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AUTHOR: RACHELLE BROWN

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Leslie P. Mauerman, MS.Ed
PROJECT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Signature
Date: 5-6-13

Kimberly Venisse, MBA
PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBER

Signature
Date: 5-6-13

Jacqueline S. Thousand, Ph.D.
MA PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Signature
Date: 5-6-13
Creating an Effective Token Economy:
Manual and Professional Development Training Workshop

by
Rachelle D. Brown

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Abstract

The purpose of this study and project is to examine research regarding the positive effects of implementing Token Economies in a variety of educational settings and to produce an effective manual and training for educators. The result of the implementation of Token Economy as a secondary form of intervention is geared toward decreasing undesired student behaviors and increasing the academic achievement of students. Findings in the literature review determined the correlation between the implementation of Token Economies and the decrease of undesired behavior by students. It further became evident that teachers have requested and desire additional professional training opportunities to address the realities of classroom realities dynamics, including as undesired student behaviors. This analysis supported the development of a training manual entitled “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” for general educators. The audience for this training can include paraeducators and novice Educational Specialists. To ensure accurate implemented this researcher created a companion training module for teachers. The full project for “How to Create an Effective Token Economy Training Manual” includes a power point presentation to be used for the professional development training workshop. With the knowledge from and skills gained from the workshop and equipped with the manual, educators can be equipped with the tools to implement Token Economies in order to decrease undesired behaviors and increase the opportunities for academic achievement, resulting in overall success for students and their teachers.

Keywords: Token Economies, Academic Achievement, Decrease Undesired Behaviors
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ ii

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. iii

Chapter 1: Definition of Problem ......................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: Literature Review ................................................................................................. 8

Chapter 3: Methodology ......................................................................................................... 20

Chapter 4: Project ................................................................................................................. 25

Chapter 5: Project Recommendations ................................................................................. 136

References ............................................................................................................................. 141
Chapter 1: Definition of Problem

Introduction

Educators are required to teach students specific content, which supports and aligns to specific grade level standards. Overcoming the distractions from this task on a daily basis can include management of student behavior. Every teacher has experienced various types of off task and on task behaviors exhibited by students in his/her classroom. These behaviors can be desired or undesired for example, a student raising his hand to ask a question is a desired behavior. An example of an undesired behavior in the same setting would be a student shouting out to ask a question. The frequency and intensity of undesired behaviors can vary, depending upon the classroom setting. Educators who experience undesired behaviors in their classroom typically attempt to decrease those behaviors by utilizing behavior management strategies. Strategies such as verbal praise, visual aids to display reminders and/or the desired behavior expected, or social scripts explaining the desired behavior may be implemented. When simple behavior management strategies such as those listed here are not effective, many educators need to ask for help.

Behavior management strategies have been used throughout civilized history to decrease undesired behaviors (Kazdin, 1982). These behavior management strategies can be effective to help students achieve academic success (Nelson, 2010). Current policies, such as those mandates by recent federal legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), place educators under pressure to ensure students make academic progress. NCLB is an act, which sets high standards and requires states to establish assessments to measure the Academic Achievement students are making in the United States. However, in a recent
plan released by the United States Department of Education (2011) it states 62% percent of teachers report feeling underprepared for “classroom realities”. One “classroom reality” that educators may encounter is undesired student behavior. One of the most effective positive behavior management strategies that educators have used extensively are Token Economies. To accomplish the task of preparing educators to meet the realities of teaching, it is important to provide them with professional development opportunities to learn the process of creating and implementing an effective Token Economy in the individual classroom setting. Educators also need to be instructed about how to fade, or slowly eliminate a Token Economy to natural consequences following effective use. Research has shown that the use of Token Economies increases desired behaviors (Klimas and McLaughlin, 2007). In addition to this research, research has been conducted to demonstrate the effects of Token Economies on improving Academic Achievement (Klimas and McLaughlin, 2007).

This chapter introduces the project questions, the literature, and the methodology used to create the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual for general educators, novice special educators and other interested persons. In addition, the manual explains how to fade an effective Token Economy into natural consequences, another behavior management concept. A natural consequence occurs when there is a predictable and appropriate response to a particular behavior from nature, society or another person, not the educator. For example, if a student refuses to eat lunch he/she will receive a “natural consequence” in that he/she will be hungry. This concept eventually replaces the use of a Token Economy through fading.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to produce a manual for general educators, novice special educators and other interested persons on how to implement an effective Token Economy. Prior to beginning work on the manual, this author collected examples of the types of Token Economies used, analyzed their effectiveness, and explored how the systems were faded into natural consequences. In addition to the manual, the researcher created a professional development training to teach educators how to use the manual, and also to provide them practice for implementation. Research has established that there are definite positive effects of the use of Token Economies as it relates to on task behavior and the decrease of undesired behaviors (Klimas and McLaughlin, 2007). Limited research also demonstrates a correlation between the use of a Token Economy and students’ Academic Achievement (Nelson, 2010).

Definitions

Token Economies

A Token Economy is a specific behavior modification technique focused on positive reinforcement focused on positive reinforcement tokens that are awarded for desired behavior. When a student exhibits a desired behavior and/or task he/she receives a Token. Tokens can be exchanged for Backup Reinforcements when the student has accumulated a predetermined number of Tokens. Token Economies can be implemented for a single student at any educational level or for an entire group or class.

Tokens
A Token is a reinforcer that is traded for a larger reinforcer when the predetermined number of Tokens is reached. Forms of a Token can vary. Examples of Tokens are stickers, poker chips, pretend money, gems, etc.

Backup Reinforcers

Backup Reinforcers are predetermined desired incentives a participant in the Token Economy has chosen. These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy or can be time to complete a desired task. An example of this could be, twenty minutes to play a desired computer game.

Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement is an increase in test scores and an increase rate of accurate completion of classroom work assignments.

On Task Behavior

On Task Behaviors occur when students are completing their work and displaying appropriate classroom attentive behavior.

Appropriate classroom attentive behavior

Appropriate classroom attentive behaviors consist of students sitting up in their chairs and looking at the teacher, classroom visuals, and classmates when group work is assigned. Students also participate by answering and asking questions.

Response Cost Token Economies

Response Cost Token Economies are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behavior are exhibited. When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return give a previously earned Token. In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.
**Preview Literature**

In the literature reviewed, it is evident that the use of Token Economies emerged in the mid to late 1960’s (Kazdin, 1982). This form of behavioral intervention was implemented and appeared to be effective in a variety of settings including; (a) treatment, (b) rehabilitation, and (c) educational settings. (Kazdin, 1982) The most effective use of a Token Economy is to decrease undesired behaviors. However, it can be adjusted to increase desired behaviors (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003).

Various Token Economy systems that decrease undesired and increase desired behaviors include a component of punishment referred to as a Response Cost. Unlike Token Economies, Response Cost systems can be used when students exhibit appropriate and/or inappropriate behaviors. When a student displays inappropriate behavior a specific number of Tokens are then removed from the possession of the student. (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick 2011) LD Online (1998) reports Response Cost programs can decrease Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder symptoms. The Center of Disease Control (2012) explains that, “People with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, or be overly active.” One of the symptoms that can be decreased is impulsivity, the inclination to act without thinking about the results. Response Cost systems are effective behavior management strategies for students.

The literature reviewed examines the implementation of Token Economies in the following settings; (a) preschool, (b) elementary, (c) middle school, and (d) college. At the preschool setting, the literature review will examine two studies that focus on the decrease of undesired behaviors using Token Economies. The literature review also explores four studies performed at the elementary school level where the focus was
centered on the decrease of undesired behaviors and/or the increase of work completion. Studies performed at the middle school setting analyzed vital information about the decrease of undesired behaviors and the increase of Academic Achievement after effective Token Economies were implemented. Two studies conducted at the university level which focused on the increase of desired behaviors and the increase in Academic Achievement once Token Economies were implemented were also examined.

The literature reviewed also contains pertinent information about the effective implementation of Token Economies with students who have a diagnosis of ADHD. The research reviewed provided positive results. The most effective type of Token Economy implemented for student students with ADHD appears to be the Response Cost Token Economy.

*Preview Methodology*

The methodology of the project was to examine various Token Economies and the process by which they were implemented in the literature reviewed. From this information, a manual was created to explain the process to general educators, inexperienced special educators and other interested readers. The process was separated into seven simple steps for educators to implement. In addition to the steps, the manual provides documents to assist educators in implementing Token Economies.

*Significance of Project*

The significance of the project is that the training and manual created can be an important resource for general education teachers, inexperienced special education teachers and others to use to support students who have behavior difficulties. The presence of undesired behaviors can distract the student, classmates, and the educator
from the academic content being delivered. Eliminating undesired behaviors will increase the amount of time a student is actively engaged in the classroom and mastering content. Behavior difficulties can cause a lack or decrease in Academic Achievement. This result of behavior difficulties is why the implementation of Token Economies can positively affect the Academic Achievement of a student. Increasing Academic Achievement can help satisfy the requirements of policies such as NCLB and responding to pressure from administrators to increase the school wide level of Academic Achievement.

Limitations of Project

This project has two limitations. The first limitation is the time spent to complete the project and review literature on the subject. The second limitation was the relative lack of peer-reviewed literature on the effects of implementing a Token Economy on students’ Academic Achievement levels.

