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The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet

by

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PROJECT ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine existing research regarding behavior management systems in order to determine the most successful techniques to manage behavior, and then create an improved system that incorporates these techniques. The audience for this improved system is special education teachers, and the tool to employ this system is a guidebook. The author reviewed research, articles and studies to further investigate these techniques’ validity. This research revealed the most effective techniques to include in a behavior management system: parent involvement, self-regulation and extrinsic rewards. However, limited research has been conducted on the effects of combining these techniques into one comprehensive behavior management tool. The shortcomings and strengths of these studies were evaluated, and from these findings the author designed *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* for special education teachers to use as a comprehensive behavior management system in their elementary classrooms. The resulting guidebook is intended to give special education teachers direction on how to support student growth on behavior and academic related Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. Additional research could determine the guidebook’s effectiveness in general education classroom settings; however, for this study’s purpose the goals were achieved because the guidebook will be available to special education teachers.

KEYWORDS: behavior management, extrinsic rewards, IEP, parent involvement, point sheet, self-regulation, special education
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Definition of Problem

In a multifaceted profession that expands beyond formal teaching, teachers now more than ever, have to utilize their instructional time within the school day to cover state mandated curriculum (Xenos, 2012). Easier said than done, educators at all grade levels face the challenge of having their students fully attend to and be engaged in instructional activities. Students at the same time, have academic pressures, most importantly the emphasis of performing well on standardized testing. With these issues present in classrooms nationwide, teachers must work alongside their students to create a learning environment that demonstrates accountability and harmony in order to become successful (Witzel & Mercer, 2003; Bergin & Bergin, 1999). An important factor in this is utilizing effective classroom management strategies that students are motivated by (Cohen, 1986). If students lack buy-in or simply do not see the importance of a classroom management system, problematic behaviors will continue to exist and worsen (Evans & Lester, 2012).

Looking at the issue a step further, educators are also faced with employing ways of decreasing behaviors for students with various needs, particularly students who qualify for special education (Evans & Lester, 2012). These various factors often leave teachers at a loss of how to make modifications to their instructional and classroom environments in order to address, change and eliminate disruptive behaviors that reduce precious instructional time (Xenos, 2012). It is no coincidence that the time lost in the classroom translates to students’ limited understanding of
curriculum, higher chances of regression and an overall reduction in skills (McKissick et al., 2010).

**Purpose of the Project**

Problematic behavior, although unwelcome, is present in classrooms where students with special needs learn. According to Witzel and Mercer (2003), “It’s logical to assume that classroom management is a concern for students with disabilities who may have repeatedly failed academically. A student with a weak understanding of academics may behave poorly to gain the teacher’s attention.” Recognizing these issues, special education teachers and support providers look to motivators that help their students with existing behaviors, learn adaptive skills that can be generalized to their environments both inside and outside of the classroom (Witzel & Mercer, 2003). Therefore this research question guides the study: Is there a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement?

The purpose of this project is to provide special educators with a classroom management tool that is both an extrinsic reinforcer and motivational model that allows teachers to analyze student behaviors within the classroom. The ultimate goal of this project and the purpose behind developing this management tool is for students to become independent learners, thus facilitating their own learning.

The researcher in this study and project combined components including parent involvement, self-regulation and extrinsic rewards into a classroom behavior
management system that aims at lessening misbehaviors and increasing academic achievement. The resulting guidebook *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* is designed to accomplish these aims. This project seeks to extend special education research to determine the efficiency of designing, implementing and managing a classroom point sheet focused on students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans. This project builds upon research by Butera, Giacone and Wagner (2008) and Xenos (2012), by providing effective examples of point rewards systems that enhance teachers’ management of their classrooms.

**Project Product**

The researcher of this project created an educators’ guidebook on how to successfully design, implement and manage a classroom point sheet. Using the step-by-step guidebook, special education teachers would be able to develop a point sheet to facilitate teacher-student interaction in the classroom. The point sheet acts as (a) an extrinsic reinforcer that uses numeric thresholds, (b) a graphic organizer with a daily schedule for students to follow, (c) a home-to-school communication device, and (d) a data sheet for teachers to monitor IEP goals.

**Defining Terms**

Key terms used in this study are defined and their sources are provided.
**Behavior Management.** The wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

**Extrinsic Reinforcement.** Performing an activity with the intention of attaining some separable consequence, such as receiving a reward, avoiding guilt, or gaining approval. Behaviors that are extrinsically motivated would generally not occur spontaneously, so their occurrence must typically be prompted by some type of instrumentality (Deci, Ryan & Williams 1996).

**Self-regulating.** The choice or decision to monitor and improve your own behavior. This choice is effective in raising a person’s self-esteem, motivation and sense of responsibility (Lewis, 2001).

**Parent Involvement.** The level of participation that a parent or guardian has in his or her child’s education and school (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).

**Point Sheet.** An external or tangible agent used to arrange instructional conditions, monitor student performance (behavior) and implement appropriate classroom contingencies (Cavalier, Ferretti & Hodges, 1997; Maggin, Chafouleas, Goddard, & Johnson, 2011).

**Individual Education Plan (IEP).** A written plan created for a student with learning disabilities by the student's teachers, parents and/or guardians, the school administrator, or other interested parties. The plan is tailored to the student's specific
needs and abilities, and outlines goals for the student to reach. The IEP should be reviewed at least once a year (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

**Preview Literature**

These are the key areas of the literature pertinent to this study: using extrinsic reinforcement as a form of classroom management, promoting self-control, and soliciting parent involvement. The literature reviewed for this project included research articles and studies that report accomplishments in designing, implementing and managing a classroom point sheet. A number of articles discuss the benefits of using extrinsic reinforcement as a form of classroom management (Butera, Giacone, & Wagner, 2008; Boisjoli & Matson, 2008; Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges, 1997; Maggin et. al., 2011; McKissick et al., 2010; Özbent, 2010; Simonsen, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008; Witzel, & Mercer, 2003; Xenos, 2012). The design of the guidebook for this project reflects the successful application of extrinsic reinforcement as shown in these studies. Similarly, in creating a point sheet that uses numeric thresholds, which reinforce giving rewards and consequences, the researcher draws from the examples these authors give of using extrinsic reinforcement.

There were also a few articles that discussed the importance of students learning self-regulation or self-control techniques in conjunction with extrinsic rewards (Bergin & Bergin, 1999; Cohen, 1986; Deci, Ryan & Williams, 1996; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Lewis, 2001; Sparks & Cote, 2011). The guidebook reflects these studies’ successes through its implementation. As discussed by these authors, a classroom point sheet is only effective when the students using it take
ownership and become responsible for earning points which facilitates their self-directed learning.

In addition, the review includes articles that suggest monitoring students’ behaviors alongside parents, to build accountability at both home and school (Evans & Lester, 2012; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Lazarus, 1990; Owens et al., 2012; Vannest, Burke, Payne, Davis, & Soares, 2011). The implementation and management of the guidebook is informed by these studies. For example, a child’s progress needs to be transparent for all persons involved in their IEP, especially their parents who have the job of regulating behaviors at home. The guidebook suggests soliciting parent involvement daily to encourage home-school communication.

Three themes that arise in the literature review support the guidebook: (a) using extrinsic reinforcement, (b) promoting self-control, and (c) soliciting parent involvement. However, Butera et al. (2008) and Xenos (2012) proved to have the most beneficial studies for the project by describing their actual accomplishments in implementing a classroom point reward system. Their results prove student success is attainable both academically and behaviorally through the design, implementation and management of a classroom point system.

**Preview Methodology**

The methodology used for this project is to review the ways in which a classroom point sheet can help teachers reduce misbehaviors and increase academic achievement in the special education classroom. The findings led to the development
of a guidebook for special education teachers on how to design, implement and manage an effective classroom point sheet. In order to design the *Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet*, the author reviewed existing and most commonly used behavior management techniques employed in special education classrooms. For this evaluation the author referred to research, reviewed articles and studies to further investigate these techniques’ validity. The articles’ shortcomings and strengths helped create the guidebook, which is a valid solution to the original research question proposed: Is there a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement?

This guidebook is an instrument, written with the intent to give special education teachers direction on how to effectively design, implement and manage a classroom point sheet. In addition, the guidebook is intended to be used in the elementary school setting to support student growth on behavior and academic related IEP goals. Previous studies have shown the successes of implementing a classroom point sheet in reducing student misbehaviors (Butera et al., 2008) and advancing academic achievement (Xenos, 2012). This project’s effectiveness will become apparent when continual management of the point sheet is completed and regular student data is collected.

**Significance of Project**
As all educators know, every student is different and therefore has a distinctive way of learning. Teachers understand that their teaching style and behavior management system must be personalized to fit each of their students’ learning styles. The problem is that teachers need support and resources in order to cohesively foster each student’s learning and behavior needs. The guidebook provides special education teachers with an outline of how to lessen behavior interruptions in their classrooms by teaching students to be responsible for their learning through the use of a classroom point sheet.

This approach is different from other behavior management systems in that it combines best practices into one comprehensive approach. The guidebook focuses on teaching students how to build self-control through extrinsic rewards. The guidebook also encourages parent involvement to inspire follow-through at home. Most importantly this guidebook informs teachers of ways to work cohesively with their students to build a productive classroom community. This point sheet offers educators the opportunity to build each student’s learning style – uniquely.

Limitations

The project has three limitations: (a) implementation research (b) population studied and (c) audience. First, the guidebook was not implemented into a school setting which created the inability to show sustained effectiveness. In addition, the research articles reviewed for this project consisted of student populations in elementary school. This resulted in a lack of research pertaining to older students in
secondary school settings. Lastly, the guidebook was created with the special education teacher in mind, ultimately limiting the people it can impact in the field of education. These limitations although important to identify, do not impact the guidebook’s effectiveness. The research reviewed indicates that behavior problems emerge and become stable at an early age, thus promotion of self-control is critical for young children primarily. For this reason, the guidebook excluded older students.

In addition, the guidebook was created with the special education teacher in mind because, as noted in the literature reviewed, special education students exhibit more severe behaviors and ultimately require more extreme interventions through behavior support plans and IEP goals. Therefore, the guidebook’s target audience is special education teachers.

Summary

Each new school year presents teachers with the challenge of how to effectively manage their classrooms. For special education teachers, the challenge is greater, in that the classroom management system needs to be specialized to each student’s IEP. In order to have a cohesive classroom environment that fosters learning, teachers need to implement a system that regulates students’ behaviors. Implementing a classroom point sheet that acts as an extrinsic reinforcer yet also focuses on academic success helps eliminate this persistent issue for special education teachers.
This study and resulting guidebook builds upon the findings of Butera et al. (2008) and Xenos (2012) which confirmed that using a classroom point sheet is highly effective in reducing student misbehaviors. A thorough review of previously published and reviewed articles, which highlighted the most commonly used behavior management techniques used in classrooms, helped to develop the guidebook. These articles’ shortcomings and strengths pinpointed the essential qualities needed to create an effective classroom point sheet. The next chapters will further explore the literature and methodologies included in the development of the Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Teachers in the special education field know that behavior management is one aspect of their job that requires a lot of attention. Often times, the students, these special educators teach have customized IEP goals that directly relate to their behavior issues. The challenge for these teachers is finding a behavior management tool that can teach their students what expected behavior looks like at school. Therefore, special education teachers can benefit from learning how to design, implement and manage a point sheet in their classrooms to assist their students with self-regulating their behaviors. Both supporters and critics have argued over whether extrinsic motivators, or the performing of a task to gain a reward, could be used in the classroom. With those arguments in mind, a review of the literature revealed that when designed to reflect classroom expectations, implemented using positive reinforcement and managed in a way that records student progress, a classroom point sheet can be beneficial.

This literature review will provide research-based examples of the benefits of extrinsic motivation to support the contents of the guidebook. The guidebook will give special education teachers a resource to help guide their development, implementation and management of an effective, extrinsic management tool – a classroom point sheet. The guidebook’s components will include: benefits of using a point sheet, designing a point sheet that promotes academic achievement and
expected behaviors, implementing a point sheet that promotes student self-control and managing a point sheet that monitors IEP goals. Reviewing the literature gives the guidebook research-based data that supports teachers’ use of behavior management practices that employ tangible rewards. By studying and comparing the literature, the researcher has based her project on existing studies that have proven successful with point sheets as classroom management tools for improving not only students’ behavioral needs, but academic needs as well.

A study done by Bergin and Bergin (1999) confirmed that both teachers and parents agree that the most consistent serious problem in schools at all levels is student misbehavior. Many teachers in this situation understand that when misbehaviors happen, learning takes a backseat. Ozben (2010) has researched this idea and found that misbehaviors in the class ruin the atmosphere, the teaching process and prevent both students and teachers from achieving their aims. His study also found that teachers use different coping strategies to deal with student misbehavior, but educators need to have new, fresh behavior management strategies to manage negative behaviors within the classroom (Ozben, 2010). Therefore a need exists for an improved system that focuses on interventions that motivate students towards academic achievement (Gurland & Glowacky, 2011).

The literature focuses on the most commonly used behavior management techniques employed in special education classrooms: extrinsic reward systems, self-monitoring systems and daily report cards home. Using rewards to decrease misbehaviors or extrinsic reward systems differ but share the same commonality of
praising students using tangible reinforcers. These systems include token economies and group contingencies, which aim at teaching social behaviors and appropriate school conduct (Boisjoli & Matson, 2008). Extrinsic reward systems are typically used in special education classrooms for these reasons and others including, the need to improve behavioral and social-emotional related IEP goals (Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges, 1997). In addition, discipline that promotes responsibility or self-monitoring is also highly regarded as a successful technique in special education classrooms. Students with disabilities are able to learn how to express their beliefs appropriately and self-regulate their behaviors based on the choices they make (Sparks & Cote, 2011). Ultimately this leads to students driving their learning choices and building their independence.

Lastly, daily report cards home that solicit parent involvement is a technique that is utilized in special education classrooms. Building rapport with parents, who foster learning at home, helps students develop their behavioral and academic skills continuously (Lazarus, 1990). Ultimately, students are being held accountable outside of school as well as at school which reinforces appropriate behaviors. Historically, teachers have used several types of behavior management systems in their classrooms. However, never before have the most effective elements of these systems been combined into one all-encompassing behavior management system. Classroom point sheets are one such system that has been proven as a successful behavior management technique because it encompasses the most commonly used elements of the other systems (Butera et al., 2008 & Xenos, 2012). Point sheets are extrinsic
reinforcers that focus on promoting student growth independently or in a self-monitoring format. They are especially successful in a special education classroom in that they minimize misbehaviors and increase academic achievement.

Each of the above techniques and corresponding studies supports the guidebook by presenting methods that can be encompassed into a classroom point sheet. Certain research, pertaining to students beyond elementary age, is excluded from this literature review for reasons that behavior problems emerge and become stable at an early age, thus promotion of self-control is critical for young children primarily (Bergin & Bergin, 1999).

**Using Rewards to Decrease Misbehaviors**

Many authors have studied the results of using a classroom management system centered on extrinsic rewards (Boisjoli & Matson, 2008; Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges, 1997; Maggin et al., 2011; McKissick et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2008; Witzel, & Mercer, 2003). The purpose behind employing such management systems can be separated into two categories: increasing academic performance and supporting inappropriate behaviors. These two categories become especially crucial in special education classrooms where students who have low self-esteem in academics revert to means other than schoolwork for obtaining attention (Witzel & Mercer, 2003). Due to this continual underachievement, there is a high risk of academic failure and regression that may continue throughout the students’ school years if they are not taught expected school behaviors.
The most highly recognized reward-based behavior management system used in classrooms today is token economies, which as outlined by Boisjoli & Matson (2008) have largely been used in special education classrooms to teach social behaviors, school conduct and improve classroom performance. Token economies tend to be one of the primary intervention models that achieves student success (Boisjoli & Matson, 2008; Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges, 1997; Maggin et al., 2011). According to anecdotal reports reviewed during a study done by Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges (1997), two special education students improved their self-management skills, task completion skills and ability to ensure greater control over their learning through the use of a token economy system. The study results proved that extrinsic rewards do lessen special education students’ chances of behavioral and academic regression. This idea was further enhanced in the Maggin et al., (2011) study which again looked at the success of token economies in relation to special education students. Their study’s findings revealed that student functioning following the introduction of token economy programs significantly improved (Maggin et al., 2011). Although, these studies found successes, there are apparent shortcomings. As addressed in the upcoming articles, researchers found that students’ motivation can be increased even more through the use of token economies and teacher praise, or contingent specific praise.

Simonsen et al., (2008) identified token economies as an evidence-based practice to use as a classroom management system. Their study’s empirical evidence supports the use of token economies because the system focuses on identifying and
recognizing appropriate classroom behaviors (Simonsen et al., 2008). Their study further reports that contingent specific praise needs to coincide with token economy systems. The benefits of doing both resulted in higher academic achievement because students’ work productivity and accuracy increased along with their language and math performance on classwork. In addition, students’ social behavior improved as seen in the students’ ability to stay on-task, stay attentive, compliant and play cooperatively (Simonsen et al., 2008). Further research provided by Witzel and Mercer (2003) showed the need for contingent teacher praise in that it boosts performance levels for students with disabilities by teaching how to recruit teacher praise appropriately. Their research argued that contingent verbal praise must focus on the value and relevance of the task (Witzel & Mercer, 2003). Ultimately, contingent teacher praise gives each student the opportunity to gain a reward extrinsically and gain praise intrinsically, which equates to student success in the classroom.

Contingent specific praise is continued in the McKissick et al. (2010) study of group contingencies, or providing the same behavioral goals, criteria, target behaviors, and consequences to the whole class. Their study saw success with students’ academic achievement levels in math, spelling and reading because student rewards were contingent upon students’ behavioral performance and whether the criterion for the reward was being met (McKissick et al., 2010). Success was found when target behaviors and academic needs were rewarded.
In summary, token economies, contingent teacher praise and group contingencies are executed best when misbehaviors are prevented through mutual respect between teacher and student. Ozben (2012) articulated this, “It is essential for teachers to adopt the preventive discipline and constructive strategies. During these coping strategies students need to feel good and see that they are cared for.” Uniquely, Ozben’s (2010) study recognized that no extrinsic behavior management plan is effective without joint buy-in. For each of these extrinsic behavior management techniques mentioned above, there is a way of promoting student academic and behavioral success, yet both teacher and student need to be invested.

**Discipline that Promotes Responsibility**

Many researchers have studied the results of using a classroom management system centered on teaching students self-control or self-management skills (Bergin & Bergin, 1999; Cohen, 1986; Deci, Ryan & Williams, 1996; Gurland & Glowacky, 2011; Lewis, 2001; Sparks & Cote, 2011). These management systems aim at increasing students’ academic performance and modifying their inappropriate behaviors. How these two goals are achieved varies, and often they are employed in a classroom management system controlled and directed by the teacher. This question then arises, how often are students’ theories of motivation taken into account when implementing a classroom management system? This question is one that Gurland & Glowacky (2011) believed is answered best by determining if a child is able to self-regulate their behaviors in a way that best fits with their motivation style of
preference. If a lack of motivation exists then ultimately students’ academic achievement level will drop.

There are multiple studies done on classroom management; however, little research has been done on management systems “that aim to preserve the child’s perceptions of autonomy and to foster self-control” (Bergin & Bergin, 1999). Bergin & Bergin (1999) suggested that there is a price to be paid for power assertive discipline that limits students’ ability to be socially responsible. Power assertive behavior leads to defiant student behavior but also eliminates the possibility of reciprocity between teacher and student, which jeopardizes the caring relationship (Bergin & Bergin, 1999). The results of their study indicated that when students participated in a management system where expectations were clear, persistent and presented in a non-negative manner, their self-determination rose. Similarly, Lewis (2001) argued that as punishment increases without the reinforcement of rewards, discussions and involvement, students chose to not improve their behavior. Therefore, if students feel undermined by the management program put in place in the classroom, a behavior improvement will not be seen. The study also found a strong connection between discipline strategies and student responsibility, suggesting that if teachers do not involve their students in some of the decision making processes for rules and consequences, students will spend less time on task and become less responsible (Lewis, 2001). These two studies would indicate that in order for a classroom management system to be successful, students need to feel a sense of ownership which will lead them to promote self-control.
Cohen (1986) saw similar benefits in finding ways of motivating students; however, she takes a different approach by answering the question of why students need to be motivated. She writes that the ultimate focus of running behavior management systems in classrooms is to “teach students how to arrange their own reinforcement contingencies so that they are managing their behaviors.” In other words, students are learning to be responsible for their actions at school and practicing self-control. The article takes this view a step further by looking at the benefits for special education teachers employing such systems into their classroom. Teachers of special education students are faced with more than just instructional objectives. Cohen (1986) argued that these teachers must facilitate maturity in social and emotional domains that are best achieved through motivation and discipline. Her closing remarks further support the argument that motivation when paired correctly with discipline can be advantageous.

Deci, Ryan and Williams (1996), similarly argued that internalization of extrinsic motivation should be used to encourage students. Their analysis of self-regulation determines that like motivations there are different levels of self-regulation, but the underlying tendency in every level of self-regulation is the willingness to integrate values and extrinsic processes that exist in the social world. Their argument pointed out that self-regulation is most evident when extrinsic motivation has been fully internalized and integrated by an individual. Gurland & Glowacky (2011) continue this evidence in their study about asserting children’s theories of motivation to build success. Their study found that children’s theories are
based on social inputs to which they are exposed and then interpret. Ultimately, their findings revealed that motivation needs to encompass four strategies: promising rewards, imposing consequences, asserting value and providing choices. Lastly, Sparks and Cote (2011) build on both of the above arguments by concluding that in order for a behavior management system to be successful in a special education setting, choice-making skills need to be implemented. By doing so, students with mild to moderate disabilities are able to learn how to express their beliefs appropriately and self-regulate their behaviors based on the choices they make. Their results suggest that providing choices helps students with disabilities learn natural consequences and a sense of independence (Sparks & Cote, 2011).

The qualities discussed by the various authors, indicate through their research that behavior management systems need to motivate students by making them responsible for their actions. Both academic success and limiting of misbehaviors can be achieved if students feel valued, motivated and respected by their authorities.

**Soliciting Parent Involvement**

Many researchers have studied the results of monitoring students’ behavioral progress with parent involvement in order to build extrinsic rewards that have value at home and school (Evans & Lester, 2012; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Lazarus, 1990; Owens et al., 2012; Vannest et al., 2011). Like most behavior management systems, this form of supervision also aims at providing academic success and a decrease in students’ misbehavior. Often these goals are pursued by the classroom teacher alone; however, success has also been seen when a support team rallies...
together to implement a behavior system that includes maintenance at home from parents. This success is one that Vannest et al. (2011) noted exemplifies reinforcement applications, emphasizes students’ target behaviors and encourages parent involvement continually. Ultimately, if parents are targeting their child’s behavioral and academic needs at home, they are supporting their child’s ability to learn at school.

Researchers such as Evans and Lester (2012) have contended that with such strict zero tolerance policies plaguing schools nationwide, solutions that involve teams of people who support students’ learning are needed. These teams, including school support staff, teachers and parents, could help develop ways of supporting school discipline policies as well as individual student behaviors (Evans & Lester, 2012). This leads to the discussion of how important parents are to their child’s educational success. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) claimed that events at home influence students’ school performance at least as much as the teacher and school. Their report focused on parent participation in order to have parents be co-educators, co-decision makers and leaders for their child. They observed that parent involvement has shifted from affairs at the school site to affairs at the home site, which means teachers’ involvement has to change too. Their report concludes by urging teachers to implement a two-way communication system with their students’ parents to build rapport and foster learning at home. How then do teachers implement a two-way communication system with parents?
For Owens et al. (2012), the answer is a daily report card, or feedback tool that informs students and their parents of the successes seen during the day, in relation to academic and behavior goals. Their study’s results found that children have a positive response to daily report cards and showed a decrease in the frequency of targeted behaviors (Owens et al., 2012). Parent involvement proved beneficial in a study done by Vannest et al. (2011) that looked at the practical solution daily report cards made in monitoring student progress. Their study revealed that because of the performance feedback given and frequency (i.e. daily) in which parents are informed of their child’s progress, students’ improvement rates increased. This is especially important for teachers of special education students with IEP goals. Vannest et al. (2011) discussed the option of using data to monitor IEP goals, in that it can maximize teachers’ time of progress monitoring. The need for parent involvement becomes critical in a project by Lazarus (1990), which looked at the implementation of a cooperative home-school token economy system for students receiving special education services. Lazarus (1990) stated that the most important benefit of such an endeavor is seeing the combined efforts of the teacher, student and parent(s) sustain the student’s social and academic gains including IEP goals. The end result, leads to open communication across the home and school setting and an opportunity for students to see the relevance of similar behavior in different settings (Lazarus, 1990).

There are many behavior management systems that rely solely on teacher direction and although successful these systems are leaving out a crucial piece of any child’s success their parent(s). The multiple examples above illustrate that parents are
vital factors in preparing their child for future endeavors, and that they need to work alongside their child’s teacher to be informed of the milestones made along the way.

This literature provides teachers with additional insight on how to improve academic achievement as well as improve students’ behaviors through the use of a multifaceted behavior management system that solicits parents’ involvement.

**Classroom Point Sheets**

The ideas behind implementing token economies, contingent teacher praise, group contingencies, parent participation and teaching of self-regulation skills culminate into a classroom point sheet. Multiple researchers have suggested and tested the best ways of implementing a classroom management system that centers on increasing academic achievement and lessening inappropriate behaviors. Various factors such as providing praise, positive directives and incentives proved beneficial (Bergin & Bergin, 1999; Simonsen et al., 2008; Witzel & Mercer, 2003). However, research is limited on comprehensive behavior management systems that focus on extrinsic rewards, self-monitoring and parent involvement. As cited, there are various benefits to using these systems separately. Could it then be concluded that greater success would arise if these systems’ advantageous qualities were combined into one comprehensive behavior management tool?

A study using a classroom dot chart done by Butera, Giaccone and Wagner (2008) aimed at decreasing off-task behavior and increasing students’ awareness by motivating them using incentives, decision-making opportunities and self-regulation strategies. The study found that students’ off-task behavior improved solely because
the dot chart encompassed multiple motivating factors such as incentives as well as
taught self-regulation skills (Butera et. al, 2008). Continued success was deemed
inevitable if the study was allotted more time and the dot chart could have been
managed for a longer period of time. Another downside to this study was that the
researchers never suggested to teachers how to design and manage the study’s dot
chart successfully. These shortcomings leave gaps in the research. However, Xenos
(2012) aimed at filling in those gaps with his approach to designing, managing and
implementing a points system.

Xenos (2012) aimed at helping readers create a points system in their
classrooms that focused on consequences and rewards, and could be implemented in a
way that centers on minimizing distractions and could be managed to act as a
recordkeeping method that ensures efficiency. His arguments give evidence that point
systems have success in that they reward positive behavior yet assign consequences
for negative behavior. These rewards and consequences need to correspond to both
academic and behavioral needs for every student in the classroom and coincide to
school disciplinary policy (Xenos, 2012; Evans & Lester, 2012). His suggestions
reflect the research reviewed above stating that behavior management systems need
to include positive praise, rewards and apply consequences to the whole class, much
like a group contingency does (Maggin et al., 2011; Simonsen et al., 2008; McKissick
et al., 2010).

Implementation of the point sheet is a crucial factor on whether or not success
is made within the classroom. Xenos (2012) furthers this idea by stating that both
student and teacher need to be invested in the point sheet by developing the rules together. This attention to detail puts the focus on students being responsible for their own motivation and learning to be self-controlled (Bergin & Bergin, 1999; Lewis, 2001). Finally, Xenos (2012) concluded his article by describing how important management is for recordkeeping purposes. He states that the added time and paperwork are extremely beneficial to access each student’s class performance in a comprehensive glance. This is an important plus for teachers dealing with large class sizes and periodic reporting periods throughout the year.

Although, Xenos’ article discussed many techniques reviewed by the researchers cited in the literature review, it left out two main and very important points: (a) the involvement of parent participation and (b) how this can be managed by a special education teacher. The guidebook aims at filling in these gaps as well as providing an example point sheet to start implementing and managing immediately.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate and identify research-based articles concentrated on implementing successful behavior management systems. The studies cited give teachers a starting point as to what to include when designing, implementing and managing a classroom behavior management plan. These are the main components of this literature review: using rewards to decrease misbehaviors, exercising discipline that promotes responsibility, soliciting parent involvement, and understanding the benefits of implementing a point sheet. These components all aim at improving students’ academic achievement and lessening students’ misbehavior
through the use of a behavior management system. The review revealed that student success is achieved, when teachers use researched techniques and employ those techniques in a classroom point sheet through its design, implementation and management. The purpose of this project is to provide a resource for teachers. This is to help guide them when introducing a point sheet to their students with disabilities.

The next chapter will present a review of the methodologies used to produce the Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet, based upon the research described above. The guidebook was created to expand upon the research findings of Butera et al., (2008) and Xenos (2012) and the success they have found when using a points reward system.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Special education teachers are faced with the task of not only employing ways of decreasing student misbehaviors but also finding ways to motivate their students towards academic achievement. Achieving this balance in special education classrooms nationwide is often challenging for teachers, resulting in job related stress and burnout (Xenos, 2012). As a result, a more effective and positive approach to behavior management is explored in this study. The review of the literature revealed that multiple approaches have been assessed separately in an effort to help teachers implement a strong behavior management system in their classrooms. However, gaps in the research revealed that employing these approaches in unison has not yet been done. The urgency to employ a behavior management tool that decreases misbehaviors and extrinsically motivates students towards academic achievement is needed.

This chapter describes the methodologies used to produce *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet*, based upon the research described in the Literature Review and to respond to the research question that guides this study: Is there a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement? The guidebook was created to expand upon the research findings of Butera et al. (2008) and Xenos (2012) and the success they have found
when using a point reward system. *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* was designed to be used by special education teachers to reduce off task behavior and promote academic achievement in the classroom and at home. The methods used to create the guidebook are addressed in the following sections: (a) Project Design, (b) Setting and Demographics, (c) Instruments Used, (d) Procedures and (e) Evaluation.

**Project Design**

The research revealed that special education teachers have a low baseline in relation to understanding how to implement a comprehensive behavior system that encompasses extrinsic motivation, promotes student self-control and solicits parent involvement (Butera et al., 2008; Xenos, 2012). Therefore, a supportive resource was needed to inform and support their knowledge: *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet*. The guidebook is to be used as a support tool for teachers to effectively lessen behavior interruptions through extrinsic reinforcement that focuses on students self-regulating their behavior. Parent involvement is also solicited to help aid with the point sheet’s effectiveness at school, by reporting student progress daily to parents. The necessity for special education teachers to meet the needs of every child’s extensive IEP goals has become more challenging. Therefore this guidebook is a good match in solving these persistent issues in that it aids both teachers’ concerns and students’ needs.
The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet is divided into four sections. Section one is an introduction outlining the benefits seen through the use of point sheets. Section two outlines procedures to follow and expectations to include when designing a classroom point sheet. Section three outlines the step-by-step procedures to follow when implementing a classroom point sheet. Lastly, section four summarizes ways to manage point sheet data in a way that coincides with IEP goals.

Setting and Demographics

The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet has been created to be used by special education teachers to effectively manage disruptive behaviors in classrooms. The guidebook is intended for special education populations; however, it can also be utilized in the general education setting that includes students eligible for special education services as outlined in an IEP or 504 Plan. In addition this guidebook makes a good resource for substitute teachers with little knowledge of how to manage a classroom environment directed around a point sheet.

The guidebook is designed to be utilized in the elementary setting and based on the most effective strategies identified in previous research. The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet is needed in these settings to benefit both teacher and student. Teachers will be able to manage classroom conduct more effectively as well as boost instructional
time. In addition, consistent and beneficial data will be collected daily on students’ progress. This allows for ease of management and less stress for teachers. Students will be able to reach higher levels of academic achievement and learn self-management skills. Students will build responsibility for their actions and develop study skills that can be utilized in the future secondary setting.

**Instruments Used**

Prior to designing the *Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet*, the author reviewed existing and most commonly used behavior management techniques employed in special education classrooms. From this evaluation the author referred to research, reviewed articles and studies to further investigate these techniques’ validity. These articles’ shortcoming and strengths helped create the guidebook. This guidebook is an instrument, written with the intent to give special education teachers direction on how to effectively design, implement and manage a classroom point sheet. The *Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* is a good tool for this study because it is easily accessible to help teachers create proactive students. Previous studies have shown the successes of implementing a classroom point sheet in reducing student misbehaviors (Butera et al., 2008) and advancing academic achievement (Xenos, 2012).

**Procedures**
The author took several steps prior to creating the guidebook. First, the researcher reviewed existing and most commonly used behavior management techniques employed in special education classrooms. Next, the researcher reviewed commonalities, characteristics and differences in these techniques to determine their effectiveness in reducing behaviors. Then, the author investigated corresponding articles and studies pertaining to the techniques’ success and validity. The researcher concluded from the analysis which techniques are most successful at lessening behavior interruptions and increasing academic achievement when used in unison. Therefore, *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* was created to include the key elements from these studies in order to support special education teachers in managing misbehaviors and boosting academic achievement.

This process was aimed at taking current classroom practices and finding the validity in those typically used practices. After reviewing the published studies pertaining to these practices, their obvious shortcomings were recorded and taken into account during the process of creating the guidebook. All the steps were taken with the goal of creating a researched-based guidebook that would be easy to navigate and would educate special education teachers on how to minimize classroom misbehaviors while promoting academic success.

**Evaluation of Process**
The process used to evaluate this project was simple yet efficient. In order to see the effectiveness of this project, the expected outcomes and goals of the point sheet needed to be specifically focused on improving classroom management and academic achievement. Next, the progress and achievement of those goals were determined by establishing fair consequences and rewards that use numeric thresholds (Xenos, 2012). In addition, students and parent(s) must be versed on the purpose behind implementing the point sheet, which will build their motivation and accountability to use it (Lazarus, 1990; Xenos, 2012). This project’s effectiveness will be validated when consistent management of the point sheet is completed for a two month period of time. Two months provides enough time for regular student data to be collected and then evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the point sheet.

The lens used for this process was that of the special education teacher. On a daily basis these teachers are experiencing frustration in regards to not knowing how to support students with comprehensive behavioral, social-emotional and self-advocacy IEP goals. The result is heightened teacher stress and teacher burnout (Xenos, 2012). The parent perspective was also influential to this project. Often, parents are unaware of the daily happenings at school, leaving them blindsided and uninformed. Yearly IEP meetings and periodic progress reports are not enough to keep parents informed and most importantly involved. These two perspectives were helpful in directing the guidebook’s purpose and process.
Findings can be validated by determining the effectiveness of the suggested steps identified within the guidebook to develop a classroom point sheet. Validation of the project can also be determined by the outcomes of the implementation throughout an entire school year. Outcomes could include student success on meeting IEP goals related to both behavior and academics. Lastly, the experiences of the students and parents, along with the special education teachers who are involved in the implementation are another way to validate the effectiveness of the project.

Summary

The methodology for creating *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* evolved from a review of the literature in the field of classroom management. The research revealed that many successful techniques are utilized in special education classrooms to minimize disruptive behaviors. However, the research also revealed that limited research has been conducted on the effects of combining these techniques into one comprehensive behavior management tool. In addition, the literature discovered that when cohesively combined, these techniques result in greater student success. Therefore, a need was presented for a teacher guidebook.

*The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* includes four sections: (a) benefits of implementation, (b) design, (c) implementation, and (d) management. Ultimately, this guidebook reflects the original research aim of how to build student accountability
through the development of a classroom point sheet and responds to the research question: Is there a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement? In the next chapter, the different components of the guidebook will be visually described.
Chapter 4

Project Presentation

Classroom expectations and student goals look different in every special education teachers’ classroom. The common thread, however, is that those different expectations and goals aim at boosting student achievement and minimizing student misbehaviors. A review of the literature revealed these two outcomes are possible through the use of a comprehensive point sheet. However, very few special education teachers are versed in designing, implementing and managing a classroom point sheet. Therefore, this study seeks to create a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement. The *Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook to Designing, Implementing and Designing a Classroom Point Sheet* was created with these needs in mind. Combining the main ideas outlined by Butera et al. (2008) and Xenos (2012), the guidebook acts as a resource to special educators impacted by student misbehaviors in their classrooms.

The *Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* is divided into four sections. Section one is an introduction outlining the benefits seen through the use of point sheets. Section two outlines procedures to follow and expectations to include when designing a classroom point sheet. Section three outlines the step-by-step procedures to follow when implementing a classroom point sheet. Lastly, section four summarizes ways to manage point sheet data in a way that coincides with IEP goals.
In addition, examples of a blank point sheet and a completed point sheet were created for teachers to use and reference. These examples encompass all of the instructions, tips and reminders outlined in the guidebook’s four sections.

Ultimately, this guidebook reflects the original research aim of how to build student accountability through the development of a classroom point sheet and responds to the research question: Is there a successful behavior management system that lessens students’ misbehaviors and promotes their academic achievement? In chapter 5 the researcher presents recommendations for future plans for the guidebook in special education classrooms as well as addresses the limitations to the project.
The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet

By Erin M. Wehner

This Guidebook includes research conducted in previously published and reviewed articles.
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Introduction: What is a Classroom Point Sheet?

Definition
An external or tangible agent used to arrange instructional conditions, monitor student performance (behavior) and implement appropriate classroom contingencies. 4, 7

Benefits
- Lessens students’ dependence on others by teaching self-management skills and ensuring greater control over their learning. 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17
- Teaches students how to internalize self-control and become accountable for their actions. 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17
- Students learn adaptive skills through praise and rewards that can be generalized in multiple environments. 2, 4, 12, 13, 16, 19
- Increases instructional time within the classroom by reducing off-task behavior. 3, 15, 20
- Acts as a daily monitor of student performance. 8, 10, 14, 20
- Reduces reliance on administrative interventions. 7, 20
- Encourages parent involvement by acting as a communication tool between school and home. 7, 8, 10, 14, 18
- In the literature reviewed, reported as one of 20 most effective evidence based classroom management systems. 2, 12, 16, 20
Design: What to Include?

Design Outcomes

A point sheet is used and designed with two outcomes in mind: (1) improving classroom management, and (2) improving academic achievement. 20 Together these two components cohesively navigate students to success in the classroom.

Improving Classroom Management

1. Every classroom is different; therefore, diagnosing disruptive behaviors that negatively impact the learning environment is imperative. Eliminating these negative interfering behaviors, or unexpected student behaviors, are the focus and purpose of the point sheet. 20

2. Thinking the opposite, or expecting positive behaviors, helps teachers decipher the student expectations of the point sheet. Questions which lead to clarification of these expectations are: What needs to be happening in the classroom? How do students need to act? 15, 16, 19, 20

3. Identifying appropriate point rewards or penalties can coincide with the expected positive behaviors. 20 Gaining points for positive, expected behaviors, builds self-assurance and a sense of success rather than failure for students. 11, 15, 16, 19

Improving Academic Achievement

1. The classroom point sheet must focus on classroom achievement and skill-building tasks that serve as academic indicators of success. 3, 20 Tasks such as participating in class, completing
homework and finishing assigned work on time are examples of skill-building tasks that could be represented on the point sheet. 4, 12, 20

2. Appropriate point rewards or penalties must be assigned, once academic achievement tasks are achieved. 20

Establishing Consequences and Rewards

Assigning appropriate rewards and consequences using numeric thresholds determine how students will earn recognition for expected behaviors and achievement of tasks. 2, 4, 12, 16, 19, 20

**Important Reminder:** Consequences (loss of points) need to discourage disruptive or off-task behavior while rewards (gain of points) need to encourage expected behavior or hard work. 3, 20

1. Unison in using the same point sheet with the same consequences and rewards for the entire class makes the system fair. Yet, individual accountability is reinforced because points are independently assigned or lost. 16, 19, 20

2. Rewards (earning a point) compensate students who consistently do as they are asked: they come to school on time with their homework and materials and remain engaged during the lessons. 2, 4, 12

3. Consequences (losing a point) lessens students’ possibilities of obtaining a reward because they are consistently not doing as they are asked: they are not coming to school prepared with their homework complete and are not remaining engaged during the lessons. 2, 4, 12, 20
Helpful Tips: Rewards need to be motivational, realistic and reinforce classroom goals.  

- Don’t break the bank – rewards cannot be a financial hardship on the teacher.
- Don’t make it too easy – rewards that are too easy to obtain cause students to become complacent.
- Don’t make it too hard – rewards that are too hard to obtain cause students to resign.
- Don’t make it too frequent – rewards that are given out daily eat-up instructional time.
- Don’t make it too infrequent – rewards that are rarely given out cause students to doubt ever getting a reward.
Implementation: How to Use?

**Important Reminders:**

- The point sheet needs to be minimally disruptive to learning, yet outlines the students’ instructional day (i.e., schedule) to account for points lost or earned throughout the entire school day. ³, ²⁰
- Students, teacher(s) and parent(s) must be versed on the point sheet’s purpose and objectives. ⁸, ¹⁰, ¹⁴, ¹⁸
- Deciding when to assign and take away points during the instructional day is the teacher’s task. ³, ²⁰
- Deciding when to communicate point totals to independent students is also the teacher’s task. ³, ²⁰

**Prior to Using with Students**

1. Every student must have knowledge of the expected behaviors and academic tasks outlined on the point sheet. ¹, ⁵, ¹¹, ¹⁶

2. Rehearse the point sheets’ expected behaviors and academic tasks – model them, post them visually in the classroom, discuss them daily or act them out. ⁹, ¹⁷

3. Make parents aware of the point sheet’s expectations: send paper copies home, discuss them at conferences, and outline them at back-to-school night. ⁸, ¹⁰, ¹⁴, ¹⁸

4. Students need to be experts of the point sheet’s expectations. This ensures students are consistently being accountable for earning their points. ³, ¹⁷, ²⁰
Introducing the Point Sheet to the Students

Practice! Familiarizing students with the point sheet prior to implementing it builds their motivation.\textsuperscript{9, 17}

Questions to Answer while Practicing:\textsuperscript{20}

- When are natural breaks occurring during the instructional day, allowing time to assign or deduct points from the students?
- For unexpected behaviors, must points be immediately taken away?
- Once proving their responsibility, can students begin assigning and deducting their own points?
- Could students be assigned points and have point deducted during lunch, recess breaks, assemblies, P.E. and mainstreaming opportunities?

Daily Steps to Follow

1. Students arrive to school and fill out their name, date and daily schedule on their point sheet.\textsuperscript{20}

2. Teacher deducts and assigns points throughout the day based on each student’s completion of academic tasks and expected behavior.\textsuperscript{3, 15, 16, 19, 20}

3. At the end of the day, teacher communicates total points with each student individually.\textsuperscript{3, 17, 20}
Helpful Hint: Having a symbol or color coded system that represents point totals for each individual student saves time. This system also gives the teacher time to conference with students for self-assessment.  

Example: Teacher puts a green star on every student’s point sheet that did not get any points deducted for the day, a yellow star on every student’s point sheet that got 1-5 points deducted for the day, a red star on every student’s point sheet that got 6-10 points deducted for the day.

4. To reinforce and maintain expectations, students need to take their point sheets home for parent review and signature. The signed point sheet is then returned to school the next day. This reinforces accountability at both home and school, as well as informs parent(s) of their child’s behavior at school.  

- Students that do not return signed point sheets have points deducted on their current day’s point sheet.

5. To promote accountability, students record their previous day’s standing (e.g., green star, yellow star or red star) on a classroom displayed chart.

“As students learn each other’s point totals, they begin to compare their scores to their peers. The collective point totals then serve as a type of work-ethic scoreboard students can use to rank themselves within the class. As students begin to recognize the link between the choices they have made and the points they have earned, they take an important first step towards self-directed learning” (Xenos, 2012).
6. The returned, signed point sheets are kept for record keeping purposes, either to use as data for IEP goals or documentation at parent meetings. 18, 20

Earning Rewards

Students that received good standings (e.g., green or yellow stars) on all point sheets for the week earn the reward.

- Providing a reward at the end of the week based on standing causes students to work hard the entire instructional week rather than just one day out of the week. 9, 17, 20

**Final Note:** Every student has a fresh start daily with a new point sheet. A previous day’s standing, good or bad, is not accounted for on the current day’s point sheet. Points received and deducted are determined based on student choices alone. Self-control, responsibility and accountability drive the students’ success and standing on their point sheets. 9, 17
Management: How to Organize?

**Important Reminder:** The point sheet must be easy to access, quick to update and current with classroom expectations.  

How to Consistently Manage

1. Collection of point sheets and tracking of student progress needs to be quick and manageable. Creating a binder for each student where parent’s signed point sheet can be kept allows for organized recording keeping. This needs to be in addition to having the students daily chart their standings on the classroom chart.

2. Dating the point sheets is also extremely important, not only for organizational purposes but for record keeping purposes too. Ordering based on dates ensures that data is continuous and current.

3. Most importantly, point sheet data can be used in IEP meetings to help determine social, behavioral and academic progress made towards goals and/or drive the development of proposed IEP goals.

“It’s extremely beneficial to have the ability to immediately access each student’s classroom performance in one comprehensive glance” (Xenos, 2012).
Conclusion

Managing a classroom point sheet is not a hard task. It is a three step process requiring: design, implementation and management. Design a point system that focuses on positive, expected behavior and academic achievement. Implement the point sheet so it is minimally disruptive to the classroom and is fairly used with all students. Manage the point sheet so that is can be accessible to use in IEP meetings and track students’ classroom performance.

Anthony J. Xenos (2012) described the importance of implementing a classroom point sheet best by saying, “Although it does require additional time to implement, the inconvenience is outweighed by the reduction in discipline incidents and the improvement in student academic achievement. A points system when designed appropriately can improve classroom conditions and promote a pleasant learning environment.”
Example Point Sheet

Student Name: __________________ Date: ____________

Yesterday’s Point Sheet Signed: Yes No N/A

Homework Returned: Yes No N/A

Green Star – Lost 0 Points Today

Yellow Star – Lost 1 to 5 Points Today

Red Star – Lost 6 or More Points Today

Opening Routines:
Expected behaviors include:
un-packing personal
belongings and homework,
starting morning work and
showing respect towards
adults and other students.

Group: _____________

Ready to go: 1 0
Good attitude: 1 0
Personal space: 1 0
Work completed: 1 0
Follow directions: 1 0

Lunch/Recess:
Following lunch area rules: 1 0
Playing fair: 1 0
Respecting adults & students: 1 0
Lining up appropriately/timely: 1 0
Positive attitude: 1 0

Closing Routines: Expected behaviors
include: having homework, packing-up
personal belongings, completing classroom
job, showing respect towards adults and
other students, and lining-up appropriately
and in a timely manner.

Group: _____________

Ready to go: 1 0
Good attitude: 1 0
Personal space: 1 0
Work completed: 1 0
Follow directions: 1 0

Group: _____________

Ready to go: 1 0
Good attitude: 1 0
Personal space: 1 0
Work completed: 1 0
Follow directions: 1 0

PARENT SIGNATURE: __________________________

*Homework written on the back: Yes No N/A

*Teacher notes written on the back: Yes No N/A
## Completed Example Point Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: Erin Murphy  Date: 3/17/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday’s Point Sheet Signed: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Returned: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Green Star – Lost 0 Points Today

### Yellow Star – Lost 1 to 5 Points Today

### Red Star – Lost 6 or More Points Today

### Opening Routines:
Expected behaviors include:
- Un-packing personal belongings and homework,
- Starting morning work and showing respect towards adults and other students.

### Group: Math Group
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 1 ☐ 0

### Group: P.E.
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 0

### Group: Morning Message
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 1 ☐ 0

### Lunch/Recess:
Following lunch area rules:
- Following lunch area rules: 1 ☐ 0
- Playing fair: 1 ☐ 0
- Respecting adults & students: 1 ☐ 0
- Lining up appropriately/timely: 1 ☐ 0
- Positive attitude: 0

### Group: Speech Group
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 0
- Follow directions: 1 ☐ 0

### Group: Reading Group
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 1 ☐ 0

### Group: Classroom Jobs
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 0

### Group: P.E.
- Ready to go: 1 ☐ 0
- Good attitude: 1 ☐ 0
- Personal space: 1 ☐ 0
- Work completed: 1 ☐ 0
- Follow directions: 0

### PARENT SIGNATURE: Catherine Murphy

*Homework written on the back: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
*Teacher notes written on the back: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Yesterday’s point sheet was not signed and returned. Please return tomorrow.
References


Chapter 5

Project Recommendations

The struggle of lessening behavior issues while boosting academic success in the classroom is a reality elementary special education teachers are faced with daily and will continue to be confronted with daily until an effective system is implemented. One of the ways that this need can be met is by providing special education teachers with The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet, which was created to reduced students’ misbehaviors and increase their academic achievement. The guidebook provides an overview of how to create, implement and manage a classroom point sheet. The resulting research demonstrates that when a classroom point sheet includes extrinsic reinforcement, parent involvement and promotes students’ self-control, misbehaviors lessen and students’ academic scores increase.

This chapter discusses the guidebook’s versatility within the special education setting as well as how it can be used in the future for schools across the country. This chapter also reviews the limitations of the guidebook and identifies areas for future research to make it more applicable for all teachers.

Summary of Project

The articles and research reviewed demonstrate a clear need for a comprehensive behavior management system that effectively reduces students’ misbehaviors, unlike those systems consistently used in special education classrooms
today. First, uncovering the positives in typically used systems helped to reveal that those systems are beneficial to a point. However, gaps such as eliminating student choice or limiting parent involvement became apparent, causing these typically used systems to be unhelpful. Taking into consideration these studies’ shortcomings, the guidebook was then constructed to include only the positive, research-based successes of these typically used behavior management systems.

Although the strategies recommended in the guidebook are research based, they would have proved more valuable if researched in a case study manner where implementation results could have been collected and evaluated. Nevertheless, the original research question was supported because a behavior management system was found to lessen student misbehaviors while simultaneously improving students’ success in academics (Xenos, 2012). In addition, not only was the behavior system researched but also outlined, including actual examples, to make implementation easy for special education teachers.

**Future Plans**

This guidebook will be made accessible to students and teachers once electronically uploaded to the archives for California State University San Marcos. The guidebook’s contents will be accessible electronically to those who view it online, including teachers in surrounding San Diego County school districts, including my own. This guidebook will be accessible to special education teachers and support providers at my own school site starting at the beginning of the fall 2014
trimester. This guidebook could potentially be used to develop teachers’ understanding and training in implementing a behavior point sheet in their classrooms. In addition, if determined helpful as hypothesized to be, this guidebook could also be shared as a resource for other special education teachers to use in my school district through an in-service training. Also introducing the guidebook at “first year teacher trainings” as a resource for beginning special education teachers, who have little experience to draw upon, could prove useful.

To determine the guidebook’s success and ultimately if a teacher has implemented a point sheet fittingly into his or her classroom, students’ progress on IEP goals must be evaluated. If students are making progress or meeting expected growth on their IEP goals, success can be credited to the daily implementation and management of the classroom’s behavior management system, the point sheet. Luckily, the guidebook’s contents are not just limited to San Diego County or even California. The uses for this guidebook are endless, and it was purposely created to be so. Learning is a lifelong practice that requires sharing, investigating and collaborating. Teachers are at the forefront of this practice and should therefore be encouraging these philosophies with one another. This guidebook is meant to be shared with other educators to ease teachers’ stress and facilitate student learning.

**Classroom Context**

According to the literature that was reviewed, specific behavior management systems were deemed more successful in a special education classroom setting. These
systems include: (a) providing extrinsic rewards, (b) teaching students self-control, and (c) facilitating parent involvement. These same systems have been utilized individually at my school site; however they were not improving students’ growth academically or behaviorally as seen in students’ lack of progress on IEP goals. These repeated failures led to a deeper review of the literature, which revealed a commonality. The behavior management system that had the most success used all of the above systems in unison. Butera et al. (2008) found that students’ off-task behavior improved solely because the dot chart encompassed multiple motivating factors such as incentives as well as taught self-regulation skills. Similarly, Xenos (2012) argued that the focus is on students being responsible for their own motivation and learning by being provided rewards to be self-controlled. This insight needed to be shared with my school community and others; therefore, *The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* was created with tangible examples to implement.

**Consideration for Global Implications**

The literature reviewed and discussed reveals identifiable successes as well as shortcomings. Butera et al (2008) and Xenos (2012) found that rewards systems are beneficial behavior management systems because they encompass techniques such as providing rewards and teaching students self-control. However, their findings left out two main and very important points: (a) the involvement of parent participation; and (b) how these techniques can be managed by a special education teacher. The guidebook aims at filling in these gaps, providing a more complete system than
currently exists. Moreover, this behavior management system could have a broad application in educational settings and form a basis for further investigations. In addition, the guidebook provides special education teachers with solutions that are readily available to begin implementing. This guidebook can be used to jumpstart all special education teachers’ thinking about improving the behavior management systems used in their classroom, to reflect various research-based techniques.

Limitations

Due to the limited scope of this project, three limitations are noted: (a) implementation research (b) population studied and (c) audience. First, the guidebook was not implemented into a school setting which created the inability to show sustained effectiveness. Had implementation research been conducted in a case study manner the guidebook’s validity could have been more credible. In addition, the research articles reviewed for this project consisted of student populations in elementary school. Certain research pertaining to students beyond elementary age was excluded for reasons that behavior problems emerge and become stable at an early age, thus promotion of self-control is critical for young children primarily. Therefore, excluding older students in the secondary school setting limited the project’s versatility to be used in all grade levels. Lastly, the guidebook was created with the special education teacher in mind, ultimately limiting the people it can impact in the field of education. Expanding the guidebook to a variety of classrooms, schools and educational settings may impact other programs; however enough data was not collected to determine this.
Future Research

In the field of behavior management, multiple techniques have been researched and implemented into classrooms; however, further research involving a classroom point sheet is needed in the following area: expanding the system to include mainstreamed special education students in general education classrooms. Research that focuses on this additional research area could strengthen the guidebook’s effectiveness across multiple classroom settings.

Including further research that focuses on the guidebook’s implementation and sustainability in the general education setting would show the guidebook’s broad application. This research could allow for a larger population of teachers to be versed on using classroom point sheets in their classrooms. In addition their successes and experiences could be added to the guidebook. General education teachers are often unfamiliar with the severity of mainstreamed, special education students’ behaviors and need guidance in handling these students. Information pertaining to designing a point sheet specific to individual students mainstreaming in a general education classroom is one such topic this guidebook could include after further research is done. Ultimately, a greater population of students would have the opportunity to become independent learners that facilitate their own learning.

Conclusion

*The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet* was created by the author.
following research reviews of behavior management systems and techniques. The purpose of this project was to provide special educators with a classroom management tool that is both an extrinsic reinforcer and motivational model that allows teachers to analyze student behaviors within the classroom. The ultimate goal of this project and the purpose behind developing this management tool is for students to become independent learners that facilitate their own learning.

The guidebook was written with the intent to give special education teachers direction on how to effectively design, implement and manage a classroom point sheet. In addition, the guidebook is intended to be used in the elementary school setting to support student growth on behavior and academic related IEP goals. Limitations were discussed and conclusions were made that expanding the guidebook to a variety of classrooms, schools and student populations is needed. Future research coincided with the project’s limitations, determining that in the future the guidebook could be a multi-setting classroom tool.

Teachers’ jobs are complex but rewarding in that they help develop qualities in their students that they carry with them through adulthood. Whether those qualities are related to academic achievement or behavior management, teachers help their students find, develop and practice them in order to be independently successful. The Special Education Teachers’ Guidebook for Designing, Implementing and Managing a Classroom Point Sheet reinforces this belief and provides teachers with a tool to help foster that discovery in their students.
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