*THE EFFECTS OF A GOOD-BEHAVIOR CONTRACT ON THE
CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS¹*

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The effects of a good-behavior contract on the on-task behavior, disruptive behavior, daily assignment completion, and weekly grades of four sixth-grade students were examined in a public school classroom. The contract consisted of presenting the students with a list of good conduct and assignment completion goals and a list of disruptive behaviors coupled with a list of rewards and penalties that could be earned. The rewards and penalties made use of existing facilities and classroom privileges. At the beginning of each morning work period, the teacher negotiated the good-behavior contract with each experimental subject. During the negotiations, the teacher emphasized student self-management and encouraged each student to earn a reward by achieving the good-conduct goals and completing the contract assignments. An isolated work area was provided to allow students the opportunity to remove themselves from their desks for a fixed period of 15 min. At the end of the work period, the teacher determined whether each student earned a choice of reward or penalty dependent on assignment completion and whether the teacher had observed disruptive behaviors. Thus, the contract permitted the student to negotiate the goal behaviors and contingencies with the teacher. Throughout the study, the students were in agreement with the teacher on whether a choice of reward or penalty had been earned. The contract was introduced for different children at different times, constituting a multiple-baseline analysis. On-task behavior and daily assignment completion increased, weekly grades were higher, and disruptive behavior decreased when the contract was in effect. Three contrast subjects were selected from the class as model students who consistently produced acceptable assignments and who did not engage in high rates of disruptive and/or off-task behaviors. When the contract was in effect for the experimental subjects, their performance compared favorably with the contrast subjects, who never received the daily contract. The results demonstrated that the contract was effective within the confines of the facilities and contingencies readily available in a public school classroom setting.

DESCRIPTORS: classroom behavior, on-task behavior, disruptive behavior, contingency contracting, self-management, self-control, primary classroom, children

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