

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF MONITORING OF BEHAVIOUR  
BY DELINQUENT GIRLS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology  
at Massey University

JOHN CHARLES WATSON

1981

## ABSTRACT

The use of the methods of applied behaviour analysis to provide the basis of treatment programmes for delinquent youth has expanded over the past decade. These techniques appear to be adaptable to a wide variety of residential and community based settings. The token economy probably enjoys the widest use of all the programme alternatives. It has been found however, that when token programmes have been withdrawn, the maintenance of the behaviour change typically deteriorates. In an attempt to overcome this, self evaluation procedures can be an effective aid in maintaining behaviour after reinforcement contingencies have been withdrawn. This thesis reports on the introduction of behavioural self evaluation into a token programme with delinquent girls in a residential setting. In order to develop an accurate behavioural self evaluation and reporting procedure which established and maintained appropriate levels of behaviour, a matching procedure initially with contingent points for both accuracy of matching and behavioural performance was used. Girls rapidly learned to accurately assess their behaviour and maintain both assessments and behaviour at criterion levels. The matching procedure was withdrawn after criteria levels of 80 percent accuracy were maintained. Random checks that followed revealed accuracy and behavioural performance were maintained during periods of contingent reinforcement, and for a short period after reinforcement was withdrawn.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is extremely grateful to the staff members of the Margaret Street Girls' Home in Palmerston North, who gave their continued support, encouragement and criticisms of this research project.

To David Hutchinson, Barbara Sherson, Joyce McLaughlin, Betty Fraser, Ruth Grant, Betty Neilsen, Dawn Alexander, Jan Smith, Graeme Munford, Anne-Marie Van Der Linden, Maurice Field and Shelley Hamilton, thank you for all your work.

Special thanks also to the 28 girls who participated in the project, the standard of behaviour achieved was a credit to you all.

Thanks are also due to John Hancock, Director of Social Welfare who took a genuine interest in the developments of the project and the activities of his Residential Social Work colleagues.

Special thanks to Hilary Arlott for conscientious design of the graphic data and to Jennie Chapman for the very tolerant production of the typed manuscript.

To Dr. Alan Winton who throughout all the time and frustrations in producing this thesis supervised and continually encouraged a high standard of research practice at all times. It has been a disciplined learning experience for which I am grateful.

Finally, to Campbell, Joanna, and Helen, thanks for being so understanding of a student dad, and to Glennis for always being there.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 METHOD	18
3 RESULTS	28
4 DISCUSSION	50
APPENDICES	
A Room Cleaning Criteria Mk I	64
Room Cleaning Criteria Mk II	65
B Room Cleaning Behaviour Recording Sheet	66
C Interobserver Reliability Checks	67
D Accuracy of Self Evaluations	
Sequence A Girls	68
Sequence B Girls	69
REFERENCES	70

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
I	Subject 1, Sequence A	29
II	Subject 2, Sequence A	30
III	Subject 3, Sequence A	31
IV	Subject 4, Sequence A	32
V	Subject 5, Sequence A	33
VI	Subject 6, Sequence B	34
VII	Subject 7, Sequence B	35
VIII	Subject 8, Sequence B	36
IX	Subject 9, Sequence B	37
X	Subject 10, Sequence B	38
XI	Mean daily scores of Sequence A combined	40
XII	Mean daily scores of Sequence B combined	41
XIII	Mean daily scores of Sequence A combined and Sequence B combined	42

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Room Cleaning Criteria Mk III	20
2	Results Summary	39
3	Accuracy of Self Evaluations Summary	48