North, South, East, and West.

Why are directions So Hard to Follow?

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Abstract

Sixth grade is an important time for all students. It is a time when students are not only maturing physically and socially, but are preparing for new learning in secondary classrooms. This year I have noticed that while our students are diverse in different ways, they all share a common bond; they are dependent on teachers when following directions. Whenever a direction is given either orally, visually, or is kinesthetically demonstrated by the teacher, many students fail to follow the direction. Therefore, I have been focusing on strategies that can be used to help students follow different types of directions. I believe that these techniques will help the students to succeed in their future classrooms. It has been a journey, but the students are on their way to following directions!
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Description of Teaching Context

As a Professional Development School Intern I have been student teaching all year in a sixth grade classroom at Park Forest Middle School. For this 2010-2011 school year, we have a very diverse group of students. My classroom of twenty-one students is made up of ten boys and eleven girls who are either eleven or twelve years old. The majority of the students are Caucasian, but three students are of Middle Eastern, Asian and African American descent. All of these students’ cultural backgrounds and ethnicities contribute to our learning environment.

In the context of measured learning achievement by standardized testing, most students have tested either proficient or advanced in reading and writing according to Pennsylvania State Assessment scores. However, six to eight students have also scored basic or below basic in both of these areas. Also in terms of State College Area School District’s assessments, only eighteen students are considered fluent in sixth grade learning and the rest of the class is considered to be “bridging.” This means that the “bridging” students are continuing to work towards grade level skills that are determined by the State College Area School District.

From other previous tests we know that four of our students have an Individual Educational Plan and use learning support on a daily basis, one student is Title One, and three students have Attention Deficit Disorder. An additional student is also in the process of being tested by The Pennsylvania State University for Attention Deficit Disorder.

As you can see our classroom of students is diverse in different aspects. Due to the difference in test scores and records, these students need different types of
instruction within the classroom. Therefore I break down (scaffold) multi-step procedures through visual and demonstrated directions. I provide checklists for students to regulate the steps they must follow in order to meet the expectations of the assigned task. Clear directions and expectations are also emphasized on a daily basis using teacher directed self-checks.

**Rationale**

Throughout the school year I have noticed that while our students are diverse in different ways, they all share a common bond; they are somewhat dependent on teachers when following directions. It seems as though whenever a direction is given either orally or visually, the students fail to follow the direction or move on until a teacher prompts them individually to do so.

As new sixth grade students, I knew that getting the students to follow directions effectively would be a challenge. I assumed that being in a new large school, and having more responsibilities would force the students to depend on us for guidance. However, I believed that by November the students would fall into a comfort zone of independence and self-regulation. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I noticed that our students were still relying on us to give step-by-step directions and prompts even though the directions were scaffolded or “chunked” and were presented in a variety of ways to allow for success for visual, oral, and kinesthetic learners. At this time I noticed that about fifty percent of the class was not following directions, which started to affect our instructional time and the students’ grades.

In January, the students did not seem to make any progress. Therefore, I started to build my main wondering about following directions. Due to their lack of ability to
self-regulate and follow directions on their own, I decided to discuss this as a class and form ways to help the students follow directions effectively in the classroom.

**Wonderings and Questions**

**Main Wondering**

My inquiry process focuses on implementing techniques into the classroom that might help my students follow directions and self-regulate their ability to follow directions. My main wondering is:

“What strategies can I implement to help my sixth grade students become more aware of their responsibility and more adept with following directions effectively in the classroom?”

**Sub Wonderings**

- What tools can I give my students to self-regulate their own direction following?
- Does the way that the direction is presented affect how the students follow the direction (Verbal, visual, or demonstrated)?
- How does scaffolding/chunking directions affect the student’s ability to follow them?
- How can making students aware of their ability to follow directions and the teacher’s expectations about following directions change their habits, so they begin to understand why they are not following directions consistently?
**Data Collection**

In order to find if my strategies for following directions were effective, I gathered data before, during and after each implementation and intervention. The data collection was taken in different forms and was used to help the students and myself gauge how well the class was following directions. This data collection required the students’ participation throughout the process.

**Before:**

Prior to implementing any direction-following strategies into the classroom, I administered a student pre-survey in order to gauge how my students viewed their ability to follow directions effectively in the classroom. This survey was produced in Google Docs and was presented to the students using SCoodle, so that the surveys would remain anonymous for what I hoped would be honest results (See Appendix A for student pre-survey). In this survey, there were eight questions in total. Some questions with similar ideas were phrased either positively or negatively for un-skewed results. The survey allowed me to gauge how well my students thought they were following directions as an individual and whole class. This led me to understand how their expectations for following direction were different from my own.

Also before implementing any interventions into the classroom, I took baseline data on how well the students followed verbal, visual, demonstrated and a combination of directions. This data was taken on a spreadsheet (See Appendix B for Class Spreadsheet), which was used to tally when a student failed to follow a verbal, visual, demonstrated or a combination of directions during instructional and transitional periods throughout the day.
During:

During my inquiry process, I collected data in a similar form. My primary form of data collection was again recording behaviors using the class spreadsheet on which I tallied when the students did not follow verbal, visual, demonstrated or a combination of directions during various transitional and instructional activities throughout the day. (See Appendix B for Class Spreadsheet). In order to monitor results, I collected data in one-week increments. Whenever I noticed that a student was not following directions that were given, I recorded it in the spreadsheet. Then I analyzed this data by forming charts from the information. This way I had a clear depiction of the extent to which my students were not following various forms of directions.

After I collected this evidence, I needed a way to address these issues with my students. Therefore, I set up various class meetings throughout the process to make sure the students knew what was occurring (See Appendix E for class meetings and discussions) when they were not following directions. I also wanted our class to meet as a whole throughout this experience so that I could receive the students' honest reactions and note their feelings on this subject. These class meetings or discussions were done weekly and were used as a type of intervention to discuss the students' reactions and responses to each implementation. At these meetings and discussions, all responses were anonymous and all data was conveyed as a percentage so that the students would not feel embarrassed or singled out.

Also during the inquiry process, I was diligent in taking video evidence. This video evidence showed how my students responded to the format in which I gave the direction. The video also revealed how using teacher directed self-checks (See
Appendix C for example of self-checks) and scaffolding or “chunking” (See Appendix D for scaffolding and “chunking”) helped the students to follow different forms of directions. I used this data to assess my teaching and also the students’ actions.

After:

After all of the implementations and interventions that I administered within the classroom, I needed to have students reflect again on how well they followed directions and what they believed the teacher’s expectations for following directions looked like. In order to keep these reflections consistent throughout the inquiry, I created another student survey on SCoodle (See Appendix G for Student Post-survey) and presented it to the students. This survey asked students what strategies we used in the classroom were the most effective for them. It also asked how well the students’ believed the class followed directions after all of these strategies were administered.

Also in order to find how the students responded to the strategies and changes in directions over the course of the past several weeks, I summarized the class spreadsheet data into a graph to display a clear depiction. This graph allowed me to see any trends within the classroom and allowed me to make claims about the strategies that I administered throughout this experience.

Explanation of Findings: Claims and Evidence

Claim #1: Making students aware of how they follow directions and the teacher’s expectations of how to follow directions through class discussions, self
reflection, and visual reminders has allowed our class to come to a mutual
expectation on following directions.

Evidence:

To begin this inquiry process with the class, I wanted to get the class involved
and make sure we had mutual expectations of what it meant to follow directions and
why it was so important. Therefore we started our journey by having the students fill
out a student pre-survey (See Appendix A for student pre-survey). From this survey, I
could gather results about how well the students felt they followed directions. As you
can see in the results, one hundred percent of the students believed that as a class they
followed directions to the best of their abilities “often” or “always.” Also from an
individual standpoint, eighty-nine percent of the students felt they followed directions
to the best of their abilities “often” or “always.”

This data shocked me because from my observations and data collection I had
previously found that about fifty percent of the students were consistently not
following directions. Therefore, I realized this needed to be addressed with the class
and asked them in a class meeting if they really gave honest answers.

At first, the students were hesitant and said the answers they gave were honest.
So in order to scaffold the class discussion and allow the students to share other
thoughts, I first asked the students to talk about what it looked and sounded like to
follow directions. I wanted to do this so that the class had an idea of what following
directions should look like in general. Then after the students had a firm understanding
of what it meant to follow directions, I had the students brainstorm what following
directions looked like in Room 215 (See Appendix E for Class Discussion). The honest
answers in this discussion surprised me. Students shared that they did not usually follow directions and that most of the time they were talking to someone else, reading or drawing. They even admitted that they usually needed to be told more than two or three times to follow a direction. When I compared their honest answers with the ones from the survey, they also unanimously admitted that their survey answers were incorrect and that they did not “often” or “always” follow directions.

This honest discussion was a giant step for our class as a whole. By admitting their faults in following directions and coming up with mutual ideas of what following directions should look like, the students could recognize what actions or behaviors would keep them from being successful in the classroom. However, there were several classmates who opposed these ideas. They felt that it was only the responsibility of the teachers and that their actions were not preventing them from following directions successfully.

Therefore, in order to make these students aware of their struggles I used a “trick quiz” (See Appendix A for student “Trick quiz”) before another class meeting. In this quiz the students were told to read all of the items before starting to answer the eleven questions. However, there was a catch: number ten told them not to answer any of the questions except for nine and eleven. Unfortunately, only three students followed the directions correctly. This meant that nineteen students did not fill the quiz out correctly because they did not follow directions and read everything before taking the quiz.

Afterward when we talked about the students’ quizzes in a class meeting, some students seemed embarrassed. They admitted that they did not follow directions
because of their own actions, not ours. This was a success in helping the students realize that it was not just the teacher’s responsibility to help the students follow directions, but a partnership between the teacher and students. Because of this success in recognizing their inability to follow directions, I felt that it was important to brainstorm ideas about how we could help each other follow directions (Teacher and students together). These ideas were then left in a place were the students could be reminded of the partnership daily.

All in all, these class discussions and reflections were a great asset to the process. However, I still felt the need to create something visual as a reminder for the students to follow directions. In order to help our visual learners, I created a bulletin board that was located in the front of the classroom (See Appendix F for Visual Reminders). This bulletin board gave steps for the students to follow different types of directions in different situations. These situations included when given verbal directions, when in the moment and when given an assignment. As a class, we went over this bulletin board so that they understood each step. Then I explained how I expected it to be used daily. This bulletin board gave the students a constant reminder of how they could follow directions more effectively and helped them self-regulate at the same time. One student even admitted, “When the teacher breaks the steps it helps me understand them more. When I don’t get it I can look up there (the bulletin board) and know what to do.”

Claim #2: The use of scaffolding and teacher directed self-checks helps students to follow the directions to a multi step procedure.
Evidence:

In the beginning of the year, we first began to use scaffolding or chunking within our classroom because of our students’ diverse needs. However, I realized as the year progressed that scaffolding also helped our students follow multi-step directions or procedures more effectively. I believe that the use of scaffolding helped our learners because it broke directions down into smaller parts that were easier to follow or comprehend.

One instance in which I found scaffolding to be the most successful was during a Physical Change science lesson. In this lesson, students were asked to physically alter an index card by folding, labeling, and cutting it along different angles. Because of these difficult multi-step procedures, the students needed to follow directions perfectly. Unfortunately when I looked at the original direction sheet, I knew that the class would have difficulty following them because the directions were presented in a twelve-step list with no pictures or examples. After considering my students hardships in following verbal and visual directions, I knew that this form of procedure would not be effective for them and decided to create my own (See Appendix C for Scaffolding and “Chunking”). In order to scaffold this lesson, I first gave the students this original twelve-step list. I explained that these directions were given so they could refer to them, but that I would be breaking it down into smaller steps. Then I showed the students a PowerPoint visual that included one direction at a time with a picture example. I told all of the students to read the direction, then read it aloud to them and then had them look at the picture. After this, I then demonstrated the step to the students.
In the past my mentor teacher explained that there was never an instance when the whole class followed these directions, until this year. After my scaffolding and combination of directions, one hundred percent of the students in the class did the activity correctly. As a result, I could conclude that my scaffolding was very effective for not only the classroom, but also for the activity in general.

This scaffolding or chunking helped my students greatly, but in order to make sure that the students were on track with following directions I decided to use my method of teacher directed self-checks (See Appendix C for Teacher Directed Self-Checks). These self-checks looked different depending on the lesson, but were nevertheless effective in our classroom. In our classroom we used self-checks in the form of giving a thumbs up/thumbs down to tell if they followed a specific direction, pointing to a spot on their paper that needed to be filled out, and checking a neighbors paper to see if they could move on. These self-checks not only helped regulate the class as a whole, but allowed the students to be active in helping themselves. These self-checks provided the students with self-regulatory techniques that they could use within instructional or non-instructional times, in various different subjects. It also allowed me to gauge if my students did or did not follow directions in a quick and efficient manner.

I whole-heartedly believe that these methods of scaffolding and self-checks helped our students follow directions to their best of their ability. One student agreed with this claim on the student post-survey (See Appendix G for Student Post-survey) by saying,

“When the teacher breaks the direction in to a couple steps it helps me because I can see if I’m doing it right or wrong. It also helps the students who are visual learners at
the same time. When the teacher asks if we are ready to move on it helps because then if there is anyone who is stuck on a problem or step they don't get left behind and it sort of chunks it out at the same time. It shows how many of us actually followed the direction first time given or if we need it repeated.”

Student from Room 215

Claim #3: Students are able to follow directions more effectively when directions are demonstrated or given visually compared to when they are only given verbally.

Since the beginning of the year it seemed that our students had trouble following directions. However, as the year progressed we noticed a few trends; when directions were only given verbally or visually with no alternative form, students were less likely to follow them. We noticed this after writing down how many times we had to repeat ourselves or had to give a direction more than three times.

Therefore whenever I began to address this issue and begin the inquiry, I asked for the students’ opinion. I did this by asking for their beliefs on the student pre-survey (See Appendix A for student pre-survey). In this survey an overwhelming 89% said they preferred when directions were given in a combination of verbal, visual and demonstrated. Then when the students explained why they mentioned that they believed they were visual learners or that sometimes they could not “keep up” when the directions were given verbally.

The results only made my beliefs about how our class followed directions stronger, but I needed to take some form of evidence to make sure. At this point, I started to give directions in a combination of methods so that students would be more likely to follow them. While I did this, I also began to take tallies on my class
spreadsheet (See Appendix B for Class Spreadsheet and chart results). These tallies were taken whenever a student did not follow verbal, visual, demonstrated or a combination of directions in weekly increments. As you can see by the picture, our class seemed to have the most trouble following verbal and visual directions. I too noticed this, but wanted to wait until a week to see if the trend changed.

As to support my wonderings, the trend barely changed. As you can see by the summary of results chart (See Appendix B for chart results), the class continued to have the most trouble following verbal and visual directions over the weeks of the inquiry process. From this spreadsheet I also found that when directions were demonstrated or given in a combination of methods, they were almost always followed. However, from the green and purple sections on the chart it was apparent that there were hardly any instances when students did not follow these types of directions. From this evidence, I could claim that my students were the most adept when following demonstrated and a combination of directions.

While these forms of directions continued to be the students’ weak points, the class’ ability to successfully follow directions improved over time. This is represented by the decreasing frequency of the students not following verbal and visual directions. As you can see at the end of week six, the amount of times the students did not follow directions were cut in half. Fortunately, I can attribute this decreasing trend to our class communication, scaffolding and teacher directed self-checks.

Reflection and Implications for Future Teaching
Overall, I feel that this inquiry process helped me to feel successful in my teaching and understand my class as a whole. The class still continues to not follow verbal and visual directions at times, but the frequency of this behavior is reduced by half of the original. I believe that this is because of the joint responsibility that we took as a class to resolve this problem and the strategies that were used on a daily basis.

Fortunately my beliefs were made concrete when I had the students take their post-survey (See Appendix G for student post-survey). In the students’ responses the entire class shared that they felt following directions was a partnership and a responsibility of both the teachers and students. From their ability to recognize their failures in following directions and their learning to self-monitor, they changed the way that they followed directions.

Similarly, the students also mentioned in their post-surveys that the breaking down (scaffolding) of directions, self-checks and the use of demonstrated and combinations of directions were the most effective to both their direction following and learning. This scaffolding or “chunking” helped break down any direction or procedure into smaller parts so that the students could understand. Then these teacher directed self-checks helped both myself and the students to monitor their ability to follow directions when in the moment. This allowed the students to self-regulate and keep track of their own responsibilities and actions. This student evidence and the data from my observations and chart, made me confident that this inquiry process was a success for our classroom.

All in all, I will continue to use these techniques on a daily basis within my classroom. I felt that these strategies were not only effective in helping the students
self-regulate their abilities to follow directions, but also in aiding me to get to know each one of my students better as learners. This process was an experience that I will always remember throughout my teaching and is a journey that will continue throughout the rest of the school year. I hope to share my findings of the students’ progress in following directions with the class and continue to keep open lines of positive communication with the students.

Other wonderings: (after the process)

- How do my attention getters affect the students’ abilities to follow the directions?
- Do they influence the amount of students who follow demonstrated directions?

Inquiry Brief

North, South, East, and West. Why are directions so hard to follow?

Sixth grade is an important time for all students. It is a time when students are not only maturing socially, but they are preparing for new learning in Secondary
classrooms. This year I have noticed that while our students are diverse in different ways, they all share a common bond; they are dependent on teachers when following directions. Whenever a direction is given either orally, visually, or kinesthetically demonstrated by the teacher, the students fail to follow the direction. Therefore, I have been focusing on techniques that can be used to help students follow different types of directions. I believe that these techniques will help the students to succeed in their future classrooms. It has been a journey, but the students are on their way to following directions!

**Context**

As a professional development intern I have been student teaching all year in a sixth grade classroom at Park Forest Middle School. For this 2010-2011 school year, we have a very diverse group of students. My classroom of twenty-three students is made up of ten males and thirteen females who are either eleven or twelve years old. The majority of our students are Caucasian, but three students are of Muslim, Asian and African American descent. All of these student’s cultural backgrounds and ethnicities contribute to our learning environment.

For the most part these students have tested either proficient or advanced in reading and writing according to Pennsylvania State Assessment scores. However, six to eight students have also scored basic or below basic in both of these areas.

All of these student records influence how we teach within our classroom, but our students’ scores on the State College Area School District’s assessments are also taken into account. According to our districts assessment, only eighteen students are
considered fluent in sixth grade learning and the rest of the class is considered to be bridging. This means they have not met the fifth grade year expectations. Also from previous tests, we know that our students’ Intelligence Quotients range anywhere from a 70 to a 145 and that five of our students have a learning disability.

As you can see our classroom of students is extremely diverse. Due to the difference in test scores and records, these students need different types of instruction within the classroom. For example, five students have individual education plans and one student is placed in Title One. These students add a diverse element to the classroom as a whole because they remind us of the importance of differentiation and scaffolding.

Throughout the year, we have spent an ample amount of time on building independence and self-regulation in each student by building routines, scaffolding and giving clear and explicit directions. When an assignment is given, familiar guidelines and directions are used so that our students can form good habits and learn to self-regulate by following directions independently.

**Rationale**

Throughout the year my mentor teacher and I have noticed that while our students are diverse in different ways, they all share a common bond; they are somewhat dependent on teachers. Whenever a direction is given either orally, visually or demonstrated by the teacher, the students fail to follow the direction or move on until a teacher prompts them individually to do so.
As new sixth grade students my mentor and I knew that this would be a challenge. We figured that being in a new large school, and having more responsibilities would force the students to depend on us for guidance. However, we believed that by November the students would fall into a comfort zone of independence and self-regulation. Unfortunately, this was not the case. We noticed that our students were still relying on us to give step-by-step directions and prompts even though the directions were known throughout the school year. The directions were also repeated several times and in different ways that appealed to all learning types.

In January, the students did not seem to make any progress. Therefore, I started to build my main wondering about following directions. Due to their lack of ability to self-regulate, I decided to form ways to help the students build independence in following directions within any classroom setting.

**Main Wondering**

Throughout my Professional Development Internship I have wondered, What techniques can I implement to help my sixth grade students follow directions effectively in the classroom?

**Sub Wonderings**

Many different areas affect my main wondering. These questions below represent areas I would like to focus on to build my inquiry.

- What techniques can I give my students to self regulate their own direction following?
- Does the way that the direction is presented affect how the students follow the direction?
- How do my attention getters affect the students’ abilities to follow the directions?
• How does scaffolding directions affect the students ability to follow them?
• Are there any trends in their academic levels or learning styles that shows who is not following directions?
• How will making the students aware of their ability to follow directions change their habits?
• How can addressing the students’ inability to follow directions change the frequency of not following directions? “Are you choosing not to follow the direction or do you need help?”
• How can I help students become more adept with following directions?

**Data Collection**

My data collection for this main wondering may seem more difficult to collect than others. However, I plan on recording information so that the results can be measurable. My data collection will include a combination of different types. These will include: interviews, surveys, anecdotal notes, and timed student behavior checks. The students will also help me collect data by keeping their own records of how they follow directions and self-regulate.

Before starting any interventions or implementations of any strategies within my class, I will collect baseline data of how well my students self-regulate their own behavior when following directions. I plan on doing this by recording how often my mentor teacher or myself has to repeat a direction, prompt the students or redirect the students.

After the baseline data has been recorded, I will implement the use of surveys within my classroom. First I will conduct a survey to ask the students how they feel about their own “direction following skills” and regulation. This will give me an understanding of how well the students believe they follow directions. This survey will be anonymous and hopefully collect honest results. I am hoping to distinguish if a
student is either unaware of how to self-regulate or follow directions, or is being
defiant by not following directions. Throughout the data collection and inquiry
process, the students will be given two other identical surveys; one in the middle of the
inquiry process and one at the conclusion of the year. These surveys will ask the same
questions about how the students feel about their ability to self-regulate and follow
directions. I hope to see that the students will see an increase in their abilities that will
make them more self-aware.

Also during the middle of our inquiry process, I will interview several students
from the classroom. These students’ Intellectual Quotients will range so that I can
collect data from each level. I will arrange to take baseline data and anecdotal notes of
the student’s ability to follow directions in any classroom environment and subject.
Then I will interview the student on how they believe they can self-regulate their own
behavior when following directions. I will also ask what I can do to help the student
throughout the process. These interviews and notes will help me receive an
understanding of how a student’s Intelligent Quotient or learning disability may affect
their ability to self-monitor and follow directions.

### Inquiry Timeline

*(This original timeline has been altered throughout the process)*

Below is a brief layout of how I plan to work through and develop my information on
my inquiry process.

**Week 1: (February 14-18)**
- Find resources and create annotated bibliography
• Collect beginning baseline data on how often the teachers need to repeat the directions or prompt the students to follow the directions.
• Collect anecdotal notes on strategies the teachers use to promote students to follow directions.
• Create the inquiry brief draft

**Week 2: (February 21-26)**

• Conduct student surveys to collect information on the students’ beliefs about their abilities to follow directions.
• Collect data by taking anecdotal notes of what strategies the students might already be using to follow directions successfully.
• Develop a mini lesson on “How Our Classroom Follows Directions.”

**Week 3: (February 28-March 4)**

• Implement mini lesson on “How Our Classroom Follows Directions.”
• Record what “following directions” looks like to our classroom.
• Interview three different students from three different achievement levels and Intelligence Quotients.
• Continue to take anecdotal notes on students “direction following” behavior.
• Develop a mini lesson on how students can record their own self-regulation and ability to follow directions correctly.
• Revised draft of inquiry brief and annotated bibliography due.

**Week 4: (March 7-March 11)**

• Spring break
• Time will be used for reflecting on baseline data and any change in data thus far.

**Week 5: (March 14-18)**

• Implement mini lesson on how students can record their own “following directions” data.
• Monitor how students are collecting and recording their own data.

**Week 6: (March 21-25)**

• Assess the students’ own data on how they follow directions.
• Formulate a plan with the students on how the teachers can help increase student self-regulation in following directions.
• Conduct original anonymous survey for the second time.

**Week 7: (March 28-April 1)**

• Analyze and compare results of second survey to the first survey. Note any changes or similarities.
• Have one student each day be responsible for taking data on how many times the class does not follow a direction. Share the results with the class (If noticed that only single students are not following directions, this will be done by the teacher for privacy purposes).
Week 8: (April 4-8)
- Have students record data again on their own ability to follow directions.
- Have students organize their data into a chart.
- Construct a chart of our classrooms “direction following” data. Share chart with the class.
- Construct a list with the class on what strategies might be helpful in building self-regulation of following directions
- Inquiry brief due.
- Begin organizing data collection.

Week 9: (April 11-15)
- Continue organizing data collection.
- Begin presentation for inquiry conference.
- Conduct final survey.

Week 10: (April 18-22)
- Analyze final survey
- Produce mini lesson on “How Our Classroom Follows Directions Now.”
- Organize inquiry information

Week 11: (April 25-29)
- Prepare data for inquiry presentation
- Practice Inquiry presentation

Week 12: (April 30-March 6)
- Inquiry Conference
- Final Inquiry paper due.

Annotated Bibliography
This article is compiled by several authors from different universities and focuses on self-monitoring in students with moderate to severe disabilities. In this compilation, the authors explain that students need to be taught self-directed learning strategies in order to help them make choices, monitor their learning and learn to the best of their abilities. The authors believe that if students can learn these strategies, they will be less dependent on external support in the classroom, which will increase motivation, engagement and learning. They believe that in order to achieve this in the classroom, students need to be aware of how they already self-monitor. To help students do this, we must help them use “self-observation” of the behavior that we wish to change. In this case, we would focus on “following directions.” The authors believe that in order to help the students observe they must be made responsible of recording their own behaviors in order to understand exactly what they need to work on and improve. I plan to use the information from this article to focus on how to help our student’s with learning disabilities can learn to self-regulate.


Throughout the *Power of our words*, Denton writes about how important it is to describe student actions as behaviors and not attitudes or character. I hope to use this idea throughout my process so that I remember to use positive language. Throughout this process it is important for me to show that I am not blaming the students for their attitudes or behavior, but instead trying to help. I want the students to feel that we are working together to achieve a goal and are establishing a community of learners.


In order think of strategies to implement into my classroom to help the students follow directions, I referred to *The First Six Weeks of School*. In this book, Denton and Kriete talk about how self-rating and class meetings can be used as strategies within the classroom. Throughout my inquiry process I plan on using their ideas about student self-rating in order to help the students recognize their in-ability to follow directions. I also plan to use Denton and Kriete’s ideas
about class meetings in order to address the issues that we may encounter. I believe that these two implementations and strategies will help us gain understanding within our classroom and aid in the students’ self-regulation.


In order to help guide my wonderings in this inquiry process, I have referred to Kate Irwin’s inquiry about guiding the students to become more responsible learners. In her process, Irwin highlighted the importance of following directions in helping achieve independence and responsibility in student learning. I have used Irwin’s ideas as a guide to formulate my Inquiry process on implementing strategies to help my students follow directions.


Throughout chapter five of Principles of classroom management, Levin and Nolan write about what it means to be a professional teacher. In this chapter they mention how important it is to make clear teacher expectations and use differentiated instruction. Throughout this process, I hope to use these ideas. I feel that in order for the class to reach a clear understanding of what it means to follow directions, we need to make clear expectations for the students to follow. I also feel that it will be important to refer to how Levin and Nolan explain how differentiation can be used to gear a lesson to the students’ multiple intelligences, learning styles and needs. I feel that differentiation will be an extremely important in thinking of how directions are given throughout this process.

http://search.proquest.com/docview/228447328?accountid=13158

In this article, Pelco and Victor remind us that our students have individual differences in self-regulation. However in the elementary aged student, self-regulation affects not only the child’s schoolwork, but behavior, attention and emotions. These differences or lack of self-regulation in students can then lead to problems with social skills that include things like following directions.
However the authors explain that to help the students learn self-regulation, we must use direct instruction starting in Kindergarten through the fifth grade. They explain that a teacher can help students learn to work through their differences in self-regulation by modeling, prompting and even role-playing how to correctly self-regulate and monitor. These ideas in self-regulation can help us bridge the gap of individual differences in self-regulation and help our students with skills such as following directions. I plan to use the information from this article to help build direct instruction situations within the classroom. I believe that the use of this type of direct instruction will help build self-regulation strategies within our students.


In *Working memory and education*, Pickering reveals that a student’s working memory may directly affect a student’s comprehension in the classroom. In this resource, the compilers write about how they believe that working memory performance directly affects their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. The author also explains that a student’s working memory might also be affected by the student’s individual differences in phonological processing or comprehension. These differences in working memory, comprehension and processing may directly affect how a student follows directions. The information from this article will help identify how our students’ abilities to comprehend hinder their ability to correctly follow directions.


In this article, Pintrich and De Groot explain the importance of self-regulation in the classroom. They explain that it is important to help students be successful in their academic endeavors. However, these authors believe that self-regulation is nothing without student motivation. They greatly emphasize that strategies alone are not enough to promote students to achieve. Instead we must develop different strategies in order to help our students become motivated to increase their self-regulation and learning. Pintrich and De Groot believe that there are many aspects that would aid and influence students in self-motivation, which include metacognition, goals, beliefs and interests. With the examples and information from this article, I hope to build ways to motivate the students to follow directions. I also hope that the students will build their own intrinsic motivations to follow directions and self-regulate.

Self-regulation of learning and performance is a compilation of writings from different authors. Schunk has compiled articles together that address self-regulation in the Elementary school student. The authors explain that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation directly affects a student’s self-regulation. This resource explains that we have to help students think of learning strategies to learn to self-regulate in order to learn how to appropriately behave in the classroom. However, they must be intrinsically motivated in order to self-regulate. With the help of this article, we can help the students build motivation by thinking of ways to have them monitor their own progress and abilities.


Throughout the inquiry process I plan to refer to Yardsticks by Chip Wood. In this book, the author writes about the developmental considerations of Elementary aged students. I would like to focus on the developmental milestones of eleven and twelve year olds that are described throughout these pages. I feel that gaining a better understanding of where my students are developmentally, can help me understand how to help my students self-regulate. By reading this book, I can also understand where self-regulation lies in my students’ list of priorities.
Appendix A
Student Pre-survey and Snapshot of Student Responses

Following Directions Survey

Answer the following directions to the best of your ability. These questions are anonymous and will only be used for Ms. Souleret. Please answer every question honestly.

* Required

I am... *
- Male
- Female

It is easy for me to follow directions_____. *
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

It is difficult for me to follow directions_____. *
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

I prefer when directions are given_____. *
- Orally (read aloud/ spoken)
- Visually (written on the board/ on overhead/ on screen)

I believe that our classroom follows directions to the best of our abilities_____.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe that I follow directions to the best of my ability_____.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A (continued)
Snapshot of Student Responses and “Trick Quiz"

I prefer when directions are given:____
Orally (read aloud/spoken) _______ 2 ________ 11%
Visually (written on the board/overhead/or screen) _______ 4 ________ 21%
Demonstrated (by the teacher) _______ 2 ________ 11%
A combination _______ 11 ________ 58%

215 Questionnaire
Read every item carefully before beginning this exercise.

1. If you were one year older, what would be the year you were born? _____________________

2. Give directions from this classroom to the library.
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Add together the ages of all the students in this class. The sum is _______.

4. Exchange this paper with a person sitting next to you. Turn their paper over and put a large star on the back. Then exchange papers to get yours back.

5. List the members of your family from oldest to youngest.
   ___________________________  __________________________
   ___________________________  __________________________

6. If you traveled east from our town without changing direction, you would arrive at which ocean?

7. Rewrite the following sentence correctly:
   Why is it so important to follow directions carefully
   __________________________________________

8. Write your answer to number 7 here: _____________________
   __________________________________________

9. Circle Yes if you think you followed directions to the best of your ability or No if you did not. Yes  No

10. Do not answer numbers 1-8 on this exercise. Complete only numbers 9 and 11.

11. Write your name and today's date in the top right corner of this exercise, and turn it in to your teacher.
## Appendix B
Class Spreadsheet and Chart of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 3rd</th>
<th>Verbal Directions</th>
<th>Visual Directions</th>
<th>Demonstrated Directions</th>
<th>Combination of Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoffin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desthie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How Often 215 Does NOT Follow Directions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks of Inquiry</th>
<th>Frequency of Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Visual Directions
- Verbal Directions
- Demonstrated Directions
- Combination of Directions
Appendix C
Example of Teacher Directed Self-Checks
Appendix D
Example of Scaffolding and “Chunking”

Original Directions

Super Chain

1. Fold the index card along the long side (hotdog)
2. Start at one end of the card and cut across the fold, stopping ¼ inch from the edge.
3. The second cut starts at the open edge and stops ¼ inch from the folded edge.
   a. Cut 1-
   b. Cut 2-

4. Alternate the cuts as indicated above. Be careful to stay within ¼ inch of each edge!
5. Slip the point of your scissors under the fold at point A and cut the fold until you reach point B. Important: do NOT cut the 2 end pieces!!

PowerPoint Visual of Scaffolded Individual Directions

4. Alternate the cuts as indicated above. Be careful to stay within 1/4 inch of each edge!
Appendix D (Continued)

Teacher Demonstration

Students Following Scaffolded Directions

Snapshot of Mentor Teacher’s Comments

- Physical Change 3/23
  - Taking pictures of all of the steps to cut the index card and then inserting them into the powerpoint to give students a visual as you scaffolded the directions was an excellent strategy to assist in their understanding of the directions!
  - This is the first time in many years (at least 4) that ALL students were able to cut the index card correctly the FIRST time! In the past at least 3-5 students would have to start over and complete the steps a second or third time.
Appendix E
Class Meetings and Discussions

Following Directions in 215
- Quiet most of time
- Takes 2-3 times to follow
- Usually raise hands
- Talking between when direction is given and followed
- Once followed - focused
- Not paying attention (Sometimes)
- Don't always make contact
- Calling out
- Draw
Appendix F
Visual Reminders

How can we help each other follow directions?

- Help someone who isn’t following directions
- Rephrase the directions
- Focus on the directions
- Write down the directions
- Teachers could explain them differently
- Listen when a question is asked
Appendix G
Student Post-Survey

Following Directions Survey 2

Please answer each question thoroughly and honestly.

Your username (mls52@scasd.org) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not mls52? Sign out
* Required

As of Mid-April, I believe that I follow directions to the best of my abilities. *

☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Never

Which technique(s) have best helped you follow directions over the past few weeks. *
Choose all that apply or add "other"

☐ When the teacher gives checklists with each assignment
☐ “Following Direction Bulletin Board” Steps
☐ When the teacher breaks down procedures and directions into smaller steps
☐ When the teacher gives more visual or demonstrated directions
☐ When a teacher asks for the class’ full attention before giving a direction
☐ Reflecting on our class’ ability to follow directions (ie. Surveys and class meetings/discussions/surveys)
☐ When a teacher asks you to check whether or not you have followed directions and are ready to move on (Thumbsup/thumbs down, turn to a neighbor, point to your paper...)

☐ Other: 


Appendix G (continued)

Student Post Survey Snapshot of Results

Summary See complete responses

As of Mid-April, I believe that I follow directions to the best of my abilities.

- Always 2 (9%)
- Often 18 (82%)
- Sometimes 2 (9%)
- Never 0 (0%)

Which technique(s) have best helped you follow directions over the past few weeks.

- When the teacher gives checklists with each assignment
- "Following Direction Bulletin Board" Steps
- When the teacher breaks down procedures and directions into smaller steps
- When the teacher gives more visual or demonstrated directions
- When a teacher asks for the class' full attention before giving a direction
- Reflecting on our class' ability to follow directions (ie. Surveys and class meetings
- When a teacher asks you to check whether or not you have followed directions
- Other

On a scale from 1-5, how has your direction following improved since our first survey?

- Not at all 0 (0%)
- 2 1 (5%)
- 3 7 (32%)
- 4 14 (64%)
- A significant amount 0 (0%)

On a scale from 1-5, how has our class' direction following improved since our first survey?

- Not at all 1 (5%)
- 2 1 (5%)
- 3 13 (59%)
- 4 7 (32%)
- A significant amount 0 (0%)