



Executive Functions in the Classroom

SELF-MONITOR



Self-Monitor is our capacity to understand the impact of our words and actions on those around us. We use that information to shift social strategies.

Self-Monitor is measured with survey items, such as “I don’t notice when I cause others to feel bad or get mad until it is too late” and “I talk at the wrong time.”

How to help students who struggle...

Students with poor self-monitoring are prone to making social gaffs... saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. For example, a young child who struggles with self-monitoring their behaviour might have difficulty adjusting the volume of their voice after coming in from recess. Students on the autism spectrum or those with impulsive personalities may have a harder time understanding how their actions are interpreted within a social context. Those difficulties can lead to social isolation and, more problematically, difficulty achieving goals that require support from others.

Social Stories. Share social stories with the student that highlight how hurtful comments can be. Teach your class to not respond to the child’s inappropriate comments. Provide the student with role play opportunities so they can generate acceptable ways of expressing themselves. Directly teach strategies to inhibit responses (e.g., count to 10; stop and think). Debrief with the student after a decision they have made has gone sideways. Explain that there are ways to improve decision making. Directly teach and reinforce strategies for effective decision making (e.g., wait before responding, list pros and cons, seek expert advice).

Object lesson. Younger students may benefit from a demonstration of how our physical reactions to emotional situations cloud our decision making. Fill a water bottle with water and add lots of glitter; shake the bottle and explain to the child/class that when we are upset it is hard to see things clearly. Pass the water bottle around and have students shake the bottle and try to look through it. Then shake the bottle and give it a few minutes to sit. After the glitter settles have the students look through the bottle. They can now see clearly through the bottle. Explain that clear-headedness is the best state for making any decisions on how to act.



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