POSTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WITH STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

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THESIS: POSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WITH STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

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ABSTRACT

Students eligible for special education under the criteria of Emotional Disturbance often present disruptive or off-task behaviors in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to determine if the class pass intervention or classroom password or the combination of the two would be a more effective strategy in a high school classroom. The class pass intervention provides the student with a pass from class that they can use to request a break or to keep and use for a preferred activity at a later time. The classroom password is to increase engagement and on-task behavior during academic instruction and reduce disruptive behaviors. The study used a group design with A-B-A-B design to measure the success and effectiveness of the intervention.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Active listening and engagement are important factors in learning in a high school classroom. Students who are eligible for special education may display unwanted behaviors in the classroom which impedes learning for all students. Students who are eligible for special education under Emotional Disturbance (ED) or autism (AUT) may display more severe off-task behaviors and even disruptive behaviors in class which significantly impacts engagement (Collins et al., 2018). Teachers often respond to these behaviors by disciplining the student or removing the student from the classroom (Lewis, McIntosh, Simonsen, Mitchell, & Hatton, 2017). Removal of the student from the learning environment causes a loss of instructional minutes for the entire classroom, and even more minutes for the removed student. The literature is rich with evidence-based positive behavior management strategies at the elementary and middle school levels. Some behavior management strategies that have been explored are positive praise, self-management, peer modeling, and class-wide group contingencies. The studies show that positive behavior interventions can be used to decrease disruptive behaviors across multiple settings. Despite several successful interventions, there have not been many studies targeted at the high school level with these strategies. The current study implemented two different positive reinforcement interventions to reduce off-task behaviors in the high school special education classroom.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students eligible for special education across the spectrum of eligibilities display behaviors that decrease their ability to access school curriculum. Behaviors include tantrums, cursing, aggression, or impulsivity, which can be disruptive to individual learning and to other classmates as well. Teachers often respond to these behaviors by disciplining the student or removing the student from the classroom (Lewis et al., 2017). It is important for teachers to use effective evidence-based practices to reduce distractions in the classroom and maximize instructional learning time.

Positive Praise

The use of positive praise in classrooms of all grade levels with students of all abilities has led to an increase in student engagement with on task classroom behaviors such as active participation, raising hand to ask a question or comment, and engaging in appropriate coping strategies. For example, Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, and Weaver (2008) provided a guide on how teacher praise promotes teaching and reinforcing skills to encourage appropriate student behavior in the classroom. When teachers positively reinforce the optimum or desired behaviors, students were more likely to demonstrate those positive behaviors (Epstein et al., 2008). For these reasons, it is important for students to understand behavior expectations, and for teachers to reinforce positive behavior to encourage the likelihood that those behaviors occur in the future.

Another successful strategy to support positive classroom behavior is a school-wide positive behavior intervention and supports (SWPBIS) approach. The purpose of SWPBIS is to increase on-task behavior and use data to maintain and ensure success in order to decrease office

referrals and suspensions (Lewis et al., 2017). Schools that have adopted SWPBIS describe how administrative support is an essential component for effective implementation (George, Cox, Minch, & Sandomierski, 2018). To have a successful SWPBIS, schools must make strategic adjustments when implementing the curriculum according to the age, grade, developmental abilities, special education eligibilities, and severity levels of the student population (Bohanon et al., 2012). One study found that schools are more successful when they establish schoolwide expectations, and classroom support systems in conjunction (Bohanon et al., 2012). Once the school-wide expectations are established, the next step is to introduce the new policies in classroom or other settings such as an assembly, the office, or cafeteria. In their three-year study, Bohanon et al. (2012), focused on behavior expectations inside the classroom as well as in the hallway outside of the classroom, where behavior guidelines were posted throughout the school campus. The participants in the study were all staff and students from the same high school. Staff developed schoolwide expectations based on surveys distributed from the previous year. Students were frequently reminded of expectations and encouraged to engage in appropriate behaviors. When a student was observed to be engaging in a positive behavior, they were rewarded with a ticket. The tickets could be redeemed on a weekly basis for snacks (Bohanan et al., 2012). The following year, the SWPBIS was modified and continued and the expectations were presented at an assembly. Students could redeem tickets that year for school spirit items (e.g., t-shirt) or materials for the classroom. The SWPBIS was implemented over the span of three school years. The study found that office referrals for behaviors significantly decreased in the first and third years. During the second year, some decrease in referrals were noted but not as significant as the other two years.

Techniques of Behavior Management: Self-Management

Aside from positive reinforcement in the classroom and campus-wide, another strategy to improve behaviors involves self-management techniques, which has been particularly effective for students with ED. Moore, Anderson, Glassenbury, Lang, and Didden (2013) completed a study that involved an electronic beeper that sent a vibration at specific intervals to remind students to be on-task. The study consisted of three male students between the ages of 12 and 13 who exhibited high levels of off-task behaviors in the classroom (Moore et al., 2013). One student was described as an average student performing below his potential while the other two students were described as having low average ability. Moore et al. (2013) defined on-task behavior as behaviors that complied with instructions given by the teacher (e.g., reading written work). Off-task behavior was defined as any behavior that was not directly associated with the activity (e.g., walking around the room). The participants were taught how to use the "MotivAider" which was similar to a beeper as well as a recording sheet used to document on-task and off-task behavior. At the beginning of every lesson, the teacher handed the "MotivAider" and recording sheet to each participant. The beeper was set to provide a vibration every three minutes. The participant would record on their sheet whether they were on or off-task when the vibration occurred.

The vibrations sent from the beeper were discreet and not disruptive to other students in the class. At the end of each session, the participant graphed their on- and off-task behavior. In the baseline phase, all three students demonstrated low levels of on-task behavior. When the intervention was introduced, all three students demonstrated an increase of on-task behavior. The study lasted over 30 class sessions and found that a prompt delivered by the beeper can be an effective way to remind students to self-monitor their own on-task behavior.