Summary

This project focused on the creation of a manual for general education teachers, inexperienced special educators, and other persons interested about creating and implementing an effective Token Economy system. In addition, the manual explains how to fade an effective Token Economy to natural consequences. The project provides educators with a resource to help support students who demonstrate undesired behaviors and who may not be making sufficient Academic Achievement due to these behaviors. The effective use of the manual will help decrease undesired behaviors and help teachers meet Academic Achievement goals set by the government and school districts.
Chapter 2

This chapter supplies the foundational context support the approach for this study by reviewing existing research on Token Economies. This study focused on the positive effects of implementing Token Economies for students who have special needs as it related to their Academic Achievement and on task behavior in the school setting. The existing research examines the use of Token Economies in a variety of educational settings; (a) preschool, (b) elementary school, (c) middle school, and (d) college. This study also examines the specific use of Token Economies with students who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The review analyzed literature about the use of Token Economies in education and focused on the effects Token Economies have on students’ on task and off task behaviors. These behaviors include desired and undesired behaviors for example, a desired behavior could consist of the completion of an assignment. An undesired behavior could consist of a student running around the room or refusing to complete classroom assignments. Two of the studies reviewed collected data on the correlation between the implementation of Token Economies to the level of students’ Academic Achievement. The absence of this component in the existing literature is an indicator of the importance of this study.

Finally, the review examined the effects of Token Economies, which were implemented with students who have a diagnosis of ADHD. The number of students who are diagnosis with ADHD continues to increase (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Teachers may desire additional strategies to assist this population in completing classroom work and increasing the level of Academic Achievement being
accomplished. Exploring these results separately was intended to support educators who work with this specific population of students.

**Literature Review**

**Token Economies in Education**

This section describes foundational context for the use of Token Economies in education. The use of Token Economies emerged into common use during the mid to late 1960’s (Kazdin, 1982). Kazdin concluded the new intervention appeared to be promising in a variety of settings (1982). Token Economies were used in various setting including treatment, rehabilitation, and educational settings (Kazdin, 1982). This section focuses only on those studies conducted in educational settings.

Token Economies implemented in the school setting can be used for individual students or for a group or students. “The most popular form of token economies for groups of students is tickets, or “classroom cash”… (Otten & Tuttle, 2010). “Token Economies have been found to be an effective method of changing behavior at home and at school. Whole classrooms can be involved in token economies where students work together to gain tokens for appropriate behavior…” (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003). The purpose of Token Economies (Kazdin, 1982) is to decrease inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors. This behavior modification system can be tailored to reinforce desired behaviors (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003).

Various Token Economies tailored to reinforce desired behaviors include a method of punishment, which is referred to as Response Cost. Response Cost can be used to discourage inappropriate behaviors. When inappropriate behaviors are exhibited, a
specific number of tokens are then removed from the possession of the token recipient (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick 2011).

The Encyclopedia of Special Education (2007) explains that there are four steps to the effective implementation of a Token Economy. The first step is to determine the target behavior. The next step is to determine the type of token that will be used for example items that can used as tokens include; poker chips, play money, stamps, and tally marks. The third step is to determine the backup reinforces and the number of tokens needed to receive that reinforcement. Lastly, a system is needed to keep track of the tokens being given. Any system utilizing these four steps establishes a Token Economy, according to the Encyclopedia of Special Education (2007).

Token Economies in Preschool

Bernard, Filcheck, McNeil, and Greco (2004) examined the results of a whole class Token Economy to help manage disruptive behaviors at the preschool level. The authors stated that undesired behaviors by students at the subject preschool were increasing and that there were more children per classroom who have been exhibiting this type of behavior. The authors claimed that disruptive behaviors of students in the preschool setting have increased as a population-wide problem. The authors attempted to address this problem by implementing a Token Economy in a specific preschool class. “Problematic behaviors exhibited by young children have become a topic of concern.” (Tiano, Fortson, McNeil, & Humphreys 2005). The authors also stated that preschool staff had requested additional training in behavior management. To address this need the authors described the importance of providing staff with effective strategies, one of which was identified as the use of Token Economies.
Bernard, Filcheck, McNeil, and Greco (2004) examined the effectiveness of a whole-class Token Economy in preschools compared to Parent-Directed Interaction. Parent-Directed Interaction is a twelve week program that focuses on training parents how to handle a child who has disruptive behaviors and is between the ages of 2 to 7. This was the first study to examine the effectiveness of a whole-class Token Economy in the preschool setting. The researchers analyzed one classroom with 17 students during circle time. From the data collected, it was apparent inappropriate behaviors decreased from the incidence rate of such behaviors observed prior to implementing the Token Economy. The number of praises the teacher gave during the implementation of the Token Economy also increased. During the follow-up, the teacher “…chose to use the Level System (Token Economy) … rather than her typical classroom management strategies.” (Bernard, Filcheck, McNeil, and Greco, 2004). The results of this study provided preliminary correlations between the use of Token Economies and a decrease in disruptive behavior and increase of positivity in the classroom environment.

Tiano, Fortson, McNiel, & Humphreys (2005) also examined the effectiveness of Token Economies implemented at the preschool level. The authors examined two types of Token Economies; response cost and level system (Token Economy), similar to the strategy Bernard, Filcheck, McNeil, and Greco (2004) examined in their study. It was not evident from the data collected which type of Token Economy (Token Economy) was more effective because during the withdrawal period the undesired behaviors continued to decrease from the baseline data collected. The authors noted that throughout the study undesired behaviors decreased and the classroom environment increased positively.
The two studies discussed above indicated, on a preliminary basis that Token Economies are effective at the preschool level. The effectiveness is evidenced by the decrease of undesired behaviors and the increase in positivity in the classroom environment observed in both studies. These studies did not look at the effectiveness of the implementation of Token Economies in increasing the level of Academic Achievement or increasing the amount of on task behavior displayed.

**Token Economies in Elementary School**

Klimas and McLaughlin (2007) analyzed the effectiveness of a Token Economy in a kindergarten special education classroom. The authors collected data from one student with severe behavior disorders in the class. The student demonstrated many inappropriate behaviors including running in the classroom and refusal to perform/complete classwork or answer questions. Data was collected in 30 minute increments recording: (a) the number of assignments she completed, (b) the average time it took her to complete the assignments, and (c) the number of inappropriate behaviors the student exhibited. First, the authors collected baseline data. Baseline data showed that the student (a) completed an average of two assignments in a 30-minute session, (b) spent an average of ten minutes per assignment, and (c) exhibited three inappropriate behaviors during the same 30-minute period. From this information, the authors choose two types of Token Economies to implement, a three Token System and a five Token system. Once the student earned the desired number of Tokens (3 or 5) she was able to take a five-minute break. The implementation of the three Token system proved to have the better results because following the implementation of the three Token system, the subject (a) completed an average of 7.67 assignments within a 30-minute session, (b) the student
spent an average of four minutes per assignment, and (c) exhibited no inappropriate behaviors during the observation period. These results were observed over six sessions. There is a definite correlation between the use of a Token Economy to the decrease of undesired behaviors and increase of work completion. This study did not collect data on the student’s levels of Academic Achievement.

Another study examined the effectiveness of the implementation of a Token Economy with a positive behavioral support plan for a student with autism in the elementary school setting (Barretto, et al, 2003). The authors stated that from their research it was evident that Token Economies are effective because teachers are able to reward the absence of the targeted behavior. This form of differential reinforcement decreases inappropriate behaviors and increases appropriate behavior. The data collected in this study consisted of (a) the number of times the student made bomb noises, (b) the number of inappropriate physical contacts, and (c) the number of inappropriate verbal outbursts. The following behaviors were observed during the baseline data collection period, the student, (a) made bomb noises an average of 3.77 times, (b) initiated an average of 1.83 inappropriate physical contacts, and (c) spoke out inappropriately an average of 3.3 times. The incidences of all three behaviors decreased with the implementation of the Token Economy and positive behavior support plan. This is evident because (a) the number of times he made bomb noises declined to an average of 0.71, (b) the number of inappropriate physical contacts decreased to an average of 0.71, and (c) the number of inappropriate verbal outbursts declined to an average of 1.33. The decrease in incidences of these inappropriate behaviors following implementation of the Token Economy and the positive behavior support plan is evidence of a clear correlation.
Based on the studies discussed, Token Economies are effective for students who exhibit inappropriate behaviors. A decrease of inappropriate behaviors makes it possible for these students to increase on task behavior and increase their levels of Academic Achievement.

An additional study was performed to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of a Token Economy for a student in the third grade who was placed in a general education classroom. (Higgins, et. al, 2001) One of the reinforcers for this particular student was to be able to complete math worksheets for up to ten minutes at the beginning of the next school day if the appropriate number of Tokens was earned the previous day. Data was collected on the student’s inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors were defined as being (a) talk outs, (b) being out of seat, and (c) poor posture. The following was collected as baseline data, (a) the student had an average had of six talk outs, (b) was out of his seat an average of 1.9 times, and (c) exhibited poor posture an average of 11 times. During the implementation of the Token Economy, all three of the inappropriate behaviors declined in incidence. The following information was collected following implementation; (a) the student had an average of 0.8 talk outs, (b) was out of his seat an average of 0.2 times, and (c) exhibited poor posture an average of 5 times. It is evident that in this study the use of a Token Economy had a positive correlation to the decrease in the student’s inappropriate behaviors. No data was collected on the Academic Achievement of this student. This absence of data is a clear indicator that such a study is needed in the field of education.

Token Economies in Middle School
McLaughlin and Malaby (1972) examined the use of a Response Cost Token Economy at the middle school level with the targeted behavior bring work completion. The Token Economy employed selected privileges to be the reinforcers for the students. Students were able to earn points for appropriate behaviors and lost points for inappropriate behaviors. During the implementation of the Token Economy, there was a significant increase in work completion. When the Token Economy was removed the percentage of work completion decreased. This study is a great exemplar of how Token Economies can be implemented in classrooms without any expense to the teacher in order to increase on task behaviors.

Stover (1994) examined the effectiveness of a Response Cost Program (Token Economy) implemented in a self-contained emotional support classroom. Stover selected nine of the students in the class about whom to collect data because they exhibited inappropriate behaviors. The students were given ten class dollars at the beginning of each school day. If they exhibited any inappropriate behaviors they would be fined; the fine would then be subtracted from the ten dollars that they began with. During the baseline period, the students had an average of 28.4 inappropriate verbalizations. When the intervention was implemented the inappropriate verbalizations dropped to an average of 3.13. Stover concluded that this study demonstrated that Token Economies can increase on task behaviors because it decreases inappropriate verbalizations of students who need emotional support.

The results of both studies suggest that the implementation of a Response Cost form of a Token Economy at the middle school level can increase on task behaviors. Both studies were able to demonstrate an increase of on task behavior because of the use of a
Token Economy. In addition, neither of these studies collected data on the students’ levels of Academic Achievement and can be seen as demonstrating a need for further research to determine whether Token Economies are effective to increases students’ levels of Academic Achievement.

*Token Economies in College*

This section will examine two studies that have been completed on the effectiveness of implementing a Token Economy at the college level to increase class participation by undergraduate students. Boniecki and Moore (2003) assume the importance of active learning and define active learning as when students are engaged and process the content given to them. The authors note that this can be accomplished by asking relevant questions or by having students ask these types of questions. The problem arises when there is silence and no individual/student wants to answer or ask a relevant question. One strategy that the authors offer educators is to use a Token Economy.

Both studies (Boniecki & Moore, 2003; Nelson, 2010) examine the effectiveness of implementation of Token Economies to the increase classroom participation. The studies also use extra credit as a backup reinforcement to the Token Economy. Boniecki and Moore (2003) studied directed participation and non-directed participation. The authors defined directed participation as being the “number of students who raised their hands in response to a question from the instructor” and non-directed participation being the number of times any student spontaneously asked the instructor a question or engaged the instructor in discussion” (2003). From the results, it was evident the students were twice as likely to raise their hands to answer given questions and to make comments spontaneously during lectures compared to when the baseline data was collected. The
authors concluded the study by stating “We believe that the Token Economy procedure is a simple and effective means of breaking the silence, especially in large classes” (2003). Breaking the silence in the classroom leads to a greater level of classroom participation.

Nelson (2010) examined classroom participation at the college level differently. The author defined participation as being questions the students asked. The Token Economy implemented in this study allowed students to receive one Token per class session. A Token was earned for each question asked. Even with this unusual approach of allowing students to earn only one Token the author noted that participation increased in the three classes. Along with this increase in participation the there was an increase in quiz and exam scores.

The preliminary results of the implementation of a Token Economy at the college level indicate a positive correlation between the use of Token Economies to the increase in student participation in the classroom (Boniecki & Moore, 2003; Nelson, 2010). In addition to the increase of student participation Nelson (2010) observed an increase in student quiz and exam scores.

*Token Economies for Students with ADHD*

This section will review the literature found on the effects of implementing Token Economies for students with ADHD because ADHD is affecting more students than in previous years (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Morisoli and McLaughlin (2004) stated that students who are diagnosed with ADHD have difficulties with classroom environments. One strategy that teachers can employ to assist with this is a Token Economy. From their research, the authors found that the most effective form of a Token Economy for students with ADHD is the Response Cost Program. The authors
also expressed the opinion that teachers and parents need to be careful not to overly focus on fining inappropriate behavior, rather to reward appropriate behavior. The authors highlighted the importance of changing the reinforcers and rewards frequently (Johnson & Reid, 2011).

Eric Carbone (2001) described the processes of implementing a Response Cost Program (Token Economy) as a five-fold process. The first step is to discuss the undesired behavior with the students. The next two steps are to agree with the student on (a) a reinforcer and (b) fines. Lastly, it is vital to establish how the fines will be recorded and to ensure that the fines have a lesser value than the reinforcers. Reiber and Mclaughlin (2004) contented that Token Economies are effective for students with ADHD because this behavior management strategy offers tangible reasons to exhibit appropriate behavior and to avoid being fined. In several studies, examined by the authors, it was clear that on-task behavior increased, in addition to increasing the students’ levels of Academic Achievement.

The preliminary results of the implementation of a Token Economy for students with ADHD have indicated positive effects consisting of increasing on-task behavior and increasing students’ the levels of Academic Achievement.

Connections to the Literature

From the research gathered, there is a clear theme that Token Economies are an effective positive behavior modification when seeking to increase desired behaviors and decrease undesired behaviors. A small percentage of the research also examined the effects that Token Economies as it relates Academic Achievement. However, there is a definite gap in the research that must be filled before a justifiable claim can be made that
Token Economies increase Academic Achievement. Further research is needed to accurately conclude that these findings can be duplicated in additional studies.

**Conclusion**

This literature review analyzed various studies that focused on the effectiveness of Token Economies to the increasing students’ on task behavior and work completion. It was evident from this review that Token Economies have been proven to increase on task behaviors. It also is evident that the effects of Token Economies on Academic Achievement have not been examined to the degree needed to validly conclude that there is a correlation between Token Economies and any increase in the level of Academic Achievement.
Chapter 3

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology used to generate the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual for general educators, inexperienced special educators and other interested persons. The manual explains how to fade an effective Token Economy into natural consequences, another behavior management concept that eventually replaces the use of a Token Economy. The purpose of the manual is to provide a tool that can decrease undesired behaviors and increase desired behaviors in order to assist teachers in meeting mandated policies and expectations. The description of the methodology consists of several sections addressing: (a) the design of the project, (b) the audience for whom the manual was created, (c) the setting in which it can be implemented, (d) instruments analyzed, (e) procedures used to create the manual, and (f) an evaluation of the project.

Design

The “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual is a guidebook to teach educators how to implement an effective token economy in the school setting. The manual simplifies the creation, implementation, and fading of a Token Economy in six steps. The six steps of “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” consist of; (a) indentifying the targeted behavior, (b) collecting baseline data, (c) identifying the reinforcers, (d) identifying the type of Token Economy, (e) the implementation process, and (f) fading the Token Economy to natural consequences. The author identified these six steps from the various studies and literature reviewed in the previous chapter. The literature reviewed provided a strong foundational understanding of the process of
implementing an effective Token Economy in the school setting. The author also provided in the manual sample documents in order to complement the six steps of “How to Create an Effective Token Economy.” These sample documents consist of: (a) data collection forms, (b) behavior worksheets, (c) reinforcer interest surveys, and (d) sample Token Economies.

Audience

The “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual was created for general educators, inexperienced special educators and other interested persons to assist educators in meeting current mandated policies, such as NCLB. NCLB and other policies place educators under pressure to ensure students make academic progress. According to a recent plan released by the United States Department of Education (2011) 62% percent of teachers state that they feel underprepared for “classroom realities”. One “classroom reality” that educators may encounter is undesired behavior. One of the most effective positive behavior management strategies educators have used extensively is Token Economies. By creating a manual that explains the complete process of implementing a Token Economy, the author has provided educators with have the content, knowledge, and tools needed to quickly implement this type of behavior modification.

Setting

This project was created to assist educators in all school settings for example, preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, and college. Because the manual can be implemented for students in various age groups the manual provides age appropriate Token Economies for all settings. The literature reviewed in the previous
chapter reaches a clear conclusion that Token Economies can be effective in all of the above settings and for students with or without special needs.

Instruments

Before creating the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual believed that it was important to examine the instruments used from various studies analyzed in the previous chapter. From this information the author was able to determine effective components identified in each study and incorporate the information to create new instruments for educators. The instruments provided in the manual were created by the author to assist in minimizing the time educators spend establishing and maintaining an effective Token Economy.

Project Procedure & Evaluation

The creation of this project consisted of three steps. The first step was to analyze current literature in the field of education on the effective use of Token Economies in regard to (a) increasing desired behaviors, (b) decreasing undesired behaviors, and (c) increasing academic achievement. With these three specific criteria the author examined many studies and articles. The author also examined the procedure utilized each study, the manner in which data was collected, and the type of Token Economy implemented. This collection of information formed a strong foundation of knowledge to begin the process of creating the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” for educators.

The process of establishing and maintaining an effective Token Economy was separated into six simple steps for educators. The manual “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” includes six sections corresponding to these steps; (a) identifying the targeted behavior, (b) collecting baseline data, (c) identifying the reinforcers, (d)
identifying the type of Token Economy, (e) the implementation process, and (f) fading the Token Economy to natural consequences. In addition to the six steps, the author created many instruments to complement the manual of how to effectively implement a token economy in the school setting.

During the process of implementing a token economy it is vital to collect data to ensure that the implementation is effective. To assist with the task of data collection the author has included the following forms; (a) Teacher Behavior Observation Form, (b) Baseline Data Collection, (c) Token Economy Data Collection, and (d) Fading to Natural Consequences. These forms provide educators with the necessary data collection forms to establish and maintain an effective Token Economy. The author also provided behavior worksheets to assist in identifying the target behavior and to determine the replacement behavior desired by the teacher. Prior to the creation of these instruments the author created a reinforcement interest survey for participants to help indentify highly desired reinforcers and also sample Token Economies to implement.

Subsequent to the development of the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” the author created a two to four hour professional development in-service opportunity for educators. The professional development in-service examines each of the six steps in detail and provides the participants time to practice each step with colleagues. Participants are intended to use the instruments provided during the guided and independent practice components of the in-services. At the conclusion of the in-service, all of the participants will be provided a copy of the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual along with the instruments aligned with the manual.

Summary
The methodology of the project began by analyzing current literature in the field of education that focused on increasing desired behaviors, decreasing undesired behaviors, and increasing academic achievement. With the strong foundation of the knowledge gathered from the literature analyzed the creation of the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” manual began. The manual was created around the six simple steps necessary to establish an effective Token Economy; (a) identifying the targeted behavior, (b) collecting baseline data, (c) identifying the reinforcers, (d) identifying the type of Token Economy, (e) the implementation process, and (e) fading the Token Economy to natural consequences. To complement the six steps of establishing and maintaining an effective Token Economy the author created vital documents to assist in this process. Subsequent to the development of the manual the author created a professional development in-service to help teach educators how to implement an effective Token Economy. Because one of the most effective positive behavior management strategies are Token Economies, it is vital to teach educators how to effectively implement this positive behavior strategy to assist them in meeting “classroom realities” and mandated policies, such as NCLB.
Creating an Effective Token Economy

Chapter 4: Project

This chapter consists of three components:

(a) “How to Create an Effective Token Economy Manual”

(b) “How to Create an Effective Token Economy Training Manual”

(c) “How to Create an Effective Token Economy PowerPoint”
How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Created by Rachelle Brown
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Token Economy

Table of Contents

Brief Overview of Token Economies
Definitions

Step 1: Identify Target Behavior
  Teacher Observations
  Target Behavior

Step 2: Collect Baseline Data
  Baseline Data

Step 3: Identify Token Economy
  Examples of Token Economies
  Token Economy Templates
  Reinforcer Cost

Step 4: Identify Reinforcers
  Student Interest Survey

Step 5: Implementation
  Token Economy Data

Step 6: Fading to Natural Consequences

Bonus: Response Cost
  Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost
  Token Economy Data for Response Cost

Resources
The use of Token Economies emerged in the mid to late 1960’s (Kazdin, 1982). Kazdin recorded the new intervention appeared to be promising in a variety of settings (1982). Token Economies were used in various setting including treatment, rehabilitation, and educational settings (Kazdin, 1982).

Token Economies implemented in the school setting can be used for individual students or for a group or students. “The most popular form of token economies for groups of students are tickets, or “classroom cash”… (Otten & Tuttle, 2010). “Token Economies have been found to be an effective method of changing behavior at home and at school. Whole classrooms can be involved in token economies where students work together to gain tokens for appropriate behavior…” (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003). The purpose of Token Economies (Kazdin, 1982) are to decrease inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors. This behavior modification system can be tailored to reinforce desired behaviors (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003).

Various Token Economies are tailored to reinforce desired behaviors consist of punishment, which is referred to as Response Cost. Response Cost can be used when the engagement of inappropriate behaviors are apparent. When inappropriate behaviors are exhibited, a specific number of tokens are then removed from the possession of the token recipient (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick 2011).
# Token Economy

## How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

### Token Economy

A Token Economy is a specific behavior modification technique focused on positive reinforcement tokens that are awarded for desired behavior. When a student exhibits a desired behavior and/or task he/she receives a Token. Tokens can be exchanged for Backup Reinforcements when the student has accumulated a predetermined number of Tokens. Token Economies can be implemented for a single student at any educational level or for an entire group or class.

### Response Cost Token Economy

Response Cost Token Economies are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behaviors are exhibited. When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return a previously earned Token. In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.

### Anecdotal Notes

Anecdotal Notes are written observations of a particular student during a specific time. Only facts/observations are written down, not opinions.

### Token

A Token is a reinforcer that is traded for a larger reinforcer when the predetermined number of Tokens is reached. Forms of Tokens can vary. Examples of Tokens are stickers, poker chips, pretend money, gems, etc.

### Backup Reinforcers

Backup Reinforcers are predetermined desired incentives a participant in the Token Economy has chosen. These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy or can be time to complete a desired task. An example of this could be, twenty minutes to play a desired computer game.

### Target Behavior

Target Behavior is the undesired behavior that will to be replaced by the Replacement Behavior.

### Replacement Behavior

Replacement Behavior is the desired behavior that will replace the undesired behavior, the Targeted Behavior.
**Token Economy**

**How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting**

**Step 1: Identify Target Behavior**

The first step of implementing a Token Economy is to determine the behavior that needs to be decreased. Teacher or staff observations can determine this behavior; refer to the Teacher Behavior Observation Form provided to take anecdotal notes to help identify the target behavior. It is important for the anecdotal notes to determine one specific target behavior from the Teacher Behavior Observation Form. Once the behavior is determined, it is necessary to identify the replacement behavior that should be exhibited in place of the undesired behavior. Target Behavior Sheet can be used to help with this identification process. With this information you are ready to proceed to Step: 2 Collect Baseline Data.

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Information:** John currently attends a public elementary school in his neighborhood. He is placed in a general education classroom. John has an Individualized Education Program that provides him with specialized academic support for 90 minutes a day. He qualifies for an IEP under the eligibility criteria of Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment because of his diagnosis of ADHD.

**Behavior:** John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival. When he does this he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented however they have not been effective.
Teacher Observations

Student’s Name: John Smith DOB: 01/01/2000

Date: 02/03/2013
Time Period: 7:35 - 1:30

Observations:

8:00- John quietly left the room for small group instruction.
8:42- John opens the door saying “I’m back… What are you guys doing?” Gets his Language Arts book, making noises with his book and desk. *
12:05- John is reminded to leave for small group math from teacher.
12:37- John enters the classroom, looks around the classroom. (All students working independently.) Approximately 20 seconds later John asks, “So, what am I suppose to do?” *

* Inappropriate Behaviors

Date: 02/04/2013
Time Period: 7:35 - 1:30

Observations:

8:00- John is reminded to leave for small group instruction. John left the room for small group instruction.
8:43- John opens the door and comes into the room quietly. He gets his Language Arts book and makes noises by banging the book inside his desk. John begins to laugh and look at other students. *
12:05- John is reminded to leave for small group math from teacher.
12:37- John enters the classroom laughing. Following the prompt from his teacher, he walks back outside and then through the door again quietly *

* Inappropriate Behaviors
Teacher Observations

Student's Name: ________________________________ DOB: ___________

Date: _____/_____/_____

Time Period: _____:_____ - _____:_____ 

Observations:

* Inappropriate Behaviors

Date: _____/_____/_____

Time Period: _____:_____ - _____:_____ 

Observations:

* Inappropriate Behaviors
Target Behavior

Date: **02/04/2013**

Student’s Name: __________ John Smith __________

Number of Written Teacher Observations: 2 __________

- First, list undesired/inappropriate behaviors.

  (* Items from the Teacher Observation Form)

- Second, tally the amount of times the particular behavior was observed

1.) *John announces his presence to the classroom inappropriately* # 2

2.) *John gets his material and supplies out loudly.* # 3

3.) ____________________________ # __________

4.) ____________________________ # __________

5.) ____________________________ # __________

6.) ____________________________ # __________

7.) ____________________________ # __________

Select one behavior to be the targeted behavior (to decrease).

** *John gets his materials and supplies out loudly.* **

________________________________________________________________________________**
Target Behavior

Date: _____________

Student’s Name: _________________________________________

Number of Written Teacher Observations: _________________

- First, list undesired/inappropriate behaviors.
  
  (* Items from the Teacher Observation Form)
  
- Second, tally the amount of times the particular behavior was observed

1.) ___________________________________________ # ______

2.) ___________________________________________ # ______

3.) ___________________________________________ # ______

4.) ___________________________________________ # ______

5.) ___________________________________________ # ______

6.) ___________________________________________ # ______

7.) ___________________________________________ # ______

Select one behavior to be the targeted behavior (to decrease).

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

**Step 2:**
Collect Baseline Data

Now that the targeted behavior has been selected it is important to collect baseline data. Baseline data will be used to compare during the implementation of a Token Economy. This information will be used to determine if the Token Economy system implemented is effective. During this collection period it is important to establish the length of time data will be collected, this time period could consist of a week or a few weeks. During the predetermined time period it is important to collect baseline data on the number of times the targeted behavior is exhibited per day or per period.

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Behavior:** John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival. When he does this he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented however they have not been effective.

**Baseline Data:** Data will be collected for a period of a week to examine how many times John exhibits the above behavior. The teacher will collect data only on how he enters the classroom and other rooms around the school campus. The teacher will also note at what times these behaviors happened. For example, did the behavior happen after lunch or when returning from specialized academic instruction.
### Baseline Data

**Student's Name:** John Smith  
**DOB:** 01/01/2000

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Was the Behavior Observed?</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Student came in quietly.</td>
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<td>12:36</td>
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<td>2/10</td>
<td>8:42</td>
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<td>12:36</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Baseline Data

Student’s Name: ________________________________  DOB: ____________

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<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Was the Behavior Observed?</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
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**CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY**

*37*
Identifying the type of Token Economy is the next step in establishing an effective Token Economy. This step consists of two components, the first is to pick which type of Token Economy will be used (See Examples of Token Economies). The second is to determine the amount of Tokens the student will need to possess to exchange for the Backup Reinforcer he/she choose. (See Reinforcer Cost)

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Behavior:** John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival approximately 10 times per week. When he does this he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented however they have not been effective.

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

**Reinforcer Cost:** John’s Token Economy will consist of the following procedure. Every time he walks into the classroom quietly and takes his seat he will be given a Token. When John has collected 5 Tokens he can exchange the Tokens for a Backup Reinforcer he has chosen, see the next step for more information.

*See Example Reinforcers Cost*
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Examples of Token Economies

Sticker Charts

Classroom Money

Gems

Token Board

Poker Chips
Reinforcer Cost

Student’s Name: John Smith Date: 02/15/2013

When John walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out John will get 1 Token(s). When John collects 5 Tokens John can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) 20 minutes of Computer Time
2.) 1 prize from the prize box
3.) ___________________________________________
Reinforcer Cost

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: ___________

When __________________, _______________________
_______________________ will get _______ Token(s).

When _____________________ collects _______ Tokens
_______________________ can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) _____________________________________________
2.) _____________________________________________
3.) _____________________________________________
**Token Economy**

**How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting**

**Step 4:**

**Identify Backup Reinforcers**

Before implementing any type of Token Economy it is important to select the Backup Reinforcers the participant desires. These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy or can be intangible, such as time to complete a desired task. An example of this could be, twenty minutes to play a desired computer game. To determine which Backup Reinforcer(s) a student would like to work towards use the Student Interest Survey.

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

**Identify Backup Reinforcers:** John and his teacher met for five minutes to discuss what types of backup reinforcers John would like to earn. The top three preferred items and/or preferred privileges John chose are below:

1.) Chew gum in class for one day.
2.) 20 minutes of computer time.
3.) Prize from the prize box.

*See Example Student Interest Survey*
Student Interest Survey

Student’s Name: John Smith Date: 02/15/2013

What are things that you would like to work for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Prize from the prize box</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of computer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mechanical Pencil</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Finger Skateboard</td>
<td>□ Front of the line pass for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Bouncy Ball</td>
<td>□ Chew gum in class for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Note Pad</td>
<td>□ Use the teachers chair for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pencil Bag/Box</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pick the top three things you want to work for:

1.) 20 minutes of Computer Time

2.) 1 prize from the prize box

3.) ________________________________
Student Interest Survey

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: ___________

What are things that you would like to work for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Prize from the prize box</td>
<td>☐ 20 minutes of computer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Mechanical Pencil</td>
<td>☐ 20 minutes of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Finger Skateboard</td>
<td>☐ Front of the line pass for the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Bouncy Ball</td>
<td>☐ Chew gum in class for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Note Pad</td>
<td>☐ Use the teachers chair for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Pencil Bag/Box</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ ______________________</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ ______________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pick the top three things you want to work for:

1.) ____________________________________________________________
2.) ____________________________________________________________
3.) ____________________________________________________________
**Step 5: Implementation**

The implementation of a Token Economy is a vital step of establishing an effective Token Economy.

1.) The first step of implementing a Token Economy is to explain the expectations to the student (use Reinforcer Cost sheet).

2.) Next, select a day to start the Token Economy and begin rewarding the student with Tokens when the target behavior is exhibited.

3.) The last component is to collect data to determine if the Token Economy is effective. Data can be collected consisting of the frequency of occurrences of the Replacement Behavior hourly, daily, weekly, etc.

**If the Token Economy does not effectively increase the Replacement Behavior adjust the Reinforcer Cost sheet. An increase in the amount of Tokens given and/or decrease in the amount of Tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer may yield better results. **

---

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through.

Name: John  Age: 9

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

Data Collection: Data was collected every time the Replacement Behavior or the Targeted Behavior were observed. Data was also collected regarding the number of Tokens and Backup Reinforcers given.

*See Example Token Economy Data*
# Token Economy Data

**Student’s Name:** John Smith  
**Date:** 2/15 - 2/26

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the room quietly and get supplies out.

**Target Behavior:** Enters the room announcing his presence and gets supplies out loudly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2/23</td>
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<td>X X</td>
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Token Economy Data

Student’s Name: __________________________ Date: ________ - ________

Replacement Behavior: ___________________________________________

Target Behavior: _________________________________________________

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<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
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**Step 6:**

**Fading to Natural Consequences**

The last step of creating and establishing an effective Token Economy is to eventually fade the Token Economy into Natural Consequence. This can be accomplished by slowly adjusting the Reinforcer Cost Sheet with the student.

**How to fade into natural consequences:**

1.) Decrease the number of Tokens given.
   a. For example, one token can be given for every 2 replacement behaviors observed instead of for every 1 behavior.

And/Or

2.) Increase the number of Tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer.
   a. For example, 7 tokens may be needed instead of 5 Tokens.

**Use the Reinforcer Cost sheet and Token Economy Data sheet to track fading to natural consequences until Tokens are no longer needed for student to exhibit Replacement behavior independently.**

---

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

1st: 1 Token for each observed Replacement Behavior and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer

2nd: 1 Token for every 2 observed Replacement Behavior and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer

1st: 1 Token for every week the Replacement Behavior was observed and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer
**Token Economy**

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

**Bonus:**

**Response Cost**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

**Name:** John  
**Age:** 9

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

**Response Cost:** When John walks into the classroom and is not exhibiting the replacement behavior he will give a previously earned Token to the teacher.

**Response Cost Token Economies** are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behaviors are exhibited.

When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return a previously earned Token.

In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.

To implement a Response Cost type of Token Economy, determine the number of Tokens the student will need to possess to exchange for the Backup Reinforcer he/she chose and the number of Tokens the student will need to return if the targeted behavior is exhibited. (Replace Reinforcer Cost with Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost & Token Economy Data with Token Economy Data for Response Cost)
Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost

Student’s Name: John Smith Date: 02/15/2013

When John, walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out John will get 1 Token(s). When John collects 1 Token(s) John can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) 20 minutes of Computer Time

2.) 1 prize from the prize box

3.) ____________________________________________

If John, does not walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out John will give 1 Token(s) back to the teacher.
Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: ___________

When ____________________, ___________________________
__________________________ will get _______ Token(s). When
__________________________ collects _______ Tokens
__________________________ can exchange the Tokens for one of the
following:

1.) ________________________________________________

2.) ________________________________________________

3.) ________________________________________________

If ____________________, ____________________________
__________________________ will give _______ Token(s) back to the
teacher.
**Token Economy Data for Response Cost**

Student’s Name: ____________________________ Date: ______ - ______

Replacement Behavior: _____________________________________________

Target Behavior: _________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Taken</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
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</table>
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy Training Manual

Created by Rachelle Brown
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Page #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Preparation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3: Resources</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Part 1: Preparation

Rationale

In the literature reviewed, it is evident that the use of Token Economies emerged in the mid to late 1960’s (Kazdin, 1982). This form of behavioral intervention was implemented and appeared to be effective in a variety of settings including; (a) treatment, (b) rehabilitation, and (c) educational settings. (Kazdin, 1982) The most effective use of a Token Economy is to decrease undesired behaviors. However, it can be adjusted to increase desired behaviors (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003).

Various Token Economy systems that decrease undesired and increase desired behaviors include a component of punishment referred to as a Response Cost. Unlike Token Economies, Response Cost systems can be used when students exhibit appropriate and/or inappropriate behaviors. When a student displays an inappropriate behavior a specific number of Tokens are then removed from the possession of the student. (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick 2011) LD Online (1998) reports Response Cost programs can decrease Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder symptoms. The Center of Disease Control (2012) explains that, “People with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, or be overly active.” One of the symptoms that can be decreased is impulsivity, the inclination to act without thinking about the results. Response Cost systems are effective behavior management strategies for students.

The literature reviewed examines the implementation of Token Economies in the following settings; (a) preschool, (b) elementary, (c) middle school, and (d) college. At the preschool setting, the literature review will examine two studies that focus on the decrease of undesired behaviors using Token Economies. The literature review also explores four studies performed at the elementary school level where the focus was centered on the decrease of undesired behaviors and/or the increase of work completion. Studies performed at the middle school setting analyzed vital information about the decrease of undesired behaviors and/or increase of Academic Achievement after effective Token Economies were implemented. Two studies conducted at the university level which focused on the increase of desired behaviors and the increase in Academic Achievement once Token Economies were implemented were also examined.

The literature reviewed also contains pertinent information about the effective implementation of Token Economies with students who have a diagnosis of ADHD. The research reviewed provided positive results. The most effective type of Token Economy implemented for student students with ADHD appears to be the Response Cost Token Economy.
How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Part 1: Preparation

Objective

Educators will be able to implement an effective Token Economy for an individual student or a group of students to decrease undesired behaviors.

Needed Materials
Projector & Screen
Document Camera
Laptop/Computer
Professional Development Workshop Power Point
Chart Paper
Tape
Bowl of Gems per table

Per Educator
How to Create an Effective Token Economy Manual
Token Economy Forms
Copy of the Professional Development Workshop Power Point
Notepad
Pens
Survey
How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Anticipatory Set: 20 Minutes

Use tokens to reward educators positive behaviors and participation.

- Welcome teachers to the professional development workshop.

- Ask the teachers to write down positive behavior strategies they use in their classrooms for 3 minutes.

- Have the teachers introduce themselves and share 1 or 2 of their favorite positive behavior strategies. (While the teachers are sharing have a volunteer make a list of the positive behavior strategies shared.)

- Explain the purpose of today's training is to gain the knowledge of an additional positive behavior strategy, which is the use of Token Economies. With this knowledge the educators will be able to implement Token Economies for individual students or a group of students in all educational settings.

- Ask teachers to complete the survey prior to the professional development workshop. (See next page.)
### Pre Professional Development Workshop Survey

**My current knowledge of Token Economies:**

(Circle one box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Nonexistent</th>
<th>2 Low</th>
<th>3 Fair</th>
<th>4 Adequate</th>
<th>5 High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments:
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Step 1: 20 Minutes

- Review and explain in details slides 2-10 of the power point.
- Assign each table of educators a term from the definitions provided in the manual.
- Have each table creating a poster about their assigned term. Give the educators approximately 5-8 minutes.
- After the given time ask the tables to share their posters. Give a gem to each group member after they share.
- Have a volunteer tape the posters around the room. Give that person a gem.

Explain that there are 6 steps to implementing an effective Token Economy (use slide 13).
The use of Token Economies emerged in the mid to late 1960’s (Kazdin, 1982). Kazdin recorded the new intervention appeared to be promising in a variety of settings (1982). Token Economies were used in various setting including treatment, rehabilitation, and educational settings (Kazdin, 1982).

Token Economies implemented in the school setting can be used for individual students or for a group or students. “The most popular form of token economies for groups of students are tickets, or “classroom cash”… (Otten & Tuttle, 2010). “Token Economies have been found to be an effective method of changing behavior at home and at school. Whole classrooms can be involved in token economies where students work together to gain tokens for appropriate behavior…” (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003). The purpose of Token Economies (Kazdin, 1982) are to decrease inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors. This behavior modification system can be tailored to reinforce desired behaviors (Ollendick & Schroeder, 2003).

Various Token Economies are tailored to reinforce desired behaviors consist of punishment, which is referred to as Response Cost. Response Cost can be used when the engagement of inappropriate behaviors are apparent. When inappropriate behaviors are exhibited, a specific number of tokens are then removed from the possession of the token recipient (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick 2011).
Token Economy

A Token Economy is a specific behavior modification technique focused on positive reinforcement tokens that are awarded for desired behavior. When a student exhibits a desired behavior and/or task he/she receives a Token. Tokens can be exchanged for Backup Reinforcements when the student has accumulated a predetermined number of Tokens. Token Economies can be implemented for a single student at any educational level or for an entire group or class.

