

Which Way Do I Go?

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Which way do I go? Every teacher has tips and ideas to give to new and seasoned teachers that are “sure-fire” ways to work with students. However, I have found that every teacher has to find their own way. This presentation covers three points and provides you with an example job aid. It may or may not work for you. It may spark an idea. Nonetheless, it will give you some tools to gain control of your classes.

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The objectives for this presentation are: determining and teaching specific directions, using positive consequences, and using negative consequences. There are specific directions you will want for specific tasks in your classroom. For instance, during a lecture, you may ask that all eyes are on you and that students are sitting in their chairs. For group work, students are allowed to talk, but you will need to define the voice level. The same directions may be given for lab work.

Along with classroom directions, implementing consequences helps to establish control of your classroom. Positive consequences can make your class an enjoyable environment. Use negative consequences to stop unwanted behavior and get your class back on track.

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You will help yourself in the long run when you employ flexibility. Directions change as your classroom changes. Directions for lectures differ from those behaviors needed for a small group activity. Be clear with your directions. For example: Students are to enter your classroom quietly, sit in their seats and begin their bell work.

Breakdown class periods. For instance, your beginning and ending class, lecture and test taking. Consider materials books and other materials that will be needed. Consider interaction. If you allow students to talk, define what voice level you will allow. For instance, you do not want to hear all the details of their conversation.

When focusing on observable behaviors during a lecture, you might expect their eyes to be on you, pen or pencil out and for the student to raise their hand before speaking.

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State and explain directions. Have students restate the directions, making sure they understand the procedure. Question for understanding. Review the directions periodically. With clear specific directions, you can avoid confusion and disruption. Effective behavior management is based on clear expectations of students.

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There are several ways to implement positive consequences in your classroom. They include: positive repetition, consistent praise, circulate, scanning the classroom and a class wide reward system. When teachers use positive reinforcement, it helps make sure students are on task. Using a class wide reward system shows the class consistent appreciation.

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When teachers praise a student, it needs to be individualized and appropriate. Praise should be sincere as students will sense if the praise is not meant. Describe the task in which you are praising the student. Praise should be matter of fact. This is not the age group in which to be gushy and embarrassing to the student. Another way to give praise is to visit with the student after class and personally state the praise.

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Negative consequences are a fact of life. It is never easy, but must be done. To remain in control the teacher must remain calm. It also helps to use matter of fact statements. Consistency is always an issue to let slide; however, when you are not consistent, you are telling your students that your classroom rules are enforced only some of the time and apply to only some of the students.

It is also a good idea to provide for student feedback. Students want to tell their side of the story. Give them a method where they can tell their side. Have them write it down for you or meet with you after class.

Another method to provide negative consequences is the “Moving in” – move close to the student making eye contact, state expectations, remind student of consequences and state what happens next.

The last method you may want to use is the “taking aside”. With this method, ask the student to come to you. Be sure to place the student away from the class so that you can face the class. This allows you to observe your class.

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What do you do when a student comes into class late? Using the following job aid, the teacher does the following:

Deals with tardy slips positively, maintains consistency with a specific procedure expected from the student of signing their name in a notebook, depositing their tardy slip and taking their seat.

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Tardy procedure job aid.

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In summary, you have learned how to use specific directions, positive consequences and negative consequences to enhance the environment of your classroom.

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References