



Helping teachers maintain classroom management practices using a self-monitoring checklist



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Maintaining implementation accuracy is critical in education.
- Teachers were trained in classroom management practices and provided performance feedback to achieve implementation accuracy.
- Performance feedback was then discontinued and teachers self-monitored implementation accuracy using a checklist.
- Results suggest a self-monitoring checklist can be a useful tool to help teachers maintain implementation accuracy.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the use of a self-monitoring checklist helped teachers maintain use of evidence-based classroom management practices. Teachers used the self-monitoring checklist after high initial levels of implementation accuracy and consistency of the Good Behavior Game classroom management practices were achieved with didactic training and performance feedback. A multiple baseline single subject design across teachers was used to assess the research questions. Results indicate that teacher's use of the self-monitoring checklist helped them maintain classroom management practices. The results are discussed and future research is recommended.

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1. Helping teachers maintain classroom management practices using a self-monitoring checklist

It is well documented that improving student outcomes requires accurate and consistent implementation by teachers of effective evidence-based classroom practices. Evidence-based classroom practices will only be as effective as their accurate and consistent implementation by classroom teachers (The Evidence-Based Intervention Work Group, 2005). Unfortunately, accurate and consistent implementation of classroom practices typically does not always occur (Hagermoser Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009; Hagermoser Sanetti, Luiselli, & Handler, 2007; Noell, Witt,

Gilbertson, Ranier, & Freeman, 1997; Witt, Noell, LaFleur, & Mortenson, 1997). Lower accuracy and consistency of implementation can happen because the teacher only uses portions of the classroom practice, the accuracy of the implementation by the teacher is low, or the teacher abandons the classroom practice over time. Research is needed to identify approaches to help teachers implement evidence-based practices accurately and consistently (Hairrell et al., 2011; Smith, Daunic, & Taylor, 2007). In this context, it is of interest to examine the extent to which the use of self-monitoring checklist by teachers helps them to maintain initial high levels of accurate and consistent implementation of evidence-based practices achieved with didactic training and performance feedback.

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1.1. Importance of maintaining accuracy and consistency of implementation

The accuracy and consistency with which evidence-based practices are implemented as designed has been termed treatment fidelity or treatment integrity in the school-based efficacy research literature (Peterson, Homer, & Wonderlich, 1982). The term implementation accuracy will be used to indicate treatment fidelity in this manuscript as it more accurately reflects language used by teachers in classrooms. The authors recognize that treatment fidelity is multi-dimensional and requires both accuracy and consistency but have opted to leave off consistency to be more concise.

A high level of implementation accuracy is important in research because it increases the believability of the outcomes and for practice, because it increases the likelihood of positive student outcomes (Gresham, 1989; Kennedy, 2005). The emphasis on implementation accuracy is strongly warranted because larger effects are present when accuracy is high (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993; Telzrow, McNamara, & Hollinger, 2000). Because evidence-based practices tend to be more effective when implementation accuracy is high, researchers, professional development personnel, and others should establish procedures to support high levels of accuracy as well as identify methods for maintaining accuracy over time (Hagermoser Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2008; Han & Weiss, 2008). Unfortunately, without such supports teachers' implementation accuracy tends to decline within ten days after teachers begin implementation of evidence-based practices because the teacher omits components, implements them inaccurately, or abandons the practice altogether (Hagermoser Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009; Hagermoser Sanetti et al., 2007; Mortenson & Witt, 1998; Noell et al., 1997; Witt et al., 1997). The tendency for implementation accuracy to decrease or drop after professional development and support is withdrawn is concerning given the importance of implementation accuracy to student outcomes as well as the importance to school leaders who spend considerable amounts of money on professional development that apparently does not maintain in the classroom. Finally, given recent recommendations in the field of education prioritizing research to examine feasible methods to help teachers maintain implementation accuracy of evidence-based practices such as self-monitoring checklists, a study addressing this issue is strongly warranted (Nelson, Oliver, Hebert, & Bohaty, 2015).

