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Increasing the Social Involvement of Withdrawn Adolescents: Effects of Peer Praise Notes

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Increasing the Social Involvement of Withdrawn Adolescents: Effects of Peer Praise Notes



POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Walk the Peaceable Walk

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Outline

- Background Literature
- Method
- Results
- Discussion

Literature

Method

Results

Discussion



Socially Withdrawn Students

- Research has shown that those students who are socially withdrawn or isolated have difficulty learning appropriate social conduct which places them at risk for difficulties later in life (Oden, 1980; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992).





- Students find interactions with withdrawn students to be aversive or less rewarding than interactions with other students (Stormshak, et al., 1999).
- Many students avoid interactions with students who have behavior or emotional disorders (McDowell, 1988; Myerson & Hale, 1984).





Interventions

- One approach aimed to increase students' social involvement is to design educational systems that increase prosocial behavior, rather than simply aiming to prevent antisocial behavior (Winette & Winkler, 1972).
- Peer approval is a powerful source of prosocial influence and may be an effective target for intervention (Skinner, et al., 2000).





Peer Praise

- Positive Peer Reporting (PPR) provides students with an opportunity to verbally report their peers' prosocial behaviors. PPR has been shown to be effective in increasing the social interactions of withdrawn students (Skinner, et al., 2002).
- PPR was effective in increasing the social involvement of three socially withdrawn children. Peers were a source of positive reinforcement for the prosocial behavior of at-risk children (Moroz & Jones, 2002).



Written Praise

- This study was a replication of Nelson et al., 2008 which found that Peer Praise Notes increased the social interactions of withdrawn students.





Research Question

- What are the effects of peer-written praise notes on the social involvement of withdrawn middle-school students?



Method

- Participants
- Setting
- Experimental Design
- Intervention



Participants & Setting

- Two adolescents (7th grade) attending a middle school in the Western U.S.
- Students were in 2 separate regular English classes and were selected by teacher nomination and researcher observation for low social involvement.
- Two additional teachers confirmed the target students' behavior in their classes as socially withdrawn.





- Elaina was a Hispanic female. She was shy, but often smiled at classmates and spoke briefly to peers when they talked to her, but did not initiate interactions. She preferred to do homework during Peer Activity Time.
- Carrie was a White female. She rarely spoke to other students and peers seldom spoke to her. She did not smile or respond to classmates. She kept her head down, doing homework or reading a book during Peer Activity Time. Academically, Carrie was a very good student.



Experimental Design

- This was a single-subject multiple baseline across subjects design

Method



Intervention

1. A researcher gave the class a lesson on peer relations then announced that students would have a 15-minute Peer Activity Time 3-4 days a week.

Students' Peer Activity Time activities included:

- Listening to music
- Talking to their friends
- Hanging out together in the back of the room
- Playing games alone or with others (e.g., Jenga, cards, domino's, hackysack, etc.)

2. Students were observed during Peer Activity Time for the purpose of selecting a target student in each class.

Method



3. Treatment began: all students received instruction on how to write a Peer Praise Note and were asked to write two PPNs each day. Students received a checklist of classmates' names and an envelope for their binder to save PPNs received.
4. Students voted on a reward (group contingency) they wanted to earn for writing PPNs
5. A dial was hung in the classroom to track PPNs written.
6. Target students' social involvement was observed and recorded for 12 min. during Peer Activity Time.
 - Social Involvement:
 - Social engagement: any positive verbal or nonverbal interaction with a peer (e.g., talking, actively listening, playing together, etc.)
 - Participation: involvement in a game with structure or rules



Social Involvement

Example:

- Christine is playing a card game with Courtney
- Clay and John are talking and laughing together at the back of the room



Non-example:

- Jack is sitting at his desk playing dominos alone
- Dylan is wandering around the room observing his classmates while they play games

Method



Observational Method

Partial interval recording: Observation sessions occurred during peer activity time and consisted of 72, 10-second intervals (12 minutes).



Method



Interobserver Agreement

- Prior to data collection, two observers conducted practice sessions. When interobserver agreement exceeded 90%, training was terminated.
- Interobserver agreement: During 33% of the observations, the secondary observer simultaneously recorded the interactions. Interobserver agreement was 98%.



Observation Form

Observation Form: Sample

Period: 1 2 3

Student name: _____ (students' real names were not used)

Day of week: _____

Date: _____

Start: _____

End: _____

Observer _____

Primary Secondary

| Interval (10 second intervals) | +=Active 0= not interacting | Who initiated the interaction? (first initial of student) | Who was the recipient of the interaction? (first initial of student) | Students Involved in interaction? (first initial of students) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1 | + | E (Erin) | C (Carrie) | T (Taylor) A (Alan) D (David) |
| 2 | + | | | ↓ |
| 3 | 0 | | | |

Method



Praise Note

Date: 4/28/2007

To: David

I really liked your
role-play in class.
You are cool!

From: Sam

A large, teardrop-shaped graphic containing a form for a peer praise note. The form is titled 'Peer Praise Note' and includes fields for 'Date:', 'To:', and 'From:'. There are several horizontal lines for writing the message.

**Peer
Praise
Note**

Date: _____

To: _____

From: _____

Method



Group Contingency

- Group contingencies were used to reinforce the writing of praise notes.
- Students rank-ordered a list of activities they wanted to earn.

Please number each activity from 1–6. #1 is the activity you would like to do the *most*, #6 is the activity you would like to do the *least*.

- Doughnut and chocolate milk party
- Fiesta Party (chips, salsa, Sangria)
- Smallville* movie, popcorn, and soda
- Burgerking: receive \$3 for breakfast
- Outside games (kickball) and candy party
- Dodge ball in the gym and candy party

Method



Treatment Integrity

- A checklist was completed by the PI to ensure the training of students was conducted in a consistent manner across classrooms.
 - 100% treatment integrity
- The teacher and the PI jointly implemented the intervention daily.
 - Permanent product data suggests that the intervention was implemented as designed.

Example

- 1. During our unit on peer relations, you will be encouraged to write praise notes to your classmates.
- 2. Each morning there will be two Peer Praise Notes on your desk. You will be given time to write praise notes after journaling time.
- 3. (Teacher demonstrates the steps of writing a praise note by writing on a praise note transparency on the overhead projector):
 - a. To: Sam
 - b. Write a message to a classmate. You can write something specific like “*I liked your role-play. You were very ...*”

Method



In Class Tracking of Praise Notes

- Public posting was used to reinforce the writing of praise notes (i.e., a poster was hung on the wall indicating the number of praise notes written so far that week, as well as the class goal).

The researcher said:
“Congratulations, you wrote 20 PPNs today!”
Students were enthused about moving the dial each day.



