Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

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Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Student Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

A Dissertation by

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ABSTRACT

Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Student Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

by Christian Burner

Purpose: The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic rewards system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. A second purpose was to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting.

Methodology: This study used a Delphi method, consisting of 3 rounds, to collect data from alternative schoolteachers who are experts in implementing strategies within a school-wide extrinsic rewards system. In Round 1, participants were asked to identify strategies to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting. In Round 2, a Likert scale survey was used to rate the effectiveness of the strategies from Round 1. In Round 3, expert respondents provided activities to implement the five highest rated strategies to improve student behavior.

Findings: The expert participants identified 26 strategies to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting. These strategies were rated for their effectiveness. The top 5 strategies are (a) build relationships; (b) create a culture of care and respect; (c) consistent implementation of procedures and resources; (d) make the classroom environment about the students; and (e) free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior. The expert teachers recommended 19 activity categories for implementation of the top 5 strategies.
Conclusions: To improve student behavior in alternative schools, a variety of strategies should be implemented within an extrinsic reward system from 4 categories: social emotional, rewards, academic and curriculum, and behavioral. Additionally, it is important to understand that changing student behavior does not happen overnight, but by utilizing strategic activities that build relationships, create a culture of care and respect, and make the classroom environment about the students, while consistently implementing procedures and resources and rewarding students with passes for early lunch or free time can build trust and engagement for behavior improvement.

Recommendations: Based on the findings from this study, 2 recommendations were presented for further research to determine the effectiveness of suggested strategies to improve maladaptive student behavior in alternative schools.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

What is the worth of a child? Do we, as educators, give up trying because a child has behavioral concerns? Alternative school, for the most part, is an educational institution intended to intervene for students who are not succeeding in the comprehensive (regular) school environment because of behavioral issues. These students may be regular education students or students with a disability. Herndon and Bembenutty (2017) explained that students placed in alternative schools are students who do not have certain academic abilities and motivation to control their behavior. The alternative school is designed to be a temporary placement until a student has “reformed” their behavior and is allowed to return to the comprehensive school. Internationally, schools may exclude students from attending because of behavior or attendance concerns, so the alternative school is a program to continue one’s education (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016). Alternative schools offer a smaller school setting, but they also have a denser number of students with comportment problems. As such, the alternative educational setting implements programs to reduce interruptions and increase educational motivation.

Some alternative schools have turned to extrinsic reward systems to minimize the behavioral issues that students bring to the alternative educational systems so instruction can take place. Contingency management programs are varied in their construction and application. Additionally, behavioral research has shown that extrinsic rewards only change behavior while the reward is in place (Benabou & Tirole, 2003). Once the reward is removed, the poor behavior returns. Extrinsic reward proponents agree that tangible
awards should only be temporary and should then be reduced and replaced with the intrinsic motivation of desiring to be successful (Dowd & Peter, 1996).

This research aims to bridge the gap between extrinsic reward systems and the intrinsic desire to be successful thereby enabling the student to not only return to the regular school but also to be able to flourish in that particular educational setting. There are different contingency management programs currently being used to address problematic student behavior, all claiming to bring about a positive change in students. Uncovering the best components of the extrinsic reward systems that bring about behavioral change is the key. This research strives to support the alternative education practitioner to determine a program best suited to rehabilitate students in a particular alternative school. In turn, students who are successful within the program can return to the comprehensive school without academic and behavioral issues and be ready to move forward with their education. There is a reason for alternative schools, and how the alternative school setting became a reality is important to understand in relation to the use of extrinsic reward systems.

**Background**

Alternative schools provide an educational setting for students with behavioral problems that continually disrupt teachers and other students in the comprehensive school setting. In America, attending school is a requirement, typically between the ages of 6 and 18. Most students are motivated to go to school to learn; however, some students are not motivated to go to school and would rather be somewhere else. These students will either leave school without permission or cause problems in class to get sent to the office. When students exhibit unruly behavior on a regular basis or commit violations of state
education codes and school rules with a magnitude requiring a change of placement from the regular school to the alternative school, it is then the alternative school’s responsibility to educate these students and to address their behavior challenges. Using extrinsic reward systems is one way for these schools to create an environment where learning takes place.

The charge of alternative schools is not to just house students with behavioral issues but to educate them and prepare them to return to the comprehensive school setting in order to continue their education. There is a concern for recidivism in regard to sending students back to their home school (Rowe, Murphy, & DeCsipkes, 1974). If students are prepared to return to their home school and keep returning to the alternative school, are students getting the education they need? Are there alternative schools with extrinsic reward systems that are effective in teaching students with behavior problems, academic and social, so these students may be successful?

The purpose of this research was to define the best components of extrinsic reward systems intended to help change poor student behavior, support students in achieving academic success, and lower the rate of recidivism of students returning to the alternative school after leaving the alternative school and returning to the regular school.

**Motivation**

Students who are motivated to learn and succeed typically demonstrate curiosity, interest, goal orientation, and self-efficacy (Cunningham, 2011). Not all students are driven to be successful. Students come from different backgrounds, whether cultural, ethnical, economical, religious, or social. Students in alternative school settings typically are transferred there because of negative behaviors (Carver & Lewis, 2010). These same
students have had problems being motivated and focused academically and usually are aligned with other students who exhibit these same negative behaviors, causing learning to be a low priority (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2014). Wery and Thomson (2013) reasoned that when students are not motivated to learn, it is important to begin to reach out with extrinsic rewards and later move to intrinsic motivation.

**Compulsory Education**

Compulsory education is not an educational requirement across the world, and typically, if a student demonstrates maladaptive behavior, the student is excluded from attending school. In the United States of America, states practice compulsory education although the age limit changes from state to state. In California, all minors between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to attend school (Cal. Educ. Code § 48200, 2017). Alternative schools are no different than the comprehensive schools in that each is required to educate students with the ultimate goal of meeting the requirements for graduation and receipt of a diploma. Schools today are supposed to be the place where children’s problems are fixed (Curwin, 1995). Students with maladaptive behavior are transferred to schools that fix problem behaviors.

As all school age students are required to attend school, students with behavioral issues may be referred to an alternative education school. Alternative schools, in order to educate, may use extrinsic reward systems as a means to reduce problematic behavior so teaching can take place. By rewarding students for refraining from breaking rules and interrupting classroom instruction, alternative schools fulfill their responsibility of educating students. Additionally, all types of schools, including alternative schools, must meet state and federal benchmarks. Because students cannot be permanently excluded
from school, alternative schools’ enrollment consists of the least desirable school-age children. Bowman (2007) asserted that teachers have learned to influence students through the use of extrinsic rewards as a result of having to conform to state testing and federal accountability. Rodriguez-Planas (2012) posited that cash incentives have been on the rise as a way to encourage students to perform better.

**Alternative Schools**

Students who have behavioral issues and continually get in trouble at school despite interventions to curb problematic behavior may be referred to alternative schools. These students have interrupted classroom instruction excessively, drawing attention away from the purpose of the classroom. School administration intervenes and inserts various types of interventions, such as office detentions, after-school detentions, in-school isolation, and outside suspensions without success. Edgar-Smith and Baugher Palmer (2015) stated, “To adequately support the minority of students who function poorly within conventional school systems, alternative education programs seek to provide an innovative curriculum that effectively engages student learning” (p. 134). Alternative schools were established to house these disruptive students while working to replace their inappropriate behavior with more socially acceptable, appropriate behavior.

**Extrinsic Reward Systems**

Schools that use extrinsic rewards do so in many different ways and for various purposes. Cashwell, et. al. (1998) shared that group reward programs can contribute to encouraging positive behavior, diversity deference, and a more humanistic approach to education. Payne (2015) speaks about using a system of rewards and sanctions to promote positive behavior in schools through the use of ink stamps in a students’ daily
journal for positive rewards and negative comments as sanctions. Reluctant learners can be reengaged at first through some kind of extrinsic motivator (Wery & Thomson, 2013).

Comprehensive schools give away various types of items such as candy, school apparel, trinkets, pens, pencils, notebooks, specialty lunches, and so forth (Chance, 1992). Those students who reach targets such as reading a certain number of books or pages, having perfect attendance, helping other students, or having a variety of other milestones receive extrinsic rewards. Receiving verbal praise is also a type of extrinsic reward (Payne, 2015; Wery & Thomson, 2013). Alternative schools use extrinsic reward systems as strategies to improve behavior, which in turn can lead to students improving academic motivation. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an extensive range of general and personalized approaches for achieving important social and learning results while preventing problem behavior.

**Theoretical Reflections**

**Extrinsic Rewards Theory**

Modifying poor student behavior is the purpose of using an extrinsic reward system (Chance, 1992). Rassuli (2012) contended that extrinsic rewards work if students participate voluntarily rather than being forced to contribute. Students are given tangible rewards for exhibiting positive behavior in the classroom. Rewards may consist of candy, food, drinks, points, money, and so forth. There are several reward systems in use with common attributes, such as the Boys Town model, Numbered Heads Together (NHT), and Positive Unified Behavior Support (PUBS).
**Numbered Heads Together**

In the NHT approach, students are grouped into foursomes and numbered 1-4. The teacher offers a question to which the groups discuss the answer, and then a number (1-4) is picked by the teacher who designates which student will answer by writing the answer on a small whiteboard. Prior to the activity, each student picks a reward, and if a certain number of correct answers is given by each group, each student within the group receives the reward that was chosen beforehand (Hunter & Haydon, 2013). Hunter and Haydon (2013) further revealed that “the use of the incentives were powerful enough to increase student engagement” (p. 44).

**Positive Unified Behavior Support**

With the PUBS method, a systemic change in the way students are disciplined was developed. All teachers used the same non-confrontational approach to refocusing students within the classroom. A specific protocol was followed by each teacher, which included verbal praise for students who may have broken a rule but made an adjustment after being confronted by the teacher. According to J. S. Scott, White, Algozzine, and Algozzine (2009), after implementation of PUBS, scores improved within affected schools.

**Boys Town**

The Boys Town model is more of a hybrid system, using a point system to initially improve behavioral problems. Dowd and Peter (1996) agreed that extrinsic rewards alone may not be effective in maintaining a sustained change in behavior. Using extrinsic rewards at the beginning of the program controls the behavioral issues
temporarily, giving the student a chance to overcome poor behavior and then weans the student away from extrinsic rewards.

**Group Reward Programs**

According to C. S. Cashwell, Skinner, Dunn, and Lewis (1998), group reward programs are effective in reducing inappropriate behavior, applying rewards to students based on student production within a group. There are three types of group-oriented reward programs: independent, dependent, and interdependent (C. S. Cashwell et al., 1998).

**Short-Term Group Counseling**

Another approach is to redirect problematic behaviors and help students improve their ability to conform to school rules. According to Rauch, Brack, and Orr (1987), using a short-term group therapy with male middle school students who had been demonstrating maladaptive behaviors instead of out-of-school suspension is another method to improve student conduct.

**Intrinsic Rewards Theory**

It has long been held that intrinsic rewards have a lasting effect on students and create an inner motivation that sustains itself throughout the educational learning experience. Intrinsic rewards theory suggests that students take responsibility for their own education, and as a student makes progress in learning self-confidence, the student creates a desire to keep learning. One such example is the independent education model. In this model, independent education allows students to learn what they want. According to Speikermann (1985), the teachers are not teaching students but rather teaching the subject.
Benabou and Tirole (2003) stated, “A reward is a positive re-enforcer in the short term, but always decreases future motivation” (p. 503). When extrinsic reward systems end, previous behaviors resurface because the reason for stopping poor behavior was to get a reward (Kohn, 1993). Wilson and Corpus (2001) argued that students given the opportunity to choose and have control over their learning and are tested at a level just above what they know will become more intrinsic learners.

Even though there are two different theories about reward systems being effective in changing student behavior, the literature shows that extrinsic reward systems have a place in the alternative school setting, at least in the initial stages of changing a student’s problematic behavior. Extrinsic reward systems are varied and have different component parts that provide successful implementation within each school. Will what works in one school work in a different school? Are the components of each extrinsic reward system similar? There is limited research available that compares and contrasts different extrinsic reward systems. Students who attend alternative schools because of problem behaviors demonstrated in the traditional school setting need help to rehabilitate before returning to the regular school again. This is why the alternative school is necessary.

**Problem Statement**

Students who demonstrate consistent maladaptive behaviors in the traditional school setting are referred to the alternative schools to continue their education. Alternative schools use the smaller school setting to meet the needs of problematic students and provide them with an appropriate education (Edgar-Smith & Baugher Palmer, 2015). These students are to be rehabilitated and transitioned back to their home
schools. The idea is to give students a second opportunity to attend the traditional school (Kim, 2006).

In a study by Booker and Mitchell (2011), during the school year, students assigned to the alternative school who transitioned back to the home school during the same school year had a rate of 53% of recidivism back to the alternative school. This results in many students not being prepared to return to the traditional school setting and returning again to the alternative school program.

There are a variety of extrinsic reward systems employed by alternative schools, evidenced with the Boys Town model, Numbered Heads Together, group-oriented reward programs, group therapy programs, or PBIS programs (C. S. Cashwell et al., 1998; Dowd & Peter, 1996; Hunter & Haydon, 2013; Rauch et al., 1987). Each of these programs shows evidence of success with students who have had behavioral and learning issues.

Even though there are a variety of extrinsic reward programs in use, some districts and schools have chosen to allow individual teachers to use their own support program in the classroom. There is a lack of consistency in how extrinsic reward systems are used in alternative schools. As a result, there is a gap in the literature regarding best practices for the use of extrinsic reward systems in alternative school settings. Various studies (C. S. Cashwell et al., 1998; Edgar-Smith & Baugher Palmer, 2015; Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Hunter & Haydon, 2013; Rauch et al., 1987) have been completed examining the results of different extrinsic reward programs, and each claims success. A study that investigates the successful components of extrinsic reward systems based on the experiences of alternative education teachers can help schools and districts determine
which programs work best and identify the combination of components that help students manage maladaptive behavior successfully.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. A second purpose was to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. The final purpose was to identify recommendations from alternative schoolteachers regarding actions for the implementation of the most effective strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting.

**Research Questions**

1. What strategies do alternative schoolteachers identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

2. How do alternative schoolteachers rate the effectiveness of strategies identified as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

3. What recommendations do alternative schoolteachers have for actions for implementing the strategies rated as most effective within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?
**Significance of the Study**

Alternative schools were first introduced into school districts during the 1960s (Quinn, Poirier, Faller, Gable, & Tonelson, 2006). Raywid (1994) classified alternative schools into three different categories: (a) Type I, schools that students voluntarily attend for different strategies and programs; (b) Type II, schools that house and educate students who demonstrate maladaptive behaviors consistently in the traditional school setting; and (c) Type III, schools that teach remediation and are therapeutic in their purpose. In this study, the researcher concentrated on the Type II schools or those schools that house students with demonstrated behavioral issues. These students have disrupted classroom education and other activities on regular school campuses, causing principals to request that these students be moved off of their school sites.

Once the student arrives at the alternative school, the rehabilitation process begins. Additionally, the alternative school is required to educate the maladaptive behavioral student while in residence. This placement in the alternative school is supposed to be short term with the expectation that within a specific period of time the student is reformed and may return to the traditional school setting (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017). The uses of extrinsic reward systems are intended to help with the rehabilitation process of students while at the alternative school. A variety of extrinsic reward systems have been employed to help reduce problem behaviors in alternative school students so instruction may take place (C. S. Cashwell et al., 1998; Dowd & Peter, 1996; Hunter & Haydon, 2013; Rauch et al., 1987). Additionally, these contingency reward programs work to help reform students behaviorally.
By uncovering these effective components, alternative schools may work more productively in rehabilitating students with maladaptive behaviors and prepare them to return successfully to their traditional home schools. Administrators will have the benefit of utilizing the results of this study to implement a program discovered from this study or develop a program that will positively benefit the students and teachers within an alternative school.

