Momentary Time Sample – Description, Procedures, & Example

When the behavior that you are looking at is not easily counted, you can measure the behavior by counting the number of time-intervals in which the behavior occurred. A behavior is not easily counted when:

● It is difficult to tell exactly when the behavior begins or when it ends, or
● It occurs at such a high rate that it is difficult to count.

Use Momentary Time Sample recording if the behavior tends to last for a while, such as reading or writing. Look up at the end of each interval to see if the behavior is occurring at that particular moment. You do not need to be looking throughout the entire interval. A timing instrument such as a wall clock, wristwatch, or stopwatch is needed in order to keep track of the intervals. Examples of behaviors that you can measure using Momentary Time Sample include writing, reading, working on the given assignment, talking to peers.

Procedures
* Write down the behavior that you will be looking for and its definition
* Write down how long you will be observing every time that you observe: Total Observation Time
* Divide the total observation time into 10 same length intervals; write down the length of each interval
  ▪ All intervals need to be the same length: Intervals can be from a few seconds long up to a few minutes long (less than 11 minutes)
  Note: **Total observation time and length of intervals need to be the same each time that you observe**
* Enter the date of your observation
* Make sure that you have your timing instrument available prior to beginning your observation
* Keep an eye on your timing instrument to keep track of the intervals
* **At the end of each time interval**:
  ▪ Look and see if the behavior is occurring at that particular moment – Not before, not after
  ▪ If the behavior is occurring at that moment, place checkmark (X) for that interval
  ▪ If the behavior is not occurring at that moment, place an O for that interval
* At the end of your observation time, total the number of checkmarks **(This is what you graph)**

Example
Behavior definition: Talking to a peer anytime when the teacher is talking or when should be performing individual work during class time.

Total Observation Time: 50 minutes   Length of each interval: 5 minutes

Date	Interval #										Total times behavior occurred (X)
11/5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
O or X	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	5

Tieghi-Benet, M. C., Miller, K., Reiners, J., Robinett, B. E. Freeman, R. L., Smith, C. L., Baer, D., Palmer, A. (2003). *Encouraging Student Progress (ESP), Student/ team book.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas.