TECHNICAL NOTE

AN INEXPENSIVE TOKEN

Where it is desirable to use a manipulable generalized reinforcer (as opposed to points, stars, stamps, and so forth), an inexpensive coin is available in the form of the Mexican five-centavo piece. These coins are roughly the same size as the American nickel (Table 1). As such, they are acceptable in National Cash Register electro-mechanical coin changers for automatic delivery. They can also be dispensed manually in tube-type coin changers that have nickel-sized columns (e.g., McGill Paragon Changers, Galef Company, New York, New York). Their slightly lighter weight and smaller size, however, makes them unacceptable to standard coin-operated dispensing machines adjusted to accept American nickels, effectively denying an experimental population surreptitious token exchange outside the limits of a given project. These latter devices can gen-

Table 1

Comparison data: U.S. nickel and Mexican five-centavo piece.

Coin	Diameter	Thickness	Weight
U.S. nickel	0.839" (21.3 mm)	0.075" (1.9 mm)	4.8 grams
Mex. 5-centavo piece	0.808" (20.5 mm)	0.062" (1.6 mm)	3.9 grams

erally be adjusted to accept the five-centavo piece should this be a part of the project.

Current exchange rates make these coins available at \$0.40 U.S. currency per 100 five-centavo pieces or 0.4¢ per coin. This price contrasts favorably with poker chip costs (e.g., retail price around 0.9¢ each) or other metal tokens (e.g., brass or aluminum, round blank checks, 1 to 1.5 in. in diameter, McMaster-Carr Company, Los Angeles, California, around 2¢ each).

Other foreign currencies may make similar coins available but exchange rates can make them similar in cost to metal tokens. For example, the Cottage Demonstration Project at Parsons Research Center has utilized British half-pennies. They purchased 2000 from a local bank for \$55 plus shipping of \$6.24 (James R. Lent, personal communication)—a cost of approximately 3¢ each.

For a token economy project at this institution, 10,000 five-centavo pieces were purchased at a cost of \$40 plus shipping of \$9.95. It can be seen that total costs for the Mexican coinage remain slightly under 0.5¢ per coin.

Mexican coinage may be purchasable through a well-connected local bank. If not, this investigator has been able to make purchase through the First National Bank of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

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