

SELF-MANAGEMENT: OVERVIEW

What is self-management?

Self-management encompasses a range of internal and/or external activities wherein a student may engage that increase or decrease the probability of appropriate behaviors occurring and is based on cognitive-behavioral theory. Cognitive behavioral theory focuses on the interdependent relationship between the environment, behavior, and cognition and is based on three assumptions: 1) cognitive activity affects behavior; 2) cognitive activity may be monitored and altered; and 3) desired behavior change may be affected through cognitive change (Dobson & Block, 1988; Maag, 1999). Behavior modification programs based on self-management principles are designed to teach individuals to manage their own behavior rather than relying on external controls such as teacher administered rewards and/or punishments. Those who successfully learn to self-manage carry with them the intrinsic cues and reinforcement needed to engage in appropriate behavior.

What are the different types of self-management?

The literature discusses several types of self-management which are defined in the table below. These types of self-management have been studied alone and/or in various combinations and have generally shown to be effective in improving behavior of various student populations.

Table 1: Types of Self-Management

Type	Description
Self-instruction	Requires the student to make self-produced verbalizations to cue themselves concerning their behavior.
Self-monitoring	Requires students to become aware of their behavior and make a tangible mark to keep track of it.
Self-evaluation	Requires students to compare their performance against some criteria.
Self-reinforcement	Requires students to administer a positive or negative consequence to themselves.
Self-graphing	Commonly used with both self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Requires students to make a visual representation of their performance usually in the form of a bar or line graph.

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of self-management programs?

Self-management procedures are considered superior to the exclusive use of externally managed interventions for several reasons. First, self-management encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own behavior. Second, teaching students to self-manage increases the likelihood that appropriate behavior will last over time and generalize to various settings. Third, because the students is the control agent, these procedures provide a means for teachers to spend more time teaching and less time trying to control behavior. Fourth, self-management provides students with a sense of ownership for and control over their own behavior, which is inherently reinforcing and may also make it less likely that students will try to control the teacher's behavior. Fifth, the defining, measuring, graphing, and evaluating involved in various types of self-management give meaningful practice for other parts of the curriculum. Finally, self-management provides students and teachers with a proactive and positive way to avoid reactive punishment contingencies. This approach is consistent with the philosophy of positive behavioral supports and interventions (PBIS) which calls for behavioral management techniques to be positive, preventative, educational, and empowering.

References/ Recommended Resources

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- Maag, J.W. (1999). *Behavior Management*. Singular Publishing Group, Inc.: San Diego.
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- Mitchem, K.J., Young, K.R., West, R.P., & Benyo, J. (2001). CWPASM: A classwide peer-assisted self-management program for general education classrooms. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 24(2), 111.40.
- Otten, K.L. (2003). *An analysis of a classwide self-monitoring approach to improve the behavior of elementary students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Additional Recommended Resources

- Hoff, K.E. & DuPaul, G.J. (1998). Reducing disruptive behavior in general education classrooms: The use of self-management strategies. *The School Psychology Review*, 27(2), 290-303.
- Johnson, L.R. & Johnson, C.E. (1999). Teaching students to regulate their own behavior. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 31(4), 6-10.

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