# How To: Improve Classroom Behaviors Using Self-Monitoring Checklists

Student self-monitoring can be an effective means to improve general classroom conduct--especially if that intervention:

- targets positive, replacement behaviors (i.e., behaviors intended to replace problem behaviors);

- provides a reminder, or prompt, at the precise moment when the student needs to display the positive target behaviors;

- requires that the student compare and evaluate his or her current behaviors against the positive target behaviors; and

- is strengthened by teacher praise when the student shows progress with the positive target behaviors.

The self-monitoring intervention presented here promotes student participation and responsibility--and is convenient for classroom use (adapted from Whitford, Liaupsin, C. J., Umbreit, & Ferro, 2013).

Two versions of the self-monitoring program appear below. In preparation for using either version, teacher and student will meet to develop a checklist of appropriate, positive behaviors ('replacement behaviors') that the student will use as the self-monitoring tool. A sample set of self-monitoring checklists appears later in this document. A free, online application for creating student self-monitoring checklists can also be accessed at:

http://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/self-check-behavior-checklist-maker

**Version 1: The student does a pre-session self-prompt and post-session self-evaluation.** Before the self-monitoring session, the student uses the behavior checklist to briefly preview his or her positive behavior targets. After the session, the student reviews the checklist and records which of the positive behavior targets he or she actually displayed. The teacher then meets briefly with the student to (1) review the completed checklist, (2) correct the student if any of the ratings do not match the teacher's perception of observed behavior, and (3) provide praise if the student achieved most or all of the behavior targets or encouragement if the student failed to attain the behavior targets.

**Version 2: The student does a pre-session self-prompt and monitors behaviors at multiple points during the session.** In preparation for this intervention, the teacher chooses a timing option for the student to use during the self-monitoring phase (e.g., mechanical kitchen timer, smart phone timer application set on vibrate). NOTE: If the student has access to a device that can play MP3 (electronic audio) files, teachers can download a 'beep-tape' with tones at 5-minute intervals that can serve as an ideal signal for student self-monitoring. Those free beep-tapes and instructions for use can be accessed at:

http://www.interventioncentral.org/free-audio-monitoring-tapes

The teacher and student also determine a fixed-interval frequency (e.g., every 2 minutes; every 5 minutes) when the student will pause to evaluate and record his or her behavior.

Before the self-monitoring session, the student uses the behavior checklist to briefly preview his or her positive behavior targets. During the self-monitoring session, the student pauses at the end of each interval (e.g., whenever the timer sounds or the beep-tape signals) to review the checklist and record which of the positive behavior targets he or she actually displayed during the most recent interval. The student then resets the timer if necessary and continues the activity.

At the end of the session, the teacher meets briefly with the student to review the self-monitoring results. The instructor reviews the interval ratings, (1) corrects the student if any of the ratings do not match the teacher's perception of observed behavior, and (2) provides praise if the student hit most or all of the behavior targets or encouragement if the student failed to attain the behavior targets.

### Reference

Whitford, D. K., Liaupsin, C. J., Umbreit, J., & Ferro, J. B. (2013). Implementation of a single comprehensive function-based intervention across multiple classrooms for a high school student. Education and Treatment of Children, 36, 147-167.

# 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. |

| |
|---|
| ❑ I talk only about the topic(s) assigned by the teacher. |
| ❑ I keep my voice level down so that I don't distract other students. |
| ❑ I seek help from my partners if I don't understand something. |
| ❑ I ask the teacher for help if my partners cannot answer my question. |
| **WHEN WORKING ON AN INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENT:** |
| ❑ I am sitting up straight. |
| ❑ I have cleared my desk of unneeded materials. |
| ❑ I am working on the assignment. |
| ❑ I am not talking to other students. |
| ❑ To avoid distracting myself or others, I do not play with objects at my desk. |
| ❑ I ask my neighbor if I have a question about the assignment. |
| ❑ I ask the teacher if I still have a question about the assignment. |
| ❑ I use any extra time when I have finished the assignment to check my work. |
| **WHEN TAKING A QUIZ OR TEST:** |
| ❑ I look over the test at the start to decide how much time to spend on each section. |
| ❑ I am giving my full attention to working on the test. |
| ❑ I am not talking to other students. |
| ❑ I use any extra time when I have finished the test to check my answers. |
| **WHILE TRAVELING THROUGH HALLWAYS:** |
| ❑ When in a group, I walk in single-file. |
| ❑ When in a group, I look straight ahead. |
| ❑ When in a group, I keep my hands to myself. |
| ❑ When in a group, I am not talking to other students. |
| ❑ When alone, I go straight to my destination. |
| ❑ When alone, I do not stop to chat with others that I meet. |
| **WHEN ENTERING THE ROOM DURING CLASS:** |
| ❑ I enter quietly and walk directly to my seat without drawing attention to myself. |
| ❑ I do not talk to other students. |
| ❑ I take out my work materials. |
| ❑ I immediately join the learning activity. |
| ❑ I seek help from my neighbor if I don't understand what activity I am supposed to be doing. |
| ❑ I seek help from the teacher if I still don't understand what activity I am supposed to be doing. |

| |
|---|
| **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. |