Method



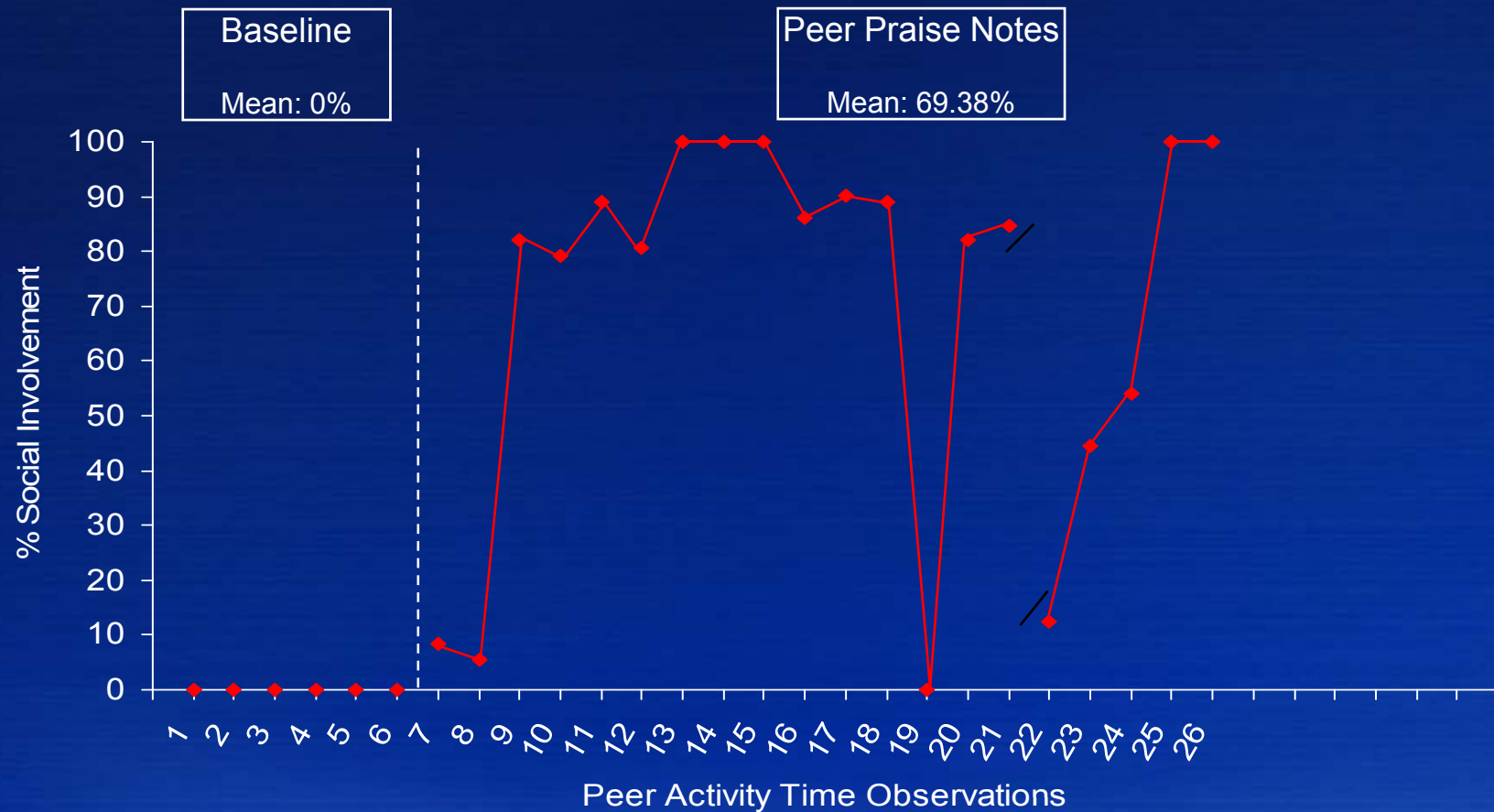
Results

- Interaction With Peers
- Results
- Social Validity

Results



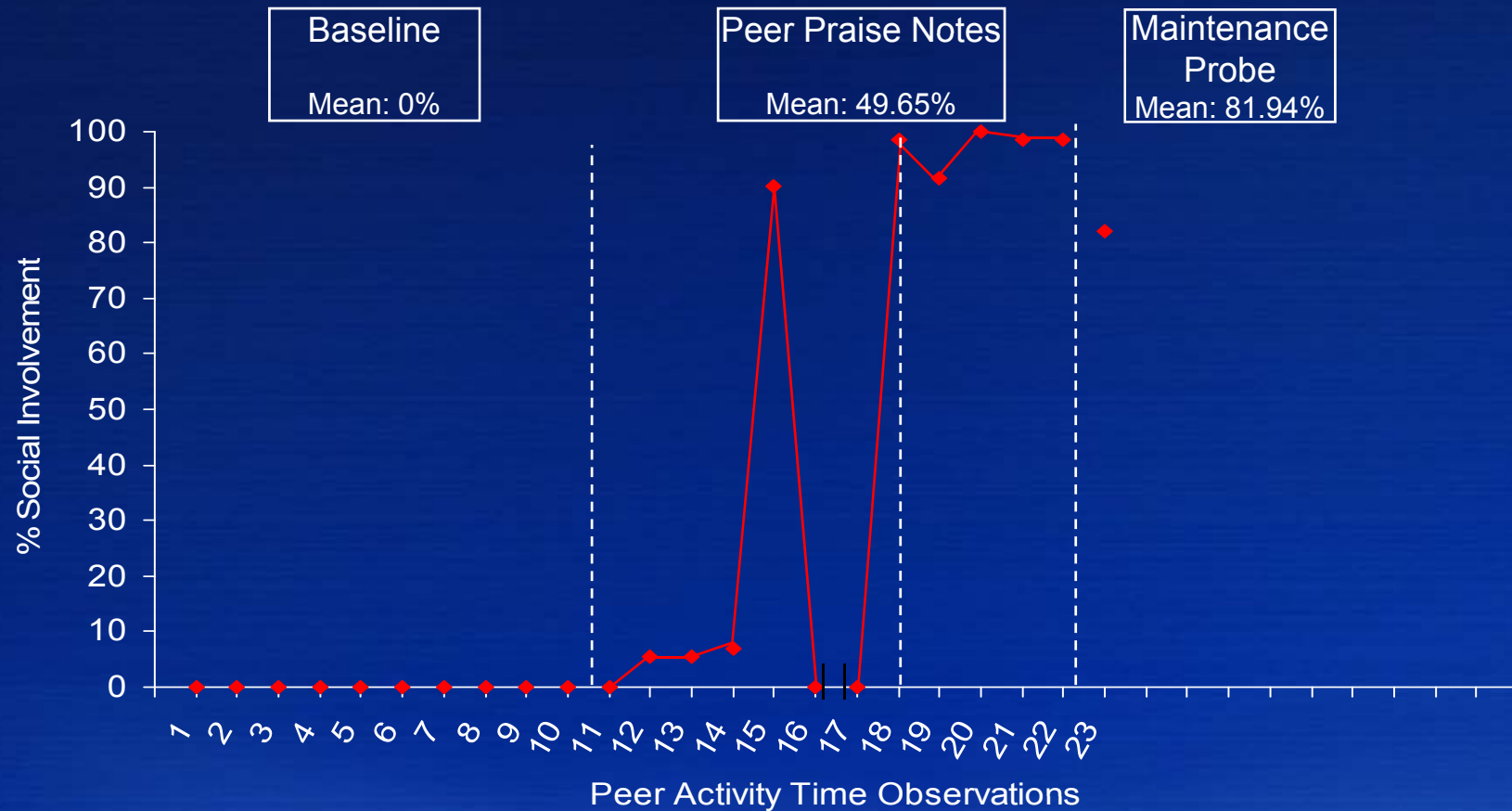
Interaction With Peers: Elaina



Results



Interaction With Peers: Carrie



Results



Social Validity: Teacher & Students

The teacher and students believed the intervention to be beneficial for all students. Intervention Rating Profile-15, (Witt & Elliott, 1985)

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree/Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| I would suggest the use of Peer Praise Notes to other teachers. | | | | | X |
| This intervention (Peer Praise Notes) is a fair way to handle students socially withdrawn behavior. | | | | | X |
| I like the procedures used in the Peer Praise Notes Intervention. | | | | | X |
| Overall, Peer Praise Notes would be beneficial for students. | | | | X | |

Results



Results

- The treatment was effective for both participants
 - Both participants' interactions increased
- The target behavior did maintain (percentage of time interacting was higher than each student's mean baseline percentage)
- Teachers and students rated the intervention high in social validity.



Discussion

- This study extended our prior study (Nelson et al., 2008)
- These findings indicate that Peer Praise Notes produced distinguishable improvements in the social involvement of two socially isolated adolescents.
- These studies extended previous research by:
 - examining a Junior High school population (adolescents rather than elementary students)
 - Using a single subjects multiple baseline design
 - utilizing written peer praise (previous research examined teacher praise or PPR– verbal peer praise or “tootling”)



Challenges

- Intervention is time consuming
 - Writing praise notes
 - Peer Activity Time (3-4 days a week for 15 min.)
- Target student's *significant peer* moved away following treatment and before maintenance data was taken
- Class size



Procedure for Writing Peer Praise Notes (PPNs) in your classroom:

- Step 1: Introduce the topic by discussing the importance of peer relationships and praise.
- Step 2: Instruct and demonstrate how to write an effective praise note, using an overhead projector and a transparency with a sample PPN.
- Step 3: Discuss and agree upon the class goal (i.e., number of PPNs students must write to earn a class reward every 1-2 weeks), write it on a poster, and hang it in the classroom.
- Step 4: Have students vote on a class reward they can earn if they reach the goal (e.g., a video and popcorn party, chips and salsa party, cereal party, etc.). Write the reward on an 8 x 11 paper and hang it by the goal poster.
- Step 5: Introduce the intervention:
 - Place a PPN on each student's desk.
 - Allow 2-5 minutes for students to write a PPN.
 - Collect and review PPNs for appropriate content.
 - Distribute PPNs to students who received them.
 - Provide a place for students to keep their PPNs (e.g., in a pocket or envelope inside of their journal or notebook).
- Step 6: Track the number of PPNs written daily.
- Step 7: Record target students' interactions during class activities or recess to determine whether PPNs provided desired results.
- Step 8: Fade the intervention as desired results are obtained.



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