Token

A Token is a reinforcer that is traded for a larger reinforcer when the predetermined number of Tokens is reached. Forms of Tokens can vary. Examples of Tokens are stickers, poker chips, pretend money, gems, etc.

Backup Reinforcers

Backup Reinforcers are predetermined desired incentives a participant in the Token Economy has chosen. These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy or can be time to complete a desired task. An example of this could be, twenty minutes to play a desired computer game.

Response Cost Token Economy

Response Cost Token Economies are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behaviors are exhibited. When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return a previously earned Token. In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.

Anecdotal Notes

Anecdotal Notes are written observations of a particular student during a specific time. Only facts/observations are written down, not opinions.

Target Behavior

Target Behavior is the undesired behavior that will to be replaced by the Replacement Behavior.

Replacement Behavior

Replacement Behavior is the desired behavior that will replace the undesired behavior, the Targeted Behavior.
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Anticipatory Set: 20 Minutes

- Review and explain in detail slides 11-14 of the power point.

- Have educators turn to Step 1 in the manual.

- Read about “John” and then show slide 16 the example Teacher Observations.

- Have each educator take out his or her Token Economy Forms packet and turn to Teacher Observation Form.

- Ask the teachers to write their observations of you for the next 2 minutes. Remind the educators they are only writing their observations not opinions.

- Act out around the room; repeat one specific behavior over and over (example shout out for help).

- Ask the teachers to share what they wrote. Record on one sheet using document camera. Fill out Target Behavior as a group.

Answer any questions.
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Step 1: Identify Target Behavior

The first step of implementing a Token Economy is to determine the behavior that needs to be decreased. Teacher or staff observations can determine this behavior; refer to the Teacher Behavior Observation Form provided to take anecdotal notes to help identify the target behavior. It is important for the anecdotal notes to determine one specific target behavior from the Teacher Behavior Observation Form. Once the behavior is determined, it is necessary to identify the replacement behavior that should be exhibited in place of the undesired behavior. Target Behavior Sheet can be used to help with this identification process. With this information you are ready to proceed to Step: 2 Collect Baseline Data.

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John  Age: 9

Information: John currently attends a public elementary school in his neighborhood. He is placed in a general education classroom. John has an Individualized Education Program that provides him with specialized academic support for 90 minutes a day. He qualifies for an IEP under the eligibility criteria of Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment because of his diagnosis of ADHD.

Behavior: John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival. When he does this he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented however they have not been effective.
Teacher Observations

Student’s Name: John Smith DOB: 01/01/2000

Date: 02/03/2013 Time Period: 7:35 - 1:30

Observations:

8:00- John quietly left the room for small group instruction.  
8:42- John opens the door saying “I’m back… What are you guys doing?” Gets his Language Arts book, making noises with his book and desk.*

12:05- John is reminded to leave for small group math from teacher.   
12:37- John enters the classroom, looks around the classroom. (All students working independently.) Approximately 20 seconds later John asks, “So, what am I suppose to do?” *

* Inappropriate Behaviors

Date: 02/04/2013 Time Period: 7:35 - 1:30

Observations:

8:00- John is reminded to leave for small group instruction. John left the room for small group instruction.  
8:43- John opens the door and comes into the room quietly. He gets his Language Arts book and makes noises by banging the book inside his desk. John begins to laugh and look at other students.*

12:05- John is reminded to leave for small group math from teacher.  
12:37- John enters the classroom laughing. Following the prompt from his teacher, he walks back outside and then through the door again quietly*

* Inappropriate Behaviors
# Teacher Observations

Student’s Name: ________________________________ DOB: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: <em><strong><strong>/</strong></strong></em>/_____</th>
<th>Time Period: <em><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></em> - <em><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></em></th>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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* Inappropriate Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: <em><strong><strong>/</strong></strong></em>/_____</th>
<th>Time Period: <em><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></em> - <em><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Inappropriate Behaviors
Target Behavior

Date: 02/04/2013

Student’s Name: John Smith

Number of Written Teacher Observations: 2

- First, list undesired/inappropriate behaviors. (* Items from the Teacher Observation Form)

- Second, tally the amount of times the particular behavior was observed

1.) John announces his presence to the classroom inappropriately # 2
2.) John gets his material and supplies out loudly. # 3

3.) __________________________________________ # __

4.) __________________________________________ # __

5.) __________________________________________ # __

6.) __________________________________________ # __

7.) __________________________________________ # __

Select one behavior to be the targeted behavior (to decrease).

**John gets his materials and supplies out loudly.**
Target Behavior

Date: ____________

Student’s Name: _________________________________________

Number of Written Teacher Observations: _________________

- First, list undesired/inappropriate behaviors.

  (* Items from the Teacher Observation Form)

- Second, tally the amount of times the particular behavior was observed

1.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

2.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

3.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

4.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

5.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

6.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

7.) ______________________________________________________ #_____

Select one behavior to be the targeted behavior (to decrease).

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Step 2: 20 Minutes

- Review and explain in details slides 18-20 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to Step 2 in the manual.
- Read about “John” and then show slide 21 the example Baseline Data.
- Have each educator take out his or her Token Economy Forms packet and turn to Baseline Data.
- Ask the teachers to take data on you for the next few minutes. Inform the educators of the date and time. (Use approximately 5 different days.)
- Act out around the room; repeat one specific behavior over and over (example shout out for help).
- Ask the teachers to share their data at their tables. After ask for volunteers to share what they recorded and record this information on one sheet using document camera.

Answer any questions.
Step 2: Collect Baseline Data

Now that the targeted behavior has been selected it is important to collect baseline data. Baseline data will be used to compare during the implementation of a Token Economy. This information will be used to determine if the Token Economy system implemented is effective. During this collection period it is important to establish the length of time data will be collected, this time period could consist of a week or a few weeks. During the predetermined time period it is important to collect baseline data on the number of times the targeted behavior is exhibited per day or per period.

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John  Age: 9

Behavior: John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival. When he does this he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented however they have not been effective.

Baseline Data: Data will be collected for a period of a week to examine how many times John exhibits the above behavior. The teacher will collect data only on how he enters the classroom and other rooms around the school campus. The teacher will also note at what times these behaviors happened. For example, did the behavior happen after lunch or when returning from specialized academic instruction.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Was the Behavior Observed?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Student came in quietly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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## Baseline Data

Student’s Name: ________________________________  DOB: ____________

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<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Was the Behavior Observed?</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
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How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Step 3: 20 Minutes

- Review and explain in details slides 24-30 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to Step 3 in the manual.
- Read about “John”.
- Give the teachers 6-8 minutes to create a list of possible Token Economies they can use in their classroom. Encourage the groups to draw visual aids and/or create examples.
- Have the groups share their lists and record on chart paper.
- Show Reinforcer Cost form to with the teachers. Model how to fill the form out using “John” as an example.
- In table groups have the teachers fill one out for you (to follow the data they took before).

Answer any questions.
Step 3: Identify Token Economy

Identifying the type of Token Economy is the next step in establishing an effective Token Economy. This step consists of two components, the first is to pick which type of Token Economy will be used (See Examples of Token Economies). The second is to determine the amount of Tokens the student will need to possess to exchange for the Backup Reinforcer he/she chooses. (See Reinforcer Cost)

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John          Age: 9

Behavior: John enters his classroom throughout the day by announcing his arrival approximately 10 times per week. When he does this, he disrupts his classmates and teachers. Other positive behavior supports have been implemented, however they have not been effective.

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

Reinforcer Cost: John’s Token Economy will consist of the following procedure. Every time he walks into the classroom quietly and takes his seat, he will be given a Token. When John has collected 5 Tokens, he can exchange the Tokens for a Backup Reinforcer he has chosen, see the next step for more information.

*See Example Reinforcers Cost*
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Examples of Token Economies

**Sticker Charts**

**Classroom Money**

**Gems**

**Token Board**

**Poker Chips**
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

I am working for

Name:
For:

Name:
For:
Reinforcer Cost

Student’s Name: John Smith Date: 02/15/2013

When John walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out
John will get 1 Token(s). When John collects 5 Tokens
John can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) 20 minutes of Computer Time
2.) 1 prize from the prize box
3.) ____________________________
Reinforcer Cost

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: ___________

When __________________, _______________________
_______________________ will get _______ Token(s).

When _______________________ collects _______ Tokens
_______________________ can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) ____________________________________________

2.) ____________________________________________

3.) ____________________________________________
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Total Time: Approximately 4 hours

Step 4: 20 minutes

- Review and explain in detail slides 37-19 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to Step 4 in the manual.
- Read about “John” and explain the Student Interest Survey form.
- Give the teachers 6-8 minutes to create a list of possible Backup Reinforces they can use in their classrooms.
- Have the groups share their list and record on chart paper.
- Model with a volunteer how to explain this survey to a student.
- Have partners practice explaining the survey.

Answer any questions.
Step 4: Identify Backup Reinforcers

Before implementing any type of Token Economy it is important to select the Backup Reinforcers the participant desires. These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy or can be intangible, such as time to complete a desired task. An example of this could be, twenty minutes to play a desired computer game. To determine which Backup Reinforcer(s) a student would like to work towards use the Student Interest Survey.

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John  
Age: 9

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

Identify Backup Reinforcers: John and his teacher met for five minutes to discuss what types of backup reinforcers John would like to earn. The top three preferred items and/or preferred privileges John chose are below:

1.) Chew gum in class for one day.
2.) 20 minutes of computer time.
3.) Prize from the prize box.