In a similar manner, another behavioral self-management technique is called “class-pass.” This positive self-management behavior intervention allows a student to use a pass to leave class for a predetermined amount of time or save the pass to use for a greater incentive at a later time (Collins et al., 2015). In this study, four male high school students were selected by their English Language Arts teachers based on specific criteria. To be eligible for the study, the student had to engage in disruptive behavior during academic work, frequently ignore academic instruction, and need constant redirection (Collins et al., 2015). Two students exclusively participated in general education while the other two students maintained special education eligibilities under specific learning disability (SLD) and participated in general education for 75% of the day. The class pass provides students a choice, but also encourages them to engage in on-task behavior more frequently if saving the pass has a more reinforcing reward for the immediate future. The intervention was introduced as an ABAB withdrawal design over six to eight weeks. In this study, Collins et al. (2015), showed that students on-task behavior declined after removing the formal rules around the pass, but off-task behavior did not return to baseline levels that were measured prior to the intervention.

Another effective self-management technique is self-modeling. In their study, Chu and Baker (2015) researched self-modeling with use of videoing the students demonstrating the appropriate classroom behavior. The participants were selected based on the following criteria: an eligibility of ED, documentation of disruptions in the classroom, enrollment in a public high school, and attended some classes in an inclusive setting (Chu & Baker, 2015). Two females and two males were selected for this study, which was conducted in a classroom where their inappropriate behaviors occurred. For two of the students, the reduction of two negative behaviors that were identified and targeted included inappropriate laughing and the use of

inappropriate language. The targeted behavior for the two other students included an increase in asking for help. In this single subject design study, students were recorded by the researchers while engaging in their specific designated disruptive behavior or off-task behavior. They were then recorded engaging in desired or replacement behavior. Data was recorded over three stages: the baseline data, during the intervention, and then maintenance and generalization. The study took place over thirty class sessions. The results showed that students showed an immediate increase in on-task behavior or decrease in off-task behavior after being shown the video recordings at predetermined times of the day. Apparent from this study is that self-monitoring techniques removes the responsibility of behavior management from the teachers and gives the students the power and choice to guide their behavior in the classroom.

Peer Modeling

As well, another identified strategy to increase on-task behavior with school-age students is called "tootling," where students report a peer's positive behavior verses tattling of a negative behavior. In one study, the participants were 36 fourth or fifth-grade students of Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic, and African American descent. Classroom A was a fifth-grade general education class with no special education students and Classroom B was a fourth-grade general education class with two students who were eligible for special education under SLD. Data was collected during 33 regular classroom periods. The intervention was implemented using an ABAB withdrawal design for five to eight classroom sessions. For this study, the following appropriate classroom behaviors were identified as looking at seat-work, teacher instruction, classroom activities or engaging in on-task conversation (Lambert, Tingstrom, Sterling, Dufrene, & Lynne, 2014). Data was collected over ten second intervals during a two-hour block of time across multiple subjects. Students in both classrooms were trained once by their teachers with a

script to explain tootling procedures. The procedure involved the teacher providing an index card where students would record positive behavior. In Classroom A, disruptive behavior decreased from 26.6% to 8.7%. In Classroom B, disruptive behavior decreased from 27.3% to 7.5%. Results from this study support that tootling is an effective classroom management technique to reduce disruptive behaviors. Some implications identified were that the results were based on public self-reporting and that the study was conducted only in two classrooms with general education students. It would be helpful if a similar study was extended to a special education classroom in order to determine if this approach might be successful with student in special education.

Some other effective techniques for on-task behavior require more teacher involvement. One specific technique, called the "classroom password," targets classroom engagement with the entire class as opposed to specific isolated students. In one study, Dart et al. (2016) selected three middle school classrooms to test a classroom password intervention. Classroom A was an eighth-grade science class with 15 students. Classroom B was a seventh-grade history class with 10 students. Classroom C was an eighth-grade reading class with 16 students. All periods lasted 60 minutes. In this study, teachers stated a daily password in the beginning of the instructional activity. The students were required to take score of how many times the teacher said the password aloud during an instructional activity. The reward (e.g., candy) would differ each day and students who submitted correct tracking forms would split the available reward. This intervention was proven to be effective in increasing engagement during academic periods across the three classrooms in the study (Dart et al., 2016). Classroom A demonstrated high levels of off-task behavior during the baseline stage but off-task behavior immediately decreased once the

intervention was introduced. Classroom B showed an immediate reduction in disruptive behaviors. Classroom C also showed a rapid reduction in off-task behavior.

Another effective activity that targets behavior modification that has been tested is called "Behavior Bingo." Collins et al. (2018) implemented a study that was contingent on students engaged in on-task behavior via use of Behavior Bingo. The goal of the study was to improve behavior of students who have ED. The participants in this study consisted of students in two classrooms in an urban alternative school setting. The participants were 15 students between the ages 15-20, who were identified with ED, other health impairment (OHI), and traumatic brain injury. The teacher in the study taught the class while data was collected by two graduate students while the students were completing independent seat work. Data was collected over 10 second intervals and coded as being on-task, off-task or disruptive (Collins et al., 2018). The study used an ABAB withdrawal design. Baseline data was collected over five, 40-minute classroom sessions. Then, Behavior Bingo was implemented after five classroom sessions. Behavior Bingo was removed and then reinstated. After all phases of the study in class one, on-task behavior increased from 74.04% to 96.27%. In addition, off-task behavior decreased from 25.69% to 4.02%. Disruptive behaviors were not an implication in the first classroom. After all phases of the study were completed, in class two, on-task behavior increased from 50.52% to 63.75% and off-task behavior decreased from 51.61% to 34.54%. Disruptive behavior in class two decreased from 13.81% to 5.41%. The results of the study support that Behavior Bingo helped to increase on-task behavior and reduce off-task or disruptive behaviors in classrooms with students identified with ED, OHI, and traumatic brain injury (Collins et al., 2017). Implications of the study include several factors. The study was conducted in an alternative school setting with one teacher at one school. The study was also conducted in the same subject

and during independent seat work. It would be interesting to see if this intervention would have similar success during group work or during direct instruction. The study identified that some students were pulled from class or student absences could have impacted the results.

Class-Wide Strategies as a Behavior Intervention

Another strategy that has been researched is class-wide strategies meaning the intervention was used with the entire class. Several class wide strategies have been studied to increase on-task behavior and reduce disruptive behavior. One behavior management strategy to increase participation is called student-response system (SRS). This strategy involves students answering questions asked by the instructor through a polling system, also known as a "clicker." The SRS allows for students to benefit from immediate feedback based on their response. Blood (2010) targeted the SRS in a self-contained ED high school class and chose five participants. The participants were in grades 9 through 11 and ages ranging from 15 to 18 years old. The participants were chosen based on regular attendance and low participation rates. The class were asked questions throughout a history lecture and were allowed to respond to questions using the clicker. Blood (2010) found that students' participation had increased due to not having to raise their hand and/or wait for a teacher to call on them. There was no correlation with the SRS and on-task behavior. From this study, the SRS can be helpful to encourage more participation but should be used in conjunction with another strategy to increase on-task behavior.

Another strategy reviewed is called "The Mystery Motivator" (Kowalequicz & Coffee, 2013). The Mystery Motivator is a whole group reinforcer that is dependent on student performance, teacher performance and reinforcers. Upon use of this strategy, the entire class is rewarded upon meeting a specific goal (Kowalequicz & Coffee, 2013). Eight classrooms with a total number of 188 students participated in the study; three kindergarten classes, two first grade

classes, one third grade class, and two fourth grade classes. These participants were located in both urban and suburban areas. Fifteen of the 188 students had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 13 students were identified as English Language Learners (ELL). The study used an ABAB changing-criterion design in each of the eight classrooms. Disruptive behavior was identified as the primary dependent variable (Kowalequicz & Coffee, 2013). After baseline data was recorded, teachers were trained with the intervention protocol in a 30-minute session and were provided with modeling by the researchers. The Mystery Motivator intervention was implemented in each classroom for eight weeks every day during the period teachers identified that contained the highest amount of disruptive behavior. Results from this study showed that disruptive behavior significantly decreased across all classrooms. In addition to reducing disruptive behaviors, seven of the eight teachers found the intervention practical and effective to use due to requiring little training and data collection (Kowalequicz & Coffee, 2013). The study defined some limitations due to threats to internal and external validity such as the short intervention phases.

An additional class-wide strategy includes random group contingency, meaning that the entire class works together as a whole to earn a reward. This study (Williamson, Campbell, & Lo, 2009), focused on encouraging students to feel responsible for initiating and maintaining on-task behaviors. The study investigated random dependent group contingency for on-task behaviors in six tenth-grade African American students with a range of special education eligibilities: SLD, OHI, and emotional and behavioral disability that participated in a special education resource classroom (Williamson et al., 2009). As a requirement for this study, students must have received special education services for at least one year prior to participating in the study. All data was collected during the same class period daily over nine weeks. The dependent

variable for the study was on-task behavior; defined as the student's eyes and head facing the seatwork or work materials and appropriately interacting with the assigned work or responded to questions (Williamson et al., 2009). The intervention was implemented using an ABAB reversal design. The intervention consisted of the teacher writing down a student's name who demonstrated on-task behavior on a piece of paper and was placed into a jar. The teacher would draw a paper from the jar at the end of the class period. If the student whose name was on the paper had received at least four or five checkmarks for observed on-task behavior for the period, the whole class received a predetermined reward (Williamson et al., 2009). If the student did not have the required number of checkmarks, the teacher encouraged the class to do better the next day and did not deliver the reward. The on-task behaviors increased from 43.4% to 66.9% as recorded by the teachers participating in the study. Results from this study support that the group contingency model increased on-task behavior in the classroom for this group of students. While this method appeared successful, there were certain limitations to this study. The data collection periods were five minutes for convenience. In addition, the study was conducted over the last two months of the school year and the students were able to select the reinforcer. Another limitation may have been that Some students may not have been strongly reinforced by the selected reward.

Research shows that there is a multitude of efficient and evidence-based practices in classroom behavioral management techniques for school-age students with ED. Typical ED behaviors such as aggression, tantrums, or cursing potentially can be reduced in the school setting with schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports. Disruptive behavior in the classroom can be reduced with self-management strategies. On-task behavior can increase by using class-wide or school-wide strategies. These techniques are simple to keep students in class

and reduce discipline or removing the student from the classroom milieu. Although these studies were conducted on a small scale of one classroom or multiple classrooms, it shows that interventions can be used to increase on-task behavior and decrease disruptive behavior across multiple settings and populations. These types of interventions should continue to be researched, tested, and made readily available to school districts who experience high levels of disruptive behaviors. Continued research would hopefully improve the education of students who engage in disruptive behaviors or who are affected by disruptive behaviors from peers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of two different positive reinforcement classroom management tools for students that present with social, emotional and behavioral challenges that impact their access to their school curriculum. The three interventions presented in this study include the class pass intervention, classroom password intervention and a combination of the two interventions.

Intervention

The participants were split into three groups and received either the class pass intervention or the classroom password intervention or received both concurrently. The class pass intervention is a positive behavior management technique that focuses on wanted behavior in the classroom (e.g., attending to the teacher, completing work). Students who display an on-task behavior receive a "pass" that they can later redeem for a reward. Students can use the pass immediately or save passes to receive a larger reward. The classroom password is another positive behavior management technique that encourages on-task behavior. The teacher designated a word at the beginning of the class as the "password." The teacher then stated the password randomly throughout the lesson. Students in the class tallied the amount of times the teacher stated the password. The students who correctly counted the amount of times the password was said received a reward. The researcher took baseline data over five class periods during math instruction in first and second periods lasting 55 minutes each. The study lasted the span of seven weeks with five sessions conducted each week.

Participants and Setting

The subjects of the study were recruited from the researcher's high school classroom located in a non-public school (NPS) setting. The study consisted of six students in grades 9-12 with ages ranging from 14-18 years of age. The participants were four male students and two female students of Caucasian or Asian descent, all English only students. The students are enrolled in a NPS setting due to their social emotional and/or behavioral needs. The school consists of two classrooms with a credentialed teacher and either a behavior technician or a behavior interventionist. There is also a counselor on site every day to provide school-based counseling. All students receive at least an hour weekly of counseling to address social and emotional needs. The participants in the study have a variety of eligibilities: four students are eligible for special education under ED; one student is identified under AUT; and the last student is eligible under OHI.

Table 1

Participants

Student	Age	Gender	Grade	Ethnicity	Eligibility	Time Spent in Special Education	Primary Language
A	14	Male	9	Caucasian	OHI	100%	English
B	17	Female	11	Asian	ED	100%	English
C	16	Female	9	Caucasian	AUT	100%	English
D	17	Male	11	Caucasian	ED	100%	English
E	18	Male	12	Caucasian	ED	100%	English
F	15	Male	10	Caucasian	ED	100%	English

Participants

Student A is a 14-year-old male who is eligible for special education under OHI. He is in the ninth grade and enrolled at a NPS setting for one year due to several aggressive behavioral incidents at his school of residence. Student A receives grades of As and Bs and has no documented diagnosis from a medical professional regarding social emotional or academic areas. He receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly. He has been enrolled in special education for one year.

Student B is an 11th grade 17-year-old female who is eligible for special education under ED who has been enrolled at a NPS for three years. She has been in special education since grade 2. Triennial reports dated from 2012 state that she qualified as a student with AUT but the team decided on an eligibility of SLD. In 2015, Student B's eligibility was changed from SLD to ED due to her "inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers" and "a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems" (IDEA, 2004). Psychoeducational reports show that Student B scores in the low range in the areas of auditory processing and memory. However, she is an A-level student. She receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly.

Student C is a 16-year-old female eligible for special education under ED with a secondary eligibility of AUT. She is in the 11th grade and has been eligible for special education services since Kindergarten when she was initially diagnosed with SLI. Student C was moved to several different schools over five years due to her intense and aggressive behavior tantrums (e.g., property destruction, physical aggression toward staff and peers). She has been enrolled in three NPS from fifth to ninth grade. According to academic testing in 2017, she is reading at a sixth-grade level but scores average in the area of mathematics. She currently receives speech

and language services in the area of pragmatics for the duration of 45 minutes weekly. She also receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly. She has one-to-one behavior support 100% of the day to identify triggers for behavior and help with de-escalation if needed.

Student D is a 17-year-old male who is eligible for special education under ED with a secondary eligibility of SLD. He has been in special education since sixth grade and has been enrolled at a NPS for one year. Student D has an extensive history of sexual abuse and neglect. He has a lack of structure at home, which in the past has caused him to miss copious amounts of school. Student D was suspended once per month on average when attending his home school placement. He is behind on credits by a year and a half (e.g., 90 credits) and is not on track to meet his expected graduation date. Since being enrolled at a NPS, Student D's attendance and behavior have improved tremendously. Student D demonstrates significant deficits in mathematics in the classroom as noted on academic standardized assessments. In math classes, he typically receives average grades but receives above average grades in other academic courses. He currently receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly.

Student E is an 18-year-old male who is eligible for special education under ED. He has been in special education since fourth grade. Student E attended a NPS for 18 months before being transferred to a residential treatment center. The placement at the residential treatment center was due to lack of progress in the areas of academics and counseling services. In addition, he has had several incidents with local police due to criminal activity. Student E spent 10 months at the residential treatment center where he received treatment for illegal substance abuse and given medication for his documented psychosis and depression. Upon return to NPS, Student E

was consistent with his treatment plan and medication, which improved his behavior and completion of credits in the classroom. At the time of the study, Student E began using illegal substances again and demonstrated a significant increase in off-task behavior due to not taking prescribed medications. Student E receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly.

Student F is a 15-year-old male who is eligible for special education under ED and has a secondary eligibility of OHI based on several congenital birth defects. He has been in special education since Kindergarten. His eligibility was changed to ED in seventh grade when he began to withdraw from school and received failing grades. Student F has been enrolled at a NPS for two years. He is an A-level student and scores in the high average range on the Woodcock Johnson IV (Schrank et al., 2014) in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Student F also receives one hour of individual counseling and one hour of group counseling weekly.

Research Design

The study used an ABAB group withdrawal design. Group 1 received only the class pass intervention. Group 2 only received the classroom password intervention. Group 3 received both interventions simultaneously. Data collection took place during normal instruction with the addition of the selected intervention. The ABAB design was used to evaluate the decrease in off-task behaviors in response to the intervention. The independent variable was off-task behavior and the dependent variable was the specific intervention used. Participants were chosen from the researcher's classroom as a convenience sample. Students who attended school regularly and participated in periods one and two for math were invited to participate in this study.

Procedure

Off-task classroom behavior was defined by the researcher as the student being out of the seat, speaking while the teacher or another peer was talking, and making unwanted noise with a book or writing instrument, or not looking at instruction or independent learning material. Baseline data was collected by observing Groups 1, 2, and 3 over five class periods. The frequency of off-task behaviors was tallied and recorded electronically on a computer.

Table 2

Interventions

Intervention Type	Characteristics
Group 1: Class Pass	Students receive a pass for on-task behavior during a class period. The pass can be redeemed for a reward (see Table 3)
Group 2: Classroom Password	Students tally the number of times the teacher says the password during a lecture. The student name(s) who get the number correct were placed into a drawing for a reward at the end of the week
Group 3: Combination of Class Pass and Classroom Password	Students receive a pass for on-task behavior during a class period. The pass can be redeemed for a reward (see Table 3). Students tally the number of times the teacher says the password during a lecture. The student name(s) who get the number correct were placed into a drawing for a reward at the end of the week

The teacher would redirect the student engaging in the off-task behavior with a private verbal prompt or a nonverbal tap on the desk. This interaction was set up in the beginning of the school year with the students. If the student continued to engage in the off-task behavior five seconds of the initial prompt, another tally was recorded. The tallies were totaled for Groups 1, 2, and 3 during the baseline phase.

The first intervention phase was delivered during the researcher's first period math class where Group 1 received the class pass intervention. In the researcher's second period Geometry class, Group 2 received the classroom password intervention and Group 3 received both interventions. Group 1, 2, 3, and other students in the class were explained the procedure and expectations of using the Class Pass. The entire class could benefit from on-task behavior, but data was only tracked for Student A, B, E, and F. When a student was on-task (e.g., working on the assignment) they were given a piece of paper that had "class pass" written on it. The researcher tracked which students received a Class Pass on a computer to prevent students from trading passes. In addition, Student A and B's off-task behavior (e.g., calling out) was tracked. Students could access how they could redeem their passes online (see Table 3).

With one pass, students could redeem a two-minute unstructured break from class, the ability to choose their partner for the period, or choose their seat. With two passes, students could redeem an extra five minutes of their 15-minute break or 30-minute lunch or have a five-minute break from class. Three passes could be redeemed for a free snack or soda which typically costs $1 or a 10-minute break from class. With four passes, students could receive an excused assignment (e.g., classwork for the period), a free period (e.g., draw during class instead of participating with the lecture), or the ability to go off-campus to the gym one more time during the week. Five passes could be redeemed for one-point extra credit. Ten passes could be redeemed for an off-campus pass to attend an errand with a staff member. With 20 passes, students could earn a $5 Starbucks gift card. Students were informed that they were able to redeem only two rewards per class session and could not combine rewards (e.g., a two-minute break and a five-minute break could not be combined for a seven-minute break). Students had to redeem their passes at the very beginning of the day prior to first period starting to use them for

that day. If students were tardy to school, they could not redeem a pass for the day. If students lost any passes, they were not replaced. Students were told if they had passes left over, or saved passes, that there would be a drawing for a meal off-campus later in the semester.

Table 3

Rewards for Class Passes

Cost	Reward	Cost	Reward
1 Pass	2-minute break from class	3 Passes	Free snack
1 Pass	Pick your partner	3 Passes	10-minute break from class
1 Pass	Pick your seat	3 Passes	Soda
2 Passes	5 minutes extended break	4 Passes	Excused assignment (not eligible to be used on tests)
2 Passes	5 minutes extended lunch	4 Passes	Free period
2 Passes	5-minute break from class	4 Passes	Extra gym period
5 Passes		1-point extra credit	
10 Passes		Off campus pass	
20 Passes		$5 Starbucks Gift card	

The researcher visually scanned the classroom in ten-minute intervals to dispense class passes. Students had five opportunities every class period to earn a class pass. The researcher started the interval at a different time each class period to avoid the students predicting when the passes could be distributed (e.g., day one would start at 8:16 a.m. and day two would start at 8:19 a.m.). During the interval, if the class pass was earned, the researcher would quietly put the pass on the students' desk while circulating the classroom.

The intervention for Group 2 and 3 were delivered during the researcher's second period class. The expectations and procedures of the classroom password were explained to Student C, D, E, and F. The other students in the class were not participating in the classroom password

intervention. The other students in the class were told that the researcher would be stating a "password" for a few students and to just ignore it. The password for the first intervention phase was "tangerine," and it was stated to the participants as well as written on the board along with the reward for the week (e.g., free snack). The researcher decided the number of times the password was used during each class period. Students tallied the amount of times they heard the password in their class notebooks or remember the number in their head. At the end of the period, the participants displayed on their fingers to the researcher how many times they believed the researcher stated the password during the class session. The participants who got the number correct had their names written down on a piece of paper and placed into a jar. At the end of the week, a name was drawn from the jar to determine who won the reward. Since the class was already participating in the Class Pass intervention, the rewards varied. For example, the reward for the first intervention phase of Week 1 was a 30-minute extended lunch whereas the second week reward was a pizza delivery for lunch.

The first removal phase mirrored the baseline phase. Both interventions were removed, and off-task behavior was tracked for five class sessions. The interventions were reintroduced over ten class sessions and then removed again for the next five class sessions. Data collection took place during all math sessions throughout the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study intended to determine effective positive classroom management for students with ED. The participants consisted of students ages 14-18 who attend a NPS for the entire school day. Group 1 received the Class Pass intervention and Group 2 received the Classroom Password intervention. Group 3 received both interventions simultaneously. The purpose of the interventions was to decrease off-task behaviors in a special education setting at the secondary level. Off-task classroom behavior was defined as the student being out of their seat, speaking while the teacher or another peer was talking, making unwanted noise with a book or writing instrument, or not looking at instruction or independent learning material.

Group 1: Class Pass Intervention

Group 1 received the Class Pass Intervention that involved the researcher distributing passes to students who were exhibiting on-task behavior. Figure 1 and Table 4 demonstrate the results for Group 1. The numbers indicate the number of off-task behavior during that phase of the study. During the baseline phase, Student A was off-task a total of 46 times. Student B was off-task a total of 22 times. When phase one of the class pass intervention was introduced, Student A demonstrated a total of 23 off-task behaviors and Student B displayed a total of 12 off-task behaviors. Student B was absent on day nine of the study. During the next phase, removal of the intervention resulted in Student A having a total of 13 off-task behaviors and Student B with a total of five behaviors. Reintroduction of the intervention reduced off-task behavior even further. Student A and B both had a total of seven off-task behaviors. Student B

was absent on day 22. Final removal of the intervention resulted in Student A with eight off-task behaviors and Student B with five off-task behaviors.

Table 4

Group 1 Total Number of Off-task Behaviors by Phase

Group 1	Baseline 5 Days	Intervention Phase 1 10 Days	Removal 5 Days	Intervention Phase 2 10 Days	Removal 5 Days
Student A	46	26	13	7	8
Student B	22	12	5	7	5

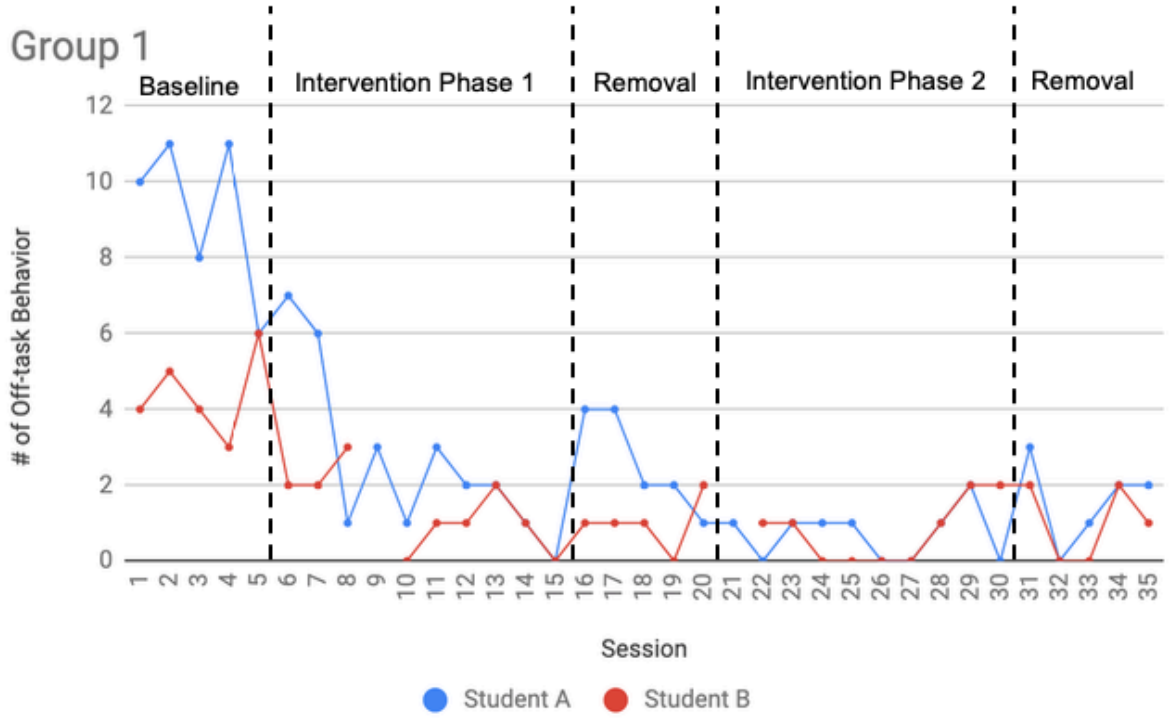

Figure 1. Group 1 Findings. Created by the author of this thesis.

Group 2: Classroom Password Intervention

Group 2 received the Classroom Password intervention that involved the researcher stating a password for a predetermined amount of times throughout each session. The students who calculated the correct number of times that the password was stated aloud were rewarded with a pre-established reinforcer. For example, one day the word “tangerine” was said eight times. The students who stated that the password was said eight times shared the reinforcer for the day. Figure 2 and Table 5 demonstrate the results for Group 2. The numbers indicate the number of off-task behavior during each phase of the study. During baseline, Student C demonstrated 32 off-task behaviors and Student D demonstrated 17 off-task behaviors. Student D was absent on day two during the baseline phase. Upon implementation of the Classroom Password intervention, off-task behaviors decreased. Student C was off-task 12 times. Student D was absent for day 12 and 13 and had a total of 14 off-task behaviors. Upon removal of the intervention, off-task behaviors continued to decrease. Student C demonstrated four off-task behaviors. Student D showed a decrease with a total of three off-task behaviors. Reintroduction of the intervention resulted in Student C with a total of 11 off-task behaviors and Student D with a total of six off-task behaviors. Student D was absent for day 23 during phase two of the intervention. Final removal of the intervention resulted in Student C demonstrating seven off-task behaviors and Student D having three off-task behaviors. Student D was absent for day 32 during the final phase.

Table 5

Group 2 Total Number of Off-task Behaviors by Phase

Group 2	Baseline 5 Days	Intervention Phase 1 10 Days	Removal 5 Days	Intervention Phase 2 10 Days	Removal 5 Days
Student C	32	12	4	11	7
Student D	17	14	3	6	3

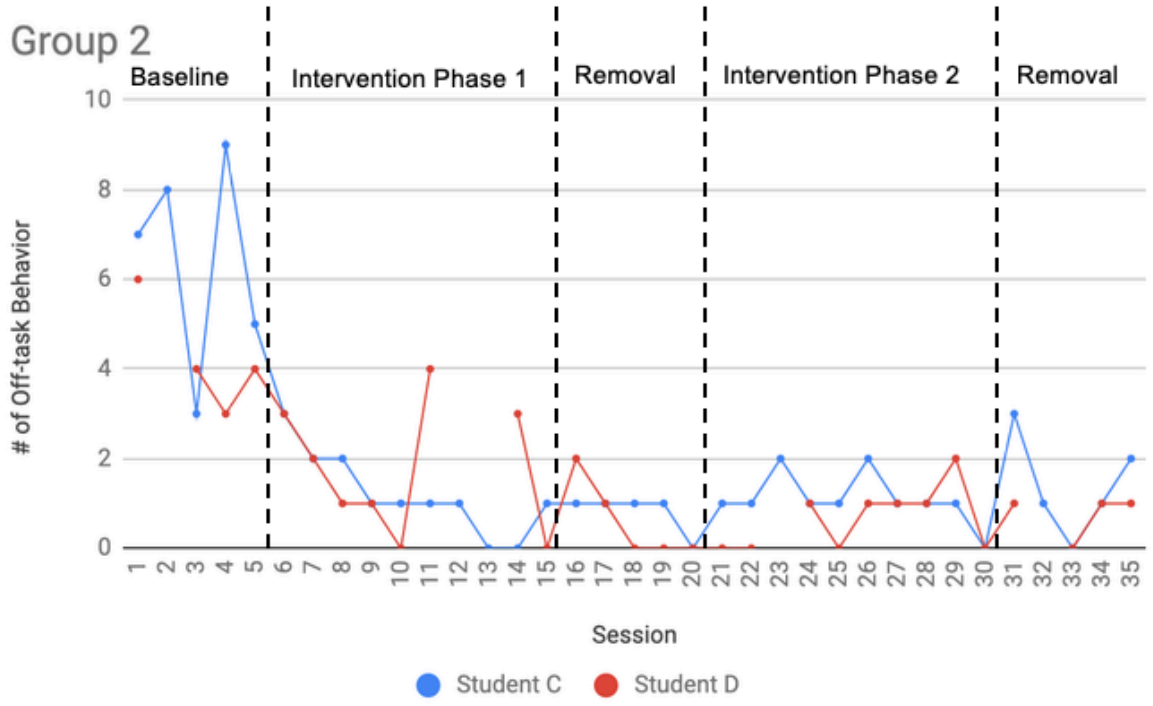

Figure 2. Group 2 Findings. Created by the author of this thesis.

Group 3: Combined Intervention

Group 3 consisted of two participants who received both the Class Pass intervention and the Classroom Password intervention simultaneously. Figure 3 and Table 6 demonstrate the results for Group 3. The numbers indicate the number of off-task behaviors during that phase of the study. Student E was absent for day five during baseline. He had a total of 25 off-task

behaviors. Student F displayed a total of 19 off-task behaviors in the baseline phase. Student E was absent for day nine and day 14 during the first intervention phase and had a total of two off-task behaviors. Student F had eight off-task behaviors. Upon removal of the intervention, Student E demonstrated seven off-task behaviors but was absent for day 20. Student F had a total of five off-task behaviors. Re-introduction of the intervention resulted in two off-task behaviors for Student E, but he was absent for day 21 and 22. During reintroduction, Student F had two off-task behaviors. During the final removal phase, Student E had one off-task behavior and Student F demonstrated two off-task behaviors.

