GOAL ATTAINMENT SCALING

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a method of rating behavioral, cognitive, or social performance based on a criterion-referenced scale with clearly defined anchor points. This method of measurement arose out of a need to evaluate intervention effectiveness in mental health settings in the late 1960s, but has since been found to be a useful and appealing tool for practitioners in the behavioral sciences, such as mental health care and education. Goals are identified for the client or population either by the client and practitioner or stakeholders who may be concerned with the target behaviors. Criteria are then defined for the range of possible outcomes from *best possible outcome*, a score of +2, to *worst possible outcome*, a score of -2. A baseline score of 0 indicates no change in the current behavior. Using GAS successfully is contingent upon creating anchor points that are measurable by observation, contain no overlaps or gaps between scoring possibilities, are specific, and do not include a great deal of jargon.

What kind of behaviors would this measure be useful in addressing?

Goal Attainment Scaling is a useful tool for measuring smaller increments of change in behavior than direct behavioral observations or behavior checklists. Measuring progress towards a behavioral goal using a structured rating system can provide practitioners with a method of evaluating progress that is more comprehensive and feasible, while also maintaining the integrity of measurement over time. Examples of school behaviors include out of seat behaviors, calling out, homework completion, physical aggression or behavior outbursts, and use of coping strategies. Any behavior of concern that can be defined in terms of incremental increases, is observable, and has scale criteria definitions that do not overlap is appropriate for GAS.

What are some examples of goals that would be appropriate for this measure?

Goal Attainment Scaling can take the form of a rubric with several behaviors of measure. It is important to ensure that you are not measuring two behaviors in one scale, and, therefore, divide the scale into the appropriate amount of goals. For example, accuracy and completion may both be important behaviors for a student, but they are more appropriately measured as two distinct goals. Please see the rubric on the other side of this document for example goals in a Goal Attainment Scaling rubric.

ADVANTAGES
- Easy to score when designed appropriately
- Provides sensitive measures of change in student behavior
- Useful for a variety of ages and behaviors
- Provides reliable evidence of effectiveness of instruction and/or interventions
- Identified as a feasible method of tracking performance in classroom settings

DISADVANTAGES
- If designed poorly, not a reliable measure
- If rated by different individuals, can become subjective
- May be more effective if substantiated by additional measures of performance, such as direct observations or checklists

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Example of Goal Attainment Scaling Rubric

Level of Attainment	Scale 1 Out of Seat	Scale 2 Calling Out	Scale 3 Homework Completion
(–2) Much worse than baseline level of behavior	J. K. is out of his seat without teacher permission more than 12 minutes during math. [specify number of minutes]	J. K. calls out an answer without teacher permission 5 or more times during math. [specify number of times]	J. K. completes less than 60% of math assignments per week. [specify percent]
(–1) Somewhat worse than baseline level of behavior	J. K. is out of his seat without teacher permission 10–12 minutes during math.	J. K. calls out an answer without teacher permission 4 times during math.	J. K. completes 60–69% of math homework assignments per week.
(0) Baseline level of behavior	J. K. is out of his seat without teacher permission 7–9 minutes during math.	J. K. calls out an answer without teacher permission 3 times during math.	J. K. completes 70–79% of math homework assignments per week.
(+1) Somewhat better than baseline level of behavior	J. K. is out of his seat without teacher permission 4–6 minutes during math.	J. K. calls out an answer without teacher permission 2 times during math.	J. K. completes 80–89% of math homework assignments per week.
(+2) Much better than baseline level of behavior or has met goal	J. K. is out of his seat without teacher permission 3 or fewer minutes during math. [specify number of minutes]	J. K. calls out an answer without teacher permission 1 or fewer times during math.	J. K. completes 90–100% of math homework assignments per week.
Comments	Monitor daily	Monitor daily	Monitor weekly

Adapted from Coffe, G. & Ray-Subramanian, C.E., (2009). Goal attainment scaling: a progress-monitoring tool for behavioral interventions. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, *3,* 1-12.

*Each section of the scale should contain a definition, but they should not overlap each other
*Avoid vague wording or the use of jargon
*Ensure that every instance of behavior has exactly one category in which it can be recorded
*Graph in a linear form using the daily score or weekly average

Goal Attainment Scale Example Graph of Out of Seat Behavior

	Baseline	Intervention
9/1/2012	0	
9/2/2012	-1	
9/3/2012	-1	
9/4/2012	0	
9/5/2012	-1	
9/8/2012		0
9/9/2012		0
9/10/2012		1
9/11/2012		1
9/12/2012		2

JK Out of Seat