**Definitions**

**Alternative school.** An educational method to serve students with academic, emotional, and behavioral needs that cannot be provided in the traditional school setting (Kim & Taylor, 2008).

**Contingency management program.** Another method to describe an extrinsic reward system.

**Extrinsic reward system.** An organized system using tangible rewards to reinforce positive behavioral decisions by students with maladaptive behaviors (Ambramovich et al. 2013; Cashwell et al., 1998; Ford & Foster, 1976; Payne, 2015).

**Intrinsic motivation.** According to Covington and Mueller (2001), intrinsic motivation is the chase of a task that is stimulating without receiving a tangible reward for accomplishing the undertaking.

**Type I alternative schools.** These are popular schools of choice choose similar to charter or magnet schools (Raywid, 1994).

**Type II alternative schools.** Raywid (1994) defined this type of school for students who are assigned as a result of disciplinary consequences for behavior issues and possibly as a last resort before expulsion.
**Type III alternative schools.** Schools that are needed for therapy or remediation, and that with successful progress students may return to the traditional school setting. These schools tend to have a low teacher to student ratio for intense instructional and therapeutic needs, such as students in a stay-at-home program or a nonpublic school setting (Raywid, 1994).

The focus of this study is on Type II schools that work with students who show maladaptive behaviors.

**Delimitations**

This study was delimited to alternative education schoolteachers in alternative schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties who met the following criteria:

1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or,
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic reward systems.

**Organization of the Study**

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I presented the background and rationale for the study along with the purpose and research questions. Chapter II reviewed the literature pertinent to the study. Chapter III presented the methodology of the study including methodology type and rationale, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. Chapter IV presented the findings from the data collection process and
Chapter V presented the researcher’s findings, conclusions, and recommendations for action.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter covers the development of the topic regarding extrinsic reward systems and changing maladaptive student behaviors, beginning with the concept of learning and the relevance of learning for students and then the motivation of students to learn and what happens with student motivation because of maladaptive behaviors. Another area considered is the purpose of compulsory education and minimum requirements for graduation, which leads to alternative education and why it exists along with its purpose. Comparing and contrasting theoretical reflections on extrinsic rewards versus intrinsic rewards is another component. A comprehensive review of various extrinsic reward systems is necessary for an overall view of the different ideas relating to student rehabilitation in the alternative school setting. Finally, demonstrating the gaps in the literature shows that the need to perform this study was crucial.

Alternative Educational Background

Compulsory Education

Compulsory education in the United States of America originated with the state of Massachusetts in 1852, and by 1918, all states had a compulsory education law on their books in some form (Rauscher, 2015). The reasoning for compulsory education was to provide an education for the more impoverished children because of their parents’ misfortune or shiftlessness (Commissioner of Education, 1891). Compulsory education in California requires that all persons between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school (Cal. Educ. Code §48200, 2017). Other states have similar laws, some from ages 5 to 16 or 5 to 18 years (Loo, 2018). Loo (2018) stated that schools are organized into elementary
level, which can be either kindergarten through sixth or eighth grades; middle school level, which typically is seventh and eighth grades; and high school level, which is ninth through 12th grades where “all students are guaranteed a free public education through the 12th grade” (p. 16). Soder (1995) stated the following about the purpose of schools:

Schools have many functions, but their fundamental purpose is to teach students their moral and intellectual responsibilities for living and working in a democracy. It is not to be efficient, effective, or accountable, nor is it to prepare docile, unquestioning workers who will go blindly into roles assigned them in the great struggle to dominate the world economy, or in the words of Tocqueville, to be a “flock of timid and hardworking animals.” (p. 163)

**Traditional School Setting**

Most students attend traditional schools nationwide (Keaton, 2014). Most school districts offer parents and students a variety of educational options for students to participate in their education. Comprehensive or traditional school settings are more common because the curriculum is more varied with a wide selection of subject options (Perzigian, Afacan, Justin, & Wilkerson, 2017). Additionally, traditional schools offer sports and extracurricular opportunities for students (Loo, 2018). There are a variety of factors that may interfere with a student’s progression in academic success, one of which is discipline issues (Brooks & Coll, 1994; Gottlieb & Polirstok, 2005; Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002; Rhodes, Hill, Vadodaria, Carter, & Gold, 2011; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997).
Alternative Education

Alternative education had its beginnings in the 1960s with private alternative programs (Magee Quinn, Poirier, Faller, Gable, & Tonelson, 2006). Traditionally, alternative schools were used to separate students with discipline issues to eliminate school and classroom disruptions as well as for safety reasons (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Maillet, 2017; Perzigian et al., 2017; Ruebel, Ruebel, & O’Laughlin, 2001; Wilkerson, Afacan, Persegian, Justin, & Lequia, 2016). Giancola (2000) maintained that removing maladaptive students from traditional schools could help non-maladaptive students improve their behavior because of the influence of peers. Additionally, A. S. Neill founded Summerhill in 1921 in Great Britain because he believed that traditional schools did not offer students the personal freedom needed to learn (Conley, 2002). Raywid (1998) discussed urban and suburban area alternative schools, with urban schools developing alternatives for failing students and suburban schools using innovative approaches to reinvent the educational system. Another popular alternative program was the freedom school in the South where African American students could go and be educated with a focus on reading, writing, and speaking skills using Black history, the power structure, and developing a movement against this power structure (Conley, 2002).

During the 1990s, alternative educational programs such as voucher programs, charter schools, and magnet schools surfaced to help students suffering from poor academic achievement and poor pedagogical methods and to help diverse families with a variety of needs by providing choice within public education (Kim, 2006). Alternative education was also viewed by the public as a place where students with maladaptive
behaviors should go as a means to protect the rest of the students who were seen as wanting to be educated (Ascroft, 1994; Howell, 1995; Leone, Rutherford, & Nelson, 1991; McGee, 2001). Arrington (2019) stated that in regard to the number of alternative schools in the United States,

Researchers have continued to study which services are most beneficial in the setting of alternative schools, especially as the number of alternative schools has continued to increase in the country. As was pointed out in a 2016 literature review of the topic, a team from the National Center for Education Statistics had reported in 2010 that 64 percent of school districts had at least one alternative school administered by the district. (p. 7)

There are different kinds of alternative schools. Raywid (1994) identified three types of alternative schools. Type I schools are for students who desire to attend a charter or magnet school. These schools are typically innovative in their approach and make school more challenging and fulfilling (Raywid, 1994). Type II schools are for students who are assigned to a school due to behavioral issues at the comprehensive school. Districts may also offer an alternative school setting instead of expulsion (Wilkerson et al., 2016). Type III schools are for students who need therapy or remediation (Raywid, 1994). Raywid (1998) revised this description of schools to (a) change the student schools, (b) change the school, and (c) change the educational system schools.

Knutson (1999) said that originally alternative education was used as an *umbrella* for educational options outside of the traditional school setting. A meta-analysis of evaluations of 57 alternative education programs was conducted by Cox, Davidson, and
Bynum (1995) with the results showing reduced positive effects, and many of the studies had defects with their methodologies. Another study showed only short-term positive effects in regard to attendance, self-esteem, and grade point average (Cox, 1999).

Knutson (1999) also suggested that alternative schools may be the school of the future, with the addition of private schools, charter schools, and community schools becoming more relevant. Some alternative schools are private where districts purchase seats for their behaviorally at-risk students (Gut & McLaughlin, 2012). More recently, parents have chosen the alternative school setting for safety reasons, smaller setting, more individualized instruction, more convenient schedule, and better teaching (Knutson, 1999; Raywid, 1994).

Alternative schools can be housed in a variety of locations such as old school buildings, vacated city buildings, industrial complexes, strip malls, and homes where the parents instruct their own children (Knutson, 1999; Loo, 2018). Homeschool can be done for a student’s entire education with the parents certifying that their student has completed an educational program equivalent to an accredited high school (Loo, 2018). Universities allow exceptions for admission by using SAT scores, letters of recommendation, and a complete appraisal of the homeschool curriculum (Loo, 2018).

Another type of alternative education is independent study. Independent study allows students the opportunity to complete schoolwork at home during the school week. These students have a weekly appointment with a teacher, usually for 2 hours, wherein instruction occurs, the previous week’s work is submitted, tests are taken, science labs are performed, and new work is assigned for the upcoming week. Student attendance is based on the completion of assigned work turned in each week. When students have
behavioral problems, parents can enroll their children in independent study programs or homeschool.

Magnet or charter schools are another alternative educational option for students with maladaptive behaviors (Imberman, 2011). Charter schools can maintain a strong disciplinary program to help students be successful (Lopez Kershen, Miles Weiner, & Torres, 2018). Charter schools have more autonomy than public schools regarding personnel, curriculum, and organization and are not restricted geographically, allowing more parent choice (Schneider & Buckley, 2006). According to DeAngelis and Lueken (2019), charter schools have more freedoms when it comes to determining policies regarding discipline, building culture, and enrollment.

Continuation high school, a type of alternative school, gives volunteering juniors and seniors an opportunity to recover lost credits because of failing classes at the comprehensive high school, offering an opportunity to graduate within the 4-year high school time frame. As such, Kennedy-Lewis (2015) discussed the continuation high school as a safety net for those students with academic deficiencies, behavioral issues, and any other nontraditional student issues. Students have the option to graduate from either their continuation high school or their home comprehensive high school.

Alternative schools include opportunity schools, which are usually designed to admit students from the seventh through the 10th grades. These schools were originally for students who had attendance and behavioral problems and were assigned to these schools for a specific time period. According to the California Education Code Section 46180 (2018), opportunity schools are only required to be in session for 180 minutes and can have two 180-minute school sessions, depending on the district’s need. Opportunity
schools may also stay in session for a typical school day of 360 minutes. In more recent years, more and more students volunteer to attend because of a variety of reasons such as social-emotional concerns, which include anxiety, bullying, and laziness, plus safety reasons.

In California, county-run schools were created through the passing of Assembly Bill 922 (AB 922) in 1996 to house district-expelled students (Kennedy-Lewis 2015). Juvenile detention education programs are characteristically designed for students who have been arrested and are currently incarcerated. County school students have been placed on contracts requiring completion of certain conditions, which include academic, discipline, and attendance. Juvenile detention programs are available for youth who have been incarcerated within juvenile detention centers.

This study focused on Type II schools. Students who attend these schools not only have behavioral concerns but also have attendance problems and emotional issues (Lehr & Lange, 2003; Swain-Bradway, Swoszowski, Boden, & Sprague, 2013; Wilkerson et al., 2016). As a result, all of these types of students typically have academic concerns (Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Palmer, 2008).

Students who violate education codes related to discipline can be assigned to Type II schools until a period of time has elapsed and rehabilitation has occurred, and these students are allowed to return to the comprehensive schools (Leone & Drakeford, 1999). In a study on how student outcomes are impacted in Type II alternative schools that are behaviorally focused, Wilkerson et al. (2016) questioned whether these schools are effective. Wilkerson et al. looked at office referral, suspensions, attendance, and credits earned. This study showed that office referrals were reduced, suspensions were
not significantly different, attendance was lower, and credits earned were reduced. Also considered were the limitations that the sampling of the data could be skewed and busing could be problematic. Another study by Gut and McLaughlin (2012) demonstrated that office discipline referrals showed a significant reduction through a privately owned alternative school program where a district can purchase seats in the school.

Booker and Mitchell (2011) developed a study that measured patterns in recidivism for students placed into disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP). The study showed that compared to Caucasian students, African American and Hispanic students were more likely to return to a DAEP during the same school year. Middle school students were no more likely to return to a DAEP school than high school students.

Quinn et al. (2006) discussed school climate in alternative educational settings: What is an alternative school and why do students attend these types of schools? Quinn et al. shared the work of Raywid (1994) in regard to giving alternative schools labels based on why students attend these schools. Raywid originally categorized alternative schools by coding them Type I, Type II, and Type III. Type I schools emphasize innovative and strategic programs; Type II schools emphasize a last chance for students before expulsion; Type III schools are for students who need remedial and therapeutic help.

Learning and Relevance

The ultimate student is the one who learns consistently because he or she is motivated to go to school and is interested in each subject. Dewey (1897) asserted that educators must have a “psychological insight” (p. 2) into a student’s abilities, curiosities,
and behaviors to find relevancy to learning. This same student conforms to school rules and strives to do her or his best. According to Mac Iver and Mac Iver (2014), when students are not interested in learning, the motivation to attend school is absent. Students not interested in learning do not believe the subjects are relevant to them in their lives (Adelman & Taylor, 1983; Solomon & Rogers, 2001). Braswell (2017) pointed out that to maintain relevance and success, it is necessary to keep up with the latest pedagogies and strategies. The National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2004) reported that students need instruction that relates to their cultural backgrounds and need to have an outside-of-school relationship. Indeed, Albrecht and Karabenick (2018) said, “A primary goal of relevance interventions is to scaffold students’ appraisal processes that connect curricular activities and valued goals, interests, and personal experiences” (p. 5).

Disruption of the classroom is a direct result of students who find school to be nonrelevant and boring (Adelman & Taylor, 1983; Solomon & Rogers, 2001). Additionally, students with maladaptive behaviors are more prone to avoid learning because of learning deficiencies caused by no motivation to learn (Adelman & Taylor 1983; Kinder, Wakefield, & Wilkin, 1996; O’Keeffe, 1994).

There is a correlation between problem behaviors and academic failure according to Sutherland et al. (2008). Students who manifest behavioral concerns typically are not motivated intrinsically to learn. Brooks and Coll (1994) argued that students manifest behavioral issues for a variety of reasons, such as an environmental disability, family problems, substance abuse, homelessness, physical abuse, and so forth. Once students have manifested maladjusted behaviors in their regular school and interventions have not
been affective, an alternative educational setting becomes the option as a punitive answer (Edgar-Smith & Baugher Palmer, 2015).

**Motivation**

According to Atkinson (1964), motivation refers to “various factors, which incite and direct an individual’s actions” (p. 1). A variety of theories supporting motivation include personal beliefs, environment, and socialization (Wery & Thomson, 2013).

Student achievement can be linked to several factors that influence motivation including autonomy, interest, competence, and relatedness (Adelman & Taylor, 1983; Pintrich, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seifert, 2004). Additionally, Atkinson (1964) shared some basic concepts of motivation from the field of psychology adding the theory of achievement motivation. Wery and Thomson (2013) described this achievement theory as “patterns of beliefs and feelings about success, effort, ability, errors, motivated persistence with the assigned task, even though it may be difficult” (p. 104).

Husman and Lens (1999) argued that students can be motivated intrinsically when they are learning for the sake of learning, but when learning to some end, such as earning a good grade, getting into a good school, netting higher paying employment, or meeting a goal, extrinsic motivation takes over. Husman and Lens used a concept called the future time perspective (FTP) as a vehicle to discuss intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, suggesting that the future plays a role in student motivation. According to Husman and Lens, students not only engage in their education for the present, but they also set goals for their future in whatever field that is desired. Lewin (1942) cited L. K. Frank for the use of time perspective in how people evaluate the past, present, and future of their life. As a result, “FTP is the degree to which and the way in which the chronological future is
integrated into the present life-space of an individual through motivational goal-setting processes” (Husman & Lens, 1999, p. 3).

Theoretical Reflections

Intrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic reward theory revolves around the concept that people are naturally curious or have an interest in a subject they want to learn. Deci (1971) stated, “One is said to be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity when he receives no apparent rewards except the activity itself” (p. 105). This theory subscribes to the idea that doing well as a student is inherent within the person and is motivation to continue learning. Deci further asked that when external rewards are inserted into an activity, will the motivation to keep doing an activity expand, stay the same, or diminish? Swanson (1995) referred to the studies of B. F. Skinner and his positive reinforcement phenomenon using a rewards-based program, as the preeminent way to motivate students to do well in school.

Subsequent studies regarding using rewards in the classroom and the effect on intrinsic motivation have been conducted by a variety of researchers including Lepper, Greene, and Nisbitt (1973), Deci (1975), and Deci and Ryan (1985). These studies were conducted to evaluate whether extrinsic rewards motivated students to learn and what would happen after the reward was removed. Lepper et al. (1973) argued that when reinforcement is later withdrawn, people engage in the activity even less than they did before reinforcement was introduced. Deci, Ryan, and Koestner (2001) continued to argue “that tangible rewards given for doing an interesting activity undermined intrinsic motivation for the activity” (p. 49).
Bowman (2007) argued that understanding the difference between motivation and inspiration can create within the teacher an ability to inspire students to go beyond themselves for success. Trying to motivate through a series of incentives may only serve to reduce a student’s intrinsic motivation (Bowman, 2007). Additionally, Benabou and Tirole (2003) contended that after a reward is given, the recipient will then require the reward to continue to be offered as a task is performed.

**Extrinsic Rewards**

According to Brennan and Glover (1980), extrinsic rewards vary between tangible rewards, such as money, candy, and so forth, and nontangible rewards, such as social praise and verbal acknowledgement. Chance (1992) described three types of extrinsic rewards based on certain kinds of contingencies: (a) task-contingent, which centers on receiving an award for merely participating in an activity; (b) performance-contingent, which revolves around achieving a certain level of performance; and (c) success-contingent, which gives something to students for having a good performance, showing success, or perhaps making good progress toward a goal.

Other rewards such as badges have been used, and according to Davidson (2011), these badges can lead to increased motivation of learners. Abramovich, Schunn, and Higashi (2013) pointed to merit badges rewarded by the Boy and Girl Scouts organizations for certification of achieving skill in a specific scout curricular area. Scouts choose which merit badges to be earned, thus signifying a desire to learn a specific skill (Abramovich et al., 2013).

Another type of badge that is earned comes through video gaming. According to Abramovich et al. (2013), video game systems offer badges for player achievements,
specifically citing Xbox as a video game system that allows players to develop a profile that other players can view. This way, players can compare their achievements with friends and peers leading to a motivation to do better. Specific badges can be earned by reaching certain levels, and as Abramovich et al. shared, players “can earn a badge incidentally through normal game play” (p. 3).

**Extrinsic Versus Intrinsic**

Experts on intrinsic reward theory and extrinsic reward theory debate over whether extrinsic rewards harm intrinsic learning and motivation. Proponents for the intrinsic rewards theory believe that extrinsic motivators given to students will only reinforce learning motivation for the period of time that the extrinsic reward is given and when removed, the motivation to learn ends (Deci, 1971). Extrinsic reward proponents believe that rewards given in the right learning environment and within certain parameters help students thrive and be motivated (Brennan & Glover, 1980).

Research has expanded to include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with intrinsic motivation being the favored type of motivation (Kohn, 1993). Intrinsic motivation regards the will to learn, achieve, succeed, and attain simply for the reason of doing so (Cameron & Pierce, 1996; Covington & Mueller, 2001; Kohn, 1993; Wery & Thomson, 2013). Being motivated intrinsically, as the research suggests, helps a student retain what is being learned (Ormrod, 2008; Schunk, 1990; Wery & Thomson, 2013). Further, Covington and Mueller (2001) stated that for the most part, students learn and retain what they learn because of personal interest.

Another concern about why to use extrinsic rewards is when dealing with students with behavioral and social-emotional issues where there is almost no motivation
regarding school and learning (Rauch et al., 1987). Ford and Foster (1976) reviewed the
use of token-based extrinsic programs (TPs) in a variety of educational situations that
included children in public education and juvenile detention centers. The success of such
programs was shared, and a review of an article submitted by Levine and Fasnacht from
November 1974 was discussed because they disagreed that TPs are successful only
during the short-term use of them, and when the reward is removed, behaviors return to
previous levels or worse. Ford and Foster (1976) pointed out that the studies cited by
Levine and Fasnacht (1974) lasted up to only 8 days and have not covered a significant
amount of time to verify true evaluation. C. S. Cashwell et al. (1998) suggested that
group contingency programs can be successful when implemented correctly.

C. S. Cashwell et al. (1998) argued that the negative side effects of the variety of
contingency reward programs get highlighted because of a lack of training along with
misconceptions about the philosophy of contingencies, thinking these programs are for
behavioral modification only. Additionally, some studies that cited only covered
behaviors that students from traditional public schools and not those schools that house
students whose behavior TPs would more likely be used prompted Ford and Foster
(1976) to state that “applied or clinical TPs usually focus on low-frequency behaviors
where intrinsic interest is presumably low or nonexistent or on shaping behaviors not
currently in the client’s repertoire” (p. 87).

Typically, younger children are usually motivated to learn because they are
curious about their environment and like to explore (Raffini, 1993; Wery & Thomson,
2013). Wery and Thomson (2013) said that as younger children age and life
circumstances change, the motivation to learn can decrease. Intrinsic motivation lessens,
especially if negative behaviors increase (Adelman & Taylor, 1983). Wery and Thomson (2013) noted that as student behavior interferes with student learning, curiosity and motivation to learn can decrease to the point where students are not being successful in the classroom. As negative behaviors increase, there is the possibility of a student being assigned to an alternative school that specializes in dealing with behavioral issues (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017).

Students who attend alternative schools, or DAEPs, arrive because of their maladaptive behaviors and typically have low self-esteem regarding academic progress (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987; Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Kim 2006). Alternative schools turn to extrinsic rewards or reward programs to get nonmotivated students back to learning (C. S. Cashwell et al., 1998; Guetzloe, 2006). Extrinsic rewards revolve around the student or group of students receiving some reward for achieving some academic or behavioral criteria (Rassuli, 2012) with the criterion determined by the school and teachers.

Wery and Thomson (2013) discussed those students who struggle in school because of exceptional education needs tend to show attitudes that are apathetic to learning and may have behavioral issues that exacerbate the learning process. Teachers struggle with developing strategies to help motivate these students. Two motivational theories are reviewed to help motivate these struggling students: expectancy-value theory and achievement theory. Wery and Thomson stated, “Achievement Theory describes motivation as patterns of beliefs and feelings about success, effort, ability, errors, feedback and standards of evaluation” (p. 104). Expectancy-value theory explains that a student is motivated by the value of a task along with perceiving the chance of
completing that task. Wery and Thomson discussed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the factors within each theory that create motivation.

Students with disabilities may struggle with learning and as a result may become less motivated to learn and use a variety of strategies to blame other environmental causes for not performing. Wery and Thomson (2013) shared a list of suggestions that can be used in the classroom to enhance student motivation.

Cameron and Pierce (1996) discussed the results of their study regarding the debate between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation. They conducted a study that resulted in statistics indicating that extrinsic rewards can have a positive effect on student achievement while maintaining intrinsic motivation. This was done through a meta-analysis conducted over 20 years. Other researchers have argued that extrinsic rewards have a detrimental effect on students and hurt intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Cameron and Pierce responded to the detractors of their meta-analysis and the attacks about how the study was conducted and framed. The main idea was that when extrinsic rewards are contingent on achieving some goal, extrinsic rewards are effective. When rewards are based on noncontingent reasons, intrinsic motivation decreases.

Deci (1971) theorized that if an activity is enjoyable for the sole reason of doing the activity, utilizing external rewards may decrease the desire to do the activity. Deci conducted an experiment using money, verbal reinforcement, and positive feedback as motivators and concluded that money decreased intrinsic motivation while verbal reinforcement and positive feedback increased intrinsic motivation.

Using a token-based program is dangerous because it may decrease the desire to continue an activity (Levine & Fasnacht, 1974). Bowman (2007) claimed that teachers
can use both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in the classroom to motivate students to perform productively. Deci (1971) stated that there may be a distinction between tangible and nontangible rewards in motivating students in the short term and long term.

Covington and Mueller (2001) discussed the intrinsic reward versus the extrinsic reward theory that the one is antagonistic to the other, with intrinsic rewards being learning for the pleasure of learning and extrinsic rewards being learning because there is some type of reward for achieving success. Specifically, Covington and Mueller argued that in education, the most significant reward is good grades for performing well in the classroom, and the aftereffect for good grades is entrance into a good university and then a good occupation. What was found through their study was that students were more afraid of failing than of receiving good grades. Because students receiving the highest grades were limited, students competing for these grades did not want to fail at receiving the highest grade. Additionally, these same students acknowledged that they liked what they were learning. Overall, Covington and Mueller determined that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can coexist and not be antagonistic.

Chance (1992) argued that teachers who have been taught to use reinforcers correctly can have a positive effect on students in relation to motivation. Kohn (1993) responded to Chance (1992) regarding intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards. Kohn (1993) disagreed with Chance (1992) regarding the use of rewarding students for their accomplishments. Kohn (1993) argued that rewards are detrimental to student learning. When students are rewarded for doing well on an assignment or test, or perhaps by meeting some goal, the aftereffect is that when the reward is removed, the student will not work as hard to meet the desired level of learning. When students are rewarded for
positive behavior and then the reward is removed, the behavior will return to the previous level displayed by the student or even below the original level (Lepper et al., 1973). Kohn (1993) asserted that teachers need to discard rewards and work better with students to allow students to intrinsically reward themselves for doing well in school. Wilson and Corpus (2001) asserted that students will increase intrinsic motivation when challenged just above their competence level. An ethical classroom is where teachers model positive learning behaviors while placing responsibility for learning and the need to complete tasks on the student (Swanson, 1995).

**Extrinsic Reward Systems**

Alternative schools are a result of school districts reacting to the need for students at risk because of behavioral issues, academic issues, or social-emotional issues (Wilkerson et al., 2016). Comerford and Jacobson (1987) argued that schools have neglected providing appropriate services to students who exhibit maladaptive behaviors and use suspensions and expulsions as a method to treat misbehavior. Wilkerson et al. (2016) went on to explain that the result from zero-tolerance policies in the 1980s created an increased number of students expelled for drug or weapon violations in school. Behavioral focused alternative schools offered potentially expelled students a second chance before an actual expulsion occurred (Kennedy-Lewis, 2015).

Making the alternative school a place of rehabilitation to avoid increasing the school-to-prison pipeline is an essential mission of these schools (Kennedy-Lewis, 2015; Wilkerson et al., 2016). According to Levine and Fasnacht (1974), “token”-type extrinsic reward programs are becoming more commonplace. Utilizing extrinsic reward systems
in some form is now the norm despite a large pool of researchers who argue against using extrinsic rewards (Levine & Fasnacht, 1974).

Individual Teacher Reward Systems

The most common extrinsic reward system is found in the individual teacher’s classroom through the use of praise, either verbal or nonverbal cues, such as a thumbs-up (Chance, 1992). Teachers want students to be successful, and it is typical for teachers to have intrinsically motivated students and non-motivated students in their classrooms (Husman & Lens, 1999). In this type of classroom, more time is usually committed to work with the nonmotivated students rather than the motivated students in order to keep up with the pacing guides developed by each academic department. Chance (1992) suggested that teachers resort to some sort of classroom reward system for different types of actions such as completing work on time, not disrupting the classroom, helping others, doing well on a quiz or test, or some other positive action in class, not as incentives with an explanation but as pleasant surprises. Wery and Thomson (2013) stated that tangible rewards are given as extra points, such as candy, food, games, no homework, and so forth. Additionally, nontangible awards such as free time, a smile, a high-five, or verbal praise are used. And to make it fair, all students are recipients of these rewards, even the intrinsically motivated students (Covington & Mueller, 2001).

Cashwell et al. (1998) discussed group reward programs in terms of how students are targeted within different types of groups. According to Cashwell et al. (1998), there are four ways to reward students in groups: (a) independent group rewards, (b) dependent group rewards, (c) interdependent group rewards, and (d) randomized interdependent group rewards. The structure in how rewards are distributed differs with each. With
independent group rewards, which are the most used rewards within education, a criterion is established, and only the students within the groups receive rewards as a criterion is met (Rassuli, 2012). With dependent group rewards, the whole group receives a reward even if only one member of the group meets the criteria, and the other students receive the rewards based on someone else’s merit (Cashwell et al., 1998). Cashwell et al. (1998) went on to explain that interdependent group rewards are based on the achievement of some component of group behavior using averages, minimums, highs, or other criterion such as a group average of 85% on a quiz.

Rassuli (2012) reviewed a system to engage students with an extrinsic reward of bonus credits. This discussion centers on experimenting with students regarding participation time for exams during a semester. The instructor provided team activities to prepare for each exam. Basically, the larger bonus points rewarded determined the longer period of time spent by the students on the exam preparing activities. Within this article, Rassuli discussed the argument surrounding intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation utilizing information from Deci (1975) along with a myriad of studies that suggested that students must be intrinsically motivated to learn in order to be successful. Other studies suggested that extrinsic rewards can motivate students to be successful in school. This article also shared three seminal meta-analysis studies (Cameron, Banko, & Pierce, 2001; Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999) that suggested a consensus regarding the motivational role of extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic motivation can be supplemented with extrinsic motivators and reinforce learning (Chance, 1992).
School-Wide Reward Systems

Within the alternative school, extrinsic reward systems are more common because most of the students who attend alternative schools, specifically Type II alternative schools, are not motivated to learn because of their behavioral issues (Ford & Foster, 1976). According to Weist et al. (2018), multitiered systems of support have been scaled up to meet the needs of students with emotional and behavioral issues. Type II alternative schools are mostly populated with the emotionally and behaviorally challenged student. Additionally, these schools are expected to teach students the same curriculum that comprehensive and traditional schools teach (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010), and these same students are required to take statewide examinations (California Department of Education, 2014) with the same accountability as the traditional school.

Boys Town Urban Program

The Boys Town Urban Program utilizes tangible rewards through a point system primarily for at-risk youth educational settings. Within this system, there are four components that drive this program: (a) a normalized school setting, (b) a concretized credit system, (c) a focused discipline policy, and (d) a responsive services approach (Gilg & Greenspan, 1981). Gilg and Greenspan (1981) explained that there are three outcomes this program tries to achieve: (a) increased likelihood of school completion, (b) enhanced self-esteem, and (c) diminished alienation. This program uses a three-tiered points system with points accrued on a daily basis and over time. Students may use their points to purchase a variety of things such as snacks, athletic objects, school supplies, and
so forth. Points are required to purchase movement from one tier to the next tier and so on.

Gilg and Greenspan (1981) called the first tier the Basic tier, which is for students who first enroll in the school, and students go through an orientation about how the program works. As students master the basic components and earn points, there are intervals where points can be traded for goods. When a student uses points to move to the next tier, a new set of criteria is shared, and the student continues to earn points within the structure of the next tier, Basic +. The final tier is Merit, and at this point, students are ready to return to their comprehensive school setting because their rehabilitation is typically complete.

