Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Task Analysis Data Sheet Protocol in Training Educators to Use the You/Me Game During Direct Instruction Reading Groups

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Task Analysis Data Sheet Protocol in Training Educators to Use the You/Me Game During Direct Instruction Reading Groups

by

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Utah State University, 2022

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Teachers often struggle with classroom management during academic lessons. Self-adapted remedial efforts to improve classroom management are often not founded on researched behavioral principles. These struggles and remedial efforts impact student behavioral and academic outcomes. The You/Me game is a token economy variation used in Direct Instruction curricula to reward students for correct academic performance. This study examined the effectiveness of a task analysis protocol in training two general educators to implement the You/Me Game for classroom management during small group Direct Instruction reading lessons. The effects of game implementation were assessed by examining the secondary dependent variables including the frequency of student disruptions, academic opportunities to respond provided by the teacher, percentage of correct student responses to academic opportunities to respond, and the rate of behavioral redirections. Results provide information related to the effects of a simple,
low cost means for training educators to implement a classroom management strategy that has the potential to impact student academic and behavioral outcomes.

*Keywords:* You/Me Game, Direct Instruction, Task Analysis, Task Analysis Data Sheet

(60 pages)
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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McKenzie Niebergall

Teachers often struggle with classroom management during academic lessons. Self-adapted efforts to improve classroom management are often not founded on researched behavioral principles. These struggles and efforts impact student behavioral and academic outcomes. The You/Me game is a game included in many Direct Instruction curricula, specially sequenced curricula that encourage positive classroom management and the gaining of academic skills, as a means to reward students for correct academic performance. This study examined the effectiveness of providing a sheet of specific written instructions and allowing for clarifying questions in training four general educators to implement the You/Me Game for classroom management during small group reading lessons run using Direct Instruction curriculum. The effects of game implementation were assessed by examining the frequency of student disruptions, academic opportunities to respond provided by the teacher, the percentage of correct student responses to academic opportunities to respond, and the rate of behavioral redirections. Results provide information related to the effects of a simple, low cost means for training educators to implement a classroom management strategy that has the potential to impact student academic and behavioral outcomes.
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Direct Instruction (DI) is a teaching method repeatedly demonstrated to be an effective means of instruction (Carnine & Silbert, 1979; Engelmann, 2006; Kamps et al., 2016; Trout, Epstein, & Michelson, 2003). According to the National Institute for Direct Instruction ([NIFDI], n.d.), DI is an explicit, sequenced, scripted model of instruction. Direct instruction curricula are available for reading, language, spelling, math, science, and history, but are most commonly implemented for reading and math. Most curricula are designed for use in grades K-5. DI curricula incorporate several principles to encourage academic skill acquisition and positive classroom management practices. The NIFDI (n.d.) lists four main components of DI that facilitate more efficient student learning. The first is placing students at their skill level. Students are given a series of assessments to assess skill proficiency and deficits and are grouped with other students whose data show similar results. The next is that the program structures are designed to ensure content mastery. Skills are introduced gradually, giving students the opportunity to master them and experience success before integrating them into more sophisticated applications. The third component is that instruction is modified to accommodate each student’s rate of learning. Students can be retaught a skill or accelerated through a program based on the rate at which they learn. The last component is that programs are field tested and revised before they are published. This means that programs in use are never experimental, they have already yielded effective results. Martella and Nelson (2003) provide additional recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of DI. These
include instructional momentum, progressing through a program at such a pace that students experience appropriate skill acquisition, and maintaining high student motivation through the use of praise, point systems, and contracts that specify expectations and consequences for behavior during lessons.

Many DI curricula include strategies that aim to improve student motivation, such as different games where students earn points contingent on accurate academic performance. These point systems typically function as various types of token economies (Ayllon & Azrin, 1968). Token economies are composed of three critical components: Specific target behaviors, tokens, and backup reinforcers (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). When a token economy is being used, specific behaviors targeted for acquisition or reduction are discussed with the individual(s), then they are told that when they engage in or refrain from these behaviors, they will earn tokens. Tokens are tactile and/or visual items (e.g., tallies, stamps, currency, marbles) that are later exchangeable for backup reinforcers (e.g., toys, snacks, access to preferred items or activities). In order for token economies to be effective, tokens should be delivered on schedules that are appropriate for the individual and difficulty of the behavior. Tokens should also be exchangeable on a schedule that is effective at maintaining behavior change. Initially the exchange schedule should be rapid but can be adjusted as the individual becomes more proficient at performing the behavior (Cooper et al., 2007).

Previous research has demonstrated that token economies can be an effective intervention to change student behavior. DeJager et al. (2020) used an alternating treatment design to compare the use of a token economy, response cost, and combined method in decreasing problem behavior and increasing academic engagement in typically
developing students. Sessions were run in two first grade general education classrooms during math lessons. In the token economy condition the teacher began the lesson by telling the class that during math she would be giving tokens to individual students for good behavior, that the tokens would not be taken away, and that at the end of math they would each be able to turn in their tokens for a hand stamp or a piece of candy from the prize box. The teacher then taught the lesson, awarding tokens with specific praise for appropriate behavior during math. At the end of math students exchanged their tokens for the prize of their choice. Across all conditions, five or more tokens could be exchanged for three prizes, three or four tokens for two prizes, one or two tokens for one prize, and no prize for zero tokens. In the response cost condition, the teacher began the lesson by telling the class that during math, they would all begin with five tokens, and each time a student misbehaved, that student would lose a token. The way to keep all their tokens was to behave appropriately and follow classroom rules and expectations. While teaching the lesson, if a student engaged in problem behavior, the teacher would remove a token from that student with a statement of why they were losing a token. Problem behaviors recorded by student researchers included fidgeting, drawing on self, talking out, interaction with peers that interfered with learning, leaving the assigned instructional area, and making audible vocalizations not related to the instructional task. If a student lost all their tokens, the teacher gave corrective feedback in the event of additional problem behavior. At the end of the math lesson students exchanged their remaining tokens for the prize of their choice.

