



Subject/Course: Self-monitoring of attention for any course

**Author Notes:** This plan provides instruction and scripts for implementing self-monitoring of attention in any course. It accompanies the Teaching Tutorial, *Self-monitoring of Attention*, by Dan Hallahan and Kim Hudson. You can find the entire Tutorial in the Teaching Tutorial section of [TeachingLD.org](http://TeachingLD.org).

DLD member teachers created this lesson plan, using evidence-based practices in their own classrooms. They have shared them with [TeachingLD.org](http://TeachingLD.org) so that other teachers may benefit from their experience. If you try the plan out in your classroom, please send us an email with your reflections.

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### Step 1: Introducing Self-monitoring to the Student (15-20 minutes, first day only)

1. Tell the student that you want him or her to be more attentive. Explain that one way to increase attention is to have a student keep track of when he or she is paying attention and when he or she is not.
2. Define and provide examples for the student of paying attention.
3. Present the student with the self-monitoring card and tape recorder. Explain that the tape to be played has tones on it. Every time the student hears a tone, he or she is to ask him- or herself the question, “Was I paying attention when I heard the tone?” and mark the self-monitoring card appropriately.
4. Describe and model the use of the self-monitoring card and ask the student to give examples of paying attention and to repeat the self-monitoring instructions.
5. Have the student demonstrate the self-monitoring procedure when provided with trial tones.

### Script for Teacher Introduction of Self-Monitoring

“Johnny, you know how paying attention to your work has been a problem for you. You’ve heard teachers tell you, ‘Pay attention,’ ‘Get to work,’ ‘What are you supposed to be doing?’ and things like that. Well, today we’re going to start something that will help you help yourself pay attention better. First we need to make sure that you know what paying attention means. This is what I mean by paying attention.” (Teacher models immediate and sustained attention to task.) “And this is what I mean by not paying attention,” (Teacher models inattentive behaviors such as glancing around and playing with objects.) “Now you tell me if I was paying attention.” (Teacher models attentive and inattentive behaviors and requires the student to categorize them.)

“Okay, now let me show you what we’re going to do. While you’re working, this tape recorder will be turned on. Every once in a while, you’ll hear a little sound like this.” (Teacher plays tone on tape.) “And when you hear that sound quietly ask yourself, ‘Was I paying attention?’ If you answer ‘yes,’ put a check in this box. If you answer ‘no,’ put a check in this box. Then go right back to work. When you hear the sound again, ask the question, answer it, mark your answer, and go back to work. Now, let me show you how it works.” (Teacher models entire procedure.)

“Now, Johnny, I bet you can do this. You’ve shown me how to do it. Tell me what you’re going to do every time you hear a ton...Correct! Ask yourself, ‘Was I paying attention?’ Let’s try it. I’ll start the tape and you work on these papers.” (Teacher observes student’s implementation of the entire procedure, praises its correct use, and gradually withdraws her presence.)

#### *Important Points to Remember*

- It is crucial that the student understands what you mean by “paying attention.” When modeling off-task behavior, it is wise to tailor your choice of off-task behaviors so that they closely approximate the kinds of off-task behaviors the student typically displays,
- Teacher attitude is important to any new technique tried in the classroom. Treat

self-monitoring in a positive way and as a desirable activity for the student rather than as an added chore. Create a positive expectation by conveying the attitude that self-monitoring will really help the student.

## **Step 2: Reviewing Self-Monitoring with the Student (2-5 minutes for a few days after the initial introduction)**

1. Review the definitions of on- and off-task behaviors. Ask the student to quickly demonstrate what it looks like when he or she is on- and off-task.
2. Review the recording procedure. Ask the student what he or she is supposed to do when the tone sounds.
3. Provide praise and corrective feedback (if necessary).

### **Script for Teacher Review of Self-Monitoring**

“Johnny, you did a great job yesterday of using our new system to help you pay attention. We are going to use the system again today, but before we begin, I want to review a little bit. What does it mean to be paying attention?” (Teacher allows student to respond, provides feedback.) “Great job! Now can you show me what it looks like when you are paying attention?” (Student demonstrates on-task behavior.) “Johnny, you did a nice job of showing me what it looks like when you’re paying attention. Now, what does it mean to not be paying attention? Can you show me what it looks like when you’re not paying attention?” (Teacher allows student to respond and demonstrate off-task behavior.) “You’ve got it, Johnny.”

“Now let’s review what you do when you hear the tone. When the tone sounds, what are you supposed to do?” (Teacher waits for student response.) “Excellent. First you quietly ask yourself, ‘Was I paying attention?’ Then you mark ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on the sheet. And what do you do as soon as you mark ‘yes’ or ‘no’?” (Teacher allows student to respond.) “That’s right—you get right back to work. And what do you do the next time you hear the tone?” (Teacher waits for student response.) “Very good—you quietly—even silently, in your own head—ask yourself, ‘Was I paying attention?’ and then you mark ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on your sheet.”

