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Positive Teacher-Student Relationship Quick Reference Guide

Positive interactions between teachers and their students play an important role in determining student success. Research shows that increasing positive interactions (e.g., praise statements) and decreasing negative interactions improves the classroom climate as well as student academic and behavioral outcomes. In general, a positive relationship with teachers boosts student motivation and cooperation. Interacting with students in a positive way teaches students valuable interpersonal skills as well. The ratio of positive to negative teacher statements to students should be 4:1.

Increasing praise statements to acknowledge appropriate behaviors, using error correction procedures to address misbehavior, and practicing active supervision (e.g., circulating, scanning, encouraging) are strategies teachers can employ to improve student-teacher interactions. Providing choices can also help to improve relationships with students as it gives students a sense of control and may stop challenging behaviors. In addition, giving students choices provides teachers with a chance to make a praise statement about the change in behavior.

Improving interactions with students will take time and practice! Increasing positivity will improve student behavior and may improve teacher outlook as well.

Following are examples of the three types of feedback that can be given to students:

Praise Statements
<p>Praise statements should be specific and genuine. It is helpful to tie praise statements to behavioral expectations to increase the likelihood students will repeat the desired behavior. By focusing on what the students do correctly, students feel competent and confident about their ability to do what is expected. Using the student’s name when making praise statements personalizes the message: <i>“You did a great job participating in class today, Alex. Keep up the great work!”</i></p> <p><u>Pithy statements</u> such as “Good work” are <u>not sufficient</u>. In addition, avoid “back-handed praise” such as “You didn’t mess up as badly as you did yesterday.” Such comments lessen desired outcomes.</p>

Corrective Statements	
<p>The primary purpose of error correction is to assist the student in performing the correct response when a behavior is incorrect or unacceptable. Error correction is not punishment.</p>	
<p>1. Using a neutral tone of voice and facial expression, inform the student his or her response was incorrect.</p>	<p><i>“Please stop. Calling out in class is not acceptable.”</i> <i>“Hold on for one moment. That voice volume is too loud.”</i></p>
<p>2. Tell the student what you want him or her to DO. If the error was an inappropriate behavior, is helpful to tie your feedback to a classroom expectation or routine.</p>	<p><i>“Please remember to raise your hand to share your answer.”</i> <i>“Please use a quiet voice like mine”</i></p>



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	<i>so I can understand better what it is that you need.”</i>
3. Immediately reinforce the student for demonstrating the correct behavior. This is very important!	<i>“Thank you for your quiet raised hand! What would you like to share with the class?”</i> <i>“Thank you for using a quieter tone. Now I can hear what you have to say.”</i>

Negative Statements	
Negative interactions with students can be extremely detrimental to student esteem and contribute to disengagement with school.	
When students engage in inappropriate behaviors to gain attention or escape a task, teachers may respond with negative feedback	<i>“You’re late”, “You’re not listening again”</i> A direction to stop a behavior -- <i>“I said stop that!”</i> , <i>“Quiet!”</i> A derogatory comment-- <i>“Only stupid people do that”</i>

Tips to Enhance Positive Teacher-Student Interactions
Active Supervision
Active supervision promotes the development of a positive classroom climate by proactively encouraging and maintaining student on-task behaviors. Active supervision of students is characterized by patterns of teacher movement and high rates of positive interactions with students, including praise statements and error correction.
Circulating
Circulation in the classroom provides teachers increased opportunities to praise students for on-task behavior, error correction, and encouragement. Teachers should use proximity to check in with students during independent and group work.
Scanning
Frequent visual scanning of the classroom environment is a good way for teachers to observe student behavior related to expectations and routines. General statements of praise or error correction can be made: <i>“I really like how everyone is on task right now. Great work!”</i> <i>“I see students working well in groups together. Excellent!”</i> <i>“I’d like all students to stop. Please remember the homework routine. Homework goes in the blue bin.”</i>
Encouraging
Provide encouragement when students are struggling or have completed a task. Also encourage students to encourage each other! Then be sure to provide students with the appropriate supports (e.g., accommodations) to increase success.
Choices
Providing choices can help redirect undesired behavior and create an opportunity for praise and/or



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encouragement. When students make a choice to follow expectations, remember to reinforce the appropriate behavior to increase the likelihood that students will repeat the desired behavior.

"I see you have not started your math work. Would you like to use scrap paper or graph paper to help you figure the problems?"

(Student makes choice and starts to work).

"I'm glad to see you on-task now. Raise your hand if you get stuck, and I will be right over to help you."