The combined condition allowed for tokens to be awarded as well as taken away for each student in a combination of the token economy and response cost conditions.
The teacher began the lesson by telling students that during today’s lesson, they would each be able to earn tokens for good behavior and lose tokens for problem behavior. Going into debt was not allowed and awarding or removal of tokens was done with a statement as to why, as in previous conditions. The results of this study indicated that the token economy condition was the most effective intervention to decrease problem behaviors and increase academic engagement. This study also included preference assessments for both students and teachers. All students said they preferred the token economy condition. Neither of the teachers showed preference for the response cost condition, with one teacher favoring the combined condition, and the other favoring token economy. While this study demonstrated the effective use of a token economy system in the classroom, it used an independent token economy for each student, making it more resource intensive than a group contingency.

In a similar study, Lee et al. (2017) used a simultaneous multiple treatment design combined with a multiple-baseline across-classrooms design to compare two variations of token economies in two fifth and sixth grade general education classrooms. Sessions occurred for several weeks and were typically run while the class was completing a math lesson. The study compared a response cost and a positive reinforcement variation. Both conditions were implemented as interdependent group contingencies where individual students earn tokens for engaging in appropriate behavior and work together toward a group goal. In the response cost condition, the class started with five stars on the board, each star representing 1-min of extra recess or free time. The teacher erased a star for every 2-min interval in which problem behavior occurred at any point, by any student. During the gain condition, the class earned a star for every 2-min interval in which no
problem behavior occurred, up to five stars. Results demonstrated that response cost and gain procedures were equally effective at reducing student problem behavior, and that teachers preferred to use response cost over gain. This study also included a student preference assessment that indicated that students preferred the response cost procedure as well. These studies indicate that teachers often prefer to use response cost procedures, rather than positive reinforcement contingencies, due to their ease of implementation and immediate effects on student behavior. In addition, the group contingency used by Lee et al. (2017) may also be easier for teachers to implement than the individual contingencies in the DeJager et al. (2020) study yet are still effective.

Within DI curricula, additional variations of token economies are common and recommended for use as a form of academic feedback and a strategy to increase student motivation. In one of the games, students complete a worksheet as part of a lesson, and points are awarded based on their performance on these tasks (e.g., 4 points for 0 errors, 3 points for 1-4 errors, etc.). Students with a certain number of points receive praise from the teacher and a star on their paper (Engelmann & Dixon, 2006). Another popular game is the You/Me Game. In this game, the teacher is a team, and the students are a team. When the students answer a choral prompt correctly, they are awarded a point. When the students answer the prompt incorrectly, the teacher is awarded the point. The team that has the most points at the end of the exercise wins and earns a smiley face (Engelmann, 2008).

In addition to the You/Me Game being used in DI lessons to promote academic performance, we have often observed the game being adapted by teachers to be used as a classroom management intervention. In this adaptation of the game, the teacher is
awarded points for inappropriate student behavior and the students are a team that is awarded points for appropriate student behavior. Since this system incorporates many features of token economies and the Good Behavior Game shown to be effective in prior research (Ayllon & Azrin, 1968; Higgins et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2017; Barrish et al., 1969), it is no surprise that teachers commonly modify its use to address issues with classroom management, as opposed to solely for academic behaviors.

There is a multitude of studies examining the Good Behavior Game as well as many variations, such as the Caught Being Good Game (Wright & McCurdy, 2012). However, these studies focus on teams composed of students, there is not usually a teacher team included in variations of the Good Behavior Game. In a study by Lastrapes et al. (2018) the You/Me Game was used but referred to as the Teacher vs Student game (TvS). The focus of the study is behavior specific praise, but its examination of the games effect on student behavior and its acceptability rating by teachers are relevant to this study. The study used a nonconcurrent multiple baseline across participants design in five fifth and sixth grade classrooms. Teachers each selected three students with higher-than-average problem behavior and momentary-time sample data was collected on off task behaviors for only these students.

At the beginning of the treatment phase, researchers met one-on-one with the teachers and provided them with a written and verbal description of the game and an opportunity to ask questions. Researchers demonstrated how the game is played in the classroom, then the teacher took over. Student problem behavior decreased from medium levels, approximately 25%, to near zero levels, approximately 5%, after the introduction of the TvS game. Overall, the social validity results were positive from both teachers and
students. The data in this study imply that playing the game with the teacher as a team is still effective as a means of behavior change and is preferred by teachers and students. A limitation of this study is that there was no designated reinforcement schedule, which this study includes.

We anticipate that like other token economies, using the You/Me Game as a classroom management tool is most likely to be effective when all the components of an effective token economy are present and implemented consistently. The game has been observed by members of the research team to be effective when teachers use back-up reinforcers that truly function as reinforcers and the expectations are clear and consistently reinforced. When these components are consistently implemented, students are more likely to engage in the targeted behaviors and refrain from inappropriate behavior to earn points and the reward. If expectations are unclear, students do not receive enough points to access the back-up reinforcer, or are not motivated by the back-up reinforcer, they are unlikely to engage in appropriate behaviors that result in delayed or undesirable consequences. Under these conditions, students are more likely to engage in behaviors with more immediately reinforcing consequences (i.e., inappropriate behavior).

The use of the You/Me Game is similar to the use of interdependent group contingencies used by Lee et al. (2017) in that points are awarded to the whole group for all students to win the reward. However, similar to the study by Lastrapes et al. (2018), in the You/Me Game the teacher can earn points as well as the students, but the points have opposing functions. Student points are intended to function as conditioned reinforcers (i.e., tokens, positive reinforcers), while teacher points are intended to function as
conditioned punishers (i.e., positive punishers). This is unlike the response cost procedures used by Lee et al. (2017) because instead of a token reinforcer being removed contingent on problem behavior, the teacher is delivering a token for themselves contingent on student’s problem behavior. The team that has the most points at the end of the period wins the game. To our knowledge, we are unaware of any studies that have evaluated this variation of a token economy, especially with the unique combination of simultaneous positive token reinforcement contingency for appropriate behavior.

Given the lack of research on this variation of token economies, investigating a method of training that is both effective and requires minimal resources becomes relevant. In a study by Griffith et al. (2019) a nonconcurrent multiple baseline across-participants design was used to evaluate the use of a self-instruction package to train 12 undergraduate students to conduct trial-based functional analyses (TBFAs). The self-instruction package included detailed written instructions, a task analysis data sheet (TA DS), and small group performance feedback training. Participants were divided into four baseline groups. All groups were given the same basic TBFA materials, vocal instructions to determine the function of problem behavior and 15 minutes to review their provided resources. Group one was given no additional resources. Group two was provided with an article on TBFAs. Group three was additionally provided with a TA DS, which was a treatment integrity checklist filled out by the participant to ensure completion of relevant steps. Group four was additionally provided with detailed written instructions. Participants were given materials and data sheets to use as they saw fit to determine the function of the behavior of a confederate researcher enacting scripted behavior so as not to influence client behavior.
In the self-instruction package condition, all participants were provided with the resources that group four received in baseline which include TBFA materials, vocal instructions, an article on TBFAs, the TA DS, and detailed TBFA written instructions. A small group training condition was implemented after participants completed the self-instruction condition. In the small group training condition, two participants were trained at a time to conduct a TBFA using the self-instruction package. At the end of a trial, the trainer would provide immediate feedback by either letting the participant know they had completed all the steps correctly, or by using the self-instruction package to inform them which steps had been performed incorrectly, model the correct response, and have the participant try again. All groups improved in the percentage of trials performed with fidelity after the introduction of the full self-instruction package with groups one, two, and three increasing by 70%, 34%, and 29.5%, respectively. The self-instruction package did not completely eliminate the need for small group or one-on-one intervention, but it did allow participants to increase in implementation accuracy as well as receive feedback on the fidelity of their TBFA implementation with less intensive intervention and resource allocation.

Evaluating the variation of a token economy also seems important because, in practice, we have frequently observed educators using this adaptation of the You/Me Game. Occasionally, we have observed the overuse of teacher points for inappropriate behavior. This is not surprising since teacher points are intended to function as a conditioned positive punisher and if they function as such teachers should observe a reduction in problem behavior. However, when there are too many teacher points, students lose motivation as a result of never accessing the backup reinforcer. In some
cases, an ineffective distribution of points results in an increase in student problem behavior. In both of these cases, the game becomes ineffective as a means of behavior change. Other practices that can contribute to the ineffective use of the game include unclear expectations, inconsistent and infrequent awarding of student points, and the lack of an effective back-up reinforcer. Since the game requires minimal resources to implement, and has features of token economies shown to be effective at improving academic behavior (DeJager et al., 2020), it is important to have an efficient means of training teachers on the necessary components of the You/Me Game and how to best implement it effectively. Once the game is being implemented correctly, the next critical step is to evaluate the effects of correct implementation on student outcomes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a task analysis data sheet protocol on the fidelity with which teachers implement the You/Me Game for classroom management during DI reading lessons. This study also examined the extent to which teacher implementation of the You/Me Game affected students’ behavioral and academic outcomes by examining the frequency of student disruptions, the rate academic OTRs provided by the teacher and behavioral redirections, and the percentage of correct student responses to academic OTRs.

Specific research questions include the following. First, what are the effects of the TA DS protocol on teacher implementation of the You/Me Game for classroom management during small group DI reading lessons (number of points awarded to each team)? Second, what are the effects of the TA DS protocol on teacher implementation of the You/Me Game for classroom management during small group DI reading lessons? Third, what are the effects of teacher implementation of the You/Me Game on student
behavior (frequency of disruptions) and academic performance (percent of correct responses to academic OTRs)? Fourth, to what extent do teachers agree that student behavior during small group DI reading lessons could be improved, that the You/Me Game for classroom management and TA DS protocol are acceptable, and that student outcomes at completion of the study are improved?

**Method**

**Participants**

Two educators that teach DI reading curricula to groups of 6-11 students in grades K-4 at a local charter school participated in this study. For participants to be eligible for participation, they had to teach a daily DI reading group during which they used the You/Me Game with less than 75% fidelity according to the TA DS before intervention. All participants have received prior training on the You/Me game consisting of a brief (<5 minutes) discussion at the beginning of the school year in the context of effective implementation of DI. It is possible that participants have received additional informal training from a DI coach or experienced teacher 1-2 times each school year that they have been employed at the school. These trainings would have consisted of discussions no more than 10 minutes in length regarding when it would be appropriate to give the class a point (e.g., everyone is sitting up straight and responding on signal) or the teacher a point (e.g., students are not using tracking fingers).

Student participants included students in DI reading groups grades K-4. Reading groups included students of any race, socioeconomic status, and ability. Students may or
may not qualify for special education services. Reading groups included students on all academic levels meaning students who progress through the curriculum one lesson per day in order and students who are “fast cycled” or progress through the curriculum one or more lessons per day skipping lessons.

Setting

The study took place in a K-8 public charter school in Northern Utah. The school’s enrollment includes approximately 20% minority and 30% economically disadvantaged students as reported on usnews.com (n.d.) using data from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. As of March 2021, 13% of students were receiving special education services. All sessions will take place in a small group academic setting held in locations throughout the school where DI lessons typically occur (e.g., a kidney shaped table to the side of the classroom, a room used for small-group instruction, open areas separated from the hallway by wooden cubbies approximately 54” tall, desks in the regular classroom). Reading groups contained 6-11 students seated at desks or tables facing the teacher during small group instruction.

Materials

Materials include the TA that outlines implementation of You/Me Game (Appendix A), and the TA DS and procedural fidelity checklist based on materials developed in Griffith et al. (2019) (Appendix B) that was shared with teachers after each observation session, teacher and student social validity measures, a whiteboard and
marker to run the You/Me Game, various potential reinforcers (e.g., small tangible items [stickers, squishy balls, paper and pencils for drawing at the end of class, stamps, etc.]), and all necessary academic material. Academic materials were specific to the particular DI lessons and may have included: Teacher DI presentation book, student textbook, when applicable (Reading Mastery Signature Edition Level K Lesson 91-Reading Mastery Signature Edition Level 4), student workbook/worksheet, lined paper, when applicable (Reading Mastery Signature Edition Level 2-Reading Mastery Signature Edition Level 4), and pencils. Laptop computers were used to conduct virtual lesson observations and teacher feedback sessions. Lessons were observed and recorded using the Zoom Video Communications platform.

**Measurement**

The primary dependent variable was the percentage of steps the teacher performed correctly according to the TA DS (Appendix B). Observers used the TA DS to measure the total number of steps completed correctly, according to the task analysis (TA) provided to participants. These data were shared with participants after each observation session. The TA was developed using procedures outlined in the Journal of Direct Instruction (Martella & Nelson, 2003) and an online article found on interventioncentral.org. On the TA DS, a + was marked for steps performed correctly and a – for steps performed incorrectly. Percentage was calculated by dividing the number of steps performed correctly by the total number of steps and multiplying by 100.

The secondary dependent variables were the total number of points given in the game for each team, the students and the teacher, throughout the observation session, the
rate of behavioral redirections and opportunities to respond (OTRs) provided by the teacher, percentage of correct student responses, and frequency of student disruptions throughout the observation session. The total number of points given in the game were summed for each team (i.e., students and teacher) by adding the number of points the teacher physically recorded throughout the observation session. A disruption was defined as a student or group of students talking while others are talking, talking without raising hand and getting permission, off topic comments from the students (this includes off topic comments after raising hand and waiting to be called on), a contextually inappropriate vocalization above speaking volume of any duration, or any other side comments requiring teacher redirection. Disruptions did not include disruptions as a result of individuals entering the classroom that were not a part of the group, students or adults. An OTR was defined as each time the teacher provided an opportunity for a student, the whole class, or a group of students to make an academic response. This included asking for a choral response, asking the group to raise their hand to respond, written responses, and motor responses and could be directed at one student or a group of students. OTRs that occurred within 5 seconds of one another or were simply a rewording of the initial opportunity were counted as only one OTR. Correct responses were defined as every student in the group during choral responses, or an individual student on individual turns, providing the correct response to any OTR within 5 seconds. An incorrect response was defined as one or more students providing the incorrect response, no response, or a response off signal to any OTR within 5 seconds. A behavioral redirection was defined as the teacher directing a gestural or vocal prompt to an individual student, group of students, or the whole class to redirect them to the desired
behavior. This included corrections on the appropriate response (i.e., sound out vs say fast vs lightning round) and behavioral observational statements (e.g., I don’t see all the tracking fingers). Behavioral redirections excluded academic feedback and precorrections. Sessions were attended virtually by student researchers as well as recorded to capture teacher and student behavior for data collection.

**Interobserver Agreement**

Independent observers collected interobserver agreement (IOA) data on all dependent variables throughout the observation session for a minimum of 25% of sessions across all participants and conditions. Independent observers collected IOA data on treatment integrity by marking a + for steps performed correctly and - for steps performed incorrectly or omitted by the teacher. An agreement was scored if a step was scored by all observers as either correct or incorrect. A disagreement was scored if a score for a step did not match between the primary and secondary observer(s). IOA on treatment integrity was calculated using the point-by-point method (Kazdin, 1982) by dividing the number of correctly implemented steps by the total number of steps, then multiplying by 100. IOA for dependent variables was calculated using total count method by dividing the smaller count by the larger count, then multiplying by 100. A secondary observer collected procedural fidelity data by marking a + for steps completed by the researcher while interacting with participants and a – for steps omitted. Procedural fidelity was calculated by dividing the percentage of steps completed correctly by the total number of steps for the relevant condition and multiplying by 100 (Cooper et al., 2007).
Experimental Design

A multiple baseline across participants design (Kazdin, 2011) was used to examine the effects of the You/Me Game TA DS protocol on the number of points given to the students and teacher, the frequency of disruptions, the percentage of correct responses, and the rates of behavioral redirections and OTRs. Student data are presented for the group, as a whole (Kazdin, 1982; Stahmer et al., 2016), while teacher data are presented individually.

Procedures

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic interactions between the student researcher and participants were conducted virtually. Data were collected throughout the study through laptop computers set up in the classroom. The researcher attended the reading group in real time by joining the existing Zoom call broadcasting the reading group to any students that may be attending virtually. Performance feedback was delivered virtually via Zoom, phone, or email.

Baseline

Teachers and students were told that observers would be collecting data during reading groups for the next several weeks. Additionally, teachers were told the following:

Data will be collected on your use of the You/Me Game during your reading groups for a research project. For now, we want to see how you play the game and how you give points for appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Play it
and deliver the reward as you normally would. We will not provide any feedback on your use of the game right now; we would just like to see how you implement the game based on prior DI trainings. Later in the study, we will help you and provide feedback.

