Self-Monitoring
Equipping Students to Manage Their Own Behavior in the Classroom

WHAT IS SELF-MONITORING?

Self-monitoring is a low-intensity, secondary prevention strategy designed to improve students' self-management skills and to support their academic, behavioral, and social development. It involves teaching students how to independently observe and record whether they are engaging in appropriate behavior at a particular time. This flexible strategy can be used to increase the occurrence of desired behaviors or to decrease inappropriate behaviors.

Self-monitoring can be used in virtually any instructional setting (e.g., general education classrooms, cafeterias, vocational programs) to address a variety of student needs (e.g., improving motivation or task fluency) and to promote greater independence. For example, self-monitoring strategies can be used to help students maintain attention, complete an assignment, remain on task, solve problems, or track their own progress toward a goal. This strategy also can be used by a particular student across multiple settings to help him or her develop self-determination skills and greater autonomy.

WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM SELF-MONITORING?

Although many students will be successful academically, behaviorally, and socially when given the usual instruction and supports that schools provide to all students, approximately 10-15% of students may benefit from secondary prevention efforts. A smaller proportion of students may require even more individualized and intensive tertiary supports. Self-monitoring can be especially beneficial for those students needing either secondary or tertiary supports.

Because self-monitoring is a flexible strategy, it can be tailored to address the academic, behavioral, and/or social deficits of students at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Self-monitoring plans can be simple to create and usually require no additional financial cost. Students must be able to recognize the occurrence of and need for the desired behavior or skill for the intervention to work most effectively. Therefore, it may be necessary to first teach students to recognize and accurately perform the target behavior.

IS SELF-MONITORING EFFECTIVE?

When implemented well, self-monitoring strategies can positively affect behavior, productivity, and accuracy, which may lead to improved academic performance (see selected research reviews). This intervention strategy may also result in students gaining the skills and confidence to navigate learning responsibilities more independently and to transfer responsibility for this learning from the teacher to the student.

Studies have found self-monitoring has high social validity among students across school levels, with many students reporting they enjoy using this strategy. Self-monitoring is among the most commonly used self-management strategies. Furthermore, students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have shown improvements in specific, targeted academic skills when using this approach. Evidence suggests these outcomes may generalize outside of the classroom and be maintained over time.

1. Establish prerequisite conditions	The student must be able to perform the target behavior that will be the focus of self-monitoring efforts.
2. Identify & define behaviors	The target behavior should be clearly defined. Provide the student with examples and non-examples of the target behaviors (e.g., modeling both talking out of turn and raising his/her hand and waiting to be called on) to ensure the teacher and student agree on when the behavior should be scored as occurring or not occurring.
3. Design procedures & monitoring form	Create a self-monitoring form and data collection sheet (see Figures 1 and 2). This should be age-appropriate, simple, and divided into specific time windows and/or settings. The target behavior and goal should be listed on the form.
4. Teach procedures to student	Use appropriate instructional strategies (e.g., discussion, modeling, coaching, and role play) to teach the student how to use the data-collection sheet. As the student becomes more independent with self-monitoring, generally fade support. Let the student know that this strategy can help them achieve success and should not be viewed as "punishment."
5. Monitor progress	The student can also be taught how to graph data to provide a visual depiction of his or her progress. The teacher can also fill out the same self-monitoring form as the student to track and reward the student's self-recording accuracy.
6. Conduct maintenance & follow-up	Self-monitoring strategies should generally be faded over time as the student shows improvements in behavior. While the ultimate goal is for the student to demonstrate the desired behaviors (or reduce undesired behaviors) across all settings, intermittent behavior-specific praise and reinforcement should be used regularly.

Adapted from Lane, Menzies, Bruhn, & Crnobori (2011)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students must be able to recognize and perform the target behavior they will be self-monitoring. If the student does not have the required skills to perform the behavior, instruction should first be provided.

The target behavior must be clearly defined, readily observable, and feasible for the student to document. The recording procedures should be simple enough to ensure accurate information will be collected.

The target behavior must occur frequently enough for the student to adequately collect data and be reinforced for meeting individual goals. Short-term behavior change can support the mastery of long-term behavioral or academic objectives.

The time commitment related to this strategy is generally minimal, but may vary based on the student's and teacher's prior experience using self-management strategies.

SUMMARY

Self-monitoring can equip students to assume greater responsibility and become more active participants in their own learning. Additionally, this strategy may positively impact academic performance, behavior skills, and social skills. When considering this strategy, it is important to remember to:

- Come to consensus with the student on the definition of the target behavior
- Develop a simple self-monitoring form
- Set a goal for (and with) the student, and
- Provide consistent reinforcement for meeting the goal or correctly monitoring the behavior.

To learn more about implementing self-monitoring strategies in your classroom, see the resources listed below and on the next page.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Evidence-Based Practice: Self-Management. *National Professional Development Center*

FIGURE 1: EXAMPLE SELF-MONITORING FORM: FREQUENT MONITORING

Name: Jenna L.		Date: December 14
Goal: I will be on task (i.e., eyes focused on the teacher or on my work) at least 75% of the 25-minute reading block.		
At this exact moment, am I on task?	Yes ☺	No ☹
5 minutes	✗	
10 minutes		✗
15 minutes		✗
20 minutes	✗	
25 minutes	✗	

*Student would use this form to assess if he/she is on task every 5 minutes during a reading block.

FIGURE 2: EXAMPLE SELF-MONITORING FORM: DAILY MONITORING

Name: Joaquin R.		Date: December 14
Goal: I will complete 100% of in-class assignments each day, with at least 85% accuracy.		
Assignments	Did I complete the assignment?	What grade did I receive?
1. Reading	Yes	74%
2. Math	Yes	93%
3. Vocabulary	No	0%
4. Science	No	0%
Percent of Completed Assignments	50%	
Accuracy of Assignments Completed	83.5%	

*Student would use this form to assess his/her completion and accuracy of daily assignments.

on Autism Spectrum Disorders. http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/self-management.

SOS: Helping Students Become Independent Learners. *The IRIS Center.* http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sr/chalcycle.htm

Defining Behavior. *The IRIS Center.* http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/case_studies/ICS-015.pdf.

SELECTED RESEARCH REVIEWS

Joseph, L. M., & Eveleigh, E. L. (2011). A review of the effects of self-monitoring on reading performance of students with disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 45*, 43-53.

Mooney, P., Ryan, J. B., Uhing, B. M., Reid, R., & Epstein, M. H. (2005). A review of self-management interventions targeting academic outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *The Journal of Behavioral Education, 14*, 203-221.

Sheffield, K., & Waller, R. J. (2010). A review of single-case studies utilizing self-monitoring interventions to reduce problem classroom behaviors. *Beyond Behavior, 19*, 7-13.

Shimabukuro, S. M., Prater, M. A., Jenkins, A., & Edelen-Smith, P. (1999). The effects of self-monitoring of academic performance on students with learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD. *Education & Treatment of Children, 22*, 397-414.
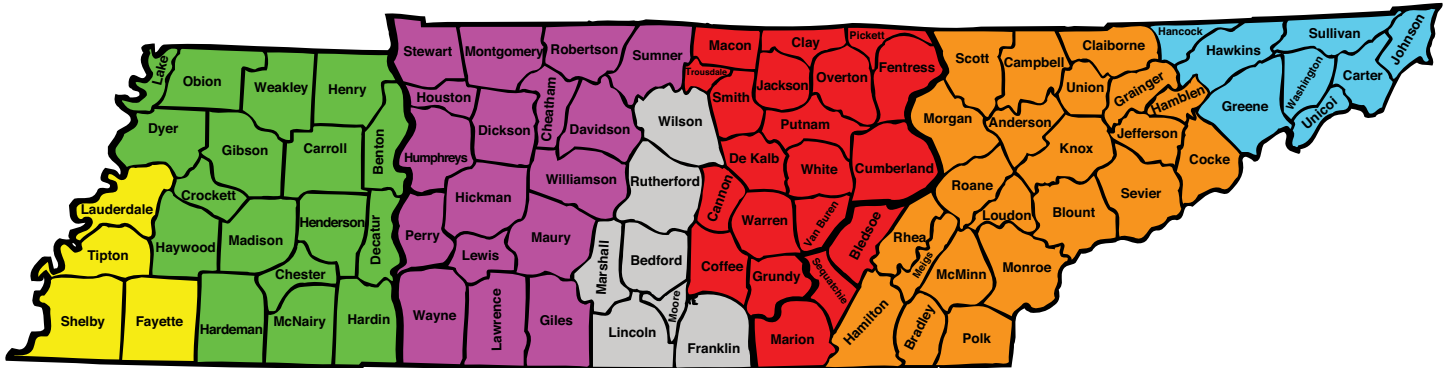
FOR FURTHER READING

Lane, K. L., Menzies, H., Bruhn, A., & Crnobori, M. (2011). *Managing challenging behaviors in schools: Research-based strategies that work.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Lee, S., Palmer, S. B., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2009). Goal setting and self-monitoring for students with disabilities: Practical tips and ideas for teachers. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 44*, 139-145.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Field, S. (2009). *Self-determination: Instructional and assessment strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

CI3T TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS BY REGION: 2012-2015

The Tennessee Department of Education has provided funding to seven projects to provide training and technical assistance to schools as they address the academic, social, and behavioral needs of students within comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered (CI3T) models of prevention. To locate the project assigned to your region, see below.

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS (RISE):
Dr. William Hunter
Email: wchunter@memphis.edu
Phone: 901.678.4932

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS, LAMBUTH CAMPUS:
Dr. Renee Murley
Email: reneelee@memphis.edu
Phone: 901.678.5087

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY:
Abbie Jenkins
Email: abbie.jenkins@vanderbilt.edu
Phone: 615.343.0706

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY:
Dr. Zaf Khan
Email: zkhan@mtsu.edu
Phone: 916.904.8429

TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY:
Dr. Helen Dainty
Email: hdainty@tntech.edu
Phone: 931.372.3116

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE:
Dr. Tara Moore
Email: Tara.moore@utk.edu
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EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY:
Dr. Leia Blevins
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