Reducing the Amount of Swearing by Using a Token System

By Kristen FitzGerald
Background/Purpose of Study

• This study attempted to decrease the amount of times the participant swears using the F-word by using a token system

• This was a problem behavior worth changing because cursing is not professional behavior.
Participant

- The participant chosen for this study was a 21 year old female college student
- The participant volunteered herself for the study
- The participant’s swearing consisted of saying the F-word in social settings.
- The participant used the F-word at least 15 times a day in social settings
Procedure

• ABAB design

• An ABAB design “involves the sequential application and withdrawal of an intervention to verify the intervention’s effects on a behavior” stated by Alberto & Troutman (2013, p.134)
Behavior Objective

• The participant will speak appropriately with an average of 1 or less curse words per hour during a 3 hour time period for 3 consecutive days.

• Speaking appropriately includes any language other than a swear word, specifically the F-word.
Materials

- Stickers
- Using the natural environment of the participant
- Providing positive praise
- And the possibility of going out to lunch if the participant collected enough stickers by refraining from swearing
Baseline Data Collection

- The participant was observed for 3 hours a day for 5 consecutive days to collect baseline data
- Event recording was used
- She used the F-word an average of 5 times an hour in a 3 hour time period for 5 consecutive days
- The baseline data in this study was stable
- There was no trend
Intervention

- Intervention was implemented 3 hours a day for 5 consecutive days
- Verbal prompts with positive praise and a sticker token system was implemented
- Once the participant collected a total of 3 stickers, she was reinforced with getting to go out for lunch
Data Collection

• Event recording

• Tallied the number of times the F-word was used in a 3-hour time period and averaged to number of times per hour
Results

- 1st baseline: averaged 5 times an hour
- 1st intervention: averaged 2 times an hour
- 2nd baseline: averaged 3 times an hour
- 2nd intervention: averaged 1 time an hour
- 1st change in performance: 5 times to 3 times
- 2nd change in performance: 3 times to 2 times
- Decreased trend in performance
Discussion

• Based on the graph, there was a functional relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable

• The participant could have an off day, or outside factors could contribute to using the F-word more than 1 time per day after the study is finished

• Would be interesting to see if it could be reduced to zero

• Observing in more than 1 setting could be changed
Reference