Following Directions is a Game We Like to Play!

Implementing strategies to strengthen direction following skills

Ashley Rogers
Sixth Grade Intern
Park Forest Middle School
State College Area School District
anr5056@psu.edu

Penn State Professional Development School
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Abstract

Several weeks into the school year I began to notice that directions were being repeated constantly. This led me to wonder how students view directions and why it is difficult for them to follow directions the first time they are given. I always wondered how I could set students up for success when it comes to following a variety of types of directions and also enhance their independence in the classroom. Come listen carefully to the strategies I have discovered that enhance direction following skills for independent learners in the classroom.
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**Context**

I have been given the opportunity, as a Professional Development Intern, to complete my student teaching through Penn State University in a self-contained sixth grade classroom for the 2009-2010 school year. My classroom, at Park Forest Middle School in the State College Area School District, consists of 23 students, 10 girls and 13 boys.

The students are diverse academically, personally and behaviorally. In regards to the academic make-up of my classroom, five students currently have Individualized Education Plan’s, one student is in Title I Reading, one student has been diagnosed with Autism, one student has been diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome and another has a possibility of this diagnosis, and three students have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. Approximately 75% scored basic or proficient in writing and reading on Pennsylvania State Standard Assessments, where the other 25% of the class scored below basic. For mathematics in sixth grade, we group students based on academic standings, and 33% of students in my homeroom class are below grade level, 38% are on grade level, and 29% are above grade level mathematically. The math class that I teach is considered below grade level where most students are learning at the same rate. When looking at socio-economic backgrounds, the students come from a range of upper to lower class families with diverse home environments. None of the students in my classroom have behavior modification plans, however, a handful of students have spent time out of class in the MRC (Motivational Resource Center) for inappropriate behaviors.
**Wonderings and Questions**

**Main Wondering**

I had several questions in my mind about my classroom, but one question in particular kept showing up at the end of each day. I continued to observe that students were having difficulty following directions all throughout the day in various content areas, even when directions were repeated frequently. The observations and discussions in the class led me to my main wondering:

*How can I set students up to be successful and independent learners when following directions?*

After asking myself this question, I began to develop sub-wonderings.

**Sub-Questions**

- How can transitions and attention getters assist students with following directions?
- How will scaffolding the directions help the students respond?
- How do I hold my students accountable for following directions?
- What types of directions enable the students to be successful?

**Data Analysis and Collection**

**Data Collection**

I collected a wide array of data using methods such as anecdotal notes, student surveys, direction following tasks, systematic observations, and a teacher survey.

**Before:**

I began taking baseline data of the students’ direction following skills during various times throughout the day. Most of the data was collected in my homeroom class; however,
some of the data was collected in my math class. I created a table on Microsoft Word where I could input data as I was observing specific classes. I wrote down the date, subject, time, teacher action and student reaction/response. I only noted the instances where directions needed to be repeated (See Appendix B). I chose to collect data this way for a few weeks in order to determine whether students struggled with directions in one class or another or at certain times of the day.

**After:**

After collecting baseline data for a few weeks, I administered the first survey to students based on directions that work for them and how they believe they follow directions. The purposes for collecting data include determining which type of directions work best, why students need to ask teachers to repeat directions, how students could improve their direction following skills, how their teachers could help them, what makes following directions difficult and what would they change to help them follow directions better (See Appendix C).

Based on my anecdotal notes and data collected from the first set of student surveys, I modified my delivery of instructions and specifically stated the importance for directions. Student seats were rearranged to meet their needs, directions were “chunked” and displayed in a written/visual format as well as on a paper in front of them, and directions were delivered orally. I incorporated a variety of attention getting or transition strategies to move from one step to another or to deliver an important instruction. Student input was taken when determining which strategies were most useful through trial and error. Through each implementation or intervention strategy, I continued to collect systematic
data using a classroom seating chart which allowed me to make quick marks next to students in regards to their direction following skills (Appendix E).

I tried to pay close attention to the types of directions being delivered and to note where the greatest success was. I gave students direction following “assessments” where they relied solely on written directions and where directions were only read orally (Appendices F-I). I chose to use these direction following assessments to determine how I could differentiate my lessons to incorporate directions given in all modes (types) to ensure all learners could have an opportunity or choice to be successful. By giving student surveys, direction following assessments and collecting systematic data, I was able to analyze how to instruct students to successfully gain independence when following directions.

**Data Analysis:**

Before determining my claims or findings from the data collected from the various assessments, I needed to analyze the information I gathered from observations, surveys, and student work. Below I have noted how I analyzed my evidence for each method used to gather data.

1. **Baseline Data/Observations:**

Before I began implementing any strategies, I took the baseline data and any observation notes I collected and compared those to the first survey I gave the students. I compared the students’ honesty with the data I had collected to see if there was a correlation between the students who consistently had direction following difficulties and the students who responded that something or someone was distracting them. I then compared the student responses from the surveys to the time of day or content
area with which students struggled to determine if there were certain times or specific subjects where students needed constant repetition of directions. I also wanted to determine if following directions was something to which I needed to give specific attention or if the students were having difficulty understanding what they were asked to do. (Appendix B).

2. **Student, Parent and Teacher Surveys**

   After students completed their surveys, I analyzed the information in three different ways. First, I wanted to see which direction type works best for each individual student. Secondly, I wanted to identify factors that caused students to need directions repeated. Next, I looked to see what students would change to help them follow directions more independently and successfully, how students could help themselves improve their direction following skills, what makes it difficult to follow instructions and how their teachers can help them follow directions. Lastly, in their final survey I wanted to determine whether or not students believed they had improved in following directions, if their teachers had helped them improve their skills and what the students would change to help them follow directions better. Once all surveys were collected, I tallied up the answers for each question and then modified directions and classroom seats to meet student needs (Appendices D & K).

   Through the teacher surveys, I analyzed the data to see teacher expectations for independence when students are given instructions and for teacher comments or answers to my other sub-questions. As I analyzed the information, I wondered how each teacher’s comments or answers would work in my classroom and whether the strategy could successfully guide students to following directions independently the
first time. I was able to obtain ideas from colleagues as well as support for the various direction following strategies I was trying with my students (Appendix L).

3. **Systematic Observations**

I took the classroom layout and created a “Time Dependent Seating Chart” which enabled me to collect data at certain times throughout the day, using a seating chart as a guide. I scanned the room every few minutes and later began to just see or hear the various behaviors I was targeting. Students were observed and noted for off-task behaviors (not doing what was asked), asking a teacher about a direction, asking a friend about a direction, requiring repeated directions, and on-task behaviors (following directions/completing work). This enabled me to look at individual students who had difficulties following directions as well as the time of day, effectiveness of attention-getting strategies and importance of seat changes in overall direction skills. Throughout the weeks as I gathered data, I was looking for my charts to be “whiter” and not as “marked up” with pen or pencil from all of the direction distractions (Appendix E).

4. **Student Work**

I began to monitor student awareness and correctness for direction following. I wanted to see if students gathered awareness from the discussions and work in class and displayed it throughout the rest of their assignments, tasks and homework. I began to not only look for correct answers, but also their direction follow skills. I also provided students with more opportunities to practice following directions in activities built into lessons. I assessed students on verbal and written directions without any repetition of expectations. I compared students’ school work and ability to follow
directions with my observations, notes and other data collected to identify where
students’ strengths and opportunities to become more independent, successful
direction followers (Appendices G and I).

**Explanation of Findings**

After analyzing all of my data collected throughout my inquiry project, I believe the following:

**Overall Claim:**

*Teachers can help 6th grade students follow directions independently by selecting appropriate communication strategies and explicitly teaching students how to follow directions.*

Evidence supporting my overall claim are described and validated through the following sub-claims.

**Sub-Claim I:**

*Teaching students how to follow directions and to recognize the purpose allows students to be successful when completing tasks.*

**Evidence:**

After analyzing the data collected throughout the course of my inquiry project, I believe students need to be explicitly taught how to follow directions and that the purpose for directions must be discussed. Having discussions about the purpose for directions and teaching students how to follow directions will ensure student success when completing tasks.

Comparing my baseline data to my anecdotal notes, student surveys and assessments, student success can be noticed in understanding and following directions the first time given. When looking at the two surveys, in the first survey 20 out of 22 students believed they followed directions most of the time or always
during school, where in the second survey 17 out of 17 students believed they followed directions most of the time or always in school. In the second student survey, 14 out of 17 students said that their teachers have helped them improve their direction following skills. Ten students believed that they improved due to the delivery of directions, preparation for understanding directions, and for the strategies used to improve direction following skills (Appendices D and K).

On several occasions I posed questions such as “Why do we give directions?” or simply asked students to read or tell me the directions before we discuss the directions (Appendix E). In these cases students were able to give responses like, “To inform us what we need to do.” Students were also responsible for reading the directions provided on a sheet or PowerPoint. Students have also expressed verbally that they now have a new understanding for a direction’s purpose. Through this data, I learned that students follow directions best when they are taught how to follow directions and the directions have been given a purpose.

Sub-Claim II:

Giving students directions using more than one type increases student understanding and decreases student questions, which leads to success in following directions correctly.

Evidence:

From the evidence I have collected, directions should be delivered using more than one type. When students were assessed with a written direction activity, one student in a class of 23 completed the task correctly. When students were assessed with an oral direction activity, where directions were given one at a time
with moderate time between each direction, 17 out of 18 present students completed Part 1 with no repetition of directions and 15 out of 18 students were completed Part 2 with no repetitions. Throughout the oral direction activity, students did not ask a single question and stayed on task. However, it was obvious with the written assessment that it is crucial to teach students how to follow directions and because of the previous statement, relying solely on student independence and only written directions to complete a task was not a success (Appendices F – I). These were proven several times throughout my inquiry, which showed overall student success through oral directions.

Twelve out of twenty-two students in our classroom said on the first survey that both written and oral directions work best for them (Appendix D). Also, out of the six teachers that replied to my survey, five out of the teachers replied saying that students learn and follow directions best when multiple types of directions are presented (Appendix L).

In conclusion, throughout recent lessons, it was evident that students truly benefit from multiple modes of directions. When teaching a science lesson, students completed a lab with 100% success with minimal clarifying questions when using a PowerPoint to display visual directions, a paper with written instructions and the teacher with students for oral directions. Students have verbally expressed that directions are easier to follow or remember when an interesting strategy has captured their attention.
Sub-Claim III:

Transitions and attention getting strategies aid students in following directions the first time they are given.

Evidence:

As I analyzed data, I focused on lessons when strong hooks or attention getting strategies were used because students had fewer questions throughout a lesson. Ten out of 14 students believed that the fun strategies used to capture attention and deliver instructions make directions clearer and easier to understand (Appendix K). Throughout a lesson, transitions and attention getting strategies can be used to give a reminder, send students onto the next step, or to change gears from one content area to another.

Throughout this inquiry, I have worked hard with my students implementing various strategies including: “3-2-1-0,” “5-4-3-2-1” (quiet 1 in the air, without saying it aloud), clapping pattern, “eyes and ears on me please,” silence, changing seats, whispering, “if you can hear my voice,” hand motions, Glass Bug Mud, and “ask 3 then me.” These are just some of the strategies I have used throughout lessons that have captured students’ attention and allowed teachers to deliver directions one time to the whole class with the majority of the class following those directions. During a writing lesson on April 5, 2010, only five out of 23 students had to have directions repeated when attention-getting strategies were used. However on April 6, 2010, 21 out of 23 students did not follow directions correctly when attention-getting strategies were not implemented during a lesson. Directions were repeated
multiple times and even though they were displayed, read aloud and provided to students in writing, students were unsuccessful in following directions independently.

In conclusion, all three claims must work together in order to have the desired outcome where students can successfully and independently follow instructions the first time they are given.

**Conclusion and Future Implications**

After the evidence I have collected and analyzed I have a better understanding for successful and independent direction following in the classroom. It is important that every year when my new class comes in, that I address directions from the first day and teach students how to follow directions. If I do not teach students or remind them how to follow directions explicitly, I cannot expect students to be successful in following directions independently. When teaching any content area, I will need to differentiate my instruction by giving the directions using oral, written and visual strategies. This will allow all students to have an opportunity to follow directions to fit their learning style. Also, when directions fit students’ learning styles, they are able to understand and participate more frequently. Integrating transitions and attention getting strategies into lessons also makes directions stand out and allows students to bring their focus to the important steps. I believe that when teachers set up their classrooms in this manner, students will be able to successfully and independently follow directions. Now I have tools to use in the future to create a classroom where students can be independent and successful learners because they know how to follow directions and the directions have been created to fit all learning styles.
Appendix A
Inquiry Brief

Context

I have been given the opportunity, as a Professional Development Intern, to complete my student teaching through Penn State University in a self-contained sixth grade classroom at Park Forest Middle School in the State College Area School District for the 2009-2010 school year. My classroom consists of 23 students, 10 girls and 13 boys.

The students are diverse academically, personally and behaviorally. In regards to the academic make-up of my classroom, five students currently have IEP’s, one student is in Title I Reading, one student has been diagnosed with Autism, one student has been diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome and another with a possibility of this diagnosis, and three students have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. Approximately 75% scored basic or proficient in writing and reading, where the other 25% of the class scored below basic. For mathematics in sixth grade, we group students based on academic standings and 33% of students in my homeroom class are below grade level, 38% are on grade level, and 29% are above grade level mathematically. The math class that I teach is considered below grade level where most students are learning at the same rate. When looking at socio-economic backgrounds, the students come from a range of upper to lower class families with diverse home environments. None of the students in my classroom have behavior modification plans, however, a handful of students have spent time out of class in the MRC (Motivational Resource Center) for inappropriate behaviors.

Rationale

Throughout my Professional Development School Internship experience in my sixth grade classroom, I have noticed that my students depend heavily upon my mentor and I to
provide them with step-by-step instruction for every task or assignment. Over time I observed a pattern developing and I began to wonder how I could better set the students up for success in terms of listening and following directions. As I started taking the role of lead teacher in the classroom, I began to wonder what I could do to help students focus, listen or read directions in order to help them gain independence.

Throughout this inquiry I expect to discover what methods work best when delivering instructions to elementary aged school children. I anticipate that students will benefit from a variety of types of directions, especially when they are broken into clearly defined steps.

Main Wondering
- How can I set students up for success when it comes to following a variety of types of directions and enhance their independence in the classroom?

Sub-Questions
- How is independence defined in the classroom?
- How can transitions and attention getters assist students with following directions?
- How will scaffolding the directions help the students respond positively?
- What types of directions enable the students to be successful?
- How do I hold my students accountable for following directions?

Data Collection Ideas
- Interviews
  - Interview select students based on survey results to get in depth responses
  - Interview elementary and 7th grade teachers on direction following as well as expected independence in the classroom
- Artifacts
  - Research what independence might look like and what strategies have worked for teachers and students.
  - Collect artifacts of student work where students were incapable and capable of following verbal, visual and or written directions.
  - Give students tasks and assignments where they have to follow different types of directions in order to complete a task correctly. Then collect and analyze the data.
- Anecdotal Notes
  - Hold a class meeting to talk about following directions and independence, what these look like and what are we doing in our classroom.
o Observe students in their natural learning environment, collecting data on following directions and also on the students who show signs of not following directions.

o Discuss with my mentor and the students what proper consequences should be addressed for lack of following directions

- **Survey**
  o Surveying students about:
    - Following directions
    - How well they feel they follow directions any given day
    - What distracts them from following directions
    - How their teachers could help them follow directions “better”

**Timeline**

*February*

- 15th-19th
  o Collect baseline data
  o Observe students
  o Give students direction following tasks
  o Create interview questions for teachers
  o Revise inquiry brief and annotated bibliography

- 22nd-26th
  o Continue to collect data
  o Observe students
  o Give students direction following tasks
  o Possibly hold a class meeting about following directions/classroom independence
  o Distribute and hold interviews with teachers about classroom independence and following directions
  o Re-submit revised inquiry brief and annotated bibliography by February 24th

*March*

- 1st-5th
  o Continue to collect data and make observations
  o Begin analyzing data collected
  o Interview students based on data and surveys collected this far
  o Implement new strategies: step by step instructions, instructions given verbally, orally and visually, transitions and attention getters
  o Continue to research ideas of possible strategies

- 8th-12th (Spring Break)
  o Research strategies and design plan for implementing strategies
  o Organize and chart data collected from students and teachers

- 15th-19th
  o Implement various strategies
  o Continue observations and data collections
  o Give students another survey to self assess their following direction skills/independence in the classroom

- 22nd-26th
  o Implement various strategies
- Continue observations and data collections
- Compile artifacts, data, and surveys
- Begin making claims supported with evidence

**29th-31st**
- Continue to implement strategies, make observations and collect data
- Begin to write paper

**April**

**1st-2nd**
- Write paper
- Continue implementation of strategies, data collection and observations

**5th-9th**
- Continue to implement strategies and make observations
- Organize data and information to be used in paper
- Continue to write and revise paper

**12th-16th**
- Survey students, similar to first survey given
- Compile and compare survey results
- Finish and submit draft: April 14th

**19th-23rd**
- Revise paper
- Prepare presentation

**26th-30th**
- Revise paper—submit paper, due: May 2nd
- Prepare presentation

**May**

**3rd-7th**
- Prepare for Inquiry Conference on May 8th
- Submit paper to webmaster by May 16th
# Appendix B
## Baseline Data/Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/subject/time</th>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Students Reaction/Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2/2 Bridges to Understanding &amp; writing / 9:30AM</td>
<td>Directions: write your war paragraph and share it with Ms. Rogers and I - wrote *share with bnm19 and anr14</td>
<td>-4 students asked who they needed to share it with (SK, SB, MR) -1 student didn’t follow directions and shared the assignment with the wrong teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2/2 Shapes and Designs-Math class/ 10:45-11:00AM</td>
<td>Directions: read directions for math problem 3.3 in Shapes and Designs and asked if anyone had any questions</td>
<td>- During class work 5 students didn’t read the directions correctly from their book and asked if they needed to tile all of the shapes—in the book it tells them specifically by each problem what shapes to tile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2/5 Calendar Math- Math class/ (10:05-10:12)</td>
<td>Directions written on board and riddle displayed for class to see</td>
<td>9 students came to carpet without having answer written where the board directed them to write it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2/5 12:53/ Work time on Peace and War posters/ Bridges</td>
<td>Eyes and ears up here</td>
<td>10 students were not paying attention and were not having their eyes and ears on Mr. McGonigal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2/5 11:50-12:50/directions for war and peace posters/bridges</td>
<td>Directions for peace and war projects (paintings)</td>
<td>18 students did not listen or follow directions/these students had no clue what to do and didn’t ask questions when given the opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 2/15 Word Study/ 12:30-</td>
<td>Directions for word study, wheel of word</td>
<td>During the 25 minutes 12 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:54</td>
<td>Mr. McGonigal observed and took notes while I was teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>study (spelling, CV, UCW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shouted out or raised their hands to ask clarifying students; SK raised his hand and asked a question that was answered (his hand was raised during discussion of the assignment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2/19 Morning/8:30AM before Word Study quizzes</td>
<td>Gave direction following sheet #1 (3 minutes quiz)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 student read through directions entirely and completed the task correctly; 20 students read the sentences and completed the tasks without reading entirely through the page first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C
Student Survey #1

Survey 1
February 4, 2010

Circle the most appropriate answer. Be honest, this will not be used against you. You may write your name at the top if you wish.

1. Do written, oral or both written and oral instructions work best for you?
   Written  Oral  Both (written & oral)

2. How often do you believe you follow directions during a full school day?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

3. I look at the board for instructions when I first come in every morning.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

4. I ask my friends or classmates what I am supposed to be doing in class.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

5. I ask my teacher(s) to repeat directions throughout the day.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

6. If you answered sometimes, most of the time, or always to number 5, why do you ask teachers to repeat directions?
   Wasn’t listening  Was Talking  Don’t Understand
   Bored  Distracted by yourself or a peer

Other: ___________________________________________________________

Write your response to the following questions:

How could you improve your direction following/listening skills?

How can your teacher(s) help you follow directions?

What makes it difficult to listen and follow directions?

If you could change one thing to help you follow directions better, it would be...
Appendix D
Student Survey Results #1

Results Survey #1

Survey 1
February 4, 2010

Circle the most appropriate answer. Be honest, this will not be used against you. You may write your name at the top if you wish.

1. Do written, oral or both written and oral instructions work best for you?
   - Written
   - Oral
   - Both (written & oral)

2. How often do you believe you follow directions during a full school day?
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

3. I look at the board for instructions when I first come in every morning.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

4. I ask my friends or classmates what I am supposed to be doing in class.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

5. I ask my teacher(s) to repeat directions throughout the day.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

6. If you answered sometimes, most of the time, or always to number 5, why do you ask teachers to repeat directions?
   - Wasn't listening
   - Was Talking
   - Don't Understand
   - Bored
   - Distracted by yourself or a peer
   - Other: didn't hear

Write your response to the following questions:

How could you improve your direction following/listening skills?
- By listening and not getting distracted:
- Raising my hand:
- Reading directions:
- Do not do while thinking:
- Always:
- Stop reading:

How can your teacher(s) help you follow directions?
- Asking questions:
- Reminders:
- Talking louder:
- Repeat directions:
- Remove distractions:
- Teacher answer questions:
- Explain more:
- No response:

What makes it difficult to listen and follow directions?
- People walking around:
- Other:
- Directions:
- Nothing:

No response:

If you could change one thing to help you follow directions better, it would be...
- No response:
- Get rid of distractions:
- Raising my hand:
- Smaller desk sets:
- Teachers write directions on board:
- Raise my hand:
- Following directions:
- No response:

No response:
Appendix E
Anecdotal Notes
Appendix F
Direction Activity 1- Written

This is a timed test—you have 3 minutes only!

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Loudly call out your first name.
4. Circle the word NAME in sentence two.
5. If you have followed directions carefully to this point, call out "I have."
6. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
7. Put an "X" in each square.
8. In your normal speaking voice, count from ten to one backwards.
9. Put a circle around each square.
10. Sign your name under the title of this paper.
11. After the title write, "Yes, yes, yes."
12. Put a circle completely around the sentence number seven.
13. When you reach this point, LOUDLY call out, "I AM THE LEADER IN FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS."
14. Put an "X" in the lower left-hand corner of this paper.
15. Draw a triangle around the "X" you just put down.
16. On the back of this paper, multiply 703 by 66.
17. Loudly call out, "I AM NEARLY FINISHED. I HAVE FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS."
18. Draw a rectangle around the word “corner” in sentence six.
19. On the reverse side of this paper, add 0850 and 9805.
20. Put a circle around your answer, and put a square around the circle.
21. Punch three small holes in the top of this paper with your pencil point.
22. Underline all even numbers on the left side of this paper.
23. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only sentences one and two!
Appendix G
Student Work- Activity 1

This is a timed test— you have 3 minutes only!

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Loudly call out your first name.
4. Circle the word **NAME** in sentence two.
5. If you have followed directions carefully to this point, call out "I have."
6. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
7. Put an "X" in each square.
8. In your normal speaking voice, count from ten to one backwards.
9. Put a circle around each square.
10. Sign your name under the title of this paper.
11. After the title write, "Yes, yes, yes."
12. Put a circle completely around the sentence number seven.
13. When you reach this point, LOUDLY call out, "I AM THE LEADER IN FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS."
14. Put an "X" in the lower left-hand corner of this paper.
15. Draw a triangle around the "X" you just put down.
16. On the back of this paper, multiply 703 by 66.
17. Loudly call out, "I AM NEARLY FINISHED. I HAVE FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS."
18. Draw a rectangle around the word **corner** in sentence six.
19. On the reverse side of this paper, add 8950 and 9805.
20. Put a circle around your answer, and put a square around the circle.
21. Punch three small holes in the top of this paper with your pencil point.
22. Underline all even numbers on the left side of this paper.
23. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only sentences one and two!
Appendix H
Direction Activity 2- Oral

Colorful Clown 3

Part 2: Clown should be green: HU M1 KU
3rd clown:

NO clown:

Date: 3/15/10

AR: M4

Only verbal directions
No repeats
My name is 1 at a time
Part 1: Coloring

V = M4, M1, MK, III

Not all circles and ruffles colored:

Color the clown:

hands = pink
nose = blue
mouth = purple
eyebrows = black

hair = yellow
boots = brown
face = pink

suit = red
cheeks = orange
circles = green

Clown
Appendix I
Student Work- Activity 2

Colorful Clown

My name is
Date: 3-6-10

Color the clown

clown
Appendix I

Student Survey 2

Circle the most appropriate answer. Be honest, this will not be used against you. Please put your name at the top.

1. How often do you believe you follow directions during a full school day?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

2. I look at the board for instructions when I first come in every morning.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

3. Do attention getters (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) help you focus on directions?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

4. Do step-by-step instructions work best for you?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

5. I ask my friends or classmates what I am supposed to be doing in class.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

6. I use the motto “Ask three then me” for repeat of directions throughout the day.
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Most of the time  Always

Write your response to the following questions:
Have you improved your direction following skills? Why or how?

Have your teachers helped you improve your direction following skills? Why or how?

What do you think an independent sixth grade student looks like?

Should you be held accountable for following directions? If so, what should happen if you don’t follow directions? What should happen when everyone follows directions?

If you could change one thing to help you follow directions better, it would be...

If I asked your parents how you follow directions, what do you believe their responses would be?
Appendix K
Student Survey 2 - Results

Survey 2
March 18, 2010

Circle the most appropriate answer. Be honest, this will not be used against you. Please put your name at the top.

1. How often do you believe you follow directions during a full school day?
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

2. I look at the board for instructions when I first come in every morning.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

3. Do attention getters (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) help you focus on directions?
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

4. Do step-by-step instructions work best for you?
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

5. I ask my friends or classmates what I am supposed to be doing in class.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

6. I use the motto “Ask three times” for repeat of directions throughout the day.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Most of the time
   - Always

Write your response to the following questions:

Have you improved your direction following skills? Why or how?
   - Yes: (1)
   - No: (0)
   - No change: (0)

Have your teachers helped you improve your direction following skills? Why or how?
   - Yes: (1)
   - No: (0)

What do you think an independent sixth grade student looks like?

Should you be held accountable for following directions? If so, what should happen if you don't follow directions? What should happen when everyone follows directions?

If you could change one thing to help you follow directions better, it would be...

If I asked your parents how you follow directions, what do you believe their responses would be?

Listen, let them finish + do it 1st time!
# Appendix L
## Teacher Survey Results

### 1. How do you set students up to successfully follow directions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>When given directions in class, I try to have them written as I verbally explain them. For assignments and assessments, I stress the importance of underlining/itnoting the important information. I model the directions first to get a sense of what is needed and then go back to underline. For my one unit, students continually struggle with following directions. So for the quiz on this material, part of the quiz involves them rewriting the directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 8:25 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Make sure they are clearly explained (verbally) and also written down for students to reference and double check.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 7:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I try to give directions verbally with a visual of what I want first. Then, I usually make a 1, 2, 3 list on the board for the children to follow and refer to. Then, I got to specific children first (who generally need one on one guidance) to make sure they are on track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 8:52 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1. Use an attention getter (clapping, call/ response) to make sure I have all of their attention before I give directions. 2. Write sequential steps on the board/ a powerpoint (to them a visual) to refer to. 3. Set up clear expectations/voice for multi step assignments. 4. Frequently check in with students to make sure they are following the directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 5:55 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I try to give the directions verbally AND in written form (and possibly also on the screen as well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 2:01 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Start from the first day of school. Make sure the room is silent when the directions are given. Ask at the end of the directions, “What questions do you have?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 2:01 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. What modes do you deliver instructions? Which do you find are the most beneficial to the majority of your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I give both written and verbal instruction. With the symposium in my classroom, I am able to do both fairly easy. I am a very visual learner so I tend to use this the most. I find that many students are also visual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 8:25 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Directions are provided verbally, visually (at times) and in written form. I think all children benefit from both types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 7:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Model, model, model... visual, visual, visual, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 6:52 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1. Whole class - at their seats or carpet 2. Small group - parallel teaching with an intern or co-teacher 3. Stations - intern, co-teacher and pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 2:59 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All modes are good... you just need to make sure that you are using a large variety and doing different things during the day (lecture, discussion, small group, co-teaching, independent work...).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 2:01 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Oral and written directions and a silent room. These three combined work the best. Ask at the end of the directions, “What questions do you have?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed, Mar 31, 2011 2:01 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. What does student independence look like in your classroom?

- On a typical day, my class revolves around group work. (Sat, Apr 10, 2010 11:58 PM)
- I expect the kids to be independent in tasks that we have done before or with routines. Independence looks like kids doing what they need to do without reminders. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 8:26 PM)
- Following a direction from start to finish -- i.e. from intro, to activity, to turning in at the correct location. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 7:47 PM)
- Students sitting at their desks or on the carpet. Very little if any talking. I allow some talking as long as it is a short conversation/question to the person sitting next to them. Conversations should not be ongoing or constant. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 8:52 PM)
- Students following the directions they have been given (either alone or in pairs or in groups)... without the need for teacher proximity or redirection. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:35 PM)
- Students working silently on the assignment they are given. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:30 PM)

4. Do you hold students accountable for following directions? If so, how?

- On certain quizzes I do hold students accountable with a grade. Part of the quiz involves the correctly restating the directions. I give positive feedback during the class for students who have followed directions and are ready to move on to the next activity. (Sat, Apr 10, 2010 11:58 PM)
- They may need to redo a task if they haven't followed directions. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 6:26 PM)
- I give positive praise -- I sometimes use a token system and verbally give a token and praise the way a student listened carefully. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 7:47 PM)
- I redo an assignment.
  1. Love Choice AREA
  2. Lunch MRC
  3. Lunch MRC
  4. Email Parents/Late Slip
- Yes, if they haven't followed directions on a paper assignment, they do it over again (sometimes from the start and sometimes they just need to fix it). (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:55 PM)
- Yes, failing to follow directions results in fewer grades. For example, no name results points off. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:01 PM)

5. Do you use any forms of scaffolding, attention getting strategies or transitions to assist students with following directions? If so, how does this positively affect the students?

- I think having routines in my classroom helps the kids follow directions, I will write directions down so they are visual as I give them verbally. (Sat, Apr 10, 2010 11:58 PM)
- Lots of scaffolding to build independence and direction following skills. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 8:26 PM)
- I discuss my scaffolding above... (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 7:47 PM)
  1. Counting down gives students time to finish up their work and know that I need their attention.
  2. Giving time breaks down - you should have up to 3 questions in 1 minute.
  3. By scaffolding directions/expectations for students gives them time to adjust and realize what needs to be done and when I expect it to be done. It also helps them pace themselves. Students this age struggle with knowing how long something should take them to finish.
- Depending on the activity, we will do parts all together, then another part on their own, and then more together so that they get the chance to do something independently, but can't get too far back on their own. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:35 PM)
- Yes, I always use the same strategies. 3-2-1 countdown, whistle, wait for silence before continuing. (Wed, Mar 31, 2010 2:01 PM)
Appendix M
Annotated Bibliography

   a. Through this article Barbara Allen, a middle school teacher, explains her struggle for students to see the importance of directions and to be able to comprehend and follow them the first time. She sets up a model that can be adapted for any grade level where she “turns the tables” on the students and now they must prepare step by step instructions that another student will have to follow in order to complete a given task. I think this would be a great strategy to try in my classroom in order to point out how important every step of a direction is and how you need to listen or read each part before continuing. I think it would be beneficial for the students to be in charge and take ownership of the directions in order to fully comprehend their importance.

   a. This master’s thesis revolves around the implementation and study of the Green Card System being placed in both elementary and middle school classrooms. These researchers and teachers found that by having a small board at the front of the room placed to the side of the main board that had a slot for three cards with the students’ names placed on them. The cards were green, yellow, and red and each student would begin on green each day. If a student was talking during a lesson, being distracting or not following instructions their green card could be pulled with the yellow card now displayed. If a student had their yellow card pulled and their red card was displayed, the student would have to write a student reflection on his/her behavior during recess. I think a reflection on their behaviors is important for students to realize why they are being penalized and can help improve their actions in the classroom. I believe some sort of response cost strategy like this may work in my classroom or at least the use of the student reflections to ensure students understand the purpose of their consequences.
   a. This YouTube video exhibits six Whole Brain Teaching strategies (once called Power Teaching) that can be used with elementary aged students up to college students. The six strategies that Chris “teaches” to the students ensure that they are paying attention, not falling asleep, are focused on the task, can re-teach instructions and tasks, and allow for comprehension check. I think it would be phenomenal to teach my students these six strategies as one of my sub questions to my wondering involves transitions and attention getting strategies. These strategies would not only help students stay engaged and focused but would also allow me to see where I need to slow down or provide students with more information.

   a. The research and data collection in this master’s thesis allows students to become more aware of their responsibilities as learners in the classroom. Through their awareness and engagement, students were more successful over all in the classroom. Students were also taught problem solving skills as well as identifiers of engaged learning, which gave them ownership and understanding of the teacher’s expectations for them as well as ownership of their actions and assignments. Throughout my inquiry I expect to find that students know that they need to listen and complete assignments but that they will think it’s okay to not be responsible all the time because they have their teachers and neighbors to lean on. This information may help me teach a mini-lesson to the students about their responsibility in the classroom as independent learners.

   a. This book focuses on building a strong learning community where students feel welcome and can take ownership of the climate. The book also focuses on what helps the community run smoothly, the teacher’s role in the classroom and also on problem solving strategies to get your class back on track. It is an all around classroom management book coming from one
teacher to another to offer words of wisdom on what has worked for her and many others. In regards to my inquiry, I will look at the set up for a classroom community where students are well aware of the rules and consequences established and also at problem solving strategies to help our class better themselves when listening, reading and following directions and also on becoming independent students.

   a. The research and findings from this master’s thesis teaches students various listening and comprehending strategies to assist them with following directions in the classroom. These researchers and teachers took into account environmental factors, yet still expected students to be able to follow directions in a precise and timely manner. I believe the findings and strategies discussed in this article will help me develop mini-lessons and activities to introduce to the students. If I can help the students to listen and comprehend what is being said, then I can begin to set them up for independent success in the classroom.

   a. This article is from a college professor who leaves instructions for her students to run her class without them knowing she is doing so. The purpose for this activity is for the students to see how crucial instructions are to teaching themselves because she has found that in the workplace in the future, the students will constantly be training and instructing others no matter what their career path may be. I believe that this can also be applicable for students in my classroom because if given instructions, I would find it intriguing to see if they could teach themselves a lesson successfully. I could sit in the back of the classroom and act as an observer to the tasks that could be listed on the overhead with precise, timed instructions for that entire period and what must be completed and turned in from every student.

   a. Kate Irwin completed her inquiry project on student responsibility in sixth
grade a few years ago and many of her strategies and ideas run parallel with students listening and following directions. Responsibility and independence are also very similar terms because if you can be responsible you must also be independent, therefore many of her surveys, data collection methods and other strategies can be modified to use in my inquiry. I have already looked through her surveys and other project ideas as well as talked to her about various strategies that I am trying in my classroom. I plan to use Kate’s project as a guide to see what did and didn’t work in her classroom and how I could modify various strategies and ideas to implement in my classroom.

   a. The main idea of this book is that you are not just the teacher standing on the outside looking in while you are teaching but that you are actually in there with the kids while you are teaching and are a part of their moods, words spoken, actions, and every other activity in that classroom. One specific chapter focuses on when the teacher presents and how it is important to have structure and variety when teaching in order to not let students slip through the cracks and to encourage students to pay attention. There are many examples, such as when the teacher sees many students with puzzled looks on their faces during a math discussion, he gives a real life example on the black board and the students suddenly chime in with yes and no answers to his question. This alerted him that he needed to modify his lesson in order to give the students the opportunity to understand. This is an important strategy that I could implement in order to help students focus and understand when I am teaching.

   a. The journal article focuses on individual differences within the classroom and how the students often need interventions in order to be successful with skills like listening and following directions. The interventions listed consist of making small changes to help all learners succeed and can be broken down into primary, secondary and tertiary categories depending on the severity of the need. Examples of interventions to help the students succeed with social skills and listening/following directions skills can be introduced so smoothly
into the curriculum and any ideas can help me at this point. I believe that changing one slight action, such as delivering instructions in a different manner could assist students and lead them in the right direction.

a. This book from the North Carolina Public Schools is a teaching resource compiled with many activities in order to ensure students understand and can take ownership of their responsibility. Many of the activities listed such as: class pledge, responsible classmate, caught for being responsible, letters from seventh grade students on expected behaviors in regards to independence and listening to/following directions and oops cards are a few activities that I believe students in my classroom currently or in the future could benefit from. I believe those activities would strengthen students’ understanding of the expectations in a classroom and how to be an independent, responsible learner.

a. *Yardsticks* focuses on the developmental stages most students are at typically through their elementary and intermediate school years. Sometimes, learning about students developmentally can help teachers understand the class better and to focus on what the students need in order to succeed. I believe that once I understand where the majority of my students fall developmentally, I will have a better understanding for how to help them become better listeners and followers of directions as well as stronger, independent students.