

Better Student Habits

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

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Parents, teachers, students, what is up? You're going to like this video because I'm going to talk about habit trackers. So for students who start with executive function stuff, you have a lot of late work, missings, incompletes, they're trying to change habits, they're trying to get more organized, trying to prioritize better, trying to use planners more, all of these sorts of things, they're really working on some stuff. Habit trackers can be a game changer. I'm going to share with you one that I made with a student recently, so a lot of the work that I do we'll custom make certain things, daily plans, planners, whatever. But in this case, we worked on a habit tracker for this particular student. And I changed it a little bit just for anonymity purposes for the student, and just to make it a little more applicable to a lot of people. Now the habit tracker I'm going to show you would probably be good for middle, high school, college students, but you will have to really consider the complexity of it because you want you don't want it to be so hard that you're not going to use it. I'm going to go ahead and show you how I created it and why I created it the way I created it. Go ahead and take whatever ideas you want, and I hope that this helps you or the students that you work with, or if you're a student, I hope this helps for life. I use habit trackers myself, they're tremendous, because I'm not one of those people who's just like, "Oh, I'm so disciplined, I'm so motivated, I want to create a change and I'm really driven by that thing," nope. It's very hard for me to create these changes, so that's why I use them because it allows me to create change in a really manage way. So here is the one that I created, I'm going to go ahead and show this to you. And I'm going to break down why I did it the way I did it.

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So basically, this is the gist of it. And this is another version that I'm going to show you in just a minute and I'll tell you why I'm going to show you that version. But this is a habit tracker, and I'm going to increase the size a little bit so we can see it better here, and I will go ahead and break down the different pieces of it. First of all, what we did is we did a two week date range for this particular student. The reason we did two weeks is because it's a good amount of data to be able to visually see. Now with this student, we were talking about different ways to visually see it, like should we use stickers, this student is a high school student who likes stickers, should we use numbers, yada, yada, I'll get some more about that. But whatever you use, whether it's stickers, whether it's color, whether it's numbers, whatever, make sure that the amount of time you choose is pretty appropriate so that the data works for whatever situation you're in. We happen to write the dates that we were looking at, and these are one through two of an eight week, just a little challenge to see what happens. Again, there are a lot of details on this particular one. But we did that purposely, you don't have to add this many details, do something that will be successful. So I wanted to show

you that really quick. I'm going to go ahead and go to 100% to make it smaller. This also, what I did is I changed it so that this was on landscape. So the way you do that is you go to 'File' and then 'Page Setup' and set it to landscape because it just fits better for what we were creating. You do you, but that's what worked for us. And then our margins are like point five, so we ended up changing the margins, also in the Page View, Page Setup button that will help you to change the margins. We wanted to maximize the space on this page, so that is what we ended up doing.

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Now I'm going to go ahead and increase the size and walk you through some more parts of it. What we did here is we typed in the date, so you can actually leave these blank so that you can replicate it and use it for different students in your classroom or you can replicate it for yourself. But what we did is we actually put the dates in here for the two weeks that we are doing, and then we put the days that were starting on a Monday, and we added those in here. So that's how we started the dates and the day. Then going down are the habits, I'll talk about the habits in a moment. We also did an overall success on a scale of 1 through 10. So what that does is that allows you to look at, let's say that you were looking at total sleep time, and this particular student wants more sleep. So they can look at you know, their overall success. And let's say that they really improved on it and they gave themselves an eight. It doesn't matter, it just matters that whatever you know, you choose to do that you can explain it. But you know, we can let people create their own ways of evaluating, but it's really important to look back and see the overall success. So we have an overall success column here. Now, not everything is going to get in here. I'll explain that in a minute. So basically, what we chose to look at here is the last bed time, this is the only confusing thing on this chart. So that is the previous night's bedtime, so let's say that it was 10:30 in the morning and then at 6am is when they woke up. Now so this is the night before and that day. The reason that we did it that way is because then we can figure out the total sleep time of the night before. So this is just the only wonky thing is it's the previous night. Everything else, this is Monday. This whole column here is Monday, but this one thing here is Sunday, just to be clear.

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What time did they go to bed the night before? What time did they Make up how much total time did they sleep? So their goal is to get eight hours of sleep at night. So this way they're tracking it, they can track it each night. They probably don't need, but they may need to have success, how successful were they on waking up, maybe they gave themselves a four, maybe going to bed was a nine, whatever. And then they consider their overall an eight, whatever. Now this student doesn't eat all their meals. So they want to look at how many, they're supposed to the three meals a day and sometimes they don't eat until evening. So this student wants to be sure that they're tracking it to try to eat three meals a day. Meal one yes or no, meal two yes or no, meal three yes or no. Self-care on a 1 through 3. A one means self-care wasn't that great, didn't brush teeth, didn't shower, didn't brush or whatever the thing was, general self-care. And a three means great, and a one means not great, and two means medium, whatever. And then brushing their teeth, 0, 1, or 2? Now this is how many times this student wants to check how many times because they want to brush their teeth twice a day. And they they can either in this case, brush their teeth zero times a day, one time a day, or two times a day. So that's why we chose the zero through two for the metric here. Did they exercise, yes or no? Did they shower, yes or no? Did they brush their hair, yes or no? This student wants to track this, okay? Did they meditate? If so, how many minutes? Did they do five gratitudes? We do a lot with gratitude. So grateful for this, this, this, and this. Gratitude really helps change the brain in a magnificent way. Did they clean the room for five minutes, yes or no? They want to just be cleaning a little bit every day. Did they use their planner, yes or no? Did they make a plan for the day, yes or no? How was their focus on a scale of 1 to 3? Was their focus really good or really weak? Were they kind of themselves? This student wants to track how kind they're to themselves. And did they have what would they are calling 'fun time,' make time to have fun every day? And then overall daily temperature, what would they consider it? And so then you can see you know, like I said before, they can choose to evaluate over here, you know, how did I use daily plans during this two week period? And then they can go on to the next two week period, and they can restart and they can see everything.

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But the thing is, is that what we wanted to do was make this a very easy chart, it only takes a minute to do. They can run through and do everything, and we want it to be very visual, but it wasn't visual enough. So since we're not doing stickers on this one, we're like "How can we make it more visual?" Meanwhile, I want to mention, the intention is not to type stuff in. The intention is we printed these off four weeks worth, or for 8 weeks week's worth but four sheets. The intention is to print it off and to handwrite it so you don't have to do it on the computer, but to have it on a clipboard that's real easy to access. So anyhow, wasn't visual enough. So how can we make it more visual? Because the more visual it is, the more you, or me, or whoever's doing the habit tracker is going to be able to, like for me when I do habit trackers myself, it's very frustrating when it's visual, and I can see color on it, so I use color. So what we decided to do on this one is to use highlighters, but we're using colors to say "Yes, this felt successful," or "No, it didn't feel successful," and I'll show you how that looks right now. So here, this one, what we did is let's say their last bedtime was at 10:30pm and they felt that was too late. But waking up at 6am was good, that the seven and a half hours wasn't enough for them. But then they did meal one that was green, meal two was green, meal three they didn't do so that's red. So you can sort of self-reflect, like self-reflect. Maybe in this case, a 2 felt like a win, right? And brushing their teeth two times a day is definitely win, but even though this isn't a 3 it's a win. And then exercise, no, no, so those are red. Brush their hair, yes. Meditated for two minutes, maybe they wanted 10 but they did two and that's still a win for this person.

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So anyhow, you can choose what's red and green. But what's really cool about this is that when you can see the entire chart and the entire thing is filled out and there are colors, and you can see a progression of more green or more red, and you can really visually see where things are going, it's very motivating. It becomes very concrete. Part of the problem with those of us like me who have ADHD, executive function challenges, and things of the sort, part of the problem with the prefrontal cortex with this stuff is our ability to accurately or realistically self-reflect and really look at things objectively and accurately. And other people might be able to see us pretty accurately but we often can't see ourselves as accurately. So this makes it very concrete, not abstract and it makes it a lot easier for a lot of us to be able to accomplish goals.

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Seth Perler 10:04

I hope that video was helpful for you. My name is Seth Perler, I'm an executive function coach, and I help struggling students navigate education that they can have a great life. Please, I put a lot of work into my work as you can see here, I'm sharing this with you for free on YouTube. And if you like what I'm doing, give it a thumbs up. Take a second to do that, and subscribe, that supports. Please share my work, snag the link and share with somebody today, somewhere. Leave a comment, that also helps. My question to you in the comments is this. I'm interested in hearing what do you think would be a really great thing to have on habit trackers? So what would you put? Completed homework or organize backpack? Like what things might be important for you or people that you know, and do you have any other ideas that would make a habit tracker like this better? Feel free to add it in the comments below. I'd love to read your comments and help other people through those comments. Again, please share my work. You can go to SethPerler.com by the way, my website for a bunch of freebies for parents, teachers and students, and my YouTube channel, and my ExecutiveFunctionSummit.com for my summit, and all the things. My wish, my hope for you today is this. I hope that you have peace of mind and peace of heart today, and I hope that you connect with the kids in your life that you care about. Real, have some real connection and quality time today. Be well, take care.