The teacher ran the game as usual, determining whether the students earned the reinforcer and delivering it as they had been before the study began. The researcher conducted observations and collected data in real time via Zoom. Performance feedback was not provided after the reading group. This phase continued until a stable pattern was observed of at least three data points of the primary dependent variable. Before moving on to the treatment phase students were asked to fill out the pre-intervention social validity rating scale anonymously to indicate their preference for the game. Paper copies of the rating scale were distributed in class to students participating in person. Surveys were collected by the teacher and scanned to the researcher.

**Task Analysis**

In the task analysis (TA) phase, teachers were told the following immediately before the first observation session began:

We are now moving on to the next phase of the study. In this phase we’re going to provide you with a set of instructions on how to use the You/Me Game effectively. You will have 10 minutes to read it and ask any clarifying questions you have before the first observation session. After the first observation session you can read the instructions and ask questions as needed. The copy of the instructions you are given is yours to keep, you can write on it and reference it as
you would like. Additional copies will always be available if you would like a new one.

Teachers were given the TA (Appendix A) detailing components of the You/Me Game and given at least 10 minutes to read it and ask clarifying questions before the first intervention session. The duration of this review period was selected based on the sampling of two individuals with no prior experience implementing the You/Me Game requiring 5-9 min to review these materials. The TA provided was for participants to keep, take notes on, and reference as desired. They were allowed to review the TA and ask clarifying questions between intervention sessions if they chose. All participants were told they could request another copy of the TA at any time and were always allowed to ask clarifying questions. All clarifying questions were to be answered by referring to the TA. Teachers then played the game as they understood it from the TA while the researcher continued to observe and collect data as described above. Performance feedback was provided after each reading lesson via Zoom, phone, or email, whichever method worked best with the teacher’s schedule.

The task analysis condition continued until the teacher used the game with 80% or greater fidelity (Collier-Meeka et al., 2012; Kazdin, 1982) for three consecutive observation sessions. Participants and students filled out the post-intervention social validity rating scale within one week of treatment termination. Student surveys were administered and collected the same as in the previous condition and remained anonymous. Teacher surveys were sent via email to be returned within three days. If the participant were to score less than 80% for three consecutive observation sessions and
data were stable or on a decreasing trend, the participant would have progressed to the remote coaching condition before completing the social validity scale.

**Remote Coaching**

At the beginning of the remote coaching condition, teachers would have been told the following before the first observation session began:

> We are now moving on to the next phase of the study. In this phase we will be prompting you to give points in the You/Me Game while you are teaching. I have this card with a T that will indicate to give a teacher point, and this card with an S that indicates to give a student point. You will still be allowed time to read the instructions for the game and ask clarifying questions as needed before observations begin. When you feel your phone vibrate, see if a card is shown for either the teacher or the students, notice why we selected that team to earn a point, and still provide the descriptive praise or correction when awarding the point. After each observation session, we will review your performance with you.

The student researcher would have signaled the teacher using a cell phone vibration and two cards, one marked with a T, and one marked with an S, or a brief statement if the teacher missed the cue (e.g., I heard all of the voices that time, students earned a point, or I didn’t hear all of the voices that time, teacher point), to show which team should have been given a point during the reading group and when it would be appropriate to award points to either the teacher or the students. As soon as possible after the end of the observation session and before the end of the school day, the student researcher would have reviewed the data with the teacher and provided feedback on their performance. The participant would be shown their score on the TA DS, provided with
feedback on up to three behaviors they were doing well using descriptive praise, and up to three behaviors they could improve. When giving the feedback on what needed improvement, the student researcher would have stated the error and what to do instead, referring to the TA DS. Once a teacher was implementing the You/Me Game with 80% fidelity for three consecutive observation sessions, the skill would have been considered learned and treatment terminated. If there were five consecutive sessions with less than 80% fidelity and no upward trend, treatment would be terminated. Participants and students would fill out the post-intervention social validity rating scale as described in the previous condition within one week of treatment termination. None of the participants in this study required the remote coaching phase as they were all able to meet the fidelity criteria without this level of intervention.

**Social Validity**

Students filled out a one question pre- and post-intervention rating scale regarding their preference for the You/Me Game (Lee et al., 2017) (Appendix E). Student surveys were anonymous, but were separated according to teacher. The teacher post-intervention scale (Appendix D) measured their perceived effectiveness of the game as a classroom management tool, and their preference for using it while teaching a DI reading group. Social validity of the training procedures was measured through a modified Treatment Acceptability Rating Form (Davis et al., 1989). Modifications have been made to survey the way the participant perceived the usefulness of the intervention of the use of the TA DS protocol as a training tool for playing the You/Me Game (Griffith et al., 2019; Jitendra et al., 1997), and the remote coaching provided. Once treatment data demonstrated stability, teachers were allowed to choose whether they would like to play
the game for up to three additional sessions. If they chose not to play, they were to be asked why not, and their answers recorded. If they did choose to play, data collection continued to further monitor student behavioral and academic outcomes as well as the fidelity with which the game was being implemented during this phase.

**Results**

**TADS Percentage Fidelity**

Figure 1 displays the data for the components of the You/Me Game completed correctly by participants according to the TADS. During baseline, both participants completed between 44-56% of the steps included on the TADS. Upon implementation of the TA, Participant 1 completed between 72-94% of the steps with an average of 86% over six sessions. Participants 1’s treatment data followed a downward trend for the first three sessions, dipping to 72% during session three. Following the dip below mastery, game implementation increased to 94% for two sessions and remained above mastery for the remaining treatment session. Participant 2, during the TA phase, had low variability with a substantial increase in fidelity, between 83-89% across three sessions. Both participants chose to continue use of the game creating a social validity phase. Participant 1 completed 89% of the steps for the first two sessions, then dropped to 72% for the final social validity session. Participant 2 demonstrated a similar level of variability with a slight drop in fidelity with sessions ranging between 72-83% over the three social validity sessions.
You/Me Points

Figure 2 displays the data for the number of points given to the teacher (me) and the students (you) throughout the observation sessions.

“Me” (teacher) Points

Before providing the TA, participants awarded a range of 2-5 points with an average of 4 to the “Me” team. During the implementation of the TA, Participant 1 awarded the “Me” team six points during the first session, the stayed at either one or two points for the remaining five sessions. Participant 2 awarded either five or six points for each of the three sessions. During the social validity phase, Participant 1 awarded 0-2 points with an average of 1 over three sessions. Participant 2 awarded 10 points during the first session, then three and two points during the second and third session, respectively. Each participant awarded points to the “Me” team at a similar level with similar variability throughout all phases.

“You” (student) Points

During baseline, both participants awarded a similar level of “You” points with a range of 2-9 points with an average of 6. During the TA phase, Participant 1 demonstrated high variability with a range of 4-14 points with an average of 9 over six sessions. Participant 2 demonstrated less variability with a slight increase in the level of points with a range of 7-12 points with an average of 10. While both participants demonstrated moderate to high levels of variability, they both also demonstrated an increase in the level of points awarded. During the social validity phase, Participant 1’s
level and variability decreased to a range of 4-7 points with an average of 5 over three sessions. Participant 2’s variability decreased and level increased to a range of 9-16 with an average of 13 over three sessions.

**Frequency of Disruptions**

Figure 3 displays the data for the frequency of class wide student disruptions during observation sessions. During baseline, Participant 1 had an average of 1 disruption (range 0-1) per observations session. Participant 2 had an average of 19 disruptions (range 14-23). After the introduction of the TA, Participant 1 had an average of 1 disruption (range 0-2) over six sessions, while Participant 2 had an average of 21 disruptions (range 14-33) over three sessions. Throughout the social validity phase, Participant 1 had an average of 1 disruption (range 0-1), while Participant 2 had an average of 19 (range 13-28) over three sessions. Both participants remained at similar levels of disruptions regardless of phase.

**Total OTR**

Figure 4 displays the results for the rate of OTRs presented per minute throughout an observation session. Participants had an average of 8.8 OTRs per minute (range 0.3-16) per observation period during baseline. During the implementation of the TA, they had an average of 12.9 opportunities per minute (range 9.9-16). During the social validity phase, they had an average of 11.5 OTR’s per minute (range 9.9-14.2) over three sessions.
Percent Correct Responses

Figure 5 displays the results for the percentage of correct student responses throughout an observation session. Participants had an average of 95% correct responses (range 91-100%) per observation period during baseline, an average of 96% (range 94-99%) during the implementation of the TA, and an average of 96% correct responses (range 92-99%) during the social validity phase. Both participants maintained high levels of correct academic responding with low variability regardless of the phase of the study.

Behavioral Redirections

Figure 6 displays the results for the rate of behavioral redirections per minute throughout an observation session. During baseline, Participant 1 had an average of 1.1 behavioral redirections per minute (range 0.9-1.3). During the TA phase, Participant 1 had an average of 0.4 redirections per minute (range 0.2-0.6) over six sessions. Finally, during the social validity phase, there was an average of 0.5 redirections per minute (range 0.2-0.9) over three sessions. Participant 2 had an average of 1.1 behavioral redirections per minute during baseline (range 0.4-1.5). During the TA phase, they had an average of 1.3 redirections per minute (range 1.2-1.5) over three sessions. During the social validity phase Participant 2 had an average of 1.4 behavioral redirections per minute (range 0.4-2.9) over three sessions. Both participants demonstrated a downward trend in the rate of behavioral redirections throughout the duration of the study. Data for
both participants also demonstrated low variability with the exception of session seven for Participant 2.

**Social Validity**

In the social validity survey, Participant 1’s data will not be reported on at this time. The participant was reached out to four times for the survey, but it has not been received by the research team. Participant 2 marked items 1-2, 6-9, and 11-15 either 3 (*quite a lot*) or 4 (*a great deal*). Items 3 and 4 were not applicable and items 5 and 10 were marked 2 (*a little*) on the modified version of the TARS (Davis et al., 1989). Participant 2’s additional open-ended feedback at the end of the survey indicated a preference for a more interactive coaching experience.

On the student survey, 100% of the students in group 1 scored that they liked the You/Me Game before and after the intervention. Of the students in group 2, 64% scored that they liked the game, 27% scored that they did not care, and 27% scored that they did not like the game on the pre-intervention scale. For students that scored more than one answer on their survey, both answers were scored. After the intervention, 72% scored that they liked the game, 18% scored that they did not care, and 10% scored that they did not like it. Both participants chose to continue using the game for an additional three sessions.
Discussion

The You/Me Game is written in DI curricula as a form of academic feedback. Educators have adapted this game to be used as a classroom management strategy. There is minimal research on the effectiveness of this game as a classroom management strategy. As such, this study attempted to examine the effects of a TA DS protocol on teacher implementation of the game for classroom management, the effects of the game on student academic and behavioral outcomes, and the social validity of the TA DS protocol and the game itself. Data were collected from two educators during their DI reading groups. The primary measure included to what extent the teacher was playing the game with fidelity. Secondary measures included, the number of points awarded to each team during an observation session, frequency of disruptions, percent correct responses, and the rate of OTR’s and behavioral redirections.

The data suggest that use of a TA DS is an effective means of training educators to implement the You/Me Game for classroom management during DI reading groups. The data in Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate that the fidelity with which the teacher implemented the game with its critical components improved after the introduction of the TA. Figure 1 indicates that teachers use the game with greater fidelity when given clear expectations and relatively minimal resources. This is beneficial in a school setting as resources are often limited and teachers have demonstrated preference for simpler procedures in previous research (Lee et al., 2017). The data in Figure 2 show that the TA was effective in shifting teacher behavior by increasing the number of points awarded to the student teams in the You/Me Game and decreasing the number of teacher points.
Awarding points in this way should increase appropriate student behavior. It also has the potential to increase student preference for reading time. This, in turn, creates a more effective teaching and learning environment.

The data in figures 3, 4, and 5 demonstrated little effect of the You/Me Game on student disruptions and academic outcomes during DI reading groups. The data in Figure 3 indicate that group 1 maintained a low level of disruptions and group 2 maintained a moderate level of disruptions before and after implementation of the intervention. The data in Figures 4 and 5 indicate that the number of OTR’s and the percentage of correct responses essentially remained steady regardless of the use of the You/Me Game with fidelity. Given that DI curricula are designed to provide fast paced lessons with minimal incorrect responding, these data are ultimately, unsurprising. While there was little change from baseline to intervention, the steady level of OTR’s and high level of correct responding implies an effective teaching and learning environment during DI reading groups leading to strong academic outcomes for students as discussed previously. Future research in this area could be done during non-DI academic times, as well as nonacademic times throughout the school day.

The data in Figure 6 indicate a beneficial behavioral change by demonstrating a decrease in the rate of behavioral redirections provided by the teacher during the reading lesson. A decrease in behavioral redirections implies a more efficient learning environment. Less behavioral redirections suggests that students are more focused on the material and the teacher does not have to lose instructional momentum addressing problem behavior.
Something interesting to note is the most commonly missed steps on the TA DS. The most commonly missed step was the provision of points at least one time per minute. Although DI lessons are fast paced and lend themselves to the rapid awarding of points, there were only two sessions between the two participants where this step was completed. The second and third most commonly missed steps were components of explaining the game, namely, stating how teachers earn points and that the team with the most points at the end of reading wins. At the beginning of the study both educators explained these steps of the game consistently for only two sessions before the behavior became more sporadic. It can seem repetitive to state the rules of the game every day when the teachers and students are familiar with how it works, but the daily explanation of the game components were included because it is a key part of consistency and clarity of expectations. The final step that was most consistently missed was the provision of a redirection with each teacher point. This is another key part of the game as it is more likely to be successful if the expectations for appropriate student behavior, instead of the behaviors they were engaging in that resulted in a teacher point, are clear and consistent.

It is also interesting to note that both participants chose to continue using the game as a classroom management strategy after demonstrating mastery. This created a social validity phase, but neither of them maintained 80% or greater fidelity of game use through all three sessions of the phase. Both participants also opted for a different variation of reinforcement during the social validity phase. Instead of the team with the most points winning, Participant 1 offered the reinforcer only if the student team won by five or more points. Participant 2 offered the class one reinforcer for each set of five points they were ahead of the teacher. These variations follow the same pattern of self-
adapted reinforcement strategies that are not necessarily evidence based. Future research in this area could explore such variations.

There are limitations to this study, the most of which being the barriers presented by restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the study was run remotely and students and teachers wore face masks. This created difficulties in recruiting participants, resulting in only two participants for this study despite continuous recruiting efforts over several months. Informed consent and assent were difficult to collect as all communication between members of the research team and participants had to remain virtual. Participating in sessions remotely with face masks may have led to less accurate data collection as technical issues, sound difficulties, and camera angles may have been barriers to additional information such as gestural redirections or incorrect OTR’s. Lastly, participants may have been less likely to ask questions about the intervention due to the response effort of potentially having to type questions and await a response, rather than asking face-to-face.

The final limitation to address is conducting the study only during DI reading groups. The study was designed to be run during DI reading groups because of the existing link between the You/Me Game and the DI reading curriculum. However, this game is used throughout the day by many educators in many different settings, subjects, and time frames. DI reading lessons are designed for academic success leading to little observed effects on academic outcomes. Perhaps outside of a DI lesson, effects on academic outcomes would be more pronounced. Some educators use this game during only one subject, like in this study, however it is not uncommon to see the You/Me Game used throughout the entire school day, or broken into other chunks of time, such as before
lunch and after lunch. Future research could include the use of the game during other subjects as well as different time frames. Future research could also include more specific parameters for what behaviors, both teacher and student, result in points. More clearly defining behaviors could change outcomes by creating more distinct behavioral contingencies.

While this study presents limitations regarding the use of the You/Me Game as a classroom management strategy, it also presents evidence that the use of a TADS can be an effective, low resource training tool. The behavior changes demonstrated by both teachers and students helped to establish a more effective and positive instructional environment by decreasing the rate of behavioral redirections during DI reading lessons. The participant responses on the social validity scale suggest that the use of a TADS can be an effective, preferred means of training, and the student responses, particularly those from group 2, indicate that the You/Me Game is likely a student preferred behavioral intervention when it is used with fidelity during DI reading groups.
**References**


Appendices
Teacher/Student Game Instructions

1. Draw a scoreboard somewhere that it will be visible to both teacher and students.
2. Begin the lesson by explaining the game.
   a. When the students are following directions, they will earn a point.
   b. When the students are not following directions, the teacher will earn a point.
   c. Whoever has the most points at the end of reading wins!
   d. If the students win, they receive a reward. Today’s reward will be (stamps, free time/drawing time, small trinket, etc.).
3. Review the rules and expectations that, when followed, will result in the students being awarded a point.
   a. Examples:
      i. Everyone answering during a choral response
      ii. Sitting up straight and tall
      iii. Tracking
      iv. Answering on signal
      v. Having voice off when the teacher or another student is talking
      vi. Giving answers to comprehension questions in complete sentences
      vii. Following directions quickly (within 5 seconds)
      viii. Raising hand and waiting to be called on before talking
      ix. Keeping bodies and belongings to themselves
4. While reviewing expectations, provide points and descriptive praise for meeting those expectations.
5. Provide descriptive praise when awarding points to the students. Example: “I see every student using their tracking fingers, that’s a point for the class!”
6. Provide a descriptive redirection when awarding points to the teacher. Example: “I have a few friends talking while I’m talking, that’s a point for me. I hope those friends can fix it by raising their hand to talk so they can keep earning points for the class.”
   a. Examples of behaviors that result in teacher points:
      i. Students talking when it is someone else’s turn to talk
      ii. Shouting out instead of raising hand
      iii. Leaving seats without permission
      iv. Touching other students with hands, feet, materials, etc
      v. Using materials inappropriately
      vi. Consistently losing track of where they should be reading after reminders
      vii. Using silly voices after they’ve been reminded not to
7. When a student fixes a behavior that resulted in a teacher point, immediately praise that student for fixing their behavior.
8. Teacher points should be used to redirect, not punish or threaten.
9. Provide points and descriptive praise/redirections at least once per minute.
10. Provide students with the reward if they win the game (finish class with the more points).
11. If the teacher wins the game (finishes class with more points), have a brief (1 minute or less) discussion about what the students can do better next time to make sure they earn more points than the teacher.
Appendix B

Teacher/Student Game TA DS

Participant ___________ Observer ______________ Date _____________
Session # _______ Circle: Primary Secondary Duration___________

Condition: Baseline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draw a scoreboard where it is visible to everyone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain the game</td>
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<tr>
<td>• State what today’s reward will be</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review rules and expectations</td>
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<td>• Sit up</td>
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<td>• Track</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Answer on signal</td>
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<td>• Respect everyone</td>
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<td>The reward is delivered if the students win</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a short discussion about rules if the teacher wins</td>
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Total

Percentage

Baseline Procedural Fidelity

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<tr>
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Total

Percentage
Teacher/Student Game TA DS

Participant ______________ Observer ______________ Date ______________

Session # _______ Circle: Primary Secondary Duration____________

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Teacher/Student Game TA DS

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**Total**

**Percentage**

### Coaching Procedural Fidelity

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<tr>
<td>Participant was given feedback on their performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback includes

- 1-3 things they are doing well using descriptive praise
- 1-3 things they can do to improve

For each behavior needing improvement the student researcher giving the feedback stated the error and what to do instead referring to the TA DS.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Dependent Variable Data Sheet

Participant__________________  Observer__________________  Date__________________

Session #______________  Circle:  Primary  Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTRs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total:       | Total:     |
| Percent Correct: |            |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disruptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total points at end of lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You/Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Social Validity Questionnaire

Participant #: 

The following questions ask about your impressions of the training process and outcomes. For each question, please circle the statement that best expresses your opinion.

Your name will in no way be linked to your responses. Once you have completed this form, please give it to Sarah Pinkelman. You may scan it to sarah.pinkelman@usu.edu or leave it with Carrie McLaughlin who will return it to Sarah for you.

*Please circle one answer per question.*

Procedures

1. You experienced reading written instructions called a task analysis to implement the You/Me Game. Do you feel this was an effective way to train this skill?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

2. You experienced reading a task analysis to implement the You/Me Game. Did you find this training to be enjoyable?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

3. You may have experienced remote coaching while running the DI reading group. If so, do you feel that this was an effective way to provide further training on this skill?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal   Did

4. You may have experienced remote coaching while running the DI reading group. If so, did you find this training to be enjoyable?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal   Did

Outcomes

5. Did the training help you implement the You/Me Game as a classroom management tool?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal
6. Do you feel student behavior during small group reading lessons improved?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

7. Do you feel student academic outcomes during small group reading improved?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

8. Are you satisfied with the student improvements in your reading group?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal   N/A; outcomes not improved

9. Do you think the student outcomes gained from the You/Me Game are worth the effort required for you to implement it?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

Maintenance/Generalization

10. Do you expect to use the You/Me Game in additional reading groups or in other contexts with students?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

11. How likely are you to continue using the You/Me Game in reading groups?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

Contextual Fit

12. To what extent do you think the You/Me Game is feasible to implement in your classroom?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

13. Does the You/Me Game align with your values/approach to teaching/classroom management?

   Not at all   A little   Quite a lot   A great deal

14. Do you feel that you have the resources to implement the You/Me Game without McKenzie’s support?
Not at all  |  A little  |  Quite a lot  |  A great deal

Overall

15. Overall, how satisfied are you with the training?

Not at all  |  A little  |  Quite a lot  |  A great deal

16. Please provide at least one way this training could be improved (provide as many as you would like, but at least one!).

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

17. Is there anything else you would like to share about your participation in this study? We highly value your honest feedback!

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for your time!!

Adapted from treatment acceptability rating form used in Davis et al. (1989) and informed by other sources (Fawcett, 1991; Horner et al., 2005; Schwartz & Baer, 1991; Wolf, 1978).
Appendix E

Student Social Validity Survey

Reading Teacher ____________________________________________

Mark how you feel about playing the You/Me Game in reading:

I don’t like it.  I don’t care.  I like it!

[Emoji images for sad face, neutral face, happy face]
Figures

Figure 1

*TA DS Fidelity Percentage*

![Graph showing TA DS Fidelity Percentage across Baseline, Task Analysis, and Social Validity phases for Group 1 and Group 2.](image-url)
Figure 2

Points Awarded

Note. Number of points awarded to each team per session.
Figure 3

*Frequency of Disruptions*

![Graph showing frequency of disruptions over three phases: Baseline, Task Analysis, and Social Validity. The graph compares two groups, Group 1 and Group 2.](image-url)
Figure 4

Total OTR’s

Baseline

Task Analysis

Social Validity

Group 1

Group 2
Figure 5

Percentage of Correct Responses
Figure 6

Rate of Behavioral Redirections