❑ **Behavioral Frequency Count/Behavioral Rate**. In a behavioral frequency count, an observer (e.g., the teacher) watches a student's behavior and keeps a cumulative tally of the number of times that the behavior is observed during a given period. Behaviors that are best measured using frequency counts have clearly observable beginning and end points—and are of relatively short duration.

Examples include:

- student call-outs

- requests for teacher help during independent seatwork.

- raising one's hand to make a contribution to large-group discussion.

Teachers can collect data on the frequency of observed student behaviors during a class period in several ways: (1) by keeping a cumulative mental tally of the behaviors; (2) by recording behaviors on paper (e.g., as tally marks) as they occur; or (3) using a golf counter or other simple mechanical device to record observed behaviors.

When multiple observations are made of student behaviors, those observations often last for differing periods of time. One method to standardize the results of observations conducted over varying timespans is to convert the results of each observation to a behavioral *rate* (behaviors divided by the length of the observation). To compute a behavioral rate, the observer (1) sums the total number of behaviors observed and (2) divides the total number of behaviors observed by total minutes in the observation period. The resulting figure represents a standardized 'behaviors observed per minute' and can be compared directly to student behavior rates observed at other times. For example, an observer may have noted that a student engaged in 5 call-outs during a 10-minute observation period. The observer then divides the 5 callouts by the 10 minute observation timespan to compute a standardized behavior rate of *0.5 callouts per minute*.

TIP: One use of the behavioral frequency count that teachers may find helpful is to tally the number of times that they need to approach and redirect an off-task, distracting, or behaviorally acting out student during an observation period (e.g., during math class). Whenever the student's identified problem behavior(s) escalate to the point at which the instructor can no longer ignore them, the teacher intervenes to redirect the student or provide other appropriate consequences. At the same time, the teacher counts this particular redirect episode toward the cumulative tally of redirects directed at the target student during the class period. While a tally of teacher redirects is not a suitable means to track all student behaviors, this approach does offer advantages. First, it recognizes that teachers typically have an informal but clear internal threshold of tolerance of student behaviors. Whenever the instructor approaches a student to redirect, the teacher does so because the student's behavior has moved above that 'tolerance threshold' and must be directly addressed. Second, teacher redirects are usually easier to measure; than other behavior targets--because the teacher has had to interrupt instruction –even briefly--to redirect the student and is thus more likely to note the incident and add it to a running tally.

Use the attached *Behavioral Frequency Count/Behavioral Rate Worksheet* to conduct behavioral frequency counts of a student across as many as 7 sessions.

Example: Ms. Stimson, a fourth-grade teacher, was concerned at the frequency that a student, Alice, frequently requested teacher assistance unnecessarily during independent seatwork. To address this concern, the teacher designed an intervention in which the student would first try several steps on her own to resolve issues or answer her questions before seeking help from the instructor. Prior to starting the intervention, the teacher kept a behavioral frequency count across three days of the number of times that the student approached her desk for help during a daily 20-minute independent seatwork period (**baseline**). Ms. Stimson discovered that, on average, the student sought requested help times per period (equivalent to 0.4 requests for help per minute). Ms. Stimson set as an **intervention goal** that, after 4 weeks of using her self-help strategies, the student's average rate of requesting help would drop to 1 time per independent seatwork period (equivalent to 0.05 requests for help per minute).

Behavioral Frequency Count/Behavioral Rate Worksheet

Student: _____ School Yr: _____ Classroom/Course: _____

Behavior Definition: Define in clear, measureable, observable terms the behavior that will be measured using the behavioral frequency count (e.g., student call-outs during instructional activities):

_____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

1 → [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

2 → [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

3 → [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

4 [_____] ➤ [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

5 [_____] ➤ [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

6 [_____] ➤ [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

Date: ____/___/____   Start Time: ____:____   End Time: ____:____   Setting/Activity: _____

Behavior Frequency Count: During the observation, place a tally mark ('|') in the box below whenever the student displays the target behavior:

	Total Observed Behaviors	Minutes of Observation Time	Behavior Rate Per Minute

7 [_____] ➤ [ ] Divided by [ ] Equals [ ]

Comments: _____

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