Table 6

Group 3 Total Number of Off-task Behaviors by Phase

Group 3	Baseline 5 Days	Intervention Phase 1 10 Days	Removal 5 Days	Intervention Phase 2 10 Days	Removal 5 Days
Student E	25	2	7	2	1
Student F	19	8	5	2	2

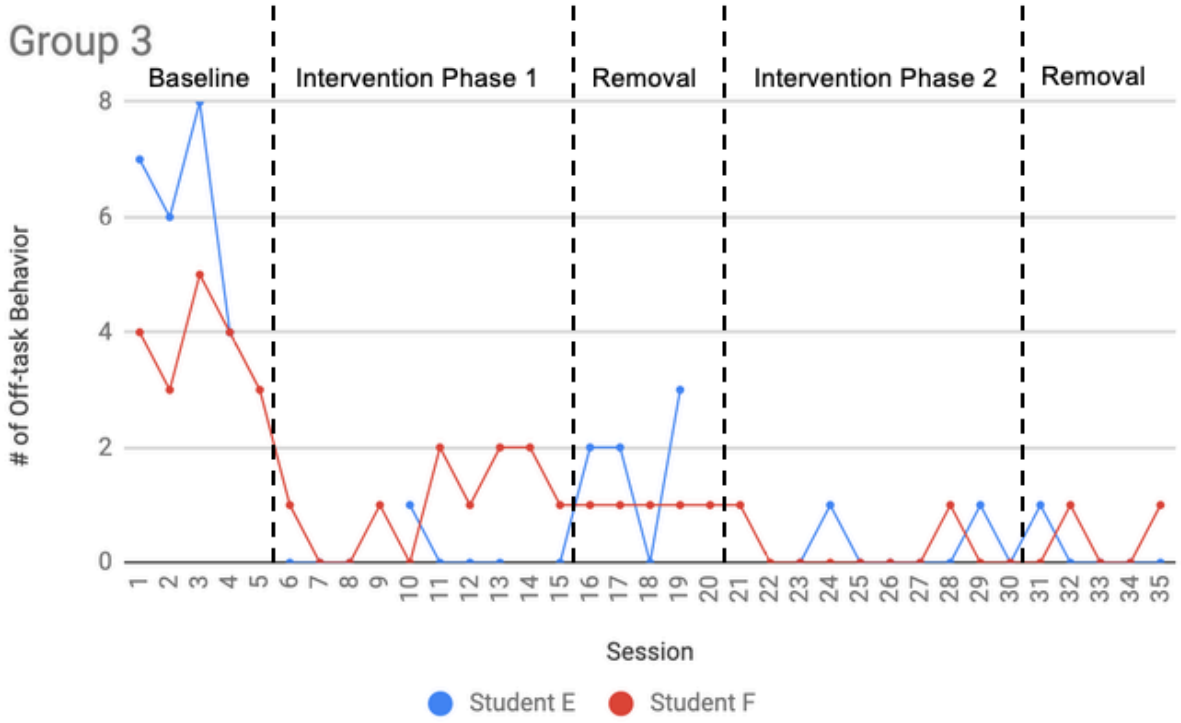

Figure 3. Group 3 Findings. Created by the author of this thesis.

Overall, results indicate that the students responded positively to the three interventions. All three groups demonstrated a decrease in disruptive and off-task behaviors. The participants' results are discussed individually in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to extend the research on positive classroom management interventions in reducing off-task behaviors with students with ED when using three different interventions, the class pass, classroom password, as well as a combination of both interventions. Results from the current study show that the class pass intervention, classroom password intervention and the combination of the two showed successful results when implemented in a high school ED classroom. More specifically, the results demonstrate that the use of the three interventions assisted the students in successfully decreasing off-task behavior. The students engaged in this study frequently exhibited disruptive or disengaged behaviors in the classroom. Results indicated that all groups showed immediate reductions in off-task behavior.

Group 1: Class Pass Intervention

Group 1 received the class pass intervention. The class pass intervention provided an environment in which the available reinforcements were available at the beginning of the class sessions during the intervention phases. Student A and Student B both responded positively to the intervention. Student A went from a total of 48 off-task behaviors in the baseline phase to only eight off-task behaviors in the final removal phase. His previous history of aggressive behavior was not apparent during the study. Student B started with a total of 22 off-task behaviors in the baseline phase and ended with five off-task behaviors in the final removal phase. This is a significant decrease for both students who were averaging a high number of off-task behaviors. The baseline data captures an accurate depiction of both students on a typical day.

Both students are impacted by their disabilities, but the students were motivated and successful with the Class Pass intervention. Group 1 had an overall decrease from the intervention.

Other studies (Collins et al., 2015) demonstrate how the class pass intervention served as a successful intervention for a secondary classroom. The Collins et al. (2015) study consisted of four male participants who engaged in frequent off-task and disruptive behavior in class. Two of the students were eligible for special education under SLD and the other two students participated in a general education setting. The two general education student participants maintained low levels of disruptive behaviors after the intervention was removed. The two special education participants increased their off-task behavior to baseline levels after the intervention was removed. Again, the current study showed that low levels of off-task behavior were recorded after the intervention was removed. While Collins et al. (2015) delayed access to items and activities that were redeemed with class passes, the current study allowed students to redeem passes on a daily basis and redeem more reinforcing items with a larger number of passes. A possible explanation for different results in the study could be permitting the participants to redeem passes on a daily basis allowed students to have a more immediate reward of their positive behavior. Other participants could also see the students using their rewards to encourage other students to maintain on-task behavior.