1.2. Conceptual and empirical basis for the use of self-monitoring checklists to maintain implementation accuracy

Self-monitoring is defined as supervising one's own professional practice or systematically recording one's own behavior to improve practice (Gravina, Austin, Schoedter, & Loewy, 2008; Kilbourne, 1991). The use of a strategy incorporating self-monitoring has strong support. In a meta-analysis of adult learning methods and strategies, researchers identified the use of evaluation, or self-assessment ($d = 0.94$), and reflection, or identifying performance goals ($d = 1.27$), as the two most effective strategies to improve adult learning outcomes (Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2010). Theoretical support for the use of self-monitoring to change and guide behavior is drawn from social cognitive behavior theory (Bandura, 1986). The act of recording and thinking about one's own behavior leads to a judgmental process when individuals compare their performance to some referential performance (e.g., internal standards, self-comparison, behavior norms) which in turn leads to self-reactive process (Bandura, 1986). Individuals seek to reduce the discrepancy between current performance and desired

performance by implicitly setting goals and changing behavior. Through self-regulatory systems, the behavior becomes habitual and maintained over time (Bandura, 1991; Fox & Riconscente, 2008).

Self-monitoring checklists are widely used in the field of medicine. Since the early 1990s, a variety of checklists have been developed to prevent medical errors (Zamir, Beresova-Creese, & Miln, 2012), resulting in a 47 percent reduction in patient deaths and a 36 percent reduction in inpatient complications (Haynes et al., 2009). Patients have also used self-monitoring checklists to maintain their use of treatment protocols. For example, considerable research has been conducted regarding the benefits of self-monitoring of diabetes (Coster, Gulliford, Seed, Powriet, & Swaminathan, 2008; Mahoney & Ellison, 2007) and weight loss (Burke, Wang, & Sevick, 2011). Fidelity assessments have also been used to train clinicians to administer specific therapies and to maintain fidelity over time (Lu et al., 2012).

Similar parallels can be found in education. Self-monitoring has been used as an intervention in school settings to change a variety of student behavior, and, to a lesser degree, teacher behavior (Webber, Scheuermann, McCall, & Coleman, 1993). Self-monitoring has been used with teacher behaviors such as increasing teacher use of praise (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001; Kalis, Vannest, & Parker, 2007; Keller, Brady, & Taylor, 2005) and opportunities to respond (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Self-monitoring appears to produce changes in teacher behavior but it is unclear if this technique can be used to maintain behaviors already established such as those associated with implementation accuracy. A review of the literature revealed no studies directly examining self-monitoring as a means to maintain implementation accuracy (i.e., treatment fidelity) of evidence-based education practices.

1.3. Evidence-based classroom management practice: The Good Behavior Game

Based on interviews, teachers in the study indicated a strong desire to learn an evidence-based classroom management practice to reduce disruptive student behavior in the classroom. In consultation with teachers, the Good Behavior Game (GBG) was selected for implementation in this study. The GBG has strong empirical support as it has been shown to reduce disruptive and aggressive student behavior through multiple experimental trials (Dolan et al., 1993; Jalongo et al., 1999; van Lier, Muthen, van der Sar, & Crijnen, 2004). Additionally, researchers have reported that high levels of implementation accuracy of the GBG by teachers can be achieved with didactic training and performance feedback (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; van Lier et al., 2004). The GBG incorporates a number of evidence-based classroom management practices that focus on reinforcing appropriate student behavior while reducing challenging behaviors by: (a) explicitly teaching pro-social behavior and systematically reinforcing instances of behavior and (b) employing positive peer pressure through group contingencies thus focusing on positive reinforcement of behavior rather than punishment. The GBG is an example of a group contingency in which the class is split into two or more groups or teams who compete against each other. Criteria for winning the game, rules that need to be followed, and the reward for winning are established prior to beginning the game. If any team member is observed to not be following the rules (e.g., out-of-seat, talking-out), a mark is placed on the board next to the appropriate team name. Any team that meets the established criteria wins the game and the specified reinforcement. If a team does not win, that team continues working while the other team is rewarded for meeting the goal.

Use of the GBG to assess the use of a self-monitoring checklist to maintain implementation accuracy of evidence-based classroom

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