preference assessments were completed, the students were then be taught how to earn points, what disruptive and non-compliance behavior look like, examples of how they could “buy” prizes with their earned points. The prizes were in point categories, 400 points, 1,000 points, 1,500 points, 2,000 points and 4,000 points. The students could earn a total of 200 points a day based on their daily schedule. They had the opportunity to spend or save their points.

Once associates were trained and students were taught how the token economy (point system) worked, it was time to get started. Associates had the student point sheets with them throughout the day and started giving points in each daily section on their schedule. At the end of each day the associates would put the point sheets in the weekly file. The special education teacher would put the total points into a Google Sheet daily. This helped keep track of the student points and whether they were saving or spending the points. During the time of the study, social skills was recorded daily on self-regulation, coping skills, and Zones of Regulation. Once the seven weeks were done, the special education teacher would then give a post assessment to find the frequency and current baseline for students. The data from the behaviors and points given as well as the pre-assessment, were compared. The teacher-researcher and the student associates collected data daily. Both documented the daily points based on the point rubric.

The data collected would be based on the independent variable, points being given, and dependent variables, disruptive and non-compliant behaviors student show. All data collected was quantitative. The associates and special education teacher were looking for appropriate and expected behaviors. The students all had a behavior goal and an Individualized Education Plan. They saw the special education teacher in the area of social skills for 20 minutes a day. During

this time the special education teacher would be teaching the students how they can earn points and buy prizes. Students were being observed to see if there was a decrease in disruptive and non-compliant behaviors.

There were two different data tools being used to collect the data during the intervention (token economy). The collection instruments include a student point sheet as well as the behavior rubric which tallied disruptive and non-compliant behaviors. The student point sheet had the students schedule throughout the day including, lunch, recess, specials, math, writing, etc. The associates gave points throughout the school day. The point system was 1-4 and the students could earn up to 200 points based on their daily schedule. The associates were taught when to give a 4, 3, 2, or 1 to students. The daily point sheet percentages would be put into the Google Sheet along with the points earned, used, and saved. The behavior rubric had definitions for both disruptive and non-compliant behaviors; so, there was no confusion on what the behaviors were defined as.

Findings

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

When students earn “points” (token economy) are they more motivated to follow classroom rules and exhibit appropriate behavior? The researcher collected data on how many points the students were earning in a day (percentage). The researcher collected a baseline percentage of the student rubric, two weeks before the intervention took place. The data was placed and collected into an Excel to help organize the data and to be able to compare days. The baseline data was compared to the post baseline data, with the student rubric percentages. The researcher did run a dependent samples t-test to help compare both the mean for the before score and after score.

The baseline assessment revealed that students had an average of 94.50% on their daily point sheet during the token economy, ($M = 94.92, SD = .03$). Students participated in a seven-week token economy system where they received points on their daily point sheet and could use the points in exchange for prizes. Students scored an average of 96.00% on their daily point sheets, ($M = 96.00, SD = .05$). Results of the dependent samples two-tailed t-test reveal a difference between the baseline and posttest, $t(3) = -.25, p < .83$. The difference was not significant.

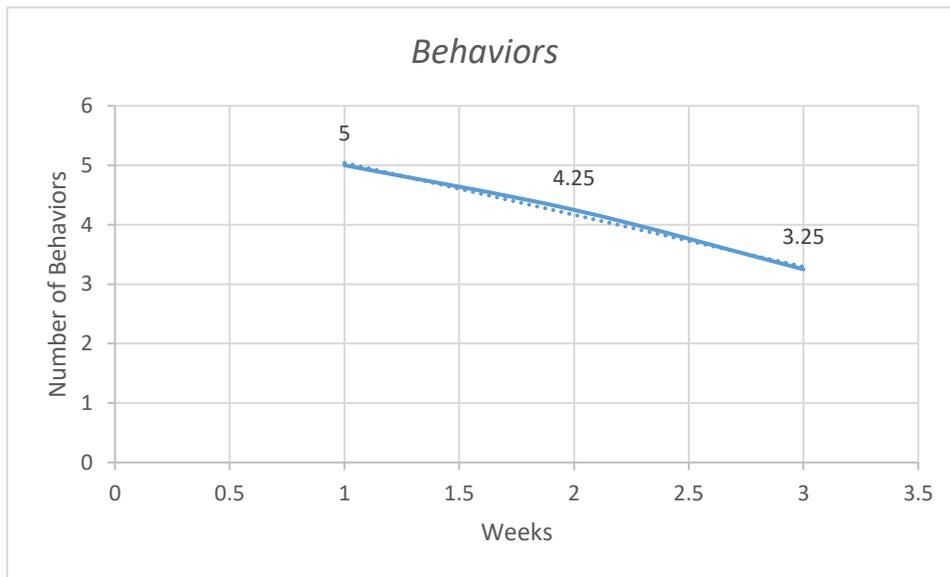
Research Question 2

Will the external motivation of a prize be less effective over time? The researcher found the baseline for frequency of behavior by using the behavior rubric and marking tallies throughout the day. The researcher tracked behaviors daily, using the rubric and tallies. When the study was finished the new baseline score of frequency of behaviors was conducted for all

students. The baseline for before, middle and end of the study was graphed. The graph shows whether or not the behaviors increased then fell back down (bell curve) or if the behavior scores were flat. This determined if the token economy was effective over time. Figure 1 shows that behaviors decreased once the token economy intervention started.

Figure 1

Student Behaviors from Beginning, Middle, and End of Intervention



Below are the graphs of each individual student with behaviors from beginning, middle, and end. Three out of four students all had a decrease from beginning to end. One student did have an increase in behaviors at the end of the intervention.

Figure 2

Student 1 Behaviors Overtime

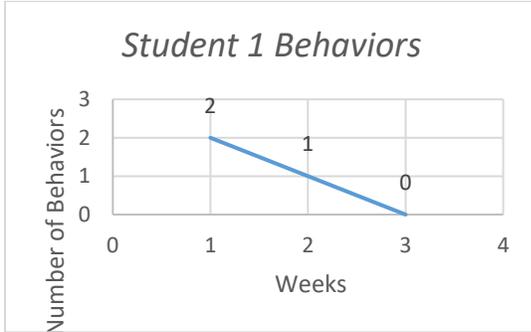


Figure 3

Student 2 Behaviors Overtime

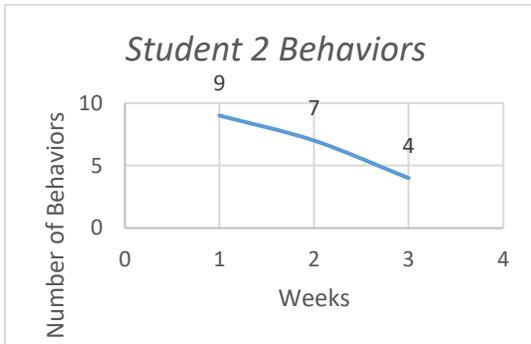


Figure 4

Student 3 Behaviors Overtime

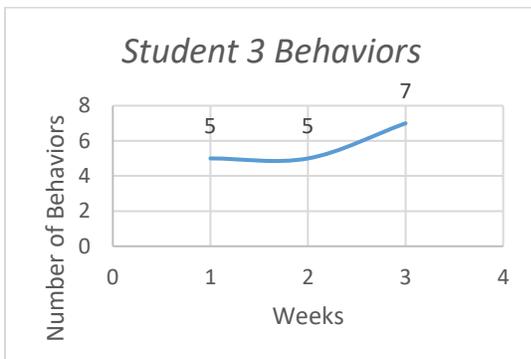
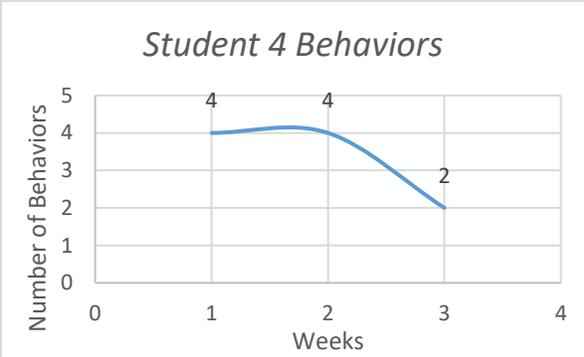


Figure 5

Student 4 Behaviors Overtime



Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

The action research project was chosen to address the questions: Does a token economy help motivate students to show less disruptive and noncompliance behaviors? And will the external motivation of a prize be less effective over time? The findings indicate that the token economy did decrease most students disruptive and noncompliance behaviors. However, there was not a significant difference from the pretest and posttest. Further research should be conducted with modifications and consistency.

Limitations of the Study

There were days with guest teachers in the classroom. A guest teacher took the place of the special education teacher or associates due to personal days, illness, or trainings. When there was a guest teacher, they did not have the proper training on when to give points and they didn't have the relationship built with the student, which could affect behavior. During this time the points given for appropriate behavior and tallies marked for non-compliance and disruption were inconsistent.

Outside factors and what happened outside of school hours limited the study. The students come from many different types of homes. Their day starts off at home where there could be fights with siblings, parents arguing, and not enough sleep. These factors are out of the researcher's control. Due to the outside factors, this could throw the students day off. The associates and special education teacher tried their best to bring the students back into the green zone but was not always successful.

The students' schedules are sometimes interrupted due to fire drills, assemblies, and tornado drills. Once a month there is a fire and tornado drill which affects the schedule. Some

students react negatively when their schedule is not consistent. The special education teacher does prepare the students in advance if there is a change coming. Due to Covid-19, assemblies looked different. Assemblies were through Zoom and were projected on the screen in the classroom. Some students react differently to assemblies and drills which may limit the study.

Due to Covid-19, the researcher only had four students in person. Students had previously been in a hybrid or virtual setting the beginning of the year. The Covid-19 pandemic could have limited the study as the year had been inconsistent and students had just started back full time in person at the beginning of the intervention.

Further Study

If this research were to be conducted again in the future, some modifications would be necessary. First, it would be beneficial if the researcher had more than four participants and used a full classroom. This would help gather more data points to see if the intervention was successful. Also, conducting the research during a 'normal' school year without so many inconsistencies due the COVID-19 pandemic would be helpful. Another modification that should be made is the use of social stories while processing with the students. Students did get social stories and social skills lessons with the special education teacher daily. However, it would be useful to use specific social stories for student behaviors when processing and reminding students of their point sheet. It would also be beneficial if social stories were used to help students know how their day looks, such as reading a social story about assemblies, class parties, or drills. This may have helped behaviors and helped remind students of their daily schedule and points.

Conclusion

This action research study had irregularities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and different types of learning throughout the school year. There were many changes in routines and schedules which made the school year very inconsistent and a challenge for both students and staff. Due to there not being a significant difference from the pretest to posttest, the researcher believes it would be beneficial to conduct this study again with modifications. The ultimate goal for any teacher is an academically productive classroom with focused, attentive, and on-task students (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). Based on the literature review and this action research, the token system does hold promise as a strategy for assisting teachers with classroom management.

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Appendix A

Point Sheet Rubric

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student had 0 redirects and/or reminders• Student made positive choices• Student completed all work/task with good quality• Student had good communication (ex. Asked for help when needed)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student needed 2-3 redirects and/or reminders• Student mostly made positive choices (maybe one mishap ex. Not staying in seat)• Student completed most of the work/task• Student communicated but needed guidance (modeling, prompting)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student needed 3 or more redirects and/or reminders• Student did not make all positive choices• Student completed very little of the work/task• Student did not have appropriate communication (whining, yelling, ignoring).
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student needed to be removed from class