

# MYSTERY MOTIVATOR

## WHAT IS MYSTERY MOTIVATOR?

Mystery Motivator (MM) involves a game-like element (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014) in order to motivate and encourage the student by using the preferences of the students. MM is a strategy that reinforces students for appropriate behavior (Moore et al., 1994). When using MM, it is usually the consequence itself that goes unnamed prior to a task demand, but the teacher signals to the student that something positive will happen if behavior changes in the desired direction. MM adds an element of intrigue to other reinforcement contingencies (Kruger et al., 2016).

## WHY?

**Including positive reinforcement for desired behavior helps encourage the students to continue to engage in that behavior in the future. MM provides reinforcement using a randomized, variable schedule (Kowalewicz & Coffee, 2014).**



## PREPARATION:

1. Determine the task or activity in which to use MM. Define the replacement behaviors you want to see.
2. Select and prepare the MM.
3. Explain the rules to the student(s).

### IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- You must first determine what the student(s) deem motivating (Cannella-Malone et al., 2013).
- Should be used at random times throughout the week/day.
- Vary the reasons for using MM.
- The reinforcement should be something that can be delivered sooner rather than later, if not immediate.
- Can use a variety of ways to setup the MM (e.g., picture in envelope, smaller object that represents the reinforcer, the actual reinforcer hidden, etc.).
- Shorter periods at first to ensure students come in contact with the reinforcer.

### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

1. Announce MM game to the student(s).
2. Define and describe target behavior(s).
3. State start time frame/period.
4. State end time.
5. Record target behavior (e.g., clicker, tally, etc.).
6. Conclude time.
7. Deliver MM if earned.

4. Track progress/criteria to determine earning the MM. Establish a cut-off.
5. Deliver MM.
6. Track student(s) progress on successfully earning the MM for pre-determined behavior(s).

*EXAMPLE: Today we are playing MM for calling out during math. Remember, calling out means to speak without raising your hand and being called on. I will be keeping track and if we stay below 3 for the lesson today, we will get our MM! Our time begins now!*