Mystery Motivator

⏱ **Target Grade Level**	Grades K-12
⚙ **Level of Intervention**	Tier 1: Universal, Tier 2: Selective, Tier 3: Indicated
◎ **Domains Targeted**	Attention and Academic Issues, Emotion Dysregulation, Externalizing Behavior
⚙ **Specific Concerns Addressed**	Disruptive Behaviors, Inattention, Off-Task Behaviors, Work Completion

Description

Mystery Motivators involve rewarding students for displaying appropriate classroom behaviors. Rewards are given to students on a random schedule so that the students are not sure when the teacher is watching their behaviors. The uncertainty helps increase the likelihood that students will use appropriate behaviors throughout the day.

The How-To

First identify which target behavior (e.g., talking-out) you want to see less, determine how to track when the behavior occurs, determine how often the behavior happens, and set a goal for when the reward can occur (e.g., if 20 talk-outs typically occur during a lesson, set a goal of 10 or fewer talk-outs). Next, identify a list of motivating rewards that the class/student can earn and a time of day to use the strategy. Announce the mystery motivator challenge to the classroom/student ("The class can win a mystery motivator reward today if we have fewer talk-outs. I will <u>not</u> tell you when I am watching. It will be a mystery. If we have 10 or fewer talk-outs, the class will win the reward."). Teach the appropriate replacement behavior (e.g., raising hand instead of talking-out). During the selected time, record the number of target behaviors without letting the students know. Lastly, reveal if the mystery motivator is earned. Provide the reward immediately following the announcement if the goal was achieved. Give feedback if not ("We had 13 talk-outs. Remember to raise your hand if you want to talk.").

- ***Who can use?*** Classroom teacher; adult in the building
- ***How often?*** Daily
- ***For how long?*** Throughout the school year (fading out little by little once behaviors improve)

Tips for Success

- The reward and/or feedback should always occur immediately after the mystery timeframe.
- Rewards are most motivating when students generate their own reward list.
- Start out with an easier goal at first. Then, increase the goal over time.

Helpful Resources
⇒ Intervention Central

Please provide your feedback

National Center for
Rural School Mental Health