

Rewards As Reinforcement And Intervention To Enhance Task Responses Of A Learner With Autism

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Abstract- This research aimed to use rewards as intervention in enhancing the performance of a Self-contained learner with Autism since the problem of the learner observed by the researchers are taking a long time to respond and a lot of pauses in between tasks. The participant of the study is an Autism Learner in a self-contained class. The researchers used rewards like toys, snacks and break time as an intervention in enhancing the performance of the learner and minimize the pauses between tasks. The researchers have conducted a pre-intervention observation assessment the result shows a mean score of 1 followed by a post-intervention observation assessment with a mean of 3. This means that the use of rewards like toys, snacks and break time as an intervention have enhanced the performance of the learner and minimizes pauses between tasks.

Keywords: Autism, Self-Contained Learner, Reward-Based Intervention, Learner Performance, Positive Reinforcement, Special Education, Behavioral Improvement, Task Completion, Motivation, Classroom Intervention, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Learning Enhancement, Educational Psychology, Student Engagement, Break Time Rewards.

I. INTRODUCTION

Taking a long time to respond and has a lot of pauses in between tasks was observed to a pupil by the researchers in a certain class. Accomplishing the tasks given on time and sit and wait are one of the essentials in transitioning to mainstream class, simultaneously finish the tasks and waiting for the next one was seen as problems that needed immediate action.

Lambrechts et. al. (2020) (Lambrechts, Cook, Ludvig, & Alonso, E, 2020) cited Rewards act as a motivator for positive behavior and learning. Although rewards are widely used in various educational and support settings for children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The role of rewards in the learning process relates intrinsically to an individual's understanding of the consequence of their actions. Ruby (2020) stated in an article that Applied Behavioral Therapy, sometimes called ABA, uses rewards sometimes called "reinforcements" as a tool

for building skills in children with autism. This approach can be very effective if the therapist chooses highly motivating rewards; the choice of reward, of course, varies from person to person. While some children with autism value toys or snacks, others value time with a favorite activity or TV show. Still others work hard for praise, hugs, and high fives (Rudy, 2020).

In the Philippines, the study conducted by (Cahapay, 2022) revealed that the SPED teachers from Region XII often employ behavior modifications for children with autism. Specifically, they use reinforcers like rewards; adjust the classroom environment to prevent behavior; provide relaxing activities; remove the child from situations that reinforce undesired behaviors; and reduce repetitive behaviors. Besides, teachers redirect aggressive and injurious behaviors; use consistent routines; ignore attention-seeking but harmless behaviors; and break rigid behaviors. At present, most interventions targeting social-communicative skill defects and other behavioral problems in ASD rely on the principles of applied

behavior analysis (ABA), especially operant techniques, where desired behaviors are reinforced using a variety of rewards for example, verbal praise, candy, toys, or stickers (Kohls , Chevallier, Troiani , & Schultz , 2012).

Positive reinforcement is an effective method of encouraging desired behaviors in students by rewarding them. This method of behavior modification has been proven to be more effective than punishment and negative reinforcement. In other words, when students exhibit positive behaviors, they are rewarded to encourage them to repeat those behaviors in the future. This is based on the principle that behavior that is reinforced will tend to be repeated (Cherry, 2023). Additionally, Positive reinforcement can be used to encourage a variety of behaviors, including academic performance, participation, and positive attitudes. Rewards can include tangible items such as stickers, tokens, or prizes, as well as intangible rewards such as praise, positive feedback, and recognition (Deped Tambayan, n.d.).

Motivating your students to learn and to participate can be very hard. Some teachers have their hands full with class management and they don't even get to teaching. In order to stimulate learning and to motivate good behavior, lots of teachers use rewards for students (Renard, 2020). This action research highlights the particular problems encounter by the teacher in a self-contained class in handling learner with autism in terms of making the learner accomplish the given tasks within the given time.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a growing program that classrooms, schools, and districts are implementing to handle challenging behaviors, especially in the use of assessment and in interventions that focus on correcting environmental deficiencies (Carr; Horner; Turnbull; Marquis; McLaughlin; McA., 2017) as cited by (Kosobud, 2017). There should be a good interaction between teachers and the students so as to create a good teacher-student relationship. Basically, motivation can come from inside and outside an individual, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It means that the person is motivated because there are some

things to be pursued or because the person is provoked by some things (Fitriati, Fatmala, & Anjaniputra, 2020).

Thus, this research focused on the use of rewards as intervention in accomplishing tasks on time of Children with autism in a public school in Davao City. The result of the study will provide information and develop strategies on how to improve learners' performance through rewards. Moreover, this study will help teachers make additional techniques and strategies among young pupils through fun and motivating way. The findings will also help teachers make instructions and instructional materials that are self- directed and easy to make.

II. METHOD

The researchers have identified a common problem of a selected learner in a self- contained class which is taking a long time to respond and has a lot of pauses in between tasks results to not finishing the task on time and not finish it at all. The researchers decided to use and integrate giving rewards in every task the learner will accomplish may it be though a form of snacks, toys and even 5 minute-break. Upon doing the intervention the researchers have used an action plan (see appendix C) and lesson plan (see Appendix B) to make the intervention valid and reliable.

The researchers conducted the prepared action plan and lesson plan in the five-day session. During the first day of intervention the researchers used in play as a reward after finishing the clip gripping, bead works and coloring worksheet within the given time. In the second day of intervention the researchers used police toy car to encourage the learner to do the clip gripping, bead works and coloring worksheet. In the third day of intervention the researchers used again the toy police car. In the fourth day of intervention that researchers use variety of toy cars as a reward. In the last day of intervention, the researchers used whatever toy the learner want to get after finishing the clip gripping, bead works, coloring worksheet, letter tracing and name tracing. To gather the baseline data, the learner was observed in a five-day session without

giving any rewards or showing toys as encouragement. After gathering the baseline data, the learner was observed by the researchers during the implementation of the intervention. The results were analyzed and interpreted through tables and bar-graphs.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section contains the results of the conducted classroom action research. It also discusses about the improvement of learners' performance and the effectiveness of the intervention applied by the researchers in conducting the classroom action research. The results are presented in a table and carefully interpreted by the researchers.

Table 1 presents the observed performance of the learner during the pre- intervention assessment and post-intervention assessment.

Table 1. Comparative Table of Pre-implementation and Post-implementation Performance of the Learner

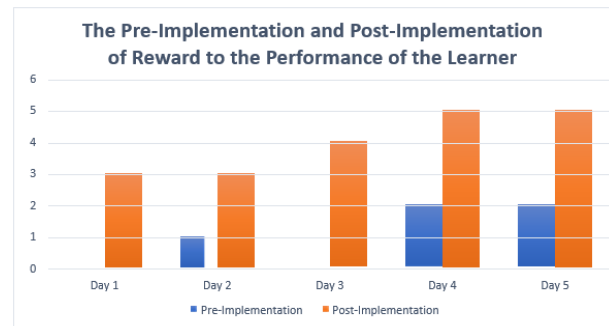
	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
Pre-Implementation	0 Task done	1 Task done	0 Task done	2 Tasks done	2 Tasks done
Post-Implementation	3 Tasks Done	3 Tasks done	4 Tasks done	5 Tasks done	5 Tasks done

In the data above, during the pre-intervention observation that highest number of accomplished tasks are only 2 and the lowest is 0. This indicates that the learner failed to accomplished all the given task of the day. With the observation presented during the pre-intervention assessment they gained a mean of 1. On the other hand, during post-intervention assessment there was an increase of scores compared to the pre- intervention scores. The highest number of accomplished tasks was 5 and the lowest was 3. With the number of accomplished tasks presented in the data above the difference of the post-intervention mean and the pre-intervention mean is 3. The intervention accounts to the difference of the pre-implementation mean and the post-intervention mean number of accomplished

which is 60%. This indicates that the learner enhanced his performance and minimizes pauses between tasks that results to more accomplished tasks.

Figure 1 presents the number of activities accomplished by the learner during the Pre-Implementation and Post-Implementation of the Intervention.

Figure 1. Shows the number of activities the Learner can finish before and after the implementation of reward as intervention.



The bar graph clearly presents the pre-implementation and post-implementation accomplished tasks of the learner. The graph shows the significant difference of the number of accomplished tasks. This implies that the intervention done between the pre- implementation and post-implementation showed promising improvement. Appendix A shows the number of accomplished tasks of the learner in the five-day observation.

The study determines that the integration of rewards such as toys, snacks and break time as intervention helped in enhancing the performance of a Learner with Autism and minimizes pauses between tasks. Based on the findings, the number of accomplished tasks of the learner in the pre-implementation were low. When the rewards were administered, the number of accomplished tasks of the learner increased per session based on the number of accomplished tasks during the observation. The learner then showed high number of accomplished tasks in the post-implementation. The results proved the essentiality of what Renard (2020) claimed that in order to stimulate learning and to motivate good

behavior, lots of teachers use rewards for students. The researchers' adherence to the use of rewards in teaching learners with autism paved the way in making teaching-learning process smooth sailing. In other words, when students exhibit positive behaviors, they are rewarded to encourage them to repeat those behaviors in the future. This is based on the principle that behavior that is reinforced will tend to be repeated (Cherry, 2023). Thus, to enhance performance of the learner and minimizes pauses in between tasks, teachers can use rewards like toys according to the liking of the learner, snacks and break time.

IV. REFLECTION

This study will be of most help to pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. In this inclusive era, learners are diversely and uniquely different. To adapt to this change, teachers should employ teaching strategies and interventions that will boost the learner's eagerness to engage and accomplish tasks given to them. That is where this study comes in. This study will help teachers make effective instructions that will really catch the attention and make the learner accomplish a task. These interventions or rewards are not only effective but also make the learner engage easily. With toys, short breaks and snacks awaiting them, they will surely have their tasks done.

To improve this study, the researchers recommend that the participants should be increased. This will make the study more valid and reliable. The researchers also suggest to explore other subjects and think of other interventions out of it. Future researches should also explore other rewards or techniques that would make the learner engage in the teaching-learning process actively and enthusiastically.

The researchers were ecstatic as they created an original research project that combined learning and enjoyment. Their unwavering love for teaching drives them to study and conduct additional studies for the benefit of teachers and, in particular, students. To explore more ways to be able to make the learning

process of learners with special needs easier and more fun.

While conducting the study, the researchers spent more time getting to know and understand the participant. Every session was full of revelations. There were instances when our tolerance was tested, and there were times when researchers were disappointed by each other's differing opinions and suggestions. Times of endurance by researchers and participant, as well as times of developing strong relationships between researchers and participant. We had ups and downs while conducting the study, and we almost gave up because of each availability in time and venue for making the intervention. However, with trust, understanding, and life goals, the researchers were able to complete and perform the study successfully.

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