In another study, Chu and Baker (2015) used a self-modeling strategy to encourage positive behavior. All participants in the study were eligible for special education as ED. Chu and Baker (2015) video recorded the four participants displaying appropriate classroom behavior. The participants viewed the video at the beginning of the school day. The study measured appropriate and inappropriate behavior. All four students demonstrated a decrease of inappropriate behavior and an increase of appropriate behavior. This study is similar to the

current study because the participants showed a decrease of inappropriate or off-task behavior. The participants also showed a decrease in off-task or inappropriate behavior during the intervention removal phase. In the Chu and Baker (2015) study, the students viewed themselves engaging in and being rewarded for appropriate behavior. In the current study, the participants viewed other students or themselves being rewarded for positive or on-task behavior. This decrease in off-task or inappropriate behavior in both studies could be attributed to seeing other students being rewarded for positive classroom behavior.

Group 2: Classroom Password Intervention

Group 2 received the Classroom Password intervention. Student C and D responded positively to this intervention. Student C had a baseline of 32 off-task behaviors which was reduced to seven off-task behaviors after all phases of the Classroom Password intervention. Student C was excited about the intervention because she saw it as a game. As a student who has been in several schools, she has felt little success in the school setting. The baseline measurement of 32 off-task behaviors is low for a typical class period with Student C. Per teacher observation, her previous off-task behavior often averaged higher in the 40-50 range based on classroom observations. Student D measured 17 off-task behaviors in the baseline phase which was reduced to three during the final removal phase. Student D had several absences throughout the time frame of the study but still demonstrated a significant decrease in off-task behavior. Because he demonstrates deficits in math skills, he often displays several off-task and inattentive behaviors in class. However, during the study, this was not observed. The Classroom Password was successful in reducing off-task behaviors in Group 2.

Results from this study are similar to findings from another study that implemented the Classroom Password intervention (Dart et al., 2016). In Dart et al. (2016) the participants

consisted of students from three middle school classrooms. Dart et al. (2016) defined attentive behavior as the student oriented toward instruction, or actively working on an assigned task. Disruptive behavior was defined as talking out or getting out of their seat. The current study defined similar behaviors as Dart et al. (2016) but did not separate off-task and disruptive behavior in the study. The participants showed a decrease in disruptive behavior in all three classrooms in the study. However, all classrooms showed a slight increase in disruptive behavior during the removal phases which was not present in the current study. This study demonstrated how the intervention was successful in reducing the disruptive behavior but was not effective in reducing the off-task or inattentive behavior in the three classes.

The Mystery Motivator studied by Kowalequicz and Coffee (2013) used a group reinforcer dependent on student performance. If the whole class reached a goal, the entire class was rewarded. This method is similar to the current study where the students share a group reinforcer based on meeting a specific goal. Kowalequicz and Coffee (2013) based their study on the entire group meeting the goal using an ABAB design in elementary school classes but the current study rewarded the students who achieved the goal individually in a high school setting. Although the age levels of the participants different, both studied showed a similar result. Both studies displayed a significant decrease in off-task behavior. One possible explanation of these shared results across grade levels could be the access to a reinforcer along with peers who earned the reward in a classroom setting.

Group 3: Class Pass and Classroom Password Interventions

Students E and F received both the Class Pass and Classroom Password interventions simultaneously. Both students responded positively to the interventions and significantly reduced their off-task behaviors. Student E started the baseline phase with 25 off-task behaviors and

ended the study with just one off-task behavior during the removal phase. This significant improvement for Student E could be related to issues of substance abuse, but his drug usage was not disclosed during the study. He had six absences throughout the phases of the study but was still positively impacted. Student F demonstrated an original baseline of 19 off-task behaviors. In the final removal phase of the study, a total of two off-task behaviors were observed. Student F is of high average intelligence and his off-task behavior is typically attributed to him not being challenged academically. He was the perfect participant for Group 3 since he would receive both interventions simultaneously. The combination of the interventions supplied him with an extra layer of challenge in addition to his classwork. The combination of both the Class Pass intervention and the Classroom Password interventions were successful in reducing off-task behaviors in Group 3.

The study by Bohanan et al. (2012) was similar to the current study by handing out passes, or tickets, for positive behavior at the high school level. While this intervention study was implemented school-wide, the results were similar to the current study. Bohanan et al. (2012) showed how there was a significant decrease in office referrals. The number of office referrals in the final phase of the study remained below the initial baseline. In Moore et al. (2013), the study tracked on-task behavior as opposed to the current study that tracked off-task behavior. However, after the interventions were removed in both studies, the participants maintained around the same level of targeted behavior that was tracked in the last phase of intervention.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. One concern is the brief removal of the intervention. The removal phases lasted five class sessions while the intervention phases lasted

ten sessions. Another limitation was participants' attendance. There were a few absences in multiple phases of the study. Participants had a variety of excused absences (e.g., illness, speech therapy, hospitalization) and one participant had unexcused absences (e.g., no phone call from parent). Absences may have affected the results because consistent data could not be collected on the student and the participants could not fully experience the entire intervention timeframe. There were several peaks and valleys in the data. Increases in off-task behaviors could be related to characteristics of AUT or ED. Students B, D, E, and F are impacted by their ED in an academic setting. Different triggers can drastically change a student's response to the environment. For example, a student may be triggered by another student's off-task behavior. When the disruptive student is absent, the other student may be exhibit more on-task behavior. The same can be stated for a student with AUT. Student C has several frustration tolerance issues that affect her education performance. For example, she excels in math but can have a tantrum when presented with a word problem due to her low comprehension.

Future Research

This study was conducted over a short period of time with limited participants due to convenience sampling and time constraints. In the future, there are several suggestions to expand this study. First, the study could be implemented over a longer period of time, possibly an entire school year such as Bohanan et al. (2012). Another suggestion would be to collect data over several classrooms with different subject matter in order to obtain a wider sample size. This might allow for the consideration of other variables to determine how the content or subject matter may play a factor in contributing to on- and/or off-task behavior(s). Another suggestion that might be useful would be to apply these strategies with other age groups.

Conclusion

Disruptive behavior from students who are eligible for special education under ED or AUT impact instructional time in multiple ways. The current study demonstrated that classroom management interventions can be successful in reducing off-task behaviors in students with ED or AUT. The participants all showed a significant decrease in off-task behaviors when presented with three different types of behavior interventions: Classroom Password, Class Pass, and a combination of both interventions. When the intervention was removed, off-task behavior still continued to decrease for most all participants. Continued research is needed on students with ED and AUT and positive classroom management strategies to reduce classroom distractions and increase on-task behavior in the high school setting.

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