*See Example Student Interest Survey*
# Student Interest Survey

**Student’s Name:** John Smith  
**Date:** 02/15/2013

**What are things that you would like to work for?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Prize from the prize box</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of computer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mechanical Pencil</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Finger Skateboard</td>
<td>□ Front of the line pass for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Bouncy Ball</td>
<td>□ Chew gum in class for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Note Pad</td>
<td>□ Use the teachers chair for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pencil Bag/Box</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ __________________________</td>
<td>□ __________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pick the top three things you want to work for:**

1.) 20 minutes of Computer Time

2.) 1 prize from the prize box

3.) ________________________________
# Student Interest Survey

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: ___________

What are things that you would like to work for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Prize from the prize box</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of computer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mechanical Pencil</td>
<td>□ 20 minutes of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Finger Skateboard</td>
<td>□ Front of the line pass for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Bouncy Ball</td>
<td>□ Chew gum in class for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Note Pad</td>
<td>□ Use the teachers chair for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pencil Bag/Box</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ ________________________________</td>
<td>□ ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pick the top three things you want to work for:**

1.) __________________________________________________________

2.) __________________________________________________________

3.) __________________________________________________________
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

- Review and explain in details slides 44-49 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to Step 5 in the manual.
- Read about “John” and explain Example Token Economy Data form.
- As a group brainstorm how to explain the expectations to a student. Have teachers practice this process with a partner. After ask the teachers to reflect/share about this step.
- Brainstorm as a group of the dialogue you can use when giving Tokens. Record thoughts on chart paper.
- Ask the teachers to take data on you for the next few minutes. Inform the educators of the date and time. (Use approximately 5 different days.)
- Act out around the room and ask for a volunteer to play the teacher role. Repeat replacement behavior, exhibit the targeted behavior at least once.
- Ask the teachers to share their data at their tables. Then ask for volunteers to share what they recorded and record this information on one sheet using document camera.

Answer any questions.
Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Step 5: Implementation

The implementation of a Token Economy is a vital step of establishing an effective Token Economy.

1.) The first step of implementing a Token Economy is to explain the expectations to the student (use Reinforcer Cost sheet).

2.) Next, select a day to start the Token Economy and begin rewarding the student with Tokens when the target behavior is exhibited.

3.) The last component is to collect data to determine if the Token Economy is effective. Data can be collected consists of the frequency of occurrences of the Replacement Behavior hourly, daily, weekly, etc.

** If the Token Economy does not effectively increase the Replacement Behavior adjust the Reinforcer Cost sheet. An increase in the amount of Tokens given and/or decrease in the amount of Tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer may yield better results. **

---

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through.

Name: John  
Age: 9

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

Data Collection: Data was collected every time the Replacement Behavior or the Targeted Behavior were observed. Data was also collected regarding the number of Tokens and Backup Reinforcers given.

*See Example Token Economy Data*
# Token Economy Data

**Student’s Name:** John Smith  
**Date:** 2/15 - 2/26

**Replacement Behavior:** Walk into the room quietly and get supplies out.

**Target Behavior:** Enters the room announcing his presence and gets supplies out loudly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/18</td>
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<td>2/26</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Token Economy Data

Student’s Name: __________________________ Date: ______ - ______

Replacement Behavior: ___________________________________________

Target Behavior: _________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

- Review and explain in details slides 53-57 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to Step 6 in the manual.
- Read about “John” and explain the fading process.
- Give the teachers 6-8 minutes to discuss in groups how they would fade the presenters Token Economy to Natural Consequences.
- Have the groups share their discussion.

Answer any questions.
Step 6:  
**Fading to Natural Consequences**

+ The last step of creating and establishing an effective Token Economy is to eventually fade the Token Economy into Natural Consequence. This can be accomplished by slowly adjusting the Reinforcer Cost Sheet with the student.

How to fade into natural consequences:

1. Decrease the number of Tokens given.
   a. For example, one token can be given for every 2 replacement behaviors observed instead of for every 1 behavior.

   And/or

2. Increase the number of Tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer.
   a. For example, 7 tokens may be needed instead of 5 Tokens.

** Use the Reinforcer Cost sheet and Token Economy Data sheet to track fading to natural consequences until Tokens are no longer needed for student to exhibit Replacement behavior independently. **

---

Student Example

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John  
Age: 9

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

1st: 1 Token for each observed Replacement Behavior and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer

2nd: 1 Token for every 2 observed Replacement Behavior and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer

1st: 1 Token for every week the Replacement Behavior was observed and 5 Tokens needed to exchange for Backup Reinforcer
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

- Review and explain in details slides 61 & 62 of the power point.
- Have educators turn to the Bonus: Response Cost in the manual.
- Read about “John” and explain how a Response Cost could be implemented.
- Model and explain the different versions on two of the Token Economy Forms.

Answer any questions.
**Token Economy**

**How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting**

**Bonus:**

**Response Cost**

---

**Student Example**

Below is a hypothetical student and situation. This is used as an example to follow through the steps.

Name: John   
Age: 9

Replacement Behavior: Walk into the classroom quietly and take a seat at his desk.

Response Cost: When John walks into the classroom and is not exhibiting the replacement behavior he will give a previously earned Token to the teacher.

---

Response Cost Token Economies are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behaviors are exhibited.

When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return a previously earned Token.

In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.

To implement a Response Cost type of Token Economy, determine the number of Tokens the student will need to possess to exchange for the Backup Reinforcer he/she chose and the number of Tokens the student will need to return if the targeted behavior is exhibited. (Replace Reinforcer Cost with Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost & Token Economy Data with Token Economy Data for Response Cost)
Reinforcer Cost for Response Cost

Student’s Name: _________John Smith_________ Date: 02/15/2013

When _______ John _______ walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out _______ John _______ will get _______ 1 _______ Token(s). When _______ John _______ _______ collects _______ 5 _______ Tokens _______ John _______ can exchange the Tokens for one of the following:

1.) _______ 20 minutes of Computer Time

2.) _______ 1 prize from the prize box

3.) _______ ________________________________

If _______ John _______ does not walks into the room quietly and gets his supplies out _______ John _______ will give _______ 1 _______ Token(s) back to the teacher.
Reinforcer Cost
for Response Cost

Student’s Name: ________________________________ Date: __________

When ____________________, __________________________
__________________________ will get _______ Token(s). When
__________________________ collects _______ Tokens
__________________________ can exchange the Tokens for one of the
following:

1.) _______________________________________________

2.) _______________________________________________

3.) _______________________________________________

If ____________________, ____________________________
__________________________ will give _______ Token(s) back to the
teacher.
Token Economy Data for Response Cost

Student’s Name: ____________________________ Date: ________ - ________

Replacement Behavior: _____________________________________________

Target Behavior: _________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Taken</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

39
Part 2: How to Create an Effective Token Economy

- Ask the teachers to spend the next 5-10 minutes brainstorming on how they will use this new information to improve their classroom environment.
- Have the teachers share with their table one way each of them will apply this new knowledge with their table and have the table pick one of the ways to share with the group.
- Record these ideas on chart paper.

Answer any questions.

- Have the teachers count the Tokens they earned and trade it in for a post survey. See the next page.
Training Evaluation

Please provide your written comments on today’s workshop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I appreciated…</th>
<th>I learned…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I plan to use…</th>
<th>I suggest…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After this workshop, my knowledge of how to implement an effective Token Economy is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please feel free to provide any additional comments about today’s workshop:
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


Token Economy

How to Create an Effective Token Economy in the General Education Setting

Resources


How to Create an Effective Token Economy

Rachelle Brown

Objective

- Educators will be able to implement an effective token economy for an individual student or a group of students in order to decrease undesired behaviors.
Definition: What are Token Economies?

- A specific behavior modification technique focused on a positive reinforcement token that is awarded for desired behavior from the student.

How do Token Economies work?

- When a student exhibits a desired behavior and/or task, he/she receives a token.

- Tokens can be exchanged for 'Backup Reinforcements' when the student has accumulated a predetermined number of tokens.
Examples of Tokens

Classroom Money

Gems

Poker Chips

What is a Backup Reinforcer?

- A Backup reinforcer is a reinforcer that is traded for a larger reinforcer when the predetermined number of smaller value tokens have been collected by the student.
What are examples of token collection methods?

- **Behavior Chart**
  (Stickers or stamps act as tokens)

- **Token Board**
  (Laminated stickers with velcro acts as tokens)

Age groups for which Token Economies work best

- Token Economies can be implemented for a single student at any educational level or for an entire group of students.
- This approach has been successful from the age of preschool students through adults– consider your paycheck!
History

- Token Economies emerged in the mid to late 1960’s.
- Kazdin recorded the new intervention appeared to be promising in a variety of settings.
- Token Economies were used in various settings including treatment, rehabilitation, and educational settings

(Kazdin, 1982).

Steps of Implementing an Effective Token Economy

1. Identify Target Behavior
2. Collect Baseline Data
3. Identify Token Economy
4. Identify Reinforcers
5. Implementation
6. Fading to Natural Consequences
Step 1: Identify Target Behavior

- 1st step of implementing a Token Economy is to determine the behavior that needs to be decreased

- EXAMPLES: yelling, work avoidance, not raising hand, etc.
Step 1, continued: Identify Target Behavior

- Teacher or staff observations can determine this behavior.

>> Use the Teacher Behavior Observation Form provided to take anecdotal notes to help identify the target behavior.

- It is important for the anecdotal notes to determine one specific target behavior from the Teacher Behavior Observation Form.

---

Step 1, continued: Identify Target Behavior

- Once the behavior is determined, it is essential for the instructor to identify the replacement behavior that needs to be exhibited in place of the undesired behavior.

- Target Behavior Sheet is to be used to facilitate with this identification process.
Let’s put this new knowledge into action:

Manual Page 5

Sample Target Behavior Form

Manual Page 7
Section 1: Checking for Understanding Questions & Answers

Step 2: Collect Baseline Data
Step 2: Collect Baseline Data

- Baseline data will be used to compare behaviors during the implementation of a Token Economy.
- This information will be used to determine the effectiveness of Token Economy system being implemented.

Step 2, continued: Collect Baseline Data

- During the predetermined time period, it is important to collect baseline data about the number of times the targeted behavior is exhibited per day or per period.
- This is rate and frequency.
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE TOKEN ECONOMY

Sample Baseline Data Collection Form
Manual Page 10

Let's put this new knowledge into action
Manual Page 11
Section 2: Checking for Understanding Questions & Answers

Step 3: Identify Token Economy
Step 3: Identify Token Economy

- This step consists of two components:
- To pick which type of Token Economy will be used (See Examples of Token Economies).
- Add here the second component

Step 3, continued: Identify Token Economy

Examples of Token Economies:

Sticker Chart
Step 3, continued: Identify Token Economy

Examples of Token Economies:

- Classroom Money
- Gems
Step 3, continued: Identify Token Economy

Examples of Token Economies:

- Token Boards
- Poker Chips
Section 3: Checking for Understanding Questions & Answers

Brainstorm additional Token Economy examples
Step 3, continued:
Identify Token Economy

- The second components:

- To determine the amount of Tokens the student will need to possess to exchange for the Backup Reinforcer he/she choose. See Reinforcer Cost

Sample Baseline Data Collection Form
Manual Page 15
Let’s put this new knowledge into action

Manual Page 16

Reinforcer Cost

Student’s Name: __________________ Date: __

When __________ will get ______ Token(s).

When __________ collects _____ Tokens

___________ can exchange the Tokens for
one of the following:

1. _________
2. _________
3. _________

Section 3: Checking for Understanding Questions & Answers
Step 4: Identify Backup Reinforcers

- Backup Reinforcers are incentives to perform the desired behaviors consistently.
- These incentives can be tangible, such as a small toy, extra time with the teacher, or can be extra time to complete a desired task.
Step 4, continued: Identify Backup Reinforcers

Backup Reinforcers Examples:

- Computer Time
- Pencil
- Prizes

Brainstorm Additional Backup Reinforcers
Sample Student Interest Survey

Manual Page 18

Let’s put this new knowledge into action

Manual Page 19
Section 4: Checking for Understanding
Questions & Answers

Step 5: Implementation
Step 5: Implementation

- The implementation of a Token Economy is a vital step of establishing an effective Token Economy.

Step 5, continued: Implementation

- The first step of implementing a Token Economy is to explain the expectations to the student.

>> Use the Reinforcer Cost Sheet to discuss with the student why you have chosen to utilize a Token Economy as a secondary method temporarily.
Step 5, continued: Implementation

- Next, select a day to start the Token Economy and begin rewarding the student with Tokens when the target behavior is exhibited.

Step 5, continued: Implementation

- The last and most important component is to collect data to determine if the Token Economy is effective.
  - Why: to avoid learned dependence

- Data can be collected on the occurrences of the Replacement Behavior data hourly, daily, weekly, etc.
Step 5, continued: Implementation

- If the Token Economy does not effectively increase the Replacement Behavior, adjust the Reinforcer Cost sheet.

- An increase in the number and frequency of tokens awarded and/or a decrease in the number of tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer may need to be adjusted to suit the situation.

Example

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Token Economy Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student's Name:</strong> John Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Replacement Behavior:</strong> Walk into the room quietly and get a piece of cereal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Behavior:</strong> Takes the room announcer's toy, and goes to the window.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th># of Replacement Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Tokens Given</th>
<th># of Target Behaviors Observed</th>
<th>Was Backup Reinforcer Earned?</th>
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</table>
Let’s put this new knowledge into action

Manual
Page 22

Section 5: Checking for Understanding
Questions & Answers
Step 6: Fading to Natural Consequences

- The last step of creating and establishing an effective Token Economy is to fade the Token Economy into a Natural Consequence behavior management system.

  >> Use the Reinforcer Cost Sheet by slowly adjusting the Reinforcer Cost Sheet with the student.

- It is also beneficial for the student to be encouraged during the fading process.
Step 6, continued: Fading to Natural Consequences

How to fade into natural consequences:

- Decrease the amount of Tokens given.
  - For example, one token can be given for every 2 replacement behaviors observed instead of for every 1 behavior.

How to fade into natural consequences, continued:

- Increase the amount of Tokens needed to receive the Backup Reinforcer.
  - For example, 7 tokens may be needed instead of 5 Tokens.
Step 6, continued: Fading to Natural Consequences

>> Use the Reinforcer Cost sheet and Token Economy Data sheet to track fading into natural consequences until Tokens are no longer needed for student to exhibit Replacement behavior independently.

Brainstorm fading a Token Economy to Natural Consequences
Section 6: Checking for Understanding Questions & Answers

Bonus: Response Cost
Training Bonus: Response Cost

- Response Cost Token Economies are Token Economy systems that incorporate a consequence when undesired behaviors are exhibited.

- When an undesired behavior/task is displayed the student needs to return or give back a previously earned Token.

- In a traditional Token Economy, the return of previously earned Tokens does not occur.

Manual Page 26
How will you apply this knowledge?

Spend the next 5-10 minutes brainstorming how you will use this new information to improve your classroom environment.

Be prepared to share with the larger group.
How will you apply this knowledge?

Share one way you will apply this new knowledge with colleagues at your table.

Pick one of the ways to share with the larger group.

Questions & Answers
Did we meet our objective?

- We are able to implement an effective Token Economy for an individual student or a group to decrease undesired behaviors.

Thank you for coming!

Please complete a workshop evaluation form and leave it on the sign in table upon leaving.
Chapter 5: Project Recommendations

Introduction

This project was to create a manual entitled “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” for general educators, inexperienced special educators and other interested educators. The manual provides an explanation of what a Token Economy is and addresses a method to fade an effective Token Economy into natural consequences, another behavior management concept. Through an in-depth examination of recent research it is evident that a Token Economy is an effective positive behavior modification tool that can be used to decrease undesired behaviors and/or increase desired behaviors. By creating a “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” includes the components of implementing an effective Token Economy, thus serves as a valuable resource for general educators, inexperienced special educators or other educators. It is recommended that the manual be used after attending the professional development training, which accompanies the manual. The manual is designed to meet the goal of decreasing undesired behaviors and increase desired behaviors when other behavior modifications have been implemented and have not been effective. It is important that Token Economies never be the first positive behavior intervention or modification implemented for a student or a group of students, since the goal is to support all students in attaining behaviors with lower intensity models.

Lessons Learned

The first lesson the researched learned in creating the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” was that the manual needed to accompany the specific resources so that the process was easily accessible to teachers. In a recent plan released by the United
States Department of Education (2011). 62% percent of teachers report feeling underprepared for “classroom realities”. One “classroom reality” that educators may encounter is undesired student behaviors. Therefore, to help address this concern efficiently, the manual was created so as to be a simple, straightforward and accessible resource for all teachers, including the concept components needed to implement a Token Economy.

Another lesson learned in creating the manual was that it needed to be accompanied by with a professional development training workshop for teachers. One of the studies examined in this project, which occurred at the preschool level, stated that preschool staff had requested additional training in behavior management. (Tiano, Fortson, McNeil, & Humphreys 2005). To ensure that teachers had the information needed and guided practice to implement an effective Token Economy the author created a professional development training opportunity for educators to attend.

Project Implementation Plans

This project manual is intended to be used as a professional development training workshop for general educators, inexperienced special educators and others, as previously stated. The goal of the professional development training and practice opportunities offered in the workshop is to offer all the tools that teachers and other educators need in order to effectively implement a Token Economy for students if other positive behavior modifications have been implemented but have not been effective.

This researcher has specific plans to use this project at the school site where the research is employed to educate teachers about this effective positive behavior modification. This researcher will accomplish this by beginning with a professional
development opportunity, then providing follow up with teachers at the school site throughout the year to support them in implementing Token Economies in their classrooms as needed. The purpose and intent in piloting this professional development opportunity will be to recruit other Education Specialist to duplicate the same opportunity at other school sites. This will promote consistency throughout the school district.

Educational Implications

If all the components of this project are implemented accurately and smoothly, it is expected that teachers will gain the knowledge and skills to begin creating effective Token Economies in a variety of the educational settings. Following the establishment of Token Economies as a behavior modification tool, it is also expected that undesired student behaviors will begin to decrease. With time for integration and focused monitoring, it is also expected that the Token Economies created will be slowly faded and replaced with natural consequences. The underlying objective of this project is has been to ultimately eliminate undesired behaviors to increase Academic Achievement by all students, specifically supporting mandated policies such as NCLB.

Limitations of Project

One readily observable limitation of this project has been the research available that examines the effectiveness of the implementation of Token Economies impact student Academic Achievement. Only a portion of the research found identified a correlation between the effectiveness of Token Economies to Academic Achievement. Due to this limitation, the rationale for the project could not be established in terms of a true correlation in the use of a Token Economies towards increasing student Academic Achievement.
Future Research

Continued research about the effects of Token Economies on student Academic Achievement is recommended for future educational research to be conducted regarding the correlation between Token Economies to Academic Achievement. It would be beneficial for future researchers to determine where there is a strong correlation between establishing Token Economies to raising Academic Achievement. With this additional research, professional development workshops and manuals similar to the one created for this project will be needed to ensure effective implementation of Token Economies as well as other approached to behavior modification strategies which help the student achieve personal academic successes.

Summary/Conclusion

The project completed in this study yielded the development of a training manual entitled “How to Create an Effective Token Economy” for general educators. To ensure that the tools were implemented accurately the researcher also deemed it necessary to create a companion training module for teachers. Therefore, the “How to Create an Effective Token Economy Training Manual” was created with a power point presentation to be used during the professional development training workshop. With the knowledge from and skills gained from the workshop and equipped with the manual, educators have the necessary skills and tools to implement effective Token Economies. The Token Economies practice will decrease undesired behaviors and provide more opportunities for learning and successful Academic Achievement on a daily basis. Through monitoring and adjustments implemented Token Economies will be slowly faded to natural consequences.
preparing students for the future. This project will help create positive learning environments for future classrooms, schools, and districts.
References


