

## Group Contingency / Differential Reinforcement of Lower Rate Behaviors

The goal of a group contingency / differential reinforcement of lower rate behaviors is to reduce a target behavior (e.g., talk outs, put downs, out of seat) by implementing a simple consequence of rewarding progressively lower rates of the target behavior while also reducing the positive response from peers for this behavior. The procedure is described below:

1. Collect baseline data related to the number of talk outs displayed by every student in the class (by period). The teacher may select to move a coin from one pocket to another each time s/he observes the target behavior over a specified interval of time (see below).
2. Establish an interval – for younger children this may be 15-30 minutes, while older students can often work by the class period. If the behavior is very high rate the intervals should be shorter in length.
3. Provide a number of marks for each interval. The number should be a little larger than the average number of target behaviors observed for the interval selected. For example, if the class displays an average of 18 talk outs across a class period, I might start with 20 marks. The marks are made in a public location (e.g., on the board or on a clipboard that can be carried) where the teacher has ready access during instruction. The number of marks should be observable by the students.
4. Each time a target behavior is observed – one mark is removed. This constitutes the consequence. DO NOT get into a power struggle in the removal of points. For example, if a student should say, “I don’t care about your dumb points!” DO NOT remove another and another until he is quiet. When you remove the first mark he and the rest of the class know you delivered a consequence. In a power struggle – the adult seldom wins as we have to play by the rules and the student does not.

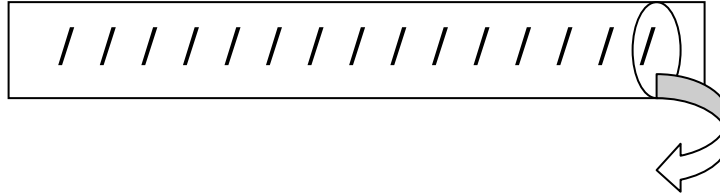
If, however, one student talks out and another student makes some comment like, “Stupid, you lost us a mark!” You remove two marks – one for each student’s comment.

5. If at the end of the interval, any marks (even just 1) remains, the students as a group get reinforced. If you are using short intervals, students can earn points and when a preset number are earned the group is rewarded. Some teachers have the students earn letters if any marks remain at the end of the interval; one they spell a specified word (e.g., G.A.M.E) they earn the reinforcer.

The teacher will want to set aside time for the students to get their reinforcement. This need not be wasted time and the reinforcer can be engagement in a fun academic game (e.g. Academic Jeopardy to review the previous lesson) or a freetime activity in which you work on providing feedback related to social skills. Some teachers identify a menu of possible reinforcers and select a student to choose the reinforcer from the group. This provides an opportunity to reward a student who has displayed exceptional behavior or simply needs to be recognized.

If no marks remain at the end of the interval, those minutes are not awarded.

- Over time, the number of marks provided at the start of each interval is reduced or the interval lengthened. Always work off the current average – providing a slightly larger number of marks than the average number of target behaviors displayed in a specified interval.



## The Teacher – Student Game

The Teacher – Student Game is a brief intervention designed to help teachers establish clear expectations for engaged academic behavior and effective transitioning between activities. The game can also be used to ‘settle’ a class of students who are becoming inattentive or disruptive. The game is generally played for periods of 10-30 minutes at a time and may be used multiple times across a school day. Typically, the game is employed more frequently at the start of the school year to establish clarity of expectations and then played as needed across the remainder of the school year. Teachers should plan to use it at least three or four times a week all year.

Note: The aim is to teach and reinforce clear expectations for student behavior. You will want to catch the students displaying the desired behavior more often than identifying when they are not. **Thus the students should “win” the game about 75-85% of the time.** This will keep them interested and promote increased desired behavior.

The game is simple to implement:

1. Identify the expected behaviors – these should be stated clearly and you may need to have students demonstrate examples and non-examples to be sure everyone is aware of what is expected.
2. The teacher indicates the game is in effect and specifies the time frame (e.g., “For the next 10 minutes we will be playing the teacher-student game.”)
3. In the course of routine instruction, the teacher will stop and provide a **very brief verbal comment** to serve as feedback related to student behavior (e.g., “Wow, each of you put your things away quietly, walked quietly to the line and have kept your hands and feet to yourselves. You have just earned 5 points.”). The teacher then posts the points under the ‘Student’ or the ‘Teacher’ column on the score sheet.
4. The score sheet should be publicly posted so that the students can see the score.

Students	Teacher
//// //	//// //
//// //	

5. The teacher should make every effort to identify times students are doing what is expected and the students should ‘win’ the game 75-85% of the time.
6. Identify a reinforcer for the group when the students win (as well as a reinforcer for yourself for when the teacher wins). Reinforcers for the students can be fun academic games to minimize loss of instructional time or can be brief periods of social interaction allowing the teacher to provide feedback on social skills and social problem solving skills.

Sample Behaviors:

## Teacher – Student Game (Instructional Time)

1. Good students sit quietly in their desk and do not talk unless having raised their hand and been called upon.
2. Good students face the front of the class with their eyes on the teacher or the instructional material.
3. Good students have the needed materials out and everything else put away.

## Teacher – Student Game (Transition Times)

1. Good students do not talk or disrupt others during transitions.
2. Good students walk in the classroom and move when needed without disrupting others. Walk in the correct direction (traffic pattern).
3. Good students listen and follow directions the first time they are given.
4. Good students transition quickly and are ready for the new task within the time provided.

## Check-In / Check –Out System

The “check-in, check-out” system is a secondary intervention designed for students that have accrued several office referrals and are primarily motivated by adult or peer attention. The system allows these students to “check-in” with a ‘positive’ adult each morning and receive a daily behavior report form (See sample below) . The behavior report form has individual behavioral goals with sections to be rated by each teacher. The student carries the card to each class/teacher throughout the day and receives a rating of 0-2 in each of the designated areas; Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be Your Personal Best. The student then “checks-out” at the end of the day. If the student meets his/her behavioral goal for the day they receive reinforcement. The system is designed to include not only the students and staff, but the parents and family as well. The students take their Behavior Report home each night/week to be signed by their parents and to receive encouragement and feedback on their progress. The system is strength-based and works best when teacher take the time to identify at least one positive aspect of the student’s performance each period.

0 = No 1= Good 2= Excellent	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Your Personal Best		Teacher initials	Comments
	Keep hands, feet, and objects to self	Use kind words and actions	Follow directions	Working in class		
Class	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2		
Recess	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2			
Class	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2		
Lunch	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2			
Class	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2		
Recess	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2			
Class	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2		
<b>Total Points =</b>		<b>Today</b>		<b>Goal</b>		
<b>Points Possible =</b>		_____ %		_____ %		
<b>50</b>						

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Period	Task Engagement				Interaction with Others	Comments	Teacher's Initials
	Follows Teacher Directives	Active Task Engagement	Completes Assigned Work	Remains in Assigned Area	Uses Kind Words and Actions towards Others		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3	0 2 4	0 1 2 4 0 1 2 4	0 1 4 0 1 4		
<b>Total Points</b>						Total Points for Day ____/____	% =

Operational Definitions for Target Behavior Ratings

- Follows Teacher Directives: 0 = Fails to comply to at least 25% of directives and engages in problem behavior  
1 = Fails to comply to at least 25% of directives but does not engage in problem behavior  
2 = Verbally protests but complies to at least 90% of directives  
4 = Spontaneously complies to at least 90% of teacher directives
- Active Task Engagement: 0 = On-task less than 10% of the interval  
1 = On-task more than 10% but less than 50% of the interval  
2 = On task more than 50% but less than 85% of the interval  
3 = On-task more than 85% of the interval
- Work Completion: 0 = Little or no work attempted  
2 = Effort expended at a reasonable level but work not completed  
4 = Work completed with reasonable level of effort (Not concerned with accuracy or neatness at this time)
- Stays in the Assigned Area: 0 = Exits the classroom without permission (any time during interval)  
1 = Out of seat or assigned area and fails to comply with initial request to return  
2 = Out of seat or instructional area but returns the first time asked  
4 = Remains in the seat or assigned area throughout the interval
- Uses Kind Words and Actions: 0 = Threatens harm or displays verbal/physical aggression towards others (to harm or frighten)  
1 = Teases, taunts or displays rude or disrespectful behavior towards others  
4 = Displays kind and welcoming behavior towards others

Behavior	Scoring Rubric	Period						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Uses Kind words and actions	Threatens harm or displays verbal/physical aggression towards others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Teases, taunts or displays rude or disrespectful behavior towards others	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Displays kind and welcoming behavior towards others	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Active Task Engagement	On-task less than 10% of the interval	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	On-task more than 10% but less than 50% of the interval	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	On task more than 50% but less than 85% of the interval	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	On-task more than 85% of the interval	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Comments: