SELF-MONITORING

2. Choose a Method for Recording Self-Monitoring Data

Student self-monitoring does not necessarily require that monitoring data be written down. For example, a student who regularly consults a self-correction checklist before turning in math assignments or keeps a mental count of call-outs during large-group instruction may see behavioral improvements even if she does not commit her self-monitoring information to writing. However, creating a written record of self-monitoring data will allow the student to collect data over time to look for trends of improvement and to share self-monitoring information with teachers and/or parents.

Reviewed here are three convenient formats to structure the collection of self-monitoring data and to record the resulting behavioral data--rating scale, checklist, and frequency count (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sugai, 2007):

- *Rating scale.* A rating scale consists of one or more items that a student can use to complete a global rating of a corresponding number of behaviors (e.g., "How well did I: (1) stay in my seat?; (2) participate?; (3) avoid distracting others?; (4) follow directions?"). The rating scale usually has a qualitative, sliding-scale rating format (e.g., "poor...fair...good"). Rating scales are typically completed at the conclusion of a fixed observation period (e.g., after a class period; at the end of the school day). See the sample *Behavior Rating Scale* later in this article for an example of how to set up a rating scale to measure student behaviors.

- *Checklist.* A checklist is a listing of behaviors (to be increased or decreased) that the student periodically reviews, checking off those behaviors actually displayed during the monitoring period. For example, a student may have a checklist for independent assignments that contains these 3 work-readiness items: *(1) I have all work materials needed, (2) My desk workspace is organized, (3) I understand the directions of this assignment.* Before beginning independent work, that student reviews and verifies that these preparatory actions have been carried out. Checklists are helpful for monitoring multi-step behaviors (e.g., the plan-write-revise-edit stages of the writing process) or for monitoring clusters of several related behaviors (e.g., as illustrated in the work-readiness example cited above). Investigate the sample *Behavior Checklist* elsewhere in this article as a guide for setting up a behavior checklist.

- *Frequency count.* In a frequency count, the student keeps a running tally of the number of times that a he or she displays a target behavior (e.g., number of call-outs or requests for teacher assistance) during an observation period. Check out the example, *Frequency Count,* further on in this article for advice on monitoring the frequency of student behaviors.

3. Choose a Self-Monitoring Schedule

Because self-monitoring requires that the student periodically measure his or her behavior, the teacher and student must decide on what schedule the monitoring will occur (Rafferty, 2010; Webber et al. 1993). Here are options:

- *Start of period or day.* The student monitors at the start of the class period or school day. Sample behaviors suitable for 'start' intervals include arriving to class on time and having all required work materials.

- *End of period or day.* The student monitors at the end of the class period or school day. Sample behaviors suitable for 'end' intervals include copying homework assignments from the board and global ratings of the student's behavior during that classroom period or school day.

The teacher may want to choose suitable rewards to further motivate students to use self-monitoring to move toward positive behavior change (Loftin, Gibb, & Skiba, 2005). Teachers can increase the power of a self-monitoring program by rewarding students when they consistently achieve positive ratings. Remember, though, that students differ in what experiences, privileges, or objects they find positively reinforcing. Here are 3 ideas for figuring out what rewards will motivate a particular student:

- *Watch the student in action.* Teachers can often get a very good idea of a student's preferred rewards, or reinforces, simply by observing the student across the school day. The locations where a student chooses to spend time, the people he or she chooses to interact with, and the activities the student engages in all provide hints about what the student finds rewarding. For example, one student may have a friend that he enjoys spending time with, suggesting that the student would view 'free time with a friend of your choice' as a motivating reward. Another student might frequently beg the teacher to be allowed to care for the class mascot, a pet rabbit—presenting the possible reward idea of 'five minutes petting the rabbit'.

- *Ask people who know the student well.* Adults such as parents or past teachers who have interacted with the student regularly for months or years may be able to supply a list of ideas about rewards that will really motivate him or her.

- *Administer a reinforcer survey.* Reinforcer surveys contain a list of possible rewards acceptable for use in a classroom. The teacher meets with the student to review each reinforcer item on the survey, and the student rates whether he or she finds the item to be a motivating reward. The teacher can then create a menu of possible rewards for the student using those reinforcers that the student rated as most motivating. (HINT: Teachers can conveniently create their own customized reinforcer surveys online at this web address: *http://www.interventioncentral.org/teacher-resources/student-rewards-finder.*)

6. Conduct Periodic Accuracy Checks.
Periodically, the teacher should check the student's self-monitoring data and procedures--particularly at the start of the monitoring--to ensure that the student is recording accurately (Webber et al., 1993). Random spot-checks tend to result in higher-quality student self-recording data.

7. Fade the Self-Monitoring Plan.
As the student attains his or her behavioral goals, self-monitoring procedures should be faded--that is, gradually simplified or discontinued (Loftin, Gibb, & Skiba, 2005; Rafferty, 2010). The goals in fading are (1) to streamline self-monitoring so that it becomes sustainable over the long term, while (2) maintaining the student's behavioral gains. Specific methods used in fading will vary, depending on the elements that make up the self-monitoring plan. Fading strategies might include condensing the monitoring format (e.g., distilling a 6-item checklist for monitoring classwork-readiness into a single question: "Am I ready to work?"), changing the monitoring cue (e.g., moving from use of an external beep-tape to student-delivered cues); and monitoring less frequently (e.g., having the student shift down from a daily monitoring schedule to monitoring twice per week on randomly selected days).

References

Chafouleas, S., Riley-Tillman, C., & Sugai, G. (2007). *School-based behavioral assessment: Informing intervention and instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Dunlap, G., Clarke, S., Jackson, M., Ramos, E., & Brinson, S. (1995). Self-monitoring of classroom behaviors with students exhibiting emotional and behavioral challenges. *School Psychology Quarterly, 10,* 165-177.

Student Self-Monitoring Checklists

Here are sample items for a student's classroom self-monitoring checklist.

Checklist Item
AT THE START OF CLASS:
❑ I have a sharpened pencil.
❑ I have a pen.
❑ I have paper for taking notes.
❑ I have my homework ready to turn in.
❑ I have put my cell phone away in my backpack.
❑ I have closed up my backpack and placed it on the floor.
❑ I have cleared my desk of unneeded materials.
❑ I am sitting quietly.
❑ I am working on the assigned start-of-class activity.
WHEN THE TEACHER IS TALKING:
❑ I am looking at the teacher.
❑ I am not talking to other students.
❑ I am sitting up straight.
❑ I raise my hand and wait to be called on to comment or ask a question.
❑ I ask questions if I don't understand what is being taught.
❑ To avoid distracting myself or others, I do not play with objects at my desk.
WHEN TOLD TO TAKE NOTES:
❑ I am sitting up straight.
❑ I am looking at the board or at the teacher.
❑ I am listening to the teacher's presentation.
❑ I am writing down my notes.
❑ I am not talking to other students.
❑ To avoid distracting myself or others, I do not play with objects at my desk.
WHEN WORKING WITH OTHER STUDENTS:
❑ I am talking only with my work partners.
❑ I participate in discussion with my partners.
❑ I do my share of the work when in pairs or groups.
❑ I do my share of the work when in pairs or groups.

WHEN LEAVING THE ROOM DURING CLASS:
❑   I have informed my teacher in advance of my reason for leaving class.
❑   I put away all work materials.
❑   I do not talk to other students.
❑   I leave my seat and exit the room quietly and without drawing attention to myself.
AT THE END OF CLASS:
❑   I am not talking to other students.
❑   I check that I have written down the homework assignment correctly and completely.
❑   I put all work materials needed for homework into my backpack.
❑   I clear my desk or other workspace.
❑   I put all classroom materials back in their proper place.
❑   I wait to be dismissed by the teacher before leaving the classroom.

DAILY TARGET BEHAVIOR % (# of Teacher YES / # of Teacher ratings): _____

Circle Daily Target Behavior Level

Honor Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
(100%)	(85%-99%)	(70%-84%)	(< 70%)

DAILY AGREEMENT % (# of Agreement YES / # of Agreement ratings): _____

Circle Daily Agreement Level

Honor Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
(100%)	(85%-99%)	(70%-84%)	(< 70%)

****

TARGET BEHAVIOR PRIVILEGE CHART

Honor Level	100%	30 minutes of free time
Level 1	85%-99%	20 minutes of free time
Level 2	70%-84%	10 minutes of free time
Level 3	Below 70%	No free time

AGREEMENT *BONUS* PRIVILEGE CHART

Honor Level	100%	*Bonus* 30 minutes of free time
Level 1	85%-99%	*Bonus* 20 minutes of free time
Level 2	70%-84%	*Bonus* 10 minutes of free time
Level 3	Below 70%	No free time

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Notes/Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student Self-Monitoring: Behavior Checklist

Behavior checklists are simple way to 'check off' whether or not you carry out selected behaviors.

How to Use This Behavior Checklist. This behavior checklist can be used before starting an activity to ensure that you are prepared (e.g., before beginning independent work) or after the activity (e.g., at the completion of independent work) to track whether you displayed target behaviors. This behavior checklist form allows you to list up to 6 different behaviors. NOTE: Checklists are an excellent tool at the end of an assignment for you to use to check your work.

How to Set Up the Behavior Checklist: Follow these steps to prepare the checklist:

- *List Behaviors to Be Tracked.* In the left column of the table below, write down up to 6 behaviors to make up your checklist. Good checklist items are those that can be easily verified as 'done' or 'not done' (e.g., arrived to class on time; brought all work materials to class; avoided chatting with classmates during independent work time).
- *Choose a Schedule for Completing the Behavior Checklist.* Decide when you will fill out this checklist (e.g., before or after independent work; at the start or end of the school day; before or after math class).

I plan to complete this behavior checklist on the following schedule:

_____

Behaviors: I engaged in these behaviors...	1 Date __/__/__	2 Date __/__/__	3 Date __/__/__	4 Date __/__/__	5 Date __/__/__
•	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
•	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
•	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
•	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
•	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Self-Monitoring

Dunlap, L.K., Dunlap, G., Koegel, L.K., Koegel, R.L. (1991). Using self-monitoring to increase independence. Teaching Exceptional Children, 23(3), 17-22.

Appropriate Grade Level: Can be used with a wide range of students

Procedures/Steps:

1. Operationally define the target behavior. A target behavior is defined in specific terms. The behavior could be any observable response that can clearly be understood by the student.
2. Identify the functional reinforcers. These could be praise, free time, or tangible items, the reinforcer should be established with the child in mind.
3. Design a self-monitoring method/device. This should provide opportunity for the student to record occurrences of the target behavior. Data recording devices should be unobtrusive and take into account the child's level of functioning. Wrist counters, tape recorders, or stop watches are some examples of self-monitoring devices. (A sample can be seen on the next page.)
4. Teach the child to use the self-monitoring device. Some students must first be taught to recognize the target behavior. The child should receive reinforcement for both the desired behavior and successful self-monitoring.
5. Fade use of self-monitoring device. Fading should be gradual and can be accomplished through thinning the reinforcement schedule or fading the cues provided by the self-monitoring device.

Comments and/or tips:

- It may be helpful to have the student begin the self-monitoring process within a selected time each day, such as out on the playground or in math.
- After the child has mastered the use of their self-monitoring technique within that selected time; the program can be implemented in other settings.

The following chart could be used in self-monitoring behavior management program. If the child understands the behavior such as when he/she is off task, the child could be given this chart to evaluate themselves. A small interval of time to begin this process with would be highly recommended. For example the child would be given a stopwatch, set the timer for 5 minutes. At the end of every five minutes the child will hear a small beep, the child will then put a check in the appropriate column. A standard can be set such as 4 out of 8 in the 11yes" column after a baseline is established. The goal should be based upon the data collected over a week's period and one that is attainable for the child. If the child receives the set amount of "on task" checks, then the child will also receive the chosen reinforcer.

Was I Working?							
Time	5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes
Yes								
No								

http://homepages.wmich.edu/~whitten/champaign_project/behavior.html