



# DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING (DBR) AS AN INTERVENTION TOOL: SELF-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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The purpose of a self-management system is to promote self-awareness of behavior on the part of a student. This type of intervention is often used when it is suspected that undesirable behavior occurs (e.g., calling out in class) in place of desirable behavior (e.g., hand raising) because the student is not aware of their behavior or there are insufficient incentives to engage in desirable behavior. A self-management system provides an opportunity for the student and teacher (or other adult) to each rate target behavior(s) at specified intervals. The student then compares his or her rating with the rating made by the teacher. After comparing the two ratings, the student is provided with feedback and any contingent consequences. Desirable consequences (e.g., tokens, stickers, free time) are often used in favor of punitive consequences. This process can improve the accuracy of students' self-perception/awareness of their own behavior and help them to understand how their behavior is perceived by others.

DBR facilitates self-management systems. The use of self-management systems can ultimately teach students skills to succeed independently in the classroom or at home without prompting. Students may use DBR scales to rate their behavior for a designated time period (it is beneficial to rate the child's behavior at the same time) and are then given feedback on their ratings.

## **Who can use DBR for self-management?**

Self-management systems can be used by anyone involved with the child:

- Teachers and other school personnel (e.g., counselor, school psychologist)
- Parents, guardians, and other family members

## **Why use DBR within self-management systems?**

DBR is an excellent tool for self-management systems. Within a DBR scale, behaviors are explicitly defined and ratings are pre-set, making it easy for students and adults to monitor behavior during an observation period.

## **Using self-management systems for intervention**

The purpose of the self-management system is to make children more aware of their actions. As a result of increased awareness, desirable behavior should increase and undesirable behavior should decrease. Students rate behavior and see how accurate their perceptions are when compared to the teacher's observation.

There are three facets of self-management:

- 1) Self-Observation/Monitoring**
- 2) Self-Recording**
- 3) Sharing/Comparing**

## **Potential Benefits of Using DBR in Self-Management Systems:**

- Provides immediate and consistent feedback about student behavior
- Promotes student awareness of behavior
- Encourages student to take responsibility
- Increases communication between student and adult about student performance
- Helps student develop a sense of independence and self competence

The teacher works with the student to define the duration and frequency of rating periods (e.g., four 10 min intervals in a class period). Both the student and teacher observe and record ratings of the student's behavior during specified intervals. Their ratings are later shared/compared to evaluate the accuracy of student perceptions. DBR facilitates the recording process.

As mentioned previously, one of the goals of a self-management system is to promote accurate/shared perceptions of behavior on the part of the student. When ratings generated by the student are close to the ratings given by the adult, the student can be rewarded. For example, it can be decided that a 2 point discrepancy or less is sufficiently accurate to generate an incentive/reward.

### Incentives

- A point system is often used as part of a self-management program. The student often earns points for both desirable behaviors (e.g., high ratings of academic engagement) and points for rating accuracy (e.g., ratings within 2 points of teacher). The points are used to incentivize desirable behavior and accurate ratings. They are later exchanged for something more tangible (e.g., free time; see [www.dbr.education.uconn.edu/intervention/](http://www.dbr.education.uconn.edu/intervention/) for more information on incentives).

### Teaching students to self-manage:

- 1) Clearly define target behavior to student in terms of operational definitions (e.g., academic engagement, disruptive behavior, or other pre-determined target behavior)
- 2) Explain to student how to fill out DBR form
  - Can use modeling and student practice followed by feedback
- 3) Determine self-monitoring schedule; explain to student how often self-monitoring will occur
- 4) Prompt student when to fill out form for an observation period
- 5) Provide feedback and ensure student understands how this information will be used

\* When implementing self-management systems, it is important to keep in mind the student's age, capabilities, and other unique factors that characterize the student. For example, students who are younger or who have developmental delays may need additional instruction and training.

### **Steps for implementing self-management systems**

- 1) Explain rating system to student and teach student to self-manage
- 2) Have student rate behavior
- 3) Rate student behavior for same time period
- 4) Compare results with student
- 5) Determine student's accuracy of self-management by comparing his/her ratings against the ratings you made during the same time period
- 6) Award student for accuracy in perception of behavior (optional)

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