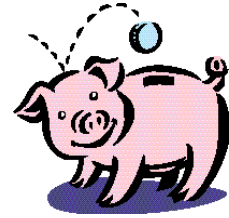


The Savvy Teacher's Guide: Selected Ideas for Behavioral Intervention

Jim Wright

jwright@freeside.scsd.k12.ny.us
www.interventioncentral.org

Creating Reward Menus That Motivate: Tips for Teachers



Rewards are often central to effective school interventions. As possible incentives that students can earn for appropriate school performance or conduct, these reinforcers (or 'rewards') often serve as the motivational 'engine' that drives successful interventions.

Choosing rewards to use as incentives for a student intervention may seem simple and straightforward. A reinforcer, however, probably will not be successful unless it passes three important tests:

- **Acceptability Test.** Does the *teacher* approve of using the reinforcer with this child? Are *parent(s)* likely to approve the use of the reinforcer with their child?
- **Availability Test.** Is the reinforcer typically *available* in a school setting? If not, can it be obtained with little inconvenience and at a cost affordable to staff or parents?
- **Motivation Test.** Does the *child* find the reinforcer to be motivating?

Reward systems are usually *most* powerful when a student can select from a range of reward choices ('reward menu'). Offering students a menu of possible rewards is effective because it both gives students a meaningful *choice* of reinforcers and reduces the likelihood that the child will eventually tire of any specific reward.

However, some children (e.g., those with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may lose interest in specific reward choices more quickly than do their typical peers. Teachers will want to regularly update and refresh reward menus for such children to ensure these reinforcers retain their power to positively shape those students' behaviors.

Creating a 'Reward Deck.' A Reward Deck is an idea that can help teachers to quickly select and regularly update student reward menus. This strategy involves 5 steps:

1. The teacher reviews a list of reward choices typically available in school settings. (Instructors can use the comprehensive sampling of possible school rewards that appears in the next section: *Jackpot! Ideas for Classroom Rewards.*). From this larger list, the teacher selects only those rewards that she or he approves of using, believes would be acceptable to other members of the school community (e.g., administration, parents), and finds feasible and affordable.
2. The teacher writes out acceptable reward choices on index cards-- to create a master 'Reward Deck'
3. Whenever the teacher wants to create a reward menu for a particular student, he or she first 'screens' reward choices that appear in the master Reward Deck and temporarily removes any that seem inappropriate for that specific case. (For

example, the teacher may screen out the reward 'pizza party' because it is too expensive to offer to a student who has only minor difficulties with homework completion.)

4. The teacher then sits with the child and presents each of the reward choices remaining in the Reward Deck. For each reward option, the child indicates whether he or she (a) likes the reward *a lot*, (b) likes the reward *a little*, or (c) doesn't care for the reward. The teacher sorts the reward options into three piles that match these rating categories.

The teacher can then assemble that child's Reward Menu using the student's top choices ("like a lot"). If the instructor needs additional choices to fill out the rest of the menu, he or she can pull items from the student's "like a little" category as well.

5. (Optional but recommended) Periodically, the instructor can meet with the student and repeat the above procedure to 'refresh' the Reward Menu quickly and easily.

Jackpot!: Ideas for Classroom Rewards



Read through this list for reward ideas that will motivate your students.

Academic Activities

- Go to the library to select a book
 - Help a classmate with an academic assignment
 - Help the teacher to present a lesson (e.g., by completing sample math problem on blackboard, reading a section of text aloud, assisting cooperative learning groups on an activity)
 - Invite an adult “reading buddy” of student’s choice to classroom to read with student
 - Listen to books-on-tape
 - Play academic computer games
 - Read a book of his/her choice
 - Read a story aloud to younger children
 - Read aloud to the class
 - Select a class learning activity from a list of choices
 - Select a friend as a “study buddy” on an in-class work assignment
 - Select friends to sit with to complete a cooperative learning activity
 - Spend time (with appropriate supervision) on the Internet at academic sites
-

Helping Roles

- ‘Adopt’ a younger student and earn (through good behavior) daily visits to check in with that student as an older mentor
 - Be appointed timekeeper for an activity: announce a 5-minute warning near end of activity and announce when activity is over
 - Be given responsibility for assigning other students in the class to helping roles, chores, or tasks
 - Complete chores or helpful activities around the classroom
 - Deliver school-wide announcements
 - Help the custodian
 - Help the library media specialist
 - Help a specials teacher (e.g., art, music, gym)
 - Take a note to the main office
 - Work at the school store
-

Praise/Recognition

- Be awarded a trophy, medal, or other honor for good behavior/caring attitude

- Be praised on school-wide announcements for good behavior or caring attitude
 - Be praised privately by the teacher or other adult
 - Design--or post work on--a class or hall bulletin board
 - Get a silent "thumbs up" or other sign from teacher indicating praise and approval
 - Have the teacher call the student's parent/guardian to give positive feedback about the student
 - Have the teacher write a positive note to the student's parent/guardian
 - Post drawings or other artwork in a public place
 - Post writings in a public place
 - Receive a "good job" note from the teacher
-

Prizes/Privileges/Rewards

- Allow student to call parent(s)
 - Be allowed to sit, stand, or lie down anywhere in the classroom (short of distracting other children) during story time or independent seat work
 - Be dismissed from school 2 minutes early
 - Be given a 'raffle ticket' that the student writes name on and throws into a fishbowl for prize drawings
 - Be permitted to sit in a reserved section of the lunchroom
 - Be sent to recess 2 minutes earlier than the rest of the class
 - Draw a prize from the class 'prize box'
 - Earn behavior-points or -tokens to be redeemed for prizes or privileges
 - Have first choice in selecting work materials (e.g., scissors, crayons, paper) and/or seating assignments
 - Have lunch in the classroom with the teacher
 - IOU redeemable for credit on one wrong item on a future in-class quiz or homework assignment
 - Receive a coupon to be redeemed at a later time for a preferred activity
 - Receive a sticker
 - Receive candy, gum, or other edible treats
 - Receive pass to "Get out of one homework assignment of your choice"
 - Select a class fun activity from a list of choices
 - Select the pizza toppings for a class pizza party
 - Sit near the teacher
 - Take the lead position in line
 - Tell a joke or riddle to the class
-

Recreation

- Be selected by the teacher to accompany another student to a fun activity
- Get extra gym time with another class
- Get extra recess time with another class
- Listen to music
- Play a game with a friend
- Play non-academic computer games

- ❑ Select fun activity from “Activity Shelf” (stocked with play materials, games)
- ❑ Spend time (with appropriate supervision) on the Internet at recreational sites
- ❑ Watch part or all of a video (preselected by the teacher and cleared with the student’s parent)
- ❑ Work on a jigsaw or other puzzle
- ❑ Write or draw on blackboard/whiteboard/easel paper

Troubleshooting Reward Programs: A Teacher's Guide

My reward program worked for a while but now it doesn't seem to be very effective.

There are several possible reasons why a reward program might begin to lose its effectiveness. You may want to experiment with changing aspects of the program until you find what is effective:

- **The student has lost interest in the current rewards.** Some students need to be given new reward choices more frequently than do typical children. Every so often, make a point to readminister the 'reward deck' or a reward inventory to the student to update his or her list of preferred rewards.
- **You have become inconsistent in administering the reward program.** Classrooms are busy places—so it is natural for the person who runs a reward program occasionally to forget to assign a point or give a reward. If the program is administered *too* inconsistently, though, it can stop working. Remember: a reward program is like a contract: its power depends entirely on how reliably it is enforced.

Reflect on your actions and decide whether you may have inadvertently begun to 'drift' from the program. Common problems that crop up include the adult being inconsistent in assigning points for positive behaviors or deducting points for negative behaviors, failing to record assigned points on a chart or graph, neglecting to give the student a chance to redeem points for rewards, and not having agreed-upon rewards available for the student.

I can't seem to find rewards that the student actually finds reinforcing.

Students vary a great deal in what kinds of activities, events, or opportunities they might find rewarding. No single reward choice appeals to every student. Here are some ideas to help you to figure out rewards that are likely to appeal even to picky students:

- **Ask the student to write down or tell you some activities that he or she likes to do.** Use this list as a starting point to generate ideas for possible rewards.
- **Observe the activities the student picks out during free or unstructured time.** Those

	<p>activities that people typically do in their free time are those that they probably find appealing. If the student spends most of his or her free time ‘hanging out’ with other kids, for instance, you can probably think up socially oriented rewards for that student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the student’s previous teachers, parent, or other significant adult what activities or rewards the student likes. Other people who have known the student for a significant length of time may have useful insights into what rewards the student will find motivating.
<p>My student argues with me every time I use the reward program.</p>	<p>Sometimes students will verbally challenge you—insisting, for example, that you should award a point that you believe they did not earn. Here are a couple of suggestions to reduce or eliminate such arguing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a negative consequence for “arguing” into the reward program. Explain to the student that you will impose a consequence whenever the student argues or verbally challenges your decisions about the reward program. You might choose, for example, to deduct a point from the student’s total whenever he or she argues or suspend the reward program for 15 minutes (so that the student cannot earn points) whenever the student argues with you. • Avoid becoming an active participant in the argument. It takes two to argue. As the adult, you can control student interactions by refusing to get pulled into arguments. If possible, keep your responses brief and your emotional state neutral. • Examine the quality of your own interactions with the student. Students are most likely to argue with adults when they feel that they have been treated unfairly or ignored. Analyze your interactions with the student to be sure that you are not expressing anger or annoyance and that you do not use sarcasm. Consider offering the student positive opportunities to share his or her feelings or opinions with you (e.g., writing a letter, participating in a class meeting). Be sure that you are enforcing the terms of the reward program fairly--in particular, giving the student appropriate credit for good behaviors.
<p>Other school staff or parents sometimes disagree with the rewards that I choose.</p>	<p>A complicating factor in setting up reward programs is that other adults may disapprove of those rewards that you have selected. For instance, a principal may be unhappy with a teacher who rewards a student with gum for good behavior, because the school has a “no gum</p>

	<p>chewing” policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview potentially controversial rewards with fellow staff, school administrators, and/or the student’s parents. When in doubt, check with the school principal, other teaching staff and the student’s parent about the acceptability of a specific reward idea. • Try to use pro-social and pro-educational reward choices whenever possible. No one objects to student rewards that build social or academic skills. If a student were motivated to play an educational math game on the computer as a reward, for example, this academic reward would usually be preferable to offering the student a food treat. In short, if you know that non-controversial rewards work for a student, use them. • Document past reward efforts. While most students can be motivated using traditional, education-friendly rewards, you will occasionally come across students who will strive only for rewards that others might regard as less acceptable (e.g., candy, coupons to skip homework). Sometimes these ‘intervention-resistant’ students have special needs and simply do not respond to those more typical rewards that normally shape kids’ behavior. If you wish to make the case to other adults about the need to use controversial rewards with ‘intervention-resistant’ children, it may help to document that your previous attempts to use more typical rewards had been unsuccessful. • Educate staff about special-needs students. You may also need to educate school staff about how a child’s special needs may cause him or her to react to rewards in a manner different from more typical students. A teacher may observe, for example, that a child with substantial cognitive deficits is motivated only by a chance to earn snacks—even though his more typical age-peers regularly select social activities as rewards. The target student’s intellectual deficits and relative emotional immaturity can help to explain why he is drawn to rewards more typical of a younger child.
<p>I am going broke trying to buy rewards for students!</p>	<p>It can be costly to provide motivating rewards for individual students, let alone a whole classroom! Some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a raffle-ticket reward system. One cost-saving idea for group rewards that can make your prizes go farther is to design an attractive paper raffle ticket, which has a space for the student’s name. Whenever the student earns a point for good behavior, have the

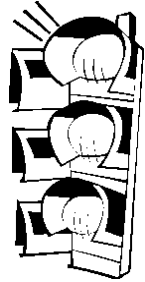
student write his or her name on the ticket and toss it into a fishbowl or other container. Hold regular drawings, awarding prizes to those students whose tickets are selected.

- **Give 'Activity Coupons'.** Many of the most effective student rewards are activities that are readily obtainable in a school setting. Make a list of all of the rewarding opportunities that you or your fellow teachers and administrators can make available as prizes. For instance, one school may identify "Reading to kindergarten students during their Story Time" or "Delivering morning announcements" as potentially motivating activities. For each activity, create an 'Activity Coupon' that describes the activity and the number of points required to earn it. Students can redeem good-behavior points that they have collected for any Activity Coupon that they can afford.
- **Build a reward program around a 'prize box'.** Like most of us, students find novelty itself to be a motivating experience. You can use a prize box to build some excitement into a reward program, without having to purchase big-ticket items. First, decorate a large sturdy box. Fill the box with inexpensive prizes that students might find motivating (e.g., small toys, stickers). (You can even supplement the contents of the prize box with fun promotional items such as key chains or pencils.) When students earn a pre-determined number of points, they can draw the prize of choice from the box.

Effective Teacher Commands: Establishing Classroom Control



As classroom managers, teachers regularly use commands to direct students to start and stop activities. Instructors find commands to be a crucial tool for classroom management, serving as instructional signals that help students to conform to the teacher's expectations for appropriate behaviors.



Teachers frequently dilute the power of their classroom commands, however, by:



- presenting commands as questions or polite requests.** Commands have less impact when stated as questions or requests, because the student may believe that he or she has the option to decline. The teacher who attempts, for example, to quiet a talkative student by saying, "*Tanya, could you mind keeping your voice down so that other students can study?*" should not be surprised if the student replies, "*No, thank you. I would prefer to talk!*"
- stating commands in vague terms.** A student may ignore a command such as "*Get your work done!*" because it does not state specifically what behaviors the teacher expects of the student.
- following up commands with excessive justifications or explanations.** Because teachers want to be viewed as fair, they may offer long, drawn-out explanations for why they are requiring the class or an individual student to undertake or to stop a behavior. Unfortunately, students can quickly lose the thread the explanation and even forget the command that preceded it!

Effective Teacher Commands...

- Are brief
- Are delivered one at a time
- Use specific language so that the student clearly understands the request
- Avoid an authoritative, "Do it my way or else!" tone of voice
- Avoid strong negative emotion or sarcasm
- Are stated as directives rather than as questions
- Avoid long explanations or justifications (and present any explanation *before* the command rather than *after* it).
- Allow the student a short but reasonable amount of time to comply without additional teacher comments or directives

Using Effective Commands

Teachers can reduce problems with student compliance and make their commands more forceful by following research-based guidelines (Walker & Walker, 1992):

Effective commands:

- **are brief.** Students can process only so much information. Students tend to comply best with brief commands because they are easy to understand and hard to misinterpret.
- **are delivered one task or objective at a time.** When a command contains multi-step directions, students can mishear, misinterpret, or forget key steps. A student who appears to be noncompliant may simply be confused about which step in a multi-step directive to do first!
- **are delivered in a matter-of-fact, businesslike tone.** Students may feel coerced when given a command in an authoritarian, sarcastic, or angry tone of voice. For that reason alone, they may resist the teacher's directive. Teachers will often see greater student compliance simply by giving commands in a neutral or positive manner.
- **are stated as directives rather than questions.** Perhaps to be polite, teachers may phrase commands as questions (e.g., "Could we all take out our math books now?"). A danger in using 'question-commands' is that the student may believe that he or she has the option to decline! Teachers should state commands as directives, saving questions for those situations in which the student exercises true choice.
- **avoid long explanations or justifications.** When teachers deliver commands and then tack lengthy explanations onto them, they diminish the force of the directive. If the instructor believes that students should know why they are being told to do something, the teacher should deliver a brief explanation *prior* to the command.
- **give the student a reasonable amount of time to comply.** Once the teacher has given a command, he or she should give the student a reasonable timespan (e.g., 5-15 seconds) to comply. During that waiting period, the instructor should resist the temptation to nag the student, elaborate on the request, or other wise distract the student.

References:

Walker, H.M. & Walker, J.E. (1991). *Coping with noncompliance in the classroom: A positive approach for teachers*. Austin, TX:: Pro-Ed, Inc.

Effective Teacher Commands: Establishing Classroom Control Workshop Activity



Directions: A series of 6 teacher commands and requests appears below. For each example, note any flaws in the teacher response. (Use the table on the right to review the elements of effective teacher commands.) Then rewrite the teacher verbal response (or describe an alternative way the teacher could have acted to head off or handle the situation more effectively).

1. *Thaddeus, I know that you finished the quiz early, but it is important that you not distract the other students while they are trying to work. You wouldn't want them to do poorly on the quiz, would you?*
2. *Maria, how many times do I have to tell you to stop being so disruptive! Every time that I have to talk to you, you take my attention away from the other students! Please try to be more considerate!*
3. *OK, class. Pull out the writing assignment that you had for homework last night. Pair off with a neighbor. Each one of you should read the others' assignment. Then you should edit your partner's work, using our peer-editing worksheet. Finally, review your editing comments with your partner. You have 20 minutes. Begin!*
4. *Jason, could you please put away that comic book and get started on your homework assignment?*
5. *Anna, I want you to be sure to go straight home from school today! Yesterday afternoon after school dismissal, I was in my car and noticed that you and your friends were utilizing the snowbanks along Henry Street, where there is a lot of traffic. I want you to go straight home today and not dawdle!*
6. *Carl, why don't you speak up so that you can distract the entire class with your talking?*

Effective Teacher Commands...

- Are brief
- Are delivered one at a time
- Use specific language so that the student clearly understands the request
- Avoid an authoritative, "Do it my way or else!" tone of voice
- Avoid strong negative emotion or sarcasm
- Are stated as directives rather than as questions
- Avoid long explanations or justifications (and present any explanation *before* the command rather than *after* it).
- Allow the student a short but reasonable amount of time to comply without additional teacher comments or directives

Teacher Commands: Self-Monitoring Sheet

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Room/Subject: _____ Activity: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Number/Mins: _____

Teacher Directions: Select a time period when you think that you typically give a significant number of commands and/or requests to your students. Record (a) the number of commands/requests that you give, whether to your whole class or to specific students, and (b) the number of those requests that students *fail* to follow (according to the definition for compliance below). As soon as possible after your self-monitoring, complete the items on the front and back of this sheet:

Definition for student compliance:
 The student(s) complied with a teacher directive to the instructor's satisfaction within _____ seconds of the command or request being given.

1. How many commands and requests did you deliver to the entire class and/or individual students during the observation period?	
2. How many minutes long was your observation period?	Mins
3. On average, how many commands and requests did you deliver per <i>minute</i> during the observation period? (Item 1/Item 2)	Per Min
4. Of your commands and requests, what <i>number</i> did the class or individual students <i>not</i> comply with to your satisfaction?	
5. Of your commands and requests, what <i>percentage</i> did the class or individual students <i>not</i> comply with to your satisfaction? (Item 4/Item 3)...	%

During the monitoring period, did I...

- ensure that I have students' full attention (e.g., establishing eye contact with the class) before delivering a command?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- deliver only one command at a time and wait for students to comply before delivering another?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

During the monitoring period, did I...

- present the command in a matter-of-fact, businesslike way rather than as a 'bossy teacher'?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- state the command in clear, precise, specific terms that are easy to understand?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- avoid stating my commands as questions or requests that students have the right to refuse?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- avoid confusing the student with long verbalizations, justifications, or explanations of why I am giving the command?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- wait a consistent amount of time after the command (e.g., five to fifteen seconds) without giving further directions to permit the student(s) to comply?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- repeat the command to those students who initially failed to comply, firmly restating the command as "*I need you to...*"?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

- provide consistent and appropriate follow-up consequences for those students who continued to fail to comply with my commands?

Never/Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Most/All of the Time
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

Mystery Motivator

Description: This reward system intrigues students because it carries a certain degree of unpredictability. The strategy can be used with an entire class or with individual students.

Materials:

- *Mystery Motivator Chart*
- Special watercolor markers (including 'invisible' marker)*

Preparation:

- Develop a reward menu for the individual or class targeted for this intervention. (NOTE: For suggestions on how to create a reward menu, see *Creating Reward Menus that Motivate: Tips for Teachers.*)
- Select 1-3 behaviors that you wish to reduce or increase in the targeted student(s) and write out concrete definitions for each.
- Decide on a time period during the instructional day that the Mystery Motivator program will be in effect (e.g., during math class, all morning, throughout the school day).
- Decide on the minimum behavioral criteria that the student must meet in order to earn a chance to fill in a blank on the *Mystery Motivator Chart* (e.g., all homework turned in; fewer than 2 teacher reminders to pay attention during reading group).
- Prepare the *Mystery Motivator Chart*.

First, decide how frequently you want students to be able to earn a reward (a good rule of thumb is to start with a frequency of 3-4 times per week and then to reduce the frequency as student behaviors improve).

Next, randomly select as many days of the week on the chart as you plan to reward students. For each day that you select on the chart, write the letter "M" into the chart blank with the invisible-ink pen.

Finally, come up with guidelines for the student or class to earn bonus points (e.g., if the student or class earn the chance to fill out at least 3 of the five chart spaces in a week, they will be given the bonus points that appear in the *Bonus Points* box on the *Mystery Motivator Chart*). Each week, you will write a different number of bonus points (e.g., between 1 and 5) into the bonus points box. If the student or class earns these points, they will be able to redeem them for a prize from the reward menu.

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the Mystery Motivator program to students:
 - Explain that students will have the chance to earn rewards for good behavior.
 - Review the behaviors that you have selected with students. Use demonstration and modeling to ensure that students clearly know either (a) the negative behavior(s) that should be avoided or (b) the positive behavior(s) that should be increased. Post the behavioral definitions that you have written.
 - Introduce the *Mystery Motivator Chart*. Tell students that they can earn a chance to fill in the blank on the chart for the current day to uncover a possible reward—but only if they first are able to show the appropriate behaviors. Specifically, inform students of the behavioral criteria that they must meet and the time period each day that the program will be in effect (e.g., “If you turn in all of your classwork assignments by 2 p.m., you will be allowed to color the daily blank on the chart.”)
 - Let students know that the magical letter “M” (for *Mystery Motivator*) has been secretly placed in some (but not all) of the chart squares. If the student reveals the “M” as he or she fills in the chart, the student can select a reward from the reward menu.
2. Start the Mystery Motivator intervention. At the end of the daily monitoring period, inform the student or class whether they have earned the chance to fill in the *Mystery Motivator Chart*. Permit the student or class to color in the chart blank for the current day, using the special markers.
 - If the magic letter “M” appears, the student or class can select a prize from the prize menu.
 - If the magic letter “M” does *not* appear, congratulate and praise the student or class for their good behaviors. Let them know that they will have another chance to fill in the *Mystery Motivator Chart* tomorrow.
3. At the end of each week, determine whether the student or class has met criteria to fill in the *Bonus Points* box. Award any points that appear in the box and let the student or class redeem them for corresponding prizes from the reward menu.

Tips:

Substitute Paper Slips for Special Markers. Students find it very motivating to color in chart blanks to uncover a hidden prize symbol. However, the teacher who does not have special “invisible ink” markers readily available can substitute envelopes and folded slips of paper. At the start of the week, the teacher takes five envelopes and writes one of the days of the week on the back of each. The teacher then takes five slips of paper. For each day (e.g., 3) that child can earn a reward, the teacher writes the letter “M” on the slip. The remaining slips are left blank. The teacher then folds all slips in half, randomly mixes them up, seals them into the envelopes, and stores them securely. Whenever the student or class meets the behavioral criteria, the teacher retrieves the envelope with the current day written on it and hands it to a student to open. If the letter “M” appears on the slip inside, the student or class can choose a reward from the reward menu.

Troubleshooting:

The student attempts to cheat. If you have a student who attempts to cheat on the Mystery Motivator Chart (e.g., by coloring beyond the borders of a given day’s chart blank in hopes of revealing whether the next day’s blank contains a magic letter), consider suspending them from the game for a day as a consequence.

A student attempts to undermine a team’s performance. Occasionally, a student may misbehave deliberately in order to prevent the class from earning a chance to fill in the *Mystery Motivator Chart*. If this happens, you can designate that student to be a “team of one”. While the student would still have the chance to play the Mystery Motivator game, he or she would no longer be in a position to sabotage the chances of others to earn reinforcement.

References:

Moore, L.A., Waguespack, A.M., Wickstrom, K.F., Witt, J.C., & Gaydon, G.R. (1994). Mystery Motivator: An effective and time efficient intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 23, 106-117.

Rhode, G., Jenson, W.R., & Reavis, H.K. (1992). *The tough kid book*. Longmont, CO: Sopriswest, Inc.

* You can purchase invisible ink pens (with “revealer” ink) on-line from the S.S.Adams Company, a manufacturer of novelty gifts. Visit the company’s website at:
<http://www.ssadams.com/catalog2.html>

MYSTERY MOTIVATOR CHART



Class/Student: _____

Week of: _____

BEHAVIOR GOALS: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Bonus

--	--	--	--	--	--



Response Cost Lottery

Description: Designed to be time effective for teachers, this strategy can be used with individual students or small groups.

Materials:

- Index card, tape
- Colored slips of paper (different color for each student)

Preparation:

- Develop a reward menu for each student targeted for this intervention. (NOTE: For suggestions on how to create a reward menu, see *Creating Reward Menus that Motivate: Tips for Teachers*.)
- Select 1-3 behaviors that you wish to reduce in the targeted student(s) and write out concrete definitions for each.
- Decide on a time period during the instructional day that the Response Cost Lottery program will be in effect (e.g., 30 minutes during math class). NOTE: You may want to limit the length of the monitoring period at the start of the intervention, to increase the odds of student success. As the intervention proves successful, you can extend the monitoring period.
- Decide how many points (i.e., paper slips) you will award to students at the outset of each monitoring period. (NOTE: For short monitoring periods, you may want to start with 4-5 points/paper slips.)
- Prepare the lottery tickets. Use a different color paper for each student's tickets, so that you can tell them apart from one another. Or type blanks on student tickets onto which the recipient can write in his or her name and the date that the ticket was awarded.
- Choose how frequently you will hold lottery-ticket prize drawings. NOTE: Many teachers find that once per week is sufficiently motivating to make the intervention effective. For students with more intense or severe levels of misbehavior, however, you may want initially to hold prize drawings more frequently (e.g., daily) and –as students' behaviors improve—gradually extend intervals between drawings

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the Response Cost Lottery program to targeted students:

- Explain that students will have the chance to earn rewards for good behavior.
 - Review with students the negative behaviors that you would like them to reduce. Use demonstration and modeling to ensure that students clearly know (a) the negative behavior(s) that should be avoided and (b) positive behavior(s) that they can engage in instead. Post the definitions that you have written for behaviors that are to be reduced.
 - Tape an index card on three sides onto the top of each student's desk. Under the untapped corner of the index card, slip the pieces of paper assigned to that student—so that about half the slip is visible.
 - Tell students that the slips of paper represent 'behavior points'. Let them know that every time that they show a negative behavior during the monitoring period, you will remove one of the slips of paper from their desk. At the end of the monitoring period, any slips that *remain* will be placed into a lottery ticket container.
 - Inform student that at the end of each week, you will hold a drawing for one or more prizes. Emphasize that students who hold onto *more* tickets through the week stand a *greater* chance of winning prizes.
2. Start the Response Cost Lottery intervention. Consider reminding students at the start of each day's monitoring period of your positive behavioral expectations (e.g., "*We are going to start our lottery game now. Be sure to give me your best attention, raise you hand to get permission to speak, and do your best work!*"). If you must remove a student's lottery slip because of misbehavior, do so quietly and without drawing undue attention to him or her. If the student does not appear to understand why you are removing a slip, provide a brief explanation in a neutral voice and move on.
 3. At the end of each week (or alternative time interval that you have selected), hold a lottery-ticket drawing and permit students whose colored slips were drawn to select a prize from their reward menu. Empty the tickets from the lottery-ticket container and start over.

Tips:

Use Bonus Tickets. You can increase motivation by telling students that they can earn an extra 'bonus ticket' each day that they manage to hold onto *all* of their allocated slips throughout the entire observation period. These bonus tickets are placed in the lottery-ticket container along with the student's other earned tickets.

Troubleshooting:

The student attempts to cheat. If you discover that a student participating in the Response Cost Lottery program attempts to 'cheat the system' (e.g., or trying to stuff the lottery-ticket container with additional tickets that the student has not earned), you can

suspend the student for one or more days from the game. Then hold a conference with the student, secure his or her promise to follow the rules of the program, and reinstate the student.

References:

Witt, J. C., & Elliott, S.N. (1982). The response cost lottery: A time efficient and effective classroom intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 20, 155-161.