*THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REINFORCEMENT, RESPONSE
COST, AND MIXED PROGRAMS ON
CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS¹*

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Six elementary school children served as subjects in an experiment comparing the relative effectiveness of (1) *token reinforcement*, in which children received tokens for attending and for correct arithmetic performance; (2) *response cost*, in which children received "free" tokens at the start of a period but lost them for inattention and for arithmetic performance below a specified level; and (3) a combination of both token reinforcement and response cost. During training, the six subjects received all three procedures in counterbalanced sequence. The effects of the three procedures were assessed by a within-subject comparison divided into three phases: (i) baseline, (ii) training, (iii) withdrawal of tokens. Introduction of the three token procedures markedly increased the two dependent measures. However, there were no differences across the procedures in the amount of change produced in either attending behavior or arithmetic performance. During baseline, the subjects averaged 29% attending behavior and 6.4 correct problems. These levels increased to 85% for attending behavior and 11.4 correct problems for arithmetic performance during training. Removal of all token procedures significantly decreased attending behavior (to an average of 65%), but produced a nonsignificant reduction in arithmetic performance (to an average of 7.6 correct problems). There was evidence that this lack of differential effects of the three token procedures was not due to an inability to discriminate among them. Furthermore, the subjects were evenly divided in their preference for the three procedures.

DESCRIPTORS: tokens, response cost, reinforcement, elementary school children

¹The full text of this manuscript is deposited with the National Auxiliary Publications Service (NAPS). For copies, order NAPS Document #02636. Order from ASIS/NAPS Co., c/o Microfiche Publications, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Remit with order for each copy \$3.00 for microfiche or \$6.75 for photocopies. Make checks payable to Microfiche Publications. Thanks are extended to Mr. Stoneburg, Mr. Perabo, and Mr. Toth for their cooperation in implementing the study in the school; Dr. Christopher Clarke and Dr. Brad Bucher for their assistance in the design of the study, and Dr. Larry Roberts for his comments and guidance in writing the paper.

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