

# Effect Of Reality Play Therapy On Increasing Elementary Students' On Task Behavior

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**Abstract:** This purpose of present study was to test the effect of reality play therapy on elementary students' on-task behavior. Two students of grade five were involved in single subject experiment. There are five on-tasks behavior which increased in present study, namely completing tasks on time, make note during class, asking questions about learning content, completing homework on time, and following teachers' instructions. Results of this study indicated that reality play therapy was effective to increase students on-tasks behavior. This finding provides an evidence that reality play therapy was effective to treat students on-task behavior in Indonesia context, particularly students from Semarang, Central of Java.

**Keywords:** Elementary school; On-task behavior; Reality Play Therapy

## I. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of students coming to school is to study. They are encouraged and facilitated to carry out learning activities in order to be able to master a set of competencies that have been determined in the curriculum. Students' attainment in mastering the competencies are indicators to assess the students' successes for their learning and, at the same time, to evaluating teachers' the teacher's success in organizing learning. To creating conducive learning, teachers need to create a conducive learning environment and climate so that students are always stimulated and interested in participating in learning activities. In other side, students need to allocate all cognitive, affective and behavioral resources to be involved with learning activities. In those circumstances, both students and teachers are equally focused on achieving a learning goal. The teachers try to implement learning strategies that are encouraging for students to master the learning material, utilize media wick are relevant to the learning material, and manage student behavior so that they always concentrate to learning process. In short, learning facilitation efforts provided by the teacher are expected to be able to encourage students' on-task behavior, namely students' willingness to participate and engage in learning activities [1]. On-task behavior includes being active in class discussions, working on class assignments, paying attention to the teacher's explanation, asking questions, reading lesson material in class, to making eye contact with the teacher. Student's on-task behavior has an important role in determining students' success in learning [2]. Unfortunately, in the learning process not all students develop on-task behavior. In other words, they tend to exhibit off-task behavior that refers to student behavior that is not tied to the learning environment and classroom assignments but rather is bound to activities that are not relevant to learning activities [3].

Included in off-task behavior is sleeping in class when learning takes place, talking to classmates or other friends about things that are not relevant to the issues in learning, daydreaming, reading books or other materials that are not relevant to the discussion in learning, making noise in class, walking around the class while learning takes place, not doing classwork. Those off-task behavior predict low students' acievement [2]. For students to succeed in carrying out learning, it is important to encourage the development of on-task behavior and at the same time strive to reduce off-task behavior. Most research studies on improving on-task behavior are carried out in the context of classroom learning in the form of classroom management [4]. However, the development of on-task behavior can also be conducted through counseling services in schools, particularly individual counseling activities [5]. One kinds of popular intervention used by counselors to improve on-task behavior in elementary school students is play therapy [6]. Furthermore, Ray and McCullogh [6] explained that play therapy is effective for children aged between 3 to 12 years. On the other hand, reality counseling is effective in reducing off-task behavior in elementary students [7]. This research is specifically intended to examine the effectiveness of reality play therapy counseling to improve the on-task behavior of elementary school students. The findings of this study are expected to reveal recommendations about the practice patterns of reality play therapy in elementary schools in Indonesia. It is important considering the practice of guidance and counseling services in elementary schools, especially counseling activities. In addition, this research is expected to provide clarification on several issues from previous studies. First, there is currently no application of reality counseling in the play therapy setting [6], whereas the findings of research conducted by Yarbrough and Thompson [7] show that reality counseling is effective in reducing off-task behavior. Second, this research is directed to present the follow-up data on the implementation of reality play therapy as recommended by Yarbrough and Thompson [7]. Finally, as suggested by Yarbrough and Thompson [7], this research was implemented in two different subject settings for exteding generalization the effectiveness of reality play therapy.

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## II. METHODS

## A. Subjects

This research involved two elementary school students who have a low level of on-task behavior or high off-task behavior. There are five on-task behaviors which is intervened in this study, namely: completing classroom task on time, make a note, ask difficult contents, submit homework on time, and following teachers' instructions. Those target intervention are based on the pre-intervention observation on both subjects.

## B. Instrument

The data in this study were assessed using interview techniques through the use of a goal-attainment scale [8]. The scale was implemented to assess the condition of students' on-task behavior before participating in the intervention, during the intervention, and after the intervention. Thus, assessment using goal-attainment scale presented information about the progress of achieving the goals of the counseling/intervention. This scale contains five objectives to be achieved as a results of counseling. Those five objectives in the GAS that are applied in this study are: 1) completion of tasks on time; 2) take note of the subject matter in class; 3) ask questions about the lesson; 4) collect homework on time; and 5), following the teacher's instructions. In addition, on this scale there are criteria that are indicators of the level of achievement of goals which are then weighted starting from -2 to +2. Criteria for achieving goals are described qualitatively in a rubric. Thus, the counselor as the experimenter and counselee together can determine objectively the level of achievement in an assessment period through interview.

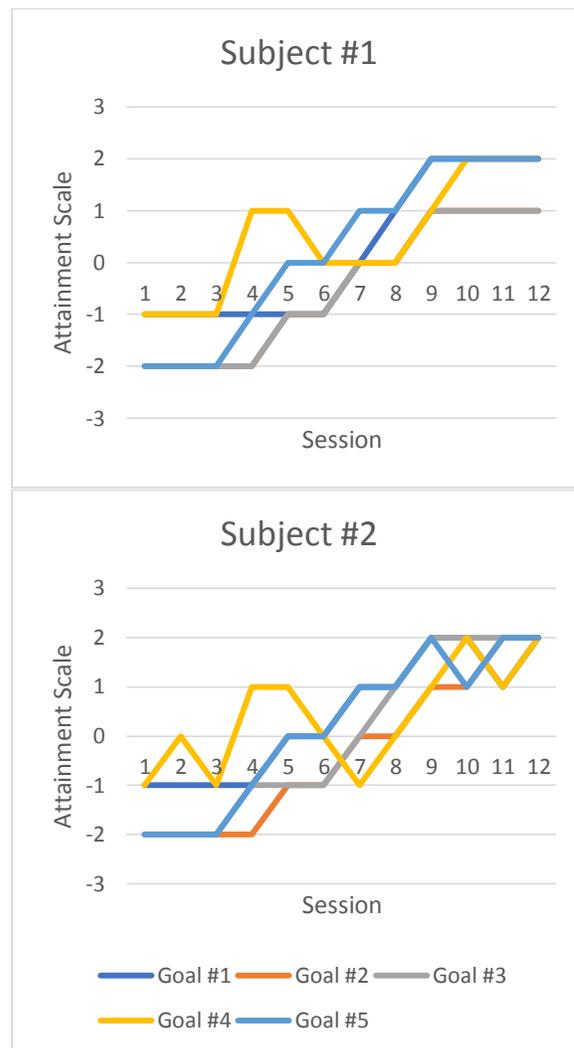
## C. Procedures

This study applies a single subject design with a type of cross-setting double baseline design (multiple baseline across settings [9] which is carried out in several stages. Before the experiment, the experimenter collaborated with the class teacher discussing the students as the subjects of the experiment, observing their behavior during the class, and setting behavioral targets. There are 5 behavioral target behaviors as a goal of play therapy, namely 1) completion of tasks on time; 2) take note of the subject matter in class; 3) ask questions about the lesson; 4) collect homework on time; and 5), following the teacher's instructions. At the initial stage of this study, students' on-task behavior was observed to assess the tendency of students' on-task behavior before getting an intervention. Initial observations of the study or baseline were carried out in three observation sessions. At the second stage, two students accepted reality play therapy counseling intervention in four stages of counseling or play therapy which is carried out in six sessions. During the counseling intervention process, students' on-task behavior is also observed to look at patterns of change. At final stage, students' on-task behavior is observed after the intervention process. Observations at this stage are made to determine the level of on-task behavior of students after the intervention process; whether there is an upward or downward trend.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results

This research is intended to improve elementary school students' on-task behavior. The graphs in Figure 1 and Figure 2 indicate a trend towards increased behavior both on subject 1 and 2.



**Figure 1** The progress of goal-attainment

Based on Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2, it can be seen that, in general, there is a pattern of increasing on-task behavior for both subject 1 and subject 2. At the time of baseline measurement, the five off-task behaviors, namely completion of assignments on time, recording material in class, ask questions about lessons, timely homework collection, and follow the teacher's instructions, were generally under 0. Then when counseling is carried out in 6 sessions, gradually the five off-task behaviors show a tendency to increase towards a positive direction. Finally, the five counseling goal behaviors in the follow-up session were relatively in a stable position at a high position. Furthermore, the complete results of implementation of reality play therapy interventions for two elementary school students were presented in Table 1 (in attachment). In the table 1, the results of assessment using goal-attainment scale (GAS) within 12 sessions are divided into 3 stages of study: namely baseline, during counseling interventions, and follow-up. In addition, table 1 also shows the T score from the measurement session, the average T score at

each stage of the study, the z score and the average z score of each stage of the study. Based on Table 1, it is known that during the baseline period, the mean of T score from both subject 1 and 2 was at a low level (27.08 for subject 1 and 27.82 for subject 2). This finding indicated that in both subjects were rarely performed on-task behavior. In the counseling stage, the mean of T scores of both students were at a moderate level (50 for subject 1 and 52.59 for subject 2). These results indicate that, compared to the results of baseline, the attainment of counseling goals gradually showed an increase. Finally, the T-score from goal-attainment scale in the follow-up was at level of high (73.16 for subject 1 and 72.67 for subject 2). This indicated that at three times the achievement of counseling goals formulated in the goal attainment scale was at a consistently high level or almost completely achieved. Based on the z score, the increasing of on-task behavior from baseline to follow up can be identified as significance improvement. The mean of z score at the baseline was -2.2, while at the follow-up phase the mean of z score was 2.2. This results indicated that the increasing of on-task behavior exceed 1.96. Based on the results of the graph, the T score and z score can be concluded that counseling play reality therapy is effective for improving the on-task behavior of elementary school students.

## 2. DISCUSSION

This study was intended to examine the effectiveness of reality play therapy in improving students' on-task behavior. Findings of this study successfully prove that reality play therapy is an effective strategy to improve the on-task behavior in participating in classroom learning for elementary school students. Results of this study are consistent with previous studies conducted by Yarbrough and Thompson [7]. Thus, the findings of this study confirm the generalization of the use of reality play therapy for elementary school students in Indonesia, particularly Semarang. Reality play therapy is effective for improving students' on-task behavior in the classroom because they are invited to see themselves, especially their off-task behavior in the choice theory perspective. Through the use of games, students are stimulated to assess the effectiveness of their off-task behavior to meet their basic needs. Through self-evaluation, students are encouraged to assess the benefits of the choices they make. Thus students are encouraged to assess the weaknesses of their off-task behavior. This process increases students' awareness of the importance of developing on-task behavior. After the counselee has successfully laid the foundation for developing on-task behavior, students are still guided to make concrete and achievable plans related to implementing on-task behavior. The development of this plan is in accordance with the SAM<sup>2</sup>C<sup>3</sup> principle [10]. This plan is important to measure and encourage students to developing on-task behavior. Thus, it can be understood that the power of reality play therapy in encouraging students to develop on-task behavior can be seen from the effort to make new choices through a process of self-evaluation and real planning. This findings implies that the development of on-task behavior in elementary school students can be conducted by developing student awareness through assessing the effectiveness of their choices in meeting their needs. When students make

choices which bring them close to meet the basic needs adaptively, students can be encouraged to maintain their choices. But when their choices prevent them from meeting basic needs adaptively, students can be facilitated to make new choices since they have the control to make choices.

## IV. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

Although the findings of this study are successful in proving the effect of reality play therapy on improving on-task behavior for elementary school students in Semarang, but there are a few of limitation from this study. First, this research focuses on the application of reality counseling and does not compare its effectiveness with other play therapy approaches. Secondly, this study involved only two students from grade 5 of elementary school. Finally, this research focus to develop five indicator of on-task behavior. Therefore, suggestions for further research are: a) comparing the effectiveness of reality counseling approaches with other counseling approaches in order to improve students' on-task behavior, including by comparing with environmental modification strategies; b) comparing the effects of reality play therapy counseling between students of various grade levels or ages; and c) explore the effectiveness of reality play therapy counseling in other forms of on-task behavior, including on-task behavior in group learning and on-task behavior in online learning. Moreover, suggestions for for counselors or teachers are: a) the development of on-task behavior can be done by getting students to evaluate their off-task behavior; b) in learning, the counselor and the teacher, it is always important to ensure that students have control over what they do; and c) teach students to be responsible for their behavior by anticipating the consequences of their actions.

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**Table 1** The summary of assessment of GAS, T and z scores

Steps	#1		#2		#3		#4		#5		T Score		Mean of T Score		z		Mean
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2									
Baseline	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-2	-2	27,08	27,08	27,08	27,82	-2,29	-2,29	-2,29
	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	0	-2	-2	27,08	29,30			-2,29	-2,07	
	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-2	-2	27,08	27,08			-2,29	-2,29	
Counseling	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-1	1	1	-1	-1	34,48	35,95	50,00	52,59	-1,55	-1,40	0,00
	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	1	0	0	42,61	47,04			-0,74	-0,30	
	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	40,39	44,83			-0,96	-0,52	
	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	1	1	52,96	55,17			0,30	0,52	
	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	57,39	58,87			0,74	0,89	
Follow up	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	72,18	73,66	73,16	72,67	2,22	2,37	2,32
	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	74,39	72,92			2,44	2,29	
	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	70,70	65,52			2,07	1,55	
	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	74,39	79,57			2,44	2,96	

Notes: #1 = completion of tasks on time; #2 = take note of the subject matter in class; #3 = ask questions about the lesson; #4 = collect homework on time; and #5 = following the teacher's instructions; S1 = Subject #1; S2 = Subject #2