### *Important Points to Remember*

- Make sure there is ample time for the self-monitoring session. However, do not run the independent self-monitoring session too long; about 30 minutes is probably right.
- You may have to provide feedback if the student does not appear to discriminate between on- and off-task behavior. For example, on the first day or two you may need to correct the student if he or she makes what you believe to be an incorrect judgment.
- Don’t worry if the student sometimes assesses inaccurately. Your aim is not to make the student a highly accurate recorder, but rather to make him or her think about when he or she is on- and off-task.
- Check the tape daily to make sure there is ample tape for the self-monitoring

session. You do not have to start the tape at its very beginning.

- Keep the sessions long enough that the student gets lots of practice managing his or her own behavior, but not so long that they become bothersome. 30-40 minutes is plenty. The idea is to have the student become accustomed to doing a good job of working independently.
- Incorporate self-monitoring into the student's regular classroom work so that the student doesn't feel as if he or she is missing out on a special activity. Use it when other students are also assigned to work independently.
- To aid generalization of the new on-task behavior, incorporate self-monitoring when the student is engaged in a variety of activities at different times of the day.

### **Step 3: Weaning Procedures**

#### **Phase 1: Remove tape OR card**

1. Once the student's level of on-task behavior has increased, it is desirable to wean him or her from reliance on the external aspects of the procedure (i.e., the tape and card).
2. You can either remove the tape or the recording card first.
3. Tell the student that he or she has been doing really good work (on whatever subject you're using self-monitoring with) lately, and that he or she doesn't need the (tape, card) anymore.
4. If removing the tape, instruct the student to ask him- or herself the question, "Was I paying attention?" whenever he or she thinks about it and to record yes or no on the card.
5. If removing the card, instruct the student to ask him- or herself the question, "Was I paying attention?" when he or she hears the tone and to decide 'yes' or 'no.'

#### **Script for Weaning of Self-Monitoring (Phase 1)**

Removing tape: "You've been doing really good work on (math, reading, etc.) lately, don't you think? You've been doing well that I don't think you need to use the tape-recorded tones anymore. Today, whenever you think about it, ask yourself the question, 'Was I paying attention?' and then mark your card. Do you have any questions?"

Removing card: "You've been doing really good work on (math, reading, etc.) lately, don't you think? You've been doing so well that I don't think you need to use the card anymore. Today, when you hear the tones on the tape, ask yourself the questions, 'Was I paying attention?' If the answer is 'yes,' say to yourself, 'Yes, good job.' If the answer is 'no,' say to yourself, 'No. I'd better start paying attention.' Do you have any questions?"

#### **Phase II: Remove tape AND card**

1. Once the student has been successfully weaned from the tape, or the card, you will want to wean him or her from the other component.
2. Tell the student that he or she has been doing really good work (on whatever subject you're using self-monitoring with) without the (tape, card), and that he or

she doesn't need the (tape, card) anymore.

### **Script for Weaning of Self-Monitoring (Phase 2)**

“You're doing really good work on (math, reading, etc.) without using the (tape, card), don't you think? You've been doing so well that I don't think you need the (tape, card) anymore. I think you can do a really good job without using the tape-recorded tones or the self-monitoring card. Today, whenever you think about it, ask yourself, 'Was I paying attention?' If the answer is 'yes,' say to yourself, 'Yes, good job.' If the answer is 'no,' say to yourself, 'No. I'd better start paying attention.' Show me how you would do that. (Provide feedback.) Great! Do you have any questions? OK, then, go to it.”

#### *Important Points to Remember*

- There are not any hard and fast rules about when to start the first phase of the weaning process and when to start the second phase. Once the student's attentional behavior and academic productivity have been at what you consider to be acceptable levels for five or six days, then you can begin the weaning process.
- During the first phase of the weaning process, you should again look for a period of five or six days of acceptable levels of attentional behavior and academic productivity before removing the second component.
- It's okay to re-implement one of the components after you have removed it, if you feel it is necessary. For example, if you find that the student has two good days but then two or three days of poor performance after removing the self-monitoring card, then you should re-introduce the self-monitoring card.

#### *Using Self-Monitoring of Attention in Group Settings*

When implementing self-monitoring in the general education classroom, you may find it necessary to adapt the implementation procedures somewhat. For example, Maag et al. (1993) successfully trained the target students on the self-monitoring procedures in the resource room and then implemented the procedures in the general education classroom. Teachers interested in using self-monitoring in this way can obtain additional guidance by reading the article by Maag and colleagues.

#### *Accuracy*

Though you are always striving for accuracy in recording, research has indicated that even if the student overestimates his or her attention, increases in on-task behavior are still observed (Hallahan et al., 1982).