**Numbered Heads Together**

Numbered Heads Together (NHT) is an instructional strategy to increase on-task behaviors during instruction in the classroom and can be classified as Tier 1 intervention (Hunter et al., 2015). Students who have emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) typically demonstrate deficits academically, so teachers in classrooms with students with EBD need strategies that support EBD students (Hunter & Haydon, 2013). This strategy creates teams of four students, and each team consists of students who are high-, average-, and low-academic performers (Hunter & Haydon, 2013).

The students choose a reward prior to the start of the lesson from a list of tangible rewards. Each student on the team is then assigned a number between 1 and 4 so each student can respond to questions based on the number called. As a question is given to the teams, the students discuss the possible answers and determine which of the four will write the answer on a small white tablet. The teacher then repeats the question and
chooses one of the four numbers to report the group’s answer. The teacher then repeats the process. Students receive their rewards for earning three out of five positive marks for participation. Hunter and Haydon (2013) compared the NHT process, with and without an incentive, with the results showing that the NHT with an incentive had a higher on-task participation level and quiz scores.

**Sundown Mountain Alternative Education Program**

Sundown Mountain Alternative Education Program began in 2011 as a method to decrease the number of discipline issues on campus requiring a police presence. Trevizo (2012) shared that over the course of 2 years, the incidences were reduced by over 90%. All incoming students were placed into some type of assistance plan depending on the reason for being assigned to the school (Trevizo, 2012). One of the plans was a check-in/check-out plan with the students checking in with the principal or counselor at the beginning of the day and with other adults during the day to monitor student attainment of daily goals.

Another component is students being assigned to groups who meet on Mondays for support that addresses behavior, academic, and attendance issues. Students are given up to three minor infractions that are recorded and signed by the students, which goes into a file, and any infractions more than three may result in some type of consequence, including a student conference, parent phone call, or suspension (Trevizo, 2012). Those students without infractions for the week receive an orange lanyard indicating success, and this leads to more individual freedoms such as using the restroom without an adult escort. Additionally, students may receive “gotcha” cards that are put into a lottery and are drawn to receive prizes such as iPods, free time, T-shirts, snacks, movie tickets, or
gas cards. Trevizo (2012) asserted that according to students, this program has helped them become more focused on schoolwork and stay out of trouble because the program teaches about responsibility and respect.

**Positive Peer Reporting**

Developing interventions targeting the use of positive interactions with students may lead to increased constructive behaviors at school. Murphy and Zlomke (2014) defined positive peer reporting as an intervention that uses positive-peer comments by students to one another during specific times of the day when rewards are withheld for negative comments and rewards are given for positive comments. According to Murphy and Zlomke, there are a variety of ways to implement rewards such as individual rewards with a badge, candy, sticker, or other type of token. Group-contingent rewards focus more on the whole class, department, or school in the form of a goal such as a pizza party, an extra recess, a movie, free time, a game day, ice cream, or a food item with a dance (T. Cashwell, Skinner, & Smith, 2001; Ervin, Johnston, & Friman, 1998; Ialongo, Poduska, Werthamer, & Kellam, 2001; Lohrmann & Talerico, 2004; Murphy 2013; Skinner, Cashwell, & Skinner, 2000).

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**

A more recent type of program being used is Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Griffiths et al. (2019) shared that this type of extrinsic reward program that is systematic across the school and classroom involves a development process using all stakeholders. Specifically, Simonsen and Sugai (2013) discussed evidence showing the need to have more positive preventions than the traditional punitive consequences of the past. Carver and Lewis (2010) reported that students are transferred to alternative
schools because of physical aggression, disruptive behavior, violations related to controlled substances, academic failures, possession of weapons, and perhaps social-emotional issues. PBIS uses a system with three tiers based on the severity of needs for students and reinforces positive behaviors with a variety of extrinsic rewards (Griffiths et al., 2019).

According to Griffiths et al. (2019), using a PBIS program is school wide and “designed to decrease negative behaviors while increasing positive interactions in schools” (p. 3). Common components of PBIS are to define positive behavior expectations, teach these expectations to the students, have a program that acknowledges then rewards those students who meet expectations, have a consistent consequence plan that is sequential and logical, and use data to make needed decisions (Griffiths et al., 2019). Another issue to consider with alternative schools and PBIS systems when it comes to promoting positive interventions and supports is overcoming the former methods of behavioral management and the more punitive staff mentality (McDaniel, Jolivette, & Ennis, 2014). Griffiths et al. (2019) similarly stated that students with higher intensity behavioral issues create more demands on staff when it comes to managing difficult students, so implementation of PBIS expectations with fidelity can be onerous.

PBIS can also be used in conjunction with other intervention programs. At Webster Thomas High School in Webster, New York, Maillet (2017) discussed the successes achieved by students by initializing six practices:

Provide active and creative instruction; integrate service learning opportunities into all aspects of the program; accelerate student learning; build time into the
schedule to connect with kids; have a plan B (and C) for every student every day; and utilize volunteers such as college students and community members. (p. 234)

The purpose for using these practices was to reconnect and reengage students to learning. The school used a variety of programs to help reengage students such as Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS), which helps students with graphing and equation solving; Stop Now And Plan (SNAP) program, which is nationally known to prepare students to deal with bullying inside and outside of school; and Adventure-Based Counseling (ABC), which is therapeutic for students. Maillet (2017) shared that if Plan A was not working, there should be a fallback plan each day for each student.

The PBIS connection to other systems has an important component because PBIS uses a multitier approach for student intervention (Weist et al., 2018). According to Weist et al. (2018), PBIS is a multitierted system of support, and the research has proven PBIS to be effective in reducing suspensions (Frey, Lingo, & Nelson, 2008), decreasing discipline issues (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005), improving academic performance of students (Kincaid, Knoster, Harrower, Shannon, & Bustamonte, 2002), and reducing staff turnover (Kincaid et al., 2002). Fixsen, Blasé, Metz, and Van Dyke (2013) claimed that PBIS is the most broadly implemented program striving to affect individual student outcomes in the public sector.

Further investigation and analysis are needed to develop strategies for students who have maladaptive behaviors at school. Maillet (2017) stated, Many educators have likely encountered students who exhibit challenging behaviors, low motivation, poor attendance, failing grades, or an overall
disengaged or passive attitude, or perhaps have worked with students who have consistently fallen below grade level, are completely defiant, or are afraid to even walk into the school building. (p. 234)

Alternative schools, either Type I, Type II, or Type III, have come into existence for the purpose of educating those students who need an education different from the mainstream. Type II alternative schools, or schools for rehabilitating students with maladaptive behaviors, have grown in number because the mainstream schools are utilizing state educational discipline codes to remove these students from the traditional school setting (Kim & Taylor, 2008; Raywid, 1994). The purpose of assigning students with behavioral problems to alternative educational programs is to add additional supports for developing success (Garrison, 1987), and it is a last-chance placement prior to a student being expelled (Wilkerson et al., 2016).

Employing some sort of rewards program, either by the teacher individually or by the school as a whole, has been a tool used by many alternative programs. Some of these programs such as the Boys Town Urban Program are whole school (Gilg & Greenspan, 1981) whereas other programs such as the bonus credits supported by Rassuli (2012) are used in individual classrooms. Opposition from supporters of intrinsic motivation contend that extrinsic motivators are not sustainable for maintaining an interest in learning and improving behaviors (Deci et al., 1999). But, according to Cameron and Pierce (1994), external rewards do not reduce the motivation to learn or behave if used correctly.

More information about the most effective strategies in the classroom within an extrinsic rewards program needs to be identified by teachers who are right there in the
classroom to understand which strategies are the most effective. By establishing a matrix of most effective strategies, other alternative programs might adopt practices to help students achieve success. Students with maladaptive behaviors could receive practices that can help to manage and perhaps reverse these behaviors and reintroduce students to a more successful pathway in their educational journey.

Summary

Chapter II offered a review of the literature discussing (a) why alternative schools exist; (b) the different types of alternative schools; (c) which students typically attend alternative schools; (d) learning, relevance, and motivation as it applies to alternative education students; (e) the theories of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation and whether extrinsic motivation can work with students who manifest maladaptive behaviors; and (f) what are some extrinsic reward systems, both individual classroom and school wide.

Synthesis Matrix

The synthesis matrix was developed to organize the subject matter to more easily identify sources relating to each section of the Chapter II literature review. The main areas covered were alternative education, student behavior, extrinsic motivation, extrinsic reward systems, intrinsic motivation, interventions, at-risk youth, group rewards, program effectiveness, and behavior modification (see Appendix A).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Alternative education is typically identified as an educational method to serve students with academic, emotional, and behavioral needs that cannot be provided in the traditional school setting (Kim & Taylor, 2008). Alternative educational schools are not just one type of school to fit the needs of all students who do not connect in the traditional school mold. Indeed, Raywid (1994) established a classification system of three levels of alternative programs: (a) Type I, students choose to attend similar to charter or magnet schools; (b) Type II, students are assigned to these schools as a result of disciplinary consequences for behavior issues and possibly as a last resort before expulsion; (c) Type III, schools that are needed for therapy or remediation. For this study, the focus was on Type II alternative schools that service students with behavioral problems and who have been assigned to the alternative educational setting for rehabilitation before returning to the traditional school setting. This research examined extrinsic rewards systems used by alternative schools for behavioral intervention and the collection of data regarding the most effective components of these systems.

This section reviews the purpose statement and research questions directing the study. The research design addresses the study methodology, the population, and the sample used for data collection. The data collection instruments used are discussed, and the protocols protecting individuals from the sample population are examined. Data collection steps with analysis along with the limitations of the study are stated as well.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this modified policy Delphi study was to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. A second purpose was to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. The final purpose was to identify recommendations from alternative schoolteachers regarding actions for the implementation of the most effective strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior.

Research Questions

1. What strategies do alternative schoolteachers identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

2. How do alternative schoolteachers rate the effectiveness of strategies identified as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

3. What recommendations do alternative schoolteachers have for actions for implementing the strategies rated as most effective within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

Research Design

The research study utilized a modified version of the policy Delphi method as the research design. The Delphi method has many variations, but its origin begins in the
1950s at the RAND Corporation with the support of the U.S. Air Force (Linstone & Turoff, 2011). The primary function of the Delphi method, as developed by the RAND Corporation, was to collect and employ feedback from experts in the field of study through the systematic use of questionnaires (Linstone & Turoff, 2011). Linstone and Turoff (1975) provided a general definition of the Delphi method: “A method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem” (p. 3). However, the Delphi method, as with other research methods, is only applicable under certain conditions.

**Delphi Method**

Linstone and Turoff (1975) explained seven properties of a study that may warrant the use of the Delphi method:

- The problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis;
- The individuals needed to contribute to the examination of a broad or complex problem, have no history of adequate communication, and may represent diverse backgrounds with respect to experience or expertise;
- More individuals are needed than can effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange;
- Time and cost make frequent group meetings infeasible;
- The efficiency of face-to-face meetings can be increased by a supplemental group communication process;
• Disagreements among individuals are so severe or politically unpalatable that the communication process must be refereed and/or anonymity assured;
• The heterogeneity of the participants must be preserved to assure the validity of the results, i.e., avoidance of domination of quantity or by the strength of personality (“bandwagon effect,” p. 4).

As a result of the many applications in which the Delphi method could be employed, variants of the Delphi method have been developed. Most Delphi method variants can be classified into one of three general categories: classical, decision, and policy (van Zolingen & Klassen, 2003). For the purpose of this study, a modified version of the policy Delphi method was utilized.

**Policy Delphi**

The policy Delphi is one type of variation of the classical Delphi method. Turoff (1970) explained the policy Delphi “seeks to generate the strongest possible opposing views on the potential resolution of a major policy issue” (p. 80). Furthermore, Turoff (1970) suggested the primary purpose of the policy Delphi is not to establish a consensus or make a decision, but it is intended to analyze policy issues. According to Turoff (1970), to accomplish the purpose of the policy Delphi, six phases are carried out:

1. Formulation of the issues.
2. Exposing the options.
3. Determining initial positions on the issues.
4. Exploring and obtaining the reasons for disagreements.
5. Evaluating the underlying reasons.
6. Reevaluating the options.
The iterative process of the policy Delphi provides a range of ideas about the issues from a diverse group (van Zolingen & Klassen, 2003). In this study, the process was modified to eliminate the final two steps of Turoff’s (1970) process. The modified Delphi Study was the most appropriate method for identifying the most effective strategies that alternative schoolteachers believe facilitates the implementation of extrinsic reward systems because it develops expert collective opinion on the most effective strategies for implementation.

**Population**

A population is a group that “conforms to specific criteria” to which research results can be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). The general population of this study consisted of alternative education teachers from all alternative public schools in school districts located in California. For the 2020 school year, there were 977 alternative public schools in California, serving 132,189 students (California Department of Education, 2020). All schools participating in the study must have had an extrinsic rewards program in place for at least 3 years in order to join in this study. In addition, only current alternative school education teachers from these alternative schools were used for this study. Not all alternative schools have extrinsic reward systems. Each participating school had to have some type of extrinsic reward system in place for the specified amount of time. However, 18 of 26 (70%) alternative schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties had extrinsic reward systems. Extrapolating these numbers statewide means it can be estimated that about 70% of the 1,193 alternative schools, or about 835 of the alternative schools in California may have extrinsic reward systems. If
each of those schools has at least 10 teachers, the population can be estimated to be about 11,930 teachers.

**Target Population**

According to Creswell (2014), the target population is the “actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected” (p. 393). A target population for a study is the entire set of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. The target population defines the population to which the findings are meant to be generalized. It is important that target populations are clearly identified for the purposes of research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The target population for this study consisted of alternative full-time teachers who teach in a school with an extrinsic reward system in the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino in California. Within these counties there are 26 district and county alternative schools of which 18 have extrinsic reward systems. There were a total of 276 full-time teachers from the 18 identified schools in Riverside County and San Bernardino County that were the target population for this study (Riverside County Office of Education, 2020; San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 2020).

**Sample**

The sample is a group of participants in a study selected from the population from which the researcher intends to generalize. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), sampling is selecting a “group of individuals from whom data are collected” (p. 129). Similarly, Patton (2015) and Creswell (2003) defined a sample as a subset of the target population representing the whole population.
Selecting research participants is a critical component of Delphi research since it is their expert opinions upon which the output of the Delphi is based (Ashton, 1986). There are four requirements for “expertise”: (a) knowledge and experience with the issues under investigation, (b) capacity and willingness to participate, (c) sufficient time to participate in the Delphi, and (d) effective communication skills (Adler & Ziglio, 1996). Since expert opinion is sought, a purposive sample is necessary where people are selected not to represent the general population but rather for their expert ability to answer the research questions (Fink & Kosecoff, 1985).

The sample for this study consisted of 15 purposively selected alternative school full-time teachers from the 276 teachers in the 18 alternative schools in the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino that have extrinsic reward systems. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that purposeful sampling provides researchers a selection of “particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest” (p. 138). The strategy employed to identify the participants was criterion sampling based on the research problem, purpose, and questions. The criterion sampling method allowed the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria (Patton, 2015). Fifteen teachers who met the following criteria were purposively and conveniently selected as the sample for the study:

1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic reward systems.

Final participants were selected based upon convenience to the researcher in that the participant was both willing and available to participate in a timely manner. The convenience sampling strategy allows a researcher to establish an accessible sample based on location and time (Marshall, 1996; Patton, 2015). In this study, the convenience sampling strategy was simultaneously applied with the purposeful sampling strategy to identify participants who met the criteria and were easily available to the researcher as indicated by their stated willingness to participate and availability to participate (Marshall, 1996; Patton 2015).

**Sample Selection**

Fifteen teachers from alternative schools with extrinsic reward systems were chosen to participate in the study. Following are the selection criteria for the teachers:

1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or,
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic rewards systems.

The sample was secured using the following steps:

1. Alternative schools that had an extrinsic reward system were identified.
2. The principal of each of the identified schools was contacted to secure participation.
3. For those agreeing to participate, each principal was asked to identify and provide contact information for teachers that met the selection criteria.

4. Teachers who met the selection criteria were contacted via email to seek their participation.

5. From those teachers agreeing to participate, fifteen (20) were selected based on convenience to the researcher.

6. Selected teachers were sent an explanation of the study, explanation of the Delphi process, informed consent documents (Appendix B), and Participants’ Bill of Rights (Appendix C).

7. The Delphi survey process was scheduled and administered.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher utilized three rounds of questioning to answer the research questions of the study. The first round consisted of an open-ended question. The second round utilized the results of the first round to create a survey that implemented a 6-point Likert scale to rate the effectiveness of the strategies identified during the first round. The third and final round provided participants the opportunity to refine their responses from the second round and deliver feedback on actions that teachers could take when implementing an extrinsic reward system.

The researcher developed the surveys using Google Forms, a commonly used online-based survey instrument. For each round, a hyperlink to the survey was e-mailed to participants with instructions on completing the survey.
Round 1 Survey Question

The Round 1 survey question asked, “What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve school student behavior in the alternative school setting?”

After participants completed the Round 1 survey, the results were gathered using Google Forms and a list of strategies for the implementation of an extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior was created. The list of unique strategies was used to generate the survey for Round 2.

Round 2 Survey Question

In the Round 2 survey, participants were asked to use a 6-point Likert scale to rate the importance of each of the strategies revealed during Round 1. The Round 2 survey question asked, “From the list of strategies identified in Round 1, how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?”

The mean score for the effectiveness of each strategy was calculated, and strategies were listed from highest to lowest mean score. The five strategies with the highest mean score were used in the development of the Round 3 survey.

Round 3 Survey Question

Round 3 asked the expert panel to identify and describe the most effective activities for implementing the five most effective strategies identified as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior, which were identified in Round 2. The Round 3 survey question asked,
“Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting determined from Round 2, please identify and describe the most effective activities for implementing each strategy.”

Reliability

Reliability points to the level in which the data can be duplicated and achieve the same results (McMillan, 2012). A field test was conducted utilizing the instruments before disseminating the surveys to the expert panel members. Two volunteer alternative education teachers that met the study criteria but were not part of the study participated in the field test. The field-test volunteers did not participate in the study. The volunteers completed each survey and provided feedback to ensure the readability of each question, the questions properly elicited the anticipated information, and the information obtained is accurate. The feedback from field-test volunteers was used to improve the survey questions and to ensure the validity and reliability of the surveys.

Validity

Validity was defined by Patten (2012) as “the extent that it measures what it is designed to measure and accurately performs the function(s) it is purported to perform” (p. 61). The validity level was also established because the survey was reviewed by a set of administrators who worked in the alternative school setting within the school district of the researcher. Gay and Airasian (2000) suggested that a field test be conducted before implementing the study. This field test consisted of participants who have experience in alternative education. These teachers provided feedback through a review of the survey.
Data Collection

Following approval by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB; see Appendix D) the researcher began data collection. No data were collected prior to BUIRB approval.

This research study consisted of three questionnaires that were developed to have teachers in alternative schools describe the most effective strategies for implementing an extrinsic rewards system to reduce behavioral problems. Three rounds of surveying took place, and all data were collected from the expert teachers using Google Forms, an online-based survey program (see Appendices E, F, and G).

Round 1

The 15-member expert panel of teachers was sent an e-mail outlining each step and round of the study, the target dates for each questionnaire to be completed, a link to the Round 1 survey, and the contact information of the researcher. The panel was asked to respond to the following question: “What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?”

The responses from the survey were compiled into one list from Google Forms. The researcher, along with a doctoral candidate and outside reader, combined like strategies in preparation for the Round 2 survey. The doctoral candidate and outside reader assisted in limiting researcher bias.
Round 2

The Round 2 survey was developed from the responses collected during Round 1. An e-mail was prepared and disseminated to the expert panel of teachers. The e-mail included instructions, the target date for completion, and a link to the Round 2 survey as well as the contact information of the researcher. The expert panel was asked to respond to the following question: “From the list of strategies identified in Round 1, how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior?”

After the Round 2 surveys were completed, the researcher gathered the responses from Google Forms. Then, the researcher, a doctoral candidate, and an outside reader tallied the scores and calculated the mean score for each strategy. Strategies were then organized from highest mean score to lowest mean score. The doctoral candidate and outside reader assisted in limiting researcher bias.

Round 3

To develop the Round 3 survey, the researcher identified the five strategies that had the highest mean score based on Round 2 survey results. An e-mail was prepared and sent to the expert panel of teachers. The e-mail included instructions and the target date for the completion of the Round 3 survey, a link to the Round 3 survey, and the contact information of the researcher. The expert panel was asked to respond to the following question: “Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, please identify and describe the best activities for implementing each strategy.”

After the Round 3 surveys were completed, the researcher compiled the responses from Google Forms. Then, the researcher, a doctoral candidate, and an outside reader coded the descriptions of each of the five necessary strategies provided by each member of the expert panel.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative data were collected through Rounds 1 and 3 of the study. Quantitative data were collected in the form of ratings for Round 2. After each quantitative round, similar responses were combined. Data were analyzed and utilized to create the survey for the next round. After Round 2, descriptive statistics were used to display mean scores for each strategy, and strategies were placed in order from the highest mean score to lowest mean score. After Round 3, the descriptions of each of the five necessary strategies from each of the expert teachers were coded and analyzed for themes. A summary was prepared to describe the five most effective strategies for implementing an extrinsic motivation system to improve student behavior.

**Round 1**

The first round sought responses to the following question: “What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?” Responses to the question from the expert panel were compiled into one list, and the researcher, a doctoral candidate, and an outside reader combined similar responses. The finalized list from the first round was used in the formulation of the second-round survey.
Round 2

The second round sought responses to the following question: “From the list of strategies identified in Round 1, how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school?” The researcher, a doctoral candidate, and an outside reader summed up the scores for each strategy and calculated the mean score for each strategy. The strategies were then listed from highest to lowest mean score (see Table 2). The five strategies with the highest mean score were utilized in the formulation of the third-round survey.

Round 3

The third round sought responses to the following question: “Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, please identify and describe the best activities for implementing each strategy.” The researcher, a doctoral candidate, and an outside reader organized the responses by strategy, coded the responses, and analyzed the responses for themes in each strategy. A summary was prepared to describe the five necessary strategies for implementing a transition from a traditional grading and reporting system to a standards-based grading and reporting system.

Limitations

It is universally accepted that all research studies have inherent limitations, or as Roberts (2012) stated, “Limitations are particular features of your study that you know may negatively affect the results of your ability to generalize” (p. 162). There are different kinds of limitations, such as sample size, response rate, length of the study, and
certain constraints to name a few. In this study, one limitation was the sample size because only 18 school districts in Riverside and San Bernardino counties in California that have alternative education schools were used as the target sample. Another limitation may have been the response rate of teachers. If less than the full number of participants expected actually completed the survey, once again representation of the attitudes of teachers would be small. Additionally, this study was limited to the ratings of these specific teachers for negative behaviors of students in this region of California as well as the United States as a whole.

Summary

This chapter was written to detail the process of how the study was conducted and data collected. An overview of the study was given with the purpose for the study and research questions to be answered. The research design introducing the Delphi study as the method to conduct this investigation of best strategies within an extrinsic reward system was proposed. The instrumentation was shared using electronic questionnaires for Round 1, Round 2, and Round 3. The target population was determined, and the reliability, validity, and limitations associated with this type of study were developed and discussed.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data collected from this study. The goal of this study was to discover the most effective strategies to improve student maladaptive behavior within an extrinsic reward system utilized by alternative schools where the majority of students enrolled in an alternative school typically have behavioral issues. In addition, this chapter restates the study’s purpose, research questions, methodology, population, and sample as well as presenting the data collected using the research questions. Chapter IV concludes with a summary of the research findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. A second purpose was to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. The final purpose was to identify recommendations from alternative schoolteachers regarding actions for the implementation of the most effective strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting.

Delphi Study Questions

1. What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?
2. From the list of strategies identified in Round 1, how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school?

3. Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, please identify and describe the best activities for implementing each strategy.

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This research study utilized a modified version of the policy Delphi method as the research design. The Delphi method has many variations, but its origin began in the 1950s at the RAND Corporation with the support of the U.S. Air Force (Linstone & Turoff, 2011). The primary function of the Delphi method, as developed by the RAND Corporation, was to collect and employ feedback from experts in the field of study through the systematic use of questionnaires (Linstone & Turoff, 2011).

This research study consisted of three questionnaires that were developed to have teachers in alternative schools describe the most effective strategies for implementing an extrinsic rewards system to reduce behavioral problems. Three rounds of surveying took place, and all data were collected from the expert teachers using Google Forms, an online-based survey program (see Appendices E, F, and G).

Population and Sample

The general population of this study consisted of alternative education teachers from all alternative public schools in school districts located in California. All schools participating in the study must have had an extrinsic rewards program in place for at least
3 years in order to join in this study. In addition, only current alternative school education teachers from these alternative schools were used for this study. Not all alternative schools have extrinsic reward systems. However, 18 of 26 (70%) of the alternative schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties had extrinsic reward systems. Extrapolating these numbers statewide means it can be estimated that about 70% of the 1,193 alternative schools, or about 835, of the alternative schools in California may have extrinsic reward systems. If each of those schools has at least 10 teachers, the population can be estimated to be about 11,930 teachers.

The target population for this study consisted of alternative, full-time teachers who taught in a school with an extrinsic reward system in the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino in California. Within these counties, there are 26 district and county alternative schools of which 18 have extrinsic reward systems. There was a total of 276 full-time teachers from the 18 identified schools in Riverside County and San Bernardino county that were the target population for this study (Riverside County Office of Education, 2020; San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 2020). From the perspective schools, permission was obtained from principals of five school districts with alternative education programs. Teachers from four of the five school districts agreed to participate in the study.

The literature recommends 10 to 18 participants on a Delphi panel (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Based on this design, the study received 20 participants who agreed to participate for the sample. The teachers invited to take part in this Delphi method study were considered experts in the implementation of strategies to improve student behavior within an extrinsic rewards system using the following criteria:
1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or,
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic reward systems.

The four school districts that participated were Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, and Val Verde.

**Presentation of the Data**

In this Delphi study, the data are presented for each research question. Beginning with Research Question 1, each of the three rounds is described for each research question consecutively.

**Delphi Round 1 Question**

*What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?*

**Round 1.** In Round 1, participants were sent a Google Form electronic survey via e-mail and asked to provide a short answer to the Round 1 question. Twenty panelists were sent the electronic survey and 11 panelists provided responses. The researcher then coded, condensed, and categorized the responses.

**Round 1 analysis.** Responses from the participants to the survey presented multiple strategies. Answers totaled 59 responses, with each panelist listing more than
one response. The researcher then reduced the strategies based on the similarity of the replies. The most common strategies given were two areas of “food/soda” and having a “token economy using points or school bucks to buy items from the student store” with each category frequency at seven respondents. Next with a frequency of four respondents each was “build relationships” and “celebrate student and staff successes.” With a frequency of three respondents each were the categories of “DJ for the day (control music at lunch),” “free time,” and “small tangible rewards, i.e. pencils.” “Clear expectations and consequences,” “free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior,” “honor improvement no matter how small,” “informal positive feedback,” “personal shout-outs,” “play online games such as Kahoot,” “recognition assemblies for positive student behavior,” and “students can see/track points” received two responses each. With one response each, the final categories were “build a curriculum more aligned to students’ interests,” “career planning to look forward in their life,” “consistent implementation of procedures and resources,” “create a culture of care and respect,” “festival game days for those that earn it,” “field trips for those that earn it,” “gamification,” “interactive dynamic curriculum,” “lunch with the teacher,” “make the classroom environment about the students,” “positive community service,” and “quick grading to encourage the completion of more work.” Table 1 shows the strategies listed by the panelists and the frequency of each chosen category.
Table 1

*Expert Teacher Strategies Used to Improve Student Behavior in an Alternative School That Utilizes an Extrinsic Reward System*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food/soda</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Token economy (points/bucks) to buy items from the student store</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate student and staff successes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ for the day (control music at lunch)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tangible rewards, i.e. pencils</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations and consequences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor improvement no matter how small</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal positive feedback</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal shout-outs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play online games such as Kahoot</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition assemblies for positive student behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students can see/track points</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a curriculum more aligned to students’ interest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning to look forward in their life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent implementation of procedures and resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a culture of care and respect</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival game days for those that earn it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips for those that earn it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive dynamic curriculum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch with the teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the classroom environment about the students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive community service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick grading to encourage the completion of more work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 11.

**Delphi Round 2 Question**

*From the list of strategies identified in Round 1, how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school?*

**Round 2.** In Round 2, participants were e-mailed a Google Form survey requesting them to rate the effectiveness of each of the strategies listed from Round 1.
within a 6-point Likert scale. The ranking categories of the Likert scale offered were 6 (extremely effective), 5 (moderately effective), 4 (slightly effective), 3 (slightly ineffective), 2 (moderately ineffective), and 1 (extremely ineffective).

**Round 2 analysis.** Fourteen panelists responded to the Google Form rating the level of effectiveness for each of the strategies identified for improving student behavior in the alternative school setting. A Likert scale was developed from the Round 1 responses of alternative school participants regarding strategies to improve student behavior in alternative schools. These responses were condensed and placed onto a 6-point Likert scale. The results of the Likert scale were compiled by the researcher, and mean scores were calculated to create a ranking of each of the strategies and determine the five most effective strategies for improving student behavior in the alternative school setting. The mean score of each strategy is shown in Table 2 with the range of 5.00 to 3.71.

There were two strategies with a mean of 5.00, the first being build relationships. With the number of respondents being 14, 11 respondents chose building relationships as extremely effective with a percentage of 78.57%, one respondent ranked it as moderately ineffective with a percentage of 7.14%, and two respondents ranked it as extremely ineffective with a percentage rate of 14.28%. These results are shown in Table 3. The second strategy with a mean of 5.00 was create a culture of care and respect. Table 4 demonstrates that this strategy received 10 respondents who ranked it as extremely effective (71.42%), one respondent ranked it as slightly effective (7.14%), and three respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (21.42%).
Table 2

*Strategies Ranked by Mean*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified strategy and mean score</th>
<th>M score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a culture of care and respect</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent implementation of procedures and resources</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the classroom environment about the students</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations and consequences</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor improvement no matter how small</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a curriculum more aligned to students' interests</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate student and staff successes</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal shout-outs</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive dynamic curriculum</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal positive feedback</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive community service</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play online games such as Kahoot</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition assemblies for positive student behavior</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Token economy (points/bucks) to buy items/student store</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students can see/track points</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival game days for those that earn it</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips for those that earn it</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tangible rewards, i.e. pencils</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ for the day (control music at lunch)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick grading to encourage the completion of more work</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning to look forward in their life</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch with the teacher</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14.

Table 3

*Build Relationships*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 5.00.
Table 4

Create a Culture of Care and Respect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 5.00.

The next strategy with a mean of 4.92 was consistent implementation of procedures and resources. Table 5 shows that eight respondents ranked this strategy as *extremely effective* (57.14%), two respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (14.28%), one respondent ranked it as *slightly effective* (7.14%), one respondent ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (7.14%), and two respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (14.28%). No one ranked this strategy as *extremely ineffective*.

The next strategy with a mean of 4.71 was make the classroom environment about the students. There were six respondents who ranked this strategy as *extremely effective* (42.85%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), two respondents ranked it as slightly effective (14.28%), and two respondents ranked it as *extremely ineffective* (14.28%). These results are shown in Table 6.

The next strategy with a mean of 4.64 was free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior. This strategy with the results in Table 7 shows that four respondents ranked it *extremely effective* (28.57%), five respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (35.71%), three respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (21.42%), and two respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (14.28%).
Table 5

**Consistent Implementation of Procedures and Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.92.

Table 6

**Make the Classroom Environment About the Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.71.

Table 7

**Free Pass to Early Out, Early Lunch, or Free Period for Identified Positive Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.64.

The next two strategies both had a mean of 4.57. One strategy was clear expectations and consequences. This strategy had six respondents who ranked it as
extremely effective (42.85%), three respondents ranked it as moderately effective (21.42%), two respondents ranked it as slightly effective (14.28%), one respondent ranked it as slightly ineffective (7.14%), and two respondents ranked it as extremely ineffective (14.28%). These percentages are shown in Table 8. The other strategy with a mean of 4.57 was honor improvement no matter how small. Seven respondents ranked this strategy as extremely effective (50.00%), one respondent ranked it as moderately effective (7.14%), three respondents ranked it as slightly effective (21.42%), one respondent ranked it as slightly ineffective (7.14%), and two respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). Table 9 lists the results for this strategy.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear Expectations and Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.57.*

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honor Improvement No Matter How Small</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.57.*
The next strategy, build a curriculum more aligned to students’ interests, had a mean of 4.50. There were four respondents who ranked this strategy as extremely effective (28.57%), three ranked it as moderately effective (21.42%), five ranked it as slightly effective (35.71%), and two ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). These rankings are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build a Curriculum More Aligned to Students’ Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.50.

Three strategies were ranked with a mean of 4.35. The first of these strategies was celebrate student and staff successes. Two respondents ranked this strategy as extremely effective (14.28%), six respondents ranked it as moderately effective (42.85%), three respondents ranked it as slightly effective (21.42%), one respondent ranked it as slightly ineffective (7.14%), and two respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). Table 11 lists the results of this strategy.

The next strategy with a mean of 4.35 was personal shout-outs. This strategy had two respondents who ranked it as extremely effective (14.28%), five respondents ranked it as moderately effective (35.71%), another five respondents ranked it as slightly effective (35.71%), and two respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). The results of this strategy are listed in Table 12.
Table 11

Celebrate Student and Staff Successes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.35.

Table 12

Personal Shout-Outs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.35.

The final strategy with a mean of 4.35 was an interactive dynamic curriculum.

Table 13 shows that three respondents ranked this strategy as *extremely effective*.

Table 13

Interactive Dynamic Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.35.
(21.42%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), three respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (21.42%), another three respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (21.42%), and one respondent ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (7.14%).

Another three strategies had a mean of 4.28, beginning with informal positive feedback. This particular strategy had one respondent who ranked it as *extremely effective* (7.14%). Over half of the respondents included eight who ranked it as *moderately effective* (57.14%), three who ranked it as *slightly effective* (21.42%), and two who ranked it as *extremely ineffective* (14.28%). Table 14 lists the results of this strategy.

### Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.28.

The next strategy, positive community service, had a mean of 4.28. Table 15 shows three respondents who ranked this strategy as *extremely effective* (21.42%), five respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (25.71%), one respondent ranked it as *slightly effective* (7.14%), four respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (28.47%), and one respondent ranked it as *extremely ineffective* (7.14%).
Table 15

*Positive Community Service*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.28.

The last strategy with a mean of 4.28 was play online games such as Kahoot. Three respondents ranked this strategy as *extremely effective* (21.42%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), three respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (21.42%), two respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (14.28%), and two respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (14.28%). Table 16 lists the results for this strategy.

Table 16

*Play Online Games Such as Kahoot*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.28.

Two strategies had a mean of 4.14. The first of these strategies was recognition assemblies for positive student behavior. With this strategy, one respondent ranked it *extremely effective* (7.14%), six respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (42.85%),
five respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (35.71%), and two respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (14.28%). Table 17 shows the results of this strategy.

Table 17

**Recognition Assemblies for Positive Student Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.14.

The other strategy with a mean of 4.14 was token economy (points/bucks) to buy items/student store. This strategy had one respondent who ranked it as *extremely effective* (7.14%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), five respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (25.71%), and alternatively, four respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (28.57%). These numbers are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

**Token Economy (Points/Bucks) to Buy Items/Student Store**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.14.
The next two strategies had a mean of 4.07, with the first one being free time.

This strategy had two respondents who ranked it as *extremely effective* (14.28%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), four more respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (28.57%), one respondent ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (7.14%), and three respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (21.42%). The results are listed in Table 19.

Table 19

**Free Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.07.*

The other strategy that had a mean of 4.07 was students can see/track points. In Table 20, this strategy had two respondents who ranked it as *extremely effective* (14.28%), four respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (28.57%), four respondents...
ranked it as *slightly effective* (28.57%), one respondent ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (7.14%), and three respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (21.42%).

With a mean score of 4.00, the strategy of festival game days for those that earn it had these rankings: two respondents ranked *extremely effective* (14.28%), one respondent ranked moderately effective (7.14%), six respondents ranked *slightly effective* (42.85%), and conversely, five respondents ranked *slightly ineffective* (35.71%). Table 21 shows the list of the results.

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival Game Days for Those That Earn It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 4.00.

The next strategy, field trips for those that earn it, had a mean of 3.92. This strategy had one respondent who ranked it as *extremely effective* (7.14%), two respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (14.28%), six respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (42.85%), and conversely, five respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (35.71%). The results are listed in Table 22.

Also with a mean of 3.92 was the strategy small tangible rewards, i.e. pencils. Four respondents ranked this strategy as *moderately effective* (28.57%), seven (or half of the respondents) ranked it as *slightly effective* (50.00%), two respondents ranked it as
slightly ineffective (14.48%), and one respondent ranked it as extremely ineffective (7.14%). Table 23 shows the results of this strategy.

Table 22

Field Trips for Those That Earn It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.92.

Table 23

Small Tangible Rewards, i.e. Pencils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.92.

The next strategy that had a mean of 3.85 was DJ for the day (control music at lunch). In this strategy, one respondent ranked it as extremely effective (7.14%), four respondents ranked it as moderately effective (28.57%), three respondents ranked it as slightly effective (21.42%), four respondents ranked it as slightly ineffective (28.57%), and two respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). These ratings are listed in Table 24.
Table 24

**DJ for the Day (Control Music at Lunch)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.85.*

Another strategy with a mean of 3.85 was quick grading to encourage the completion of more work. This strategy had three respondents who ranked it as *extremely effective* (21.42%), two respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (14.28%), two respondents ranked it as *slightly effective* (14.28%), four respondents ranked it as *slightly ineffective* (28.57%), and three respondents ranked it as *moderately ineffective* (21.42%). Table 25 lists the results of this strategy.

Table 25

**Quick Grading to Encourage the Completion of More Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.85.*

A third strategy with a mean of 3.85 is shown in Table 26 with its results. This strategy received one respondent who ranked it as *extremely effective* (7.14%), five respondents ranked it as *moderately effective* (35.71%), two respondents ranked it as...
slightly effective (14.28%), three respondents ranked it as slightly ineffective (21.42%), and three other respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (21.42%). Table 26 lists the rankings.

Table 26

Career Planning to Look Forward in Their Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.85.*

The next strategy, gamification, had a mean of 3.78. Table 27 shows this strategy with two respondents who ranked it as extremely effective (14.28%), two respondents ranked it as moderately effective (14.28%), four respondents ranked it as slightly effective (28.57%), three respondents ranked it as slightly ineffective (21.42%), and three respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (21.42%).

Table 27

Gamification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.78.*
Finally, this last strategy, lunch with the teacher, had a mean of 3.71. One respondent ranked this strategy as extremely effective (7.14%), three respondents ranked it as moderately effective (21.42%), another three respondents ranked it as slightly effective (21.42%), five respondents ranked it as slightly ineffective (35.71%), and two respondents ranked it as moderately ineffective (14.28%). These results are listed in Table 28.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch With the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total respondents = 14; mean score = 3.71.

**Delphi Round 3**

For Round 3 in this Delphi study, the researcher used the top five strategies based on the mean score from Round 2 and developed the questionnaire for the final round. These five strategies were rated through a Likert scale. Fourteen of the 18 participants responded to this final questionnaire. The participants who responded were asked to provide the most effective ways to implement these strategies to improve alternative school student behavior within an extrinsic reward program. The researcher coded the responses for each of the five strategies to find similarities and present the results. The top, five-rated strategies from Round 2 are as follows:
• Build relationships
• Create a culture of care and respect
• Consistent implementation of procedures and resources
• Make the classroom environment about the students
• Free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior

**Strategy 1: Build relationships.** Strategy 1 was one of the top five strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in an extrinsic reward system as determined through the mean score from Round 2. The participants provided a variety of implementation tactics for building relationships with students. Seven of the respondents stated that they got to know their students by asking them questions about themselves through a variety of methods such as sharing their information on 3 x 5 index cards; giving one-on-one time during passing periods or breaks; and being specific about their hobbies and music interests, with one teacher describing using a web-based program called Voki that uses an avatar to ask students about their interests, hobbies, favorite food, goals, and favorite school subject. The teacher then showed the Voki presentations to the class. Five respondents mentioned greeting students at the door each period with eye contact and a smile. Four respondents revealed that to build a community environment, using reflective circles is important for building relationships, while two respondents said that using verbal praise or silent praise for positive behavior is important, such as “high fives,” handshakes, and eye contact such as winking. Other comments by the respondents in building relationships, for example, were using group projects, assisting students to access resources, learning students’ names, and sending birthday cards.
**Strategy 2: Create a culture of care and respect.** Strategy 2 was rated one of the top five strategies for improving alternative school student behavior within an extrinsic reward system as determined through the mean score from Round 2. The most common response submitted by seven participants was listening to what students say and allowing them to create classroom norms, listening to them in one-on-one situations, and letting them voice their opinions through “fishbowl” style activities, which as one participant stated, “Students are more likely to follow them.” Five respondents stated that having a structured classroom with expectations and accountability in an atmosphere of care and respect that is modeled by the staff and demonstrated by the students is needed.

Three respondents shared that at the beginning of the school year, time is spent with students in groups on building trust, developing social skills, and respecting one another. Using teacher modeling along with student group activities and allowing each group to show ideas through gallery walks helps to promote care and respect. Two respondents specifically mentioned Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a way to reward students for positive behavior within the school program.

**Strategy 3: Consistent implementation of procedures and resources.** Strategy 3 was rated one of the top five strategies for improving alternative school student behavior within an extrinsic reward system as determined through the mean score from Round 2. The results of this round show that nine respondents remarked that developing routines was important for students to be successful. Three participants responded that having a system such as PBIS that rewards students with points for positive behavior
consistently is important. Furthermore, two respondents specifically mentioned using a warm-up, anticipatory set, or bell ringer activity creates a daily routine for students.

**Strategy 4: Make the classroom environment about the students.** Strategy 4 was rated as one of the top five strategies for improving alternative school student behavior within an intrinsic reward system as determined through the mean score from Round 2. Six respondents stated ways to make the classroom environment about the students: creating an engaging atmosphere through creative lesson planning, providing a collaborative ambiance with hands-on learning, using supplemental materials that promote exploration, providing student leadership opportunities for setting norms, and having guidelines to give students ways to contribute. Six respondents mentioned that providing students the opportunity to share their own stories through discussion helps them to know that the classroom is a safe place to share their stories and to feel that they are valued and supported. This includes fostering discussions, beginning the period with a temperature check, giving student surveys for lunchtime activities as rewards, and having dialogue about how to cope within their personal lives. Three respondents said that displaying the students’ work, achievement, images, and inspirational messages builds pride and buy-in from the students as well as motivates them to continue keeping their work on the walls.

**Strategy 5: Free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior.** Strategy 5 was another one of the top five strategies for improving alternative school student behavior within an extrinsic reward system as determined through the mean score from Round 2. With this strategy, respondents generalized their comments to state that it is important to celebrate achievements and not just punish
negative behaviors, so using the PBIS rewards program is very important to encourage positive behavior. Two respondents shared that students regard free time as important, and having the option to purchase free time for early lunch or a free period was a common item. The respondents regarded early out as not being advantageous for students because of negative home situations. Early to lunch was shared by two respondents because students wanted to be near the front of the line to get the food they wanted. Two respondents stated that they did not use this strategy.

Summary

In this chapter, three rounds of questionnaires were provided to the participants to respond to the most effective strategies to improve alternative school student behavior. In Round 1, participants were asked to create a list of strategies used to improve student behavior in the alternative school within an extrinsic reward system. These expert teachers provided a list of strategies, which the researcher coded and developed a list of 26 to be ranked in Round 2. The respondents then ranked each of these strategies using a 6-point Likert scale. The researcher took the results from Round 2 and found the mean for each of the 26 strategies to determine the top five strategies. These top five strategies became the focus of the Round 3 questionnaire. The participants were asked how they would implement these strategies within an extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior. The results that Round 3 showed are the most effective ways to implement these strategies to improve alternative school student behaviors within an extrinsic rewards system. For the five strategies, there were 15 recommended implementation methods to an extrinsic rewards system to improve alternative school student behavior.
The researcher took the results from Round 3 and found trends and themes that linked each of the strategies to the others. These linkages are explored for commonalities in Chapter V to provide recommendations for alternative schools that may benefit from this research.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Public education is the most common platform used to educate America’s K-12 student population. All states have some form of compulsory attendance law requiring children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school. When a student displays maladaptive behaviors in the classroom, there are certain protocols used to change this behavior. When the students’ behavior continues, they may be assigned to an alternative school to receive their education. It is the responsibility of the alternative school to attempt to reform students’ behavior for the students to return to their home or comprehensive school and continue their education as before. Alternative schools may use some type of specialized extrinsic rewards system to change the behavior of these students who display maladaptive behaviors to bring back their academic success.

Chapter I was an introduction of this Delphi research study. It provided the background information upon which this Delphi study was based. Chapter I included an introduction of alternative schools and the reasons for students being placed in these schools. Chapter I included a description of the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, along with the significance of the study. Chapter I also included definitions of terms and possible delimitations.

Chapter II provided a review of the literature. This review began with information about compulsory education and the traditional school, then turned attention to alternative schools and students who attend an alternative educational program. The review continued by referring to learning and the relevance of learning for an alternative student while providing reference to motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, then
comparing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the learning process. Chapter II also reviewed extrinsic rewards systems and gave examples of a variety of systems used in alternative schools around the country. The literature review concluded with a description of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which has been adopted by a majority of school districts in America.

Chapter III presented the methodology used, which was a modified policy Delphi study. Chapter III presented the purpose statement, research questions, research design, along with the population and the target population. Additionally, a sample and sample selection with the criteria to become a participant was described. The instrumentation with the reliability and validity with limitations were defined. Chapter III also presented the data collection and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presented a summary of the research findings in this policy Delphi study with an analysis of the data. The sample for this study was delimited to expert teachers working in alternative schools. In Chapter IV, a qualifying criterion was described regarding the expert participants. Three rounds of questionnaires were presented that collected data. Round 1 collected qualitative data, Round 2 collected quantitative data, and finally Round 3 collected qualitative data.

Chapter V presents a summary of this Delphi study. A review of the purpose statement, research questions, and methodology are included. Additionally, Chapter V presents the major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions from the findings, recommendations for actions, and further research recommendations. Finally, my reflections and concluding remarks close out Chapter V.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. A second purpose was to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting. The final purpose was to identify recommendations from alternative schoolteachers regarding actions for the implementation of the most effective strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting.

Research Questions

1. What strategies do alternative schoolteachers identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?
2. How do alternative schoolteachers rate the effectiveness of strategies identified as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?
3. What recommendations do alternative schoolteachers have for actions for implementing the strategies rated as most effective within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?

Methodology

This research study utilized a modified version of the Delphi study to collect data regarding the most effective strategies for improving student behavior in the alternative
school setting. In this policy Delphi study, expert teachers meeting the criteria to participate gave recommendations to improve student behavior, ranked the strategies, and finally provided methods to implement the five highest rated strategies. The modified Delphi study was the most appropriate method for identifying the most effective strategies that alternative schoolteachers believe facilitate the implementation of extrinsic reward systems because they develop expert collective opinion on the most effective strategies for implementation.

The primary function of the Delphi method, as developed by the RAND Corporation, was to collect and employ feedback from experts in the field of study through the systematic use of questionnaires (Linstone & Turoff, 2011). The iterative process of the policy Delphi provides a range of ideas about the issues from a diverse group (Van Zolingen & Klassen, 2003). The modified Delphi study was the most appropriate method for identifying the most effective strategies that alternative schoolteachers believe facilitates the implementation of extrinsic reward systems because it develops expert collective opinion on the most effective strategies for implementation.

In preparation for this study, the following criteria were established to determine expert teachers in implementing effective strategies for improving alternative school student behavior.

1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or,
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic reward systems.

Within California, there are 977 alternative schools, and in the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, 18 of 26 schools have extrinsic rewards systems. Each principal of these 18 schools was sent a request for permission to participate in this policy Delphi study (Appendix H). A total of five principals returned a positive reply. An invitation to participate (Appendix I) was sent to qualifying teachers, and 18 teachers responded agreeing to participate. There were three rounds for this policy Delphi study. The results of each round provided the content of each succeeding round. Each questionnaire was sent via e-mail, and a Google Form Survey was the platform used to deliver the questionnaire (Appendices E, F, and G).

For Round 1 of the study, expert teachers were asked to provide a list of strategies based on the survey question, “What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative school education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?” The responses produced a list of 59 strategies from 11 respondents. These strategies were coded for commonalities, and a list of 26 strategies was formed and created for Round 2. The participants were given 2 weeks to respond to the survey.

Round 2 questionnaire used a 6-point Likert scale with a ranking of 6 (extremely effective), 5 (moderately effective), 4 (slightly effective), 3 (slightly ineffective), 2 (moderately ineffective), or 1 (extremely ineffective). The Round 2 survey asked the participants to answer the question, “From the list of strategies identified in Round 1,
how do you rate the effectiveness of each strategy for extrinsic reward systems to improve alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting?” Fourteen of the 18 participants ranked each of the strategies choosing one of these ratings. After allowing 2 weeks to respond, the researcher determined the mean of each of the rankings to determine the five top-rated strategies, based on the mean score, with which the Round 3 questionnaire was created (see Table 29).

In the Round 3 survey, the participants were asked the question, “Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, please identify and describe the best activities for implementing each strategy?” There were 14 respondents from Round 3. The respondents were given 2 weeks to provide an answer to the questionnaire.

**Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is “a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalized” (p. 489). In California, there are 977 alternative schools that serve approximately 132,189 students (California Department of Education, 2020). The population for this Delphi study was expert teachers who implemented effective strategies for alternative education schools to improve student behavior.

**Target Population**

The target population for this study was alternative school expert teachers who implemented effective strategies within extrinsic rewards systems for improving student behavior. Eighteen alternative schools within Riverside and San Bernardino counties
utilize extrinsic rewards systems at their respective schools. For this study, five 
principals agreed to allow the researcher to request participation of their selected teachers 
who met the criteria to participate in this Delphi study. Eighteen teachers responded to 
the request to participate from the five schools.

**Sample**

The sample for this Delphi study was 18 teachers from five different school 
districts in Riverside and San Bernardino counties in California. Each of these schools 
employed an extrinsic rewards system. These 18 teachers were experts at implementing 
effective strategies at improving student behavior within an extrinsic rewards system and 
had met the following criteria:

1. Three or more years teaching in an alternative school with an extrinsic reward system.
2. Recommended by their principal as an expert in the implementation of extrinsic 
   rewards system.
3. Documented presentation(s) on the implementation of extrinsic reward systems, or,
4. Served as a mentor/facilitator to other teachers in the implementation of extrinsic 
   reward systems.

**Major Findings**

This section of Chapter V shows the major findings from the data collection of 
this study. Major findings were obtained through an analysis of the responses from 
expert alternative schoolteachers in implementing effective strategies within an extrinsic 
rewards system to improve student behavior. These expert teachers answered open- 
ended questions in Rounds 1 and 3, while Round 2 was a Likert scale survey that 
revealed quantitative data ranking. Prior to beginning the first round of collecting data,
the researcher obtained permission from the principals of each school where the participants taught. Each participant agreed to participate in this Delphi study.

**Delphi Round 1**

Round 1 of the Delphi study was a questionnaire sent to the participants via email in a Google Form. This questionnaire sought to obtain qualitative data by asking an open-ended question: “What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior?”

Alternative education teachers, who were identified as experts in implementing an extrinsic reward system in their schools, responded to Research Question 1. Their combined responses yielded 59 responses. The participants’ responses were subsequently coded, and similarities were identified by themes and patterns. As a result, 26 different strategies were identified. Table 29 also represents the frequency by which each strategy was identified by the participants.

From the responses received in Round 1, a major finding of four strategic categories emerged. Within each category, each strategy was grouped and could be utilized within an extrinsic rewards system at an alternative school. The four categories were rewards strategies, social-emotional strategies, curriculum and academic strategies, and behavioral strategies. All 26 strategies could serve to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting based on the participants’ responses, at least to some degree.
Table 29

Strategies Expert Teachers Identify as Being Successful in Improving Student Behavior Within an Extrinsic Reward System in the Alternative School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food/soda</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Token economy (points/bucks) to buy items from the student store</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate student and staff successes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ for the day (control music at lunch)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tangible rewards, i.e. pencils</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations and consequences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free pass to early out, early lunch or free period for identified positive behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor improvement no matter how small</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal positive feedback</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal shout-outs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play online games such as Kahoot</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition assemblies for positive student behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students can see/track points</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a curriculum more aligned to students’ interest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning to look forward in their life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent implementation of procedures and resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a culture of care and respect</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival game days for those that earn it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips for those that earn it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive dynamic curriculum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch with the teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the classroom environment about the students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive community service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick grading to encourage the completion of more work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Total respondents = 11.

The first category identified from the qualitative data received through Round 1 was receiving a reward. These strategies were token economy to buy items from the student store; small tangible rewards; free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior; students can see/track points; free time; DJ for the day; play online games such as Kahoot; festival game days for those that earn it; field trips for those that earn it; gamification; and lunch with the teacher. The category classified as
reward strategies yielded 11 strategies, which is 42% of the total number of strategies (26) identified by the respondents.

The second category was building a social-emotional environment. The strategies advocated by the respondents were building relationships, celebrate student and staff successes, honor improvement no matter how small, informal positive feedback, personal shout-outs, recognition assemblies for positive student behavior, create a culture of care and respect, make the classroom environment about the students, and positive community service. This second category had nine of 26 strategies (35%) utilizing social-emotional strategies.

The third category involves using curriculum and academic strategies. The strategies recommended by the respondents were build a curriculum more aligned to students’ interests, career planning to look forward in their life, interactive dynamic curriculum, and quick grading to encourage the completion of more work. This third category had four of 26 strategies identified (15%).

The fourth and last category denotes behavioral strategies. The strategies suggested were clear expectations and consequences and consistent implementation of procedures and resources. This fourth category had two of 26 strategies recommended (7%) of the total number of strategies.

**Delphi Round 2**

Round 2 of this Delphi study was a questionnaire sent to the participants via a Google Form. The Round 2 questionnaire sought quantitative data by using a 6-point Likert scale. The respondents rated the level of effectiveness for each of the 26 strategies identified from Round 1. The levels in the 6-point Likert scale were 6 (*extremely*
effective), 5 (moderately effective), 4 (slightly effective), 3 (slightly ineffective),
2 (moderately ineffective), and 1 (extremely ineffective). After receiving the results of
each respondents’ ratings, the mean for each strategy was determined, and the following
top five strategies were verified:
1. Build relationships ($M = 5.00$)
2. Create a culture of care and respect ($M = 5.00$)
3. Consistent implementation of procedures and resources ($M = 4.92$)
4. Make the classroom environment about the students ($M = 4.71$)
5. Free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior
   ($M = 4.64$)

A major finding from Round 2 and the rankings provided by the expert teachers
was that strategies within the social-emotional environment category were the most
important, as evidenced with three of the top five strategies being chosen (60%).
Building relationships, creating a culture of care and respect, and making the classroom
environment about the students are very important to improving maladaptive student
behavior from the participant’s point of view. Edgar-Smith and Baugher Palmer (2015)
stated, “To adequately support the minority of students who function poorly within
conventional school systems, alternative education programs seek to provide an
innovative curriculum that effectively engages student learning” (p. 134). The expert
teachers’ responses support the concept that an innovative curriculum that primarily
espouses a social-emotional environment is effective.

Another major finding was the strategy of consistent implementation of
procedures and resources. Even though only two strategies were given for the behavior
category, one of them was ranked in the top five. This suggests that the participants were stating that consistency regarding classroom and school procedures is important. Additionally, a major finding was that only one strategy from the rewards category, which had the most strategies identified by the participants, made the top five. This strategy of receiving a free pass for an early out, lunch, or a free period for identified positive behavior appears to be a more personal reward rather than something tangible such as candy, food, or another student store item. This suggests that the participants feel that it is more important for students to be rewarded with time away from the academics rather than receiving an item while working within an academic period, or even at the end of an academic period.

**Delphi Round 3**

In Round 3, these same participants identified as expert teachers in implementing strategies in an extrinsic rewards system to improve alternative school student behavior were asked the open-ended question, “Referring to the list of five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, please describe the best activities for implementing each strategy.”

**Research Question 3, Strategy 1.** The first strategy listed was build relationships, and participants responded with several strategies to build relationships that are effective in improving student behavior in the alternative school setting. This strategy is in the social-emotional category. A major finding in this strategy revolves around how to build these relationships with students. The majority of the participants felt that getting to know students personally was accomplished through a variety of means such as
asking personal questions one on one, or using 3 x 5 cards, and even utilizing an online program that asks students to list their personal interests. Another simple exercise of greeting students at the door each period helps to build relationships. Also using reflective circles and acknowledging positive behavior with shout-outs, high-fives, or simply a wink builds relationships. In building relationships with students, teachers are building trust with students who have been negatively impacted by their maladaptive behavior.

**Research Question 3, Strategy 2.** The next strategy listed was create a culture of care and respect. This strategy is also in the social-emotional category. Respondents stated that to make this strategy work to accomplish a culture of care and respect should include listening to students through activities like students setting the classroom norms, listening to students in one-on-one situations, and using fishbowl activities. Another strategy was modeling for students classroom expectations with accountability for the teachers themselves, which students will then follow with their actions. Respondents included strategies of spending time at the beginning of the school year working with students in groups to build trust, develop social skills, and respect for one another. Students can do this by creating visuals and then doing gallery walks to promote care and respect. PBIS was mentioned as a program to implement the development of this process. In creating a culture of care and respect, teachers are developing trust with their students.

**Research Question 3, Strategy 3.** This next strategy moves from the social-emotional category into a behavioral category with consistent implementation of procedures and resources. Participants regarded this strategy as one wherein routines
needed to be established and consistently followed, such as a PBIS program that rewarded positive behavior consistently. Additionally, other consistent routines in the classroom such as using bell-ringer activities add to the procedures. The major finding in this strategy would be consistency in routines. If inconsistency in the classroom or school is prevalent, improving student behavior will not be a positive result. Again, by implementing routines in the classroom and school, such as a PBIS program and classroom routines utilizing bell-ringer activities, students know what to expect and are able to trust their teachers and school.

**Research Question 3, Strategy 4.** This next strategy, make the classroom about the students, is in the social-emotional category and shows what activities are suggested to improve student behavior. Participants’ responses recommend creating an engaging atmosphere by providing a collaborative ambiance through hands-on lesson planning and exploration with supplemental materials. Fostering discussions allows students to share their own stories through discussion, and dialoguing about how to cope within their personal lives is accomplished by beginning each period with a temperature check and displaying student work, achievement, images, and inspirational messages. This creates a classroom where students feel safe, valued, and supported. As a result, student buy-in occurs, and the major finding from a classroom about the student is that trust is found between students and teachers.

**Research Question 3, Strategy 5.** This final strategy, free pass to early out, early lunch, or free period for identified positive behavior, fits into the rewards category, which in Round 1 generated the most strategies listed for improving student behavior in the alternative school setting. Implementing this strategy was centralized with utilizing an
extrinsic rewards system and including a free pass for students who had demonstrated positive behavior. Interestingly, a free pass or free time ranked higher than receiving a tangible item such as food, drink, or using school bucks to purchase a student store item. Celebrating an identified positive behavior with free time from class, whether to go to lunch early or just free time, says to the student that the teacher trusts the student to behave properly and is a motivational factor for students to continue acting positively.

**Unexpected Findings**

Round 1 capitalized on the experience of expert teachers in the ability to implement effective strategies in an extrinsic rewards system for improving student behavior at the alternative schools. Round 2 allowed these same teachers an opportunity to rank these strategies for effectiveness, which resulted in the unexpected findings. An unexpected finding was that the strategies could be grouped into four categories: rewards strategies, social-emotional strategies, curriculum and academic strategies, and behavioral strategies. The second unexpected finding revealed that the participants responded with social-emotional strategies being the most important strategies (three of five) within an extrinsic rewards system to improve maladaptive student behavior in the alternative school setting.

Finally and perhaps a larger finding was trust between the students and teachers. With the number of actions recommended by the expert teachers in implementing each strategy, a conclusion was that trust is the centerpiece developed in the extrinsic reward system.
Conclusions

The purpose of this Delphi study was to ascertain strategies that expert teachers recommend in implementing strategies within an extrinsic rewards system to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting. Although there were four major areas for findings, numerous overlaps between the findings led to two overarching conclusions from these findings for this study.

Conclusion 1

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that to effectively improve maladaptive student behavior in the alternative school, a variety of strategies should be implemented within extrinsic rewards systems based on four categories: rewards strategies, social-emotional strategies, curriculum and academic strategies, and behavioral strategies. Teachers must have a tool kit of strategies that can be used appropriately, depending on group and individual circumstances. There are no strategies that guarantee success, but it is the ability to try different strategies and find one that is successful, along with a sincere and caring teacher attitude, that can promote behavioral change. Specific strategies that expert teachers recommended in implementing strategies within an extrinsic rewards system to improve student behavior at alternative schools were building relationships, creating a culture of care and respect, implementing procedures and resources consistently, making the classroom about the students, and providing free passes to an early out, early lunch, or giving a free period for identified positive behavior.
Conclusion 2

Implementing these strategies follows a common theme in which teachers provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate improved behavior. This is accomplished by building trust between the teachers and students through activities. Based upon these findings, it is concluded that the process of changing behavior is transitional and does not occur overnight. Student behavior will improve with appropriately selected strategies, but the change does not occur immediately. Teachers must expect and be ready to deal with starts, stops, and relapses along the way and provide opportunities for appropriate interactions to continue the process. As behaviors improve, the opportunities for the appropriate use of extrinsic rewards increase. Some of these interactive activities include asking them questions about themselves, listening to students’ stories, working in social-emotional circles, being consistent with procedures, being fair, showcasing student work and accomplishments, and recognizing positive student behavior, which builds a caring and respectful culture.

Implications and Recommendations

In this Delphi study, the conclusions suggest that several implications and recommendations exist regarding implementing strategies to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting.

Implication/Recommendation 1

One of these implications revolves around alternative schools offering students on the verge of being expelled or with persistent behavior problems an opportunity for a second chance and go to a place of rehabilitation to avoid expulsion and reduce the school-to-prison pipeline (Kennedy-Lewis, 2015; Wilkerson et al., 2016). Implementing
strategies to build relationships and creating an environment of care and respect offers students a fresh start in classrooms about the students. Indeed, providing consistent procedures and resources through routines that focus on the positivity of a classroom environment about students allows for an optimistic rehabilitation. Based upon these implications are the following two recommendations for action:

1. Every district must have an alternative school specifically identified to address the needs of such students with a philosophy of remediation of problems rather than punitive measures.

2. The teachers and staff in such schools must be specifically trained in the appropriate use of strategies identified in this study, adolescent psychology regarding behavior problems, and must agree to the philosophy of rehabilitation because teacher attitude is a crucial component of success.

**Implication/Recommendation 2**

Another implication from implementing these strategies is the intent to help students overcome their personal issues and prepare them to be academic students. Alternative schools are expected to teach students the same curriculum that comprehensive and traditional schools teach (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010), and these same students are required to take statewide examinations (California Department of Education, 2014) with the same accountability as the traditional school. However, it is impractical to expect that such performance will occur with these students until behavior issues and personal issues are addressed. Developing trust between students and teachers through the implementation of these strategies may build student confidence in themselves and their abilities to learn and
improve their capacities to perform on school and state assessments. However, building such trust through the strategies from this study takes time and does not occur immediately; therefore, the following are recommendations for action:

1. Alternative schools must be allowed to use flexible and partial credit programs that allow staff to move students at an individual pace based upon needs of the individual student.

2. Behavior modification activities must count as elective classes and count as credit toward graduation. Such activities are at least as important to this student population as any other elective taken. This will also allow staff to be creative in the application of credit issued, even to the point of using it as a reward.

**Implication/Recommendation 3**

Another implication is for the students themselves. Typically, Tier II schools are set up to house students with behavioral issues (Raywid, 1994). Wery and Thomson (2013) stated that students with maladaptive behaviors usually are not motivated to perform any classroom work and therefore do not learn. By implementing strategies in the alternative school, along with creating an environment of care and respect, and making the classroom about the students, students may increase their motivation not only as students but also as citizens. Building trust with teachers and other school staff through restorative circles, receiving rewards such as an early pass to lunch or free time, while accepting consistency with procedures and resources may allow students to improve their behaviors in this school environment. By improving their behaviors, becoming more academic students, and receiving positive feedback, it is possible for these students to become better citizens. However, these changes accomplished at the
alternative school may be undone by the environment of a traditional school; therefore, the following is a recommendation for action:

Students and their families must be allowed the option of continuing enrollment at the alternative school through graduation. If these alternative education schools work for students who typically do not perform well at the traditional school, it might be reasonable to assume success can be tied into a smaller setting in which students who had maladaptive behaviors feel more successful and wish to continue their education in a setting they are familiar with. According to Comerford and Jacobson (1987), schools had neglected to provide appropriate services to students who exhibited maladaptive behaviors and used suspensions and expulsions as a method to treat misbehavior. Wilkerson et al. (2016) stated that school districts created alternative schools to have a place for students with maladaptive behaviors or social-emotional issues to be able to receive their education, thus reducing the distractions in the traditional setting. Having the option to stay at the alternative school could provide a positive decision for these students.

**Implication/Recommendation 4**

Perhaps one of the most important implications for realizing the strategies in this study is the relationship between teachers and students. Raywid (1994) concluded that one of the greatest differences between the traditional school environment and the alternative school setting is the responsive teacher-student interaction. Raywid even explained that students identified the alternative school as a caring place and likened the alternative school setting to a supportive family environment. It is, therefore, essential that teachers who are hired, transferred, or placed in alternative schools have strong
relational skills. Indeed, Magee et al. (2006) also described that students felt the personalized relationships built in the smaller school setting were a positive reason for wanting to attend the alternative school and to remain there for the duration of their school career. Reasons for this include involvement in creating norms, an engaging curriculum, and a more individualized program. As such, alternative schools cannot be a place for low-performing teachers or those who are less sensitive to the social-emotional needs of students, because the alternative education setting is a place for the neediest of students.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this Delphi study was to determine the most effective strategies to implement within an extrinsic rewards system at the alternative school to improve maladaptive student behavior. The method used was surveying, with questionnaires, expert teachers in the implementation of effective strategies within an extrinsic rewards system in the alternative school. The following are recommendations for further research:

1. Conduct research using the students who attend a Type II alternative school and develop a series of surveys to discover what students believe are policies and procedures at the school that help them be successful in improving their behavior and academic success. How do the teachers’ recommended strategies compare with what students believe are effective in helping them be successful?

2. Complete a case study at an alternative school regarding strategies used within an extrinsic rewards system to improve student behavior. Within this case study, collect data regarding the graduation rate of the students: the percentage of students who
graduate from their traditional school and the percentage of students who graduate from the alternative school. Additionally, ask, What is the expulsion rate for those students attending due to their previous maladaptive behaviors? Finally, ask, Within the case study, is there an improvement in school, district, and state assessments?

3. Conduct a study that identifies and describes the social environment that exists in alternative schools that are responsive to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Consider the following points in this recommended research: How do successful alternative schools create a sense of community that brings together students, teachers, and even itinerant staff? What are the common components of this community? Alternative schools are typically small neighborhoods and everyone knows each other, so how is this reflected in the school’s success?

4. Conduct a qualitative phenomenological study to identify and describe the appropriate leadership attributes for the alternative school setting. How is alternative school leadership defined? What are the characteristics needed of alternative school leadership, not only of administrators but also of teachers? These elements could be examined from the perspective of current alternative school administrators, alternative schoolteachers, itinerant staff, and district-level leadership.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

At the beginning of this study, I asked the question, “What is the worth of a child?” Type II alternative schools have been reserved to provide an education for students who demonstrate maladaptive behaviors or social-emotional issues. This Delphi study was prepared and completed for these students. As a beginning administrator,
working at an alternative school, I observed that the school would enroll students sent from the traditional comprehensive schools because of each students’ behavior. After serving their time with us, these students went back to their home schools rehabilitated, only to return within a few months because of their maladaptive behavior. My thought was why was this happening, and I realized it was because we were not rehabilitating these students.

I started searching for a way to truly help these students. I thought of the movie Boys Town and started looking for something to help these students. I discovered a program to use at school, and after implementing this program, students started changing their behaviors so they could return to their home school and be successful. This study focused on what strategies are recommended to use within an extrinsic rewards system in the alternative setting to improve student behavior. This study also allowed participants an opportunity to rate the effectiveness of 26 strategies and then take the top five as determined by the mean, and the participants responded with ways to implement these top five strategies to improve student behavior.

This study consisted of teachers from four different alternative schools in four different school districts that were asked to participate, so the sample size was small, but what is amazing is that the strategies indicated that the relationship between the teacher and student is about caring, respect, and trust. The teachers’ opinions are that if you treat students well, the students will respond positively, and then learning can begin. This study will enable school district leaders with their alternative schools that do not utilize an extrinsic rewards system to help improve student behavior and to rethink their position.
of how they can help the alternative school student become more successful rather than be a place to move students with maladaptive behaviors.

There are a couple of quotes that can guide those in alternative education that I use at my school. The first one has an unknown author and says, “Every child is gifted, they just unwrap their packages at different times!” Alternative school leaders understand this, and if students are provided with the right amount of care and respect, they will “unwrap” their potential. A Tibetan proverb states, “A child without an education is like a bird without wings.” Alternative education is sometimes the last chance for students. What is the worth of a child?
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### APPENDIX A

#### Synthesis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Alternative Education &amp; At-Risk Students</th>
<th>Behavior Modification &amp; Student Behavior</th>
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<th>Extrinsic Reward Systems</th>
<th>Group Counseling</th>
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second-grade students’ reports of peers’ prosocial behaviors via direct instruction, group reinforcement, and progress feedback: A replication and extension.

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**Notes:**

- Each entry is a complete citation for a research study.
- The table shows the presence or absence of specific effects, with X indicating a positive outcome.
- The absence of a table cell indicates a lack of information or data point.
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APPENDIX B

Electronic Informed Consent

INFORMATION ABOUT: Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Student Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Christian D. Burner, MS

THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY:

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Christian D. Burner, MS, a doctoral student in the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program at Brandman University. The purpose of this research study is to identify the most successful strategies within an extrinsic rewards system to improve student maladaptive behavior in the alternative school setting. This study will seek the most successful strategies from teachers who have been identified as experts in implementing successful strategies in an extrinsic rewards program in the alternative school setting.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this electronic survey, you can withdraw at any time.

Each survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. The survey questions will pertain to your opinions of which strategies, within an extrinsic rewards system, are the most successful to improve student maladaptive behavior in an alternative school setting.

Each participant will use a three-digit code for identification purposes. The researcher will keep the identifying codes safe-guarded in a locked file drawer to which the researcher will have sole access. The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

a) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

b) I understand that I may refuse to participate in or I may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.
If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact Christian Burner at cburner@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 909.800.7065; or Dr. Phillip Pendley, Advisor, at ppendley@brandman.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the “agree” button indicates that you have read the informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate.
If you do not wish to participate in this electronic survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the “disagree” button. The survey will not open for responses unless you agree to participate.

_____AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and “Bill of Rights.” I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in this study.

_____DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey.
APPENDIX C

Participant’s Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB Adopted November 2013
Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Christian Burner successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 05/22/2016.

Certification Number: 2079835.
APPENDIX E

Delphi Study Questionnaire – Round 1

Delphi Questionnaire #1

Thank you for your participation in this Delphi study about identifying the most effective strategies used in a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior.

As one of the alternative education teachers who have been identified as an expert in the implementation of strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior, your list identifying best strategies for improving student behavior is important to this study.

What strategies do you, an identified expert in implementing an extrinsic reward system as an alternative education teacher, identify as successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior? (List strategies)

https://docs.google.O5XGD2y2Wk7KmHjH7Ts5SAhGD2y2Wk7KmHjH7Ts5SNG5ll
Delphi Study Questionnaire – Round 2

Delphi Study Questionnaire #2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this second round survey. Round 2 of the Delphi study includes aggregated responses from Round 1.

Round 2 ask participants to determine the degree of effectiveness of each of the strategies identified in Round 1. Please read each strategy in each section and consider the degree of effectiveness of each strategy prior to making a rating decision. Participants’ ratings in Round 2 will be aggregated to determine the top 5 most effective strategies for improving alternative school student behavior in the alternative school setting.
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Delphi Questionnaire #3

Thank you for your participation in completing the two rounds so far of this Delphi study. Your knowledge and expertise has been very insightful and is much appreciated.

In Round 2 you determined the degree of effectiveness of the strategies from Round 1. The data from Round 2 has been disaggregated and a ranking list of the top five strategies from Round 2 was created.

For Round 3, please refer to the list of the five most effective strategies for implementing a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior determined from Round 2, and then describe the best activities for implementing each strategy.
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APPENDIX H

Request for Study Permission From Principal

Brandman University
Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership
Dissertation Research
Christian D. Burner

Dissertation Title
Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Student Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

Purpose Statement
The purpose of this modified policy Delphi study is to identify strategies that are successful within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve alternative school student behavior. A second purpose is to rate the effectiveness of the identified strategies for improving alternative school student behavior. The final purpose is to identify recommendations from alternative schoolteachers for the implementation of the most effective strategies within a school-wide extrinsic reward system to improve student behavior.

Methodology
This study will utilize the Delphi method for data collection and analysis. In this study, the experts are the teachers who utilize the components of the extrinsic reward system in their classroom and work with the students daily. The modified policy Delphi method uses a macro to a micro strategy to which allows experts in the field to give their opinions contributing to the desired outcome. Each questionnaire is developed from the analysis of the previous questionnaire based on the information received, because responses may dictate the type of questions to be written. The population to be studied is the teacher in the alternative school setting with students who have maladaptive behavioral issues.

Request of Principal
I am asking permission to conduct research at your school. Your alternative school has students that attend due to maladaptive behaviors and you operate with an extrinsic rewards program in place. Your teachers would be able to provide rich information pertaining to this study.

Approved: ____________________________________________ 5/1/2020
School/District: ________________________________________
APPENDIX I

Invitation to Participate

Study: Identifying Successful Strategies Within an Extrinsic Reward System to Improve Student Behavior in the Alternative School Setting

January 20, 2020

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

My name is Christian Burner. I am a doctoral student at Brandman University, in the field of Organizational Leadership. I am also a principal at an Alternative High School in the Colton Joint Unified School District. I am interested in identifying the most successful strategies that teachers use in the classroom within an extrinsic reward system, specifically regarding students with behavioral issues.

Your school has been selected to participate, and your principal has approved this study to occur at your site. You currently work with students within an extrinsic rewards program, and as such I am very interested in your participation in an electronic survey on three separate occasions.

I understand that you have a busy schedule teaching at an alternative school, therefore I have limited the number of survey questions that will allow you to complete the survey in 15-30 minutes.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this modified policy Delphi study, is to identify successful strategies within an extrinsic reward system to improve student behavior in the alternative school setting.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, the researcher will email you each survey within each week of the proposed study. You will then fill out the survey, it takes approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are minimal risks to your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient to find the right time to take the survey, however, the survey may be taken at your work location or at your home, and whichever is most convenient.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, however, your input may benefit other alternative schools that work with students with maladaptive behaviors. The results of this study will provide educators contemplating changes in their protocols to help students be more successful.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study, and any personal information you provide, will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask questions, at any time, that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact me at (909) 800-7065 or by email at cburner@mail.brandman.edu. You can also contact Dr. Phil Pendley
by email at pendley@brandman.edu. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Respectfully,

Christian D. Burner

Christian D. Burner
Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University