



EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTION NETWORK EBI BRIEF

The Good Behavior Game¹

Theoretical support

Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a stimulus after a response in order to increase the probability the response will occur again in this future (Alberto & Troutman, 2005). When developing a system to manage classroom behavior, researchers used the theory of positive reinforcement and believed token reinforcement and teacher attention were effective methods (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969). However, token reinforcement was found to be unnatural to the classroom because of reinforcers such as candy and money (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969). Teacher attention also had disadvantages if a teacher did not have the skills to provide reinforcement procedures successfully (Hall et al., 1968). The idea of creating a method that uses natural reinforcers in the classroom, other than teacher attention, was then developed, i.e. the good behavior game (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969). The intervention good behavior game reduces behavior problems in the classroom using natural reinforcers such as competition and classroom privileges (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969).

Empirical support

This game was first investigated by Barrish, Saunders, and Wolf (1969). In this study conducted in a 4th grade classroom, the experimental design included both reversal and multiple baseline phases. Observed behaviors were out-of-seat talking and talking out in the classroom. Rates of behavior were first collected without introduction of the game in order to establish a baseline. After the baselines were established, the good behavior game was implemented. The game was then withdrawn for a reversal baseline. Finally, the game was reintroduced. Throughout the experiment, data were collected from observations of behavior in each experimental group. It was found that the game significantly modified the behaviors of out-of-seat and talking out behaviors of the students (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969).

In 1972, a replication of the former study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the good behavior game on disruptive behavior (Medland & Stachnik, 1972). A fifth grade class was divided into two separate reading groups. The experimental design of this study consisted of 6 phases including Baseline, Game 1, Baseline 2, Rules, Rules + Lights, and Game 2. The baseline phases involved recording target behaviors when the game was not in effect. Game 1 and Game 2 consisted of introducing the good behavior game. The rule phase consisted of reintroducing the rules. The rules + light phase was used to check the control the game had on target behaviors. Data were collected throughout the experiment based on observations of behavior. Results of the first group of students showed a 99% reduction in target behaviors. The second group also had significant reduction of target behaviors with an average reduction of 97%.

A similar study to Barrish, Saunder, and Wolf was conducted in 1973. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the good behavior game on disruptive behavior and academic performances of children (Harris & Sherman, 1973). A baseline was established for academic performance and behaviors in both a fifth and sixth grade class. After the baseline was established, the good behavior game was introduced. Similar to the previous studies, results of low disruptive behavior

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were maintained in both the sixth and fifth grade classrooms while the game was in effect. However, the game only slightly increased academic performance (Harris & Sherman, 1973).

From the theory of positive reinforcement, the good behavior game was developed. Using natural reinforcers in the classroom was believed to be an effective method for managing classroom behavior. The results from these studies suggest that the intervention good behavior game does significantly modify disruptive behavior.



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References

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