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### Color Wheel Procedural Summary

1. Post rules & wheel near each other and teacher, typically at front of room
2. Teach rules in beginning of year (work into lesson plan).
3. Early on have students recite (read) rules before or immediately after turning the wheel.
4. In the beginning of year consistency is crucial, use every time you switch activity.
5. Let students abbreviate rules (easier to memorize and quicker).
6. Color wheel always on – green when enter room.
7. Two warnings: 2-minute and 30 second warnings.
8. Change activities - go to Red.
9. Under Red give class directions or instructions for next activity and what to do if finish early.
10. Almost always use Red when transitioning
  - Not Green to Yellow, But Green to Red to Yellow
  - Not Yellow to Green , But Yellow to Red to Green
  - Later may be able to do this switch, but not in beginning.
11. Red frequently (stop activity) but quick on Red (want success).
12. Praise students for following rules.
13. Can fade warnings, recitation, and praise as year goes on.
14. Can alter rules (yellow – green).

### Remember

15. Use Green as reinforcement.
16. **Do not use Red as punishment** – want them following rules.
17. Ignore or briefly prompt those not following rules.
18. Sabotage (intentional) always ignore - do not prompt as often doing this for attention.
19. Can keep all other contingencies (reinforcement and punishment) in place.  
But Should YOU?

### Tough for you to change habits

20. Work into lesson plans,
21. To help you remember to use the wheel have a designated student remind you and – tally each successful red, when total reach X give them a group reward.
22. If R+ - do not withhold the rewards from individual students  
(this is a class-wide procedure).
23. Make it fun - not life or death, not punishment focused.
24. You turn the wheel (not students, but students help you remember to do it).
25. Expect rule following.

You have given your 30 second warning, 28 seconds ago and Tom is working quickly to put his materials away. You should \_\_\_\_\_

- A. run up quickly, change wheel to red, and reprimand Tom
  - B. fumble with the wheel turning, turn it to find the class following rule
- B – Remember – to trick is to occasion rule following, not catch rule breaking.**

*Table 2. CWS Procedures and Procedure Rationales.*

Procedure	Rationale
1. Teach the students the rules. Read/recite frequently (McIntosh et al., 2004).	Students have to know rules. Repeating and reciting rules may serve as antecedent stimuli for rule-following behavior.
2. Post wheel and written rules next to each other near where group directions/instructions are typically delivered.	All three stimuli visible at the same time make it easier for students to know and follow the rules. Also, having the wheel close allows the teachers to change it after finishing delivering instructions/directions
3. Write rules using your own colloquialisms (seat-in-seat) and make them brief.	Child learning and understanding is critical, not language used. Briefly worded rules allow for rapid recitation.
4. Fade warnings, recitations and praise as year goes on, but do not stop as you may need to rehearse a bit as new students enter the room.	At some point, too much repetition and recitation are unnecessary.
5. Use red frequently, for almost every activity transition so that you can clearly communicate with the class.	Establishing transition routines is important and consistency helps some students' behavior appropriately.
6. Almost always transition using red. Do not go from yellow to green. Instead go from yellow to red to green.	You want to make it clear that one activity has ended before beginning another activity.
7. Keep time on red brief. Do not teach or provide lectures (academic) on red.	You want to occasion rule-following behavior. The longer you are on red the more likely someone will break a rule.
8. After quick directions/instruction on red turn back to yellow and respond to raised hands.	You may have a child who needs immediate attention (e.g., really, really has to go to bathroom).
9. DO NOT USE RED AS PUNISHMENT	You want to occasion rule following. It is unlikely that the entire class misbehaved and deserves punishment, so those who behaved well may resent this punishment and break red rules.
10. Praise students for rule-following behavior. Do not say something like "Well it is about time you grow up and behave! Why haven't you been doing this all along"?	The goal of CWS is rule following and praising rule-following is likely to increase this behavior and enhance the quality of the classroom environment.
11. You may use time on green as a group reward (all or none of the students get the time on green).	Time on green allows students to engage in preferred behaviors and therefore can be a powerful and efficient reward for each student.
12. You, not the students, turn the wheel.	Many students will take directions from adults but not peers. Also, although the wheel cost little to make, it does take time to make the wheel and children may accidentally destroy it.

## Color Wheel References

### **The following 2 articles summarize how to implement CW procedures:**

Skinner, A. L., & Pfaffman, J., Jaspers, K. E., & Skinner, C. H. (2008). Supplementing Color Wheel procedures with interdependent group-oriented rewards: Implementation guidelines. *Journal of Evidence-Based Practices for Schools, 9*, 47-56.

Skinner, C. H., Scala, G., Dendas, D., & Lentz, F. E. (2007). The color wheel: Implementation guidelines. *Journal of Evidence-Based Practices for Schools, 8*, 134-140.

### **These articles describe the studies:**

Below, J. L., Skinner, A. L., Skinner, C. H., Sorrell, C. A., & Irwin, A. (2008). Decreasing out-of-seat behavior in a kindergarten classroom: Supplementing the Color Wheel with interdependent group-oriented rewards. *Journal of Evidence-Based Practices for Schools, 9*, 33-46.

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Blondin, C. A., Skinner, C. H., Parkhurst, J., Wood, A., & Snyder, J. (2012). Enhancing on-task behavior in fourth-grade students using a modified Color Wheel System. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 28*, 37-58.

Watson, T. L., Skinner, C. H., Skinner, A. L., Cazzell, S., Aspiranti, K., Moore, T., & Coleman, M. (2016). Preventing disruptive behavior via classroom management: Validating the Color Wheel System in kindergarten classrooms. *Behavior Modification, 1*, 1-23.

Aspiranti, K. B., Bebech, A., Ruffo, B., & Skinner, C. H. (2019, March). Validating the Color Wheel system as a class-wide behavioral intervention for students with Autism. *Behavioral Analysis in Practice, 12*, 143-153.

**This article describes and summarizes the evidence-base for the color wheel from 2007 – the evidence base is better now, but this is where I started discussing contextual validity: I have included this article below because it is hard to get! Journal closed!**

Skinner, C. H., & Skinner, A. L. (2007). Establishing an evidence base for a classroom management procedure with a series of studies: Evaluating the Color Wheel. *Journal of Evidence-Based Practices for Schools, 8*, 88-101.

Running Head: COLOR WHEEL IMPLEMENTATION

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The Color Wheel: Implementation Guidelines

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## *TARGET STUDENTS AND BEHAVIOR*

Color Wheel (CW) procedures were designed as one component of a comprehensive program for classrooms serving students with emotional/behavioral disorders across all grade levels (Centennial School, 1986). The two studies presented in this issue demonstrate that CW procedures can be adapted and integrated into general education elementary classrooms to reduce inappropriate talks (Choate, C.H. Skinner, Fearington, Kohler, & Skolits, in press; Fudge, Reece, C.H. Skinner, & Cowden, in press). Formal and informal observations and teacher reports from these and other studies suggest that CW procedures may reduce other inappropriate behaviors, increase academic achievement by allowing for more and higher quality instruction and learning time, reduce teacher frustration and burnout, and improve the classroom climate (Below, A.L. Skinner, C.H. Skinner, Sorrell, & Irwin, in press; Hautau, C.H. Skinner, Pfaffman, Foster, & Clark, in press; Saecker, Sager, C.H. Skinner, Williams, Luna, & Spurgeon; in press; C.H. Skinner & A.L. Skinner, in press). The implementation procedures described below are minor adaptations from the Centennial School Training Manual (Centennial School, 1986).

## *MATERIALS CHECKLIST*

1. Color Wheel - Red, yellow, and green construction paper, poster board, tape/paste, and tacks.
2. Rules - Three pieces of colored poster board (red, yellow, and green), a broad tipped marker and tape, paste, or tacks.

## *PROCEDURES*

### *Step I: Preparation*

1. Develop three lists of rules (Red, Yellow and Green).
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#### Example of Rules

<u>Red</u>	<u>Yellow</u>	<u>Green</u>
a. In seat	a. Raise hand to speak	a. Use inside voices
b. Desk cleared	b. Raise hand to leave seat	b. Hands and feet to self
c. Eyes of speaker	c. Eyes on speaker or work	c. Follow directions
d. No talking	d. Hands and feet to self	
	e. Follow directions	

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2. Write rules in abbreviated (brief) fashion on colored poster board.
3. Keep rules to a minimum (e.g., 3-6 per color).
4. Construct your color wheel or traffic light.

### *Step II: Teacher Training and Practice*

CW procedures appear simple. However, in order for CW procedures to become part of a daily routine, teachers must break their previous routines. Thus, initial teacher training and practice with CW procedures should not be neglected. Teachers should practice implementing CW procedures in their classroom when students are not present. Using demonstration, role playing, immediate feedback, discussion, and repeated practice consultants can work with teachers to increase the probability that teachers will implement CW procedures correctly and consistently.

1. When students are not present, post the wheel and rules in classroom. The wheel and rules should be posted in front of the room where the teacher typically provides group directions.
2. Practice implementing CW procedures with consultants providing demonstrations, descriptions, explanations, and immediate corrective feedback. Practice implementing transitions from Yellow to Red and from Green to Red with appropriate 2-minute and 30-second warnings. Also practice moving from Red to Yellow, and from Red to Green (no warnings needed). During the practice sessions remind teachers to answer questions or address student concerns after the wheel is turned from Red as they cannot talk while it is on Red.
3. Remind teachers not to go from Yellow to Green or Green to Yellow when they first use these procedures as Red sets the stage for students to stop whatever they are doing and allows teachers to introduce the next activity without interruption.
4. After each practice session remove the rules and the color wheel from the classroom.

### *Step III: Student Training and Practice*

When the procedure is first applied, it is important for teachers to post, teach, and re-teach the rules. As it takes students time to learn and acclimate themselves to CW rules and transition procedures, the first few days the CW procedures are implemented in the room should be treated as practice days for both the teacher and the students. Thus, no serious consequences for rule breaking behavior (e.g., loose chance to earn group rewards) should be established until students have a better chance to earn rewards.

Occasionally teachers will make mistakes (e.g., call on someone to respond when the wheel is on Red). Mistakes made by both teachers and students should be treated lightly.

Finally, when CW procedures are first implemented it would be useful for consultants to be present so that they can provide private feedback to teachers regarding their implementation procedures.

1. After at least two practice sessions across 2 days post the wheel and rules in the classroom before students enter.
2. Begin the day by describing the CW procedures and goals (e.g., more efficient transitions, clarify rules so behavior expectations are clear to all, including the teacher).
3. Next describe the rules, provide a rationale for each set of rules (Yellow will make it easier for you to learn without disruptions), and finally provide an explanation for what each specific abbreviated rule means (give examples).
4. Describe the function of the wheel. Specifically, tell the students the wheel will help them know which rules are in place at any moment in time.
5. Describe the transition procedures. Focus on the warning being given to increase student success with rule following.
6. Have students read, re-read, recite, and repeat the rules numerous times.
7. Practice implementing the procedures in a fun format. For example, you could ask the class what the rules for Red are while the color wheel is on Yellow, Green, and Red. If students raise their hands while the wheel is on Red, the teacher would a) say "put your hands down, no hand raising or talking on Red", b) move the color wheel to yellow and c) ask the same question, and d) call on a student raised her/his hand.
8. Remember on the first couple of days you want to teach and re-teach the rules and procedures. However, do not provide any strong consequences for rule-breaking or rule-following behaviors as students must become acclimate to the new procedures.



#### *Step IV: Implementation Guidelines for Continued Use*

CW procedures can be modified after students and teachers have become acclimated to these procedures. Some modifications we observed are inappropriate and others are useful. Below are guidelines for continued application of CW procedures.

##### **1. Keep rules brief and use words and terms appropriate for the class.**

*Rationale.* Rules need to be learned. Thus, keeping them brief is critical. You can give provide long operational definitions of the rules when they are taught but the posted rules should be a brief easy to learn form of these operational definitions. Using idiosyncratic language that students are familiar with such as "use your inside voices" is appropriate.

##### **2. Use Red frequently but keep time on Red brief.**

*Rationale.* Red is useful for most activity transitions, so use it frequently. However, Red rules are the most difficult to follow. Keep time on red brief as you want successful rule-following behaviors.

##### **3. Time on Red should never be used for punishment.**

*Rationale.* Because the rules are strict, it is hard to get successful rule follow on Red. It is even more difficult when the entire class is being simultaneously punished, even those students who did not misbehave.

##### **4. Time on Green can be used as a group reward.**

*Rationale.* This may be an efficient and effective group reinforcer.

**5. Consistently give time warnings before switching to Red.**

*Rationale.* Warnings increase probability of rule-following behavior.

**6. If all members of the class are ready, you can change colors before the time limit elapsed.**

*Rationale.* Dead time may occasion rule breaking. Only change early when all are ready (e.g., all have material put away and in seat looking at you).

**7. Fade rule recitations and praise.**

*Rationale.* While over-learning is good, too much repetition wastes time.

**8. Teachers turn the wheel, not students.**

*Rationale.* Efficiency is the goal. Some students may resent classmates "telling them what to do".

**9. Before beginning, decide how rule breaking will be addressed.** Initially we recommend group-prompts, (e.g., "remember class on Red you need to be looking at me") as opposed to an individual prompt (e.g., "Ben you are supposed to be looking at me").

*Rationale.* Individual attention may be reinforcing and repeating rules for entire class helps all learn.

**10. If a student consistently breaks rules you may have to do some individual programming (e.g., punishment system), but never use group punishment.**

*Rationale.* You should never punish students for classmates' behavior (C.H. Skinner, Cashwell, & Dunn, 1996).

**11. CW procedures can be reactive.** For example, if students are getting too loud on Green, the teacher could return the class to their seats (turn wheel to Red) and remind them that Green requires them to use their inside voices.

*Rationale.* Preventing problems before they become too serious via stimulus control is often preferable to punishing inappropriate behaviors after they have occurred (C.H. Skinner, Cashwell, & A.L. Skinner, 2000).

#### *POSSIBLE UNDESIRE SIDE EFFECTS*

Although CW procedure appears to be effective at preventing and remedying many problems we have noticed several undesirable side effects that may occur.

1. *Messy desks.* Particularly when CW procedures are first introduced, students may rush to put materials away prior to the wheel going to Red.
2. *Rules do not fit all situations.* As the students become more acclimated to rules you can adjust them with directions. For example, while the CW is on Red the teacher may announce "I am going to change the color wheel to Yellow, but I am going to allow you to call out answers".
3. *May increase tattling.* This is especially likely with younger elementary students. Two solutions appear to work. First, ignore tattling (extinction). Second, interdependent group-rewards can discourage tattling as all students are *less* likely to get if they make teachers aware of peers' inappropriate behaviors (C.H. Skinner et al., 2000).

*A BRIEF QUIZ ON COLOR WHEEL IMPLEMENTATION*

1. The students are doing independent seatwork and you have given both the 2-minute and the 30-second warnings. As you walk to the color wheel you notice Ben rushing to put his materials away. You should

- a) quickly turn the wheel to Red to catch Ben breaking rules
- b) turn your back to the class to change the wheel, fumble with the wheel a bit until you hear Ben's desk shut, turn around to observe all students following the rules.

**Answer: B** - Educators often spend too much time and energy focused on catching and punishing inappropriate behaviors (C.H. Skinner et al., 2000). The goal is successful rule following. Allowing Ben, who is trying to follow the rules, a few more seconds to be successful is appropriate.

2. You are frustrated with your students because they behaved poorly at the cafeteria. When the students return to the classroom is it appropriate for you to turn the wheel to Red, reprimand the students, and then tell them that you are going to keep it on Red for 20 minutes as punishment?

**Answer: No, this would be inappropriate.** Your goal is to occasion rule-following behavior and it is difficult for students to follow Red rules. Because Red rules are difficult to follow, long intervals on Red will likely occasion rule breaking behavior. Additionally, you are punishing all students, even those who behaved well at the lunch.

*REMEMBER THIS*

High expectations for rule-following behavior are more likely when rules are clear, known, and reasonable. Keep expectations high and do all you can to help students succeed as opposed to putting your time and energy into catching rule-breakers.

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