

This Week's Citation Classic

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Hall R V, Lund D & Jackson D. Effects of teacher attention on study behavior. *J. Appl. Behav. Anal.* 1:1-12, 1968.

It was demonstrated that if teachers gave attention to pupils when they engaged in appropriate classroom behavior and ignored them when they were disruptive or dawdled, study levels increased dramatically. When teachers discontinued giving attention for study, pupil study decreased until teachers attended to it once more. [The *Science Citation Index*[®] (*SCI*[®]) and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*[™] (*SSCI*[™]) indicate that this paper has been cited 355 times since 1969.]

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"This study was an extension of others my colleagues (e.g., Don Baer, Montrose Wolf, Todd Risley, Marcia Broden) and I had carried out at the University of Washington which had demonstrated that adult attention could increase desired behaviors of normal preschool children and older children with severe behavior and learning problems. One reason that it is frequently cited may be because it was probably the first, study reported in which systematic reinforcement procedures were used in a regular school classroom. A number of prior reinforcement studies were carried out with deviant children in institutions and special classrooms, but few if any were with 'normal' students in a regular class.

"Another likely reason for its popularity is that the effects were immediate and dramatic, often increasing study behavior from about 25% to 75% in a few days. Similar dramatic decreases were observed if teacher attention was withdrawn. These data were graphed daily to provide excellent illustrations of the newly recognized single subject reversal design which helped launch

the field of applied behavior analysis. Because it was applied, behavioral and analytic, it was selected as the lead article in the first issue of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

"Another factor was that the procedures which produced the dramatic changes were simple and easily implemented. Prior studies using Skinner's approaches often involved tangible rewards or complex token systems. This study demonstrated that naturally available consequences could be easily implemented to bring about behavior change. Furthermore, the teachers found that once the behavior was established it took no more time to attend to appropriate pupil behavior than it previously had for disruptive behavior.

"The studies pointed out that one of the most important factors distinguishing between effective teachers and parents and unsuccessful ones is that the former attend primarily to and provide feedback for appropriate, rather than inappropriate behavior.

"This study and the fifty or more which followed were carried out in a community research project in the inner-city of Kansas City, Kansas. Many project visitors have been amazed to find our offices in two locations, the basements of a church and a liquor store

"One anecdote occurred as one of the teachers began to come by the desk of a heretofore disruptive third grader to comment on his work and praise his efforts. A classmate leaned across his desk and said, 'Robbie, what you doin' over there that so special anyway?'

"Another concerns a co-author, Deloris Jackson, a paraprofessional observer from the community where the study was conducted. Both she and Diane Lund, a graduate student, contributed substantially to the development of the observation codes and other study aspects. Deloris chuckled on receiving a number of letters addressed to Dr. Jackson and on being invited to join various professional associations because of her contributions to the field."