How To: Manage Classroom Behavior Through Group Self-Monitoring

Teachers are eager to find techniques for classwide behavior management that are feasible to implement, build lasting behavioral skills, and promote student responsibility. One positive behavioral intervention that can attain all of these goals is a classwide program for behavioral self-monitoring (Hoff & Ervin, 2012). Students are trained to rate their own behaviors as well as those of the entire class--and receive incentives for both accurate ratings and positive behaviors.

The group self-monitoring program involves 3 phases: (1) preparation, (2) an initial teacher-led demonstration that links behavioral ratings to class incentives, and (3) a final phase in which students monitor their own behaviors (Hoff & Ervin, 2012). The remainder of this document describes how to implement classwide self-monitoring.

Phase 1: Preparation: Teacher Selects Classroom Rules, Monitoring Period, and Initial Rewards. To prepare for the self-monitoring program, the teacher:

1. *defines target classroom behaviors.* The instructor defines up to 3 classroom behavioral rules that will be the focus of the student self-monitoring program. When possible, the teacher expresses those rules in positive terms (that is, as behavioral targets for students to emulate). Examples of teacher-selected behavior targets are: *Raise your hand to share ideas; sit appropriately in your seat; talk quietly*, and *keep hands to self.*

2. *decides when to schedule the intervention.* The teacher next decides when during the school day to schedule the self-monitoring program (e.g., during a math, reading, or writing lesson). A period in the range of 45 minutes is a suitable amount of time to conduct this intervention each day.

3. *becomes familiar with the rating scale.* The teacher becomes familiar with the 5-point rating scale to be used in this intervention. The scale ranges from 1 ('Totally Unacceptable') to 5 ('Excellent') and is used to rate classwide compliance with the target behaviors. See Table 1, *Behavior-Rating Criteria for Student Self-Monitoring*, for definitions of each of the levels of the rating scale.

Points Awarded	Behavioral Definition
Table 1: Behavior-Rating Criteria for Student Self-Monitoring Program (Adapted from Hoff & Ervin, 2012; Rhode et al., 1983)	
5	**Excellent.** The student/class followed all of the rules with no violations.
4	**Very Good.** The student/class followed most of the rules throughout the period, with only 1-2 minor rule violations that required little or no teacher intervention.
3	**Average.** The student/class showed appropriate behavior during at least 80% of the period, with several minor rule violations that required only minimal teacher intervention (e.g., reminder, redirection).
2	**Below Average.** The student/class broke 1 or more rules that resulted in interruption of learning. The student's problem behavior(s) required direct teacher intervention (e.g., warning, conference).
1	**Totally Unacceptable.** The student/class broke 2 or more rules that resulted in interruption of learning. The student's problem behavior(s) required direct teacher intervention (e.g., warning, class conference, loss of privileges).

4. *selects suitable class rewards.* The teacher selects several rewards that can be given to the whole class each day if they attain an acceptable teacher rating of 4 ('Very Good') or 5 ('Excellent') on all items on the classwide behavior scale. Examples of classwide rewards are free time and popcorn or another inexpensive, healthy snack.

Phase 2: Roll-Out: Behavior Rules and Monitoring are Introduced to the Class. The instructor next introduces the self-monitoring program to the class. In preparation, students re given copies of the *Classroom Behavior/Student Self-Rating Form* (which appears later in this document). The teacher then:

1. *introduces the list of classroom rules.* The teacher presents the 2-3 classroom rules that are the focus of the program. When introducing each rule (e.g., *raise your hand to share ideas)*, the teacher clearly defines that rule and gives examples of students correctly following the rule. The teacher then has students copy the class behavior rules onto their copies of the *Classroom Behavior/Student Self-Rating Form.*

2. *describes the 5-point rating system.* The teacher presents the 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 ('Totally Unacceptable') to 5 ('Excellent') that will be used to rate classwide compliance with the target behaviors. The instructor also shares behavior-rating criteria and offers illustrative behavioral examples for each point on the scale.

3. *reviews key elements of the teacher-rating process.* The teacher tells students that she or he will monitor the behavior of the entire class during a specific period each day over the next 3-5 days. Students are also informed that, after every monitoring period, the teacher will assign the class a rating between 1 and 5 for each of the target behaviors, depending on student behaviors observed. The teacher shares a list of available rewards and tells students that, on any day when the class scores at least a 4 on all three of the behavioral targets, the whole group will earn a reward to be chosen from the list.

4. *begins the teacher-led rating program.* The teacher observes classwide behaviors daily during the period selected for the program. At the end of the period, the instructor rates the class on each behavioral rule and shares the ratings with the group-- giving specifics about why that rating was assigned. If the class earns a reward (that is, attains ratings of at least 4 on all behaviors), the teacher ensures that the reward is given at the end of the period or before the close of the school day. The teacher also keeps a cumulative graph, on which the combined behavior-points earned by the class are plotted each day.

Phase 3: Student Self-Monitoring Begins. After 3-5 days in which the teacher rates classwide behaviors, provides the group with feedback about the teacher ratings, and dispenses any earned rewards, the classroom is ready to transition to student self-monitoring. During this phase, the teacher:

1. *prompts students to self-monitor behaviors.* During the self-monitoring phase, students receive copies each day of the *Classroom Behavior/Student Self-Rating Form.* At the end of each daily observation period, students are instructed to use the form to first rate their *own* behavior and then to rate the behavior of the entire class. While students are informed that ratings of their own behavior are important as personal feedback, they also are told that *only their classwide ratings* will count toward the group reward.

2. *determines the daily classwide behavior rating.* During each rating period, the instructor completes her or his own rating of classwide behaviors along with the students. Each day, the teacher randomly selects one of the 3 target behaviors and surveys the group, through a show of hands, to find out the numeric rating that the majority of the class assigned to that behavior. This majority rating represents the classwide rating ('student rating').

3. *calculates daily points earned by the class.* The teacher compares the classwide student rating to her or his own rating for the randomly selected behavioral rule. If student and teacher ratings match, the class earns the number of points represented by the rating itself (e.g.,3 points; 4 points) plus 1 bonus point. If student and teacher ratings diverge by 1 point, the class earns the number of points in the student ratings. If student and teacher ratings diverge by 2 or more points, the class earns no points that day.

4. *plots cumulative points and dispenses rewards.* The teacher plots any class points earned each day onto a cumulative graph or chart. When the class reaches a cumulative point-level goal selected by the teacher, those points are redeemed for a prize selected by the class (e.g., special snack; showing of a movie; etc.).

References

Hoff, K. E., & Ervin, R. A. (2012). Extending self-management strategies: The use of a classwide approach. *Psychology in the Schools, 50*(2), 151-164.

Rhode, G., Morgan, D. P., & Young, K. R. (1983). Generalization and maintenance of treatment gains of behaviorally handicapped students from resource rooms to regular classrooms using self-evaluation procedures. J*ournal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 16*, 171-188.

Classroom Behavior/Student Self-Rating Form

Student: _____ Classroom/Grade: _____ Date: _____

Directions: When directed by your teacher, rate your own behavior and the behavior of the entire class for the 3 classroom rules listed below. Then share your ratings with the teacher.

Behavior Rule 1: _____

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How well did *I* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent

How well did *the class* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent

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Behavior Rule 2: _____

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How well did *I* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent

How well did *the class* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent

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Behavior Rule 3: _____

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How well did *I* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent

How well did *the class* follow this rule?

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent