

## **Behavioral Responsibility**

Students who are irresponsible may not have a clear idea of what the teacher's expectations are. Often too many questions or too many choices can lead a student to believe that they can pick and choose what they want to do. My thoughts are that students need to be told and not asked to do something. If directives are not followed and the appropriate warning were given the student is then willfully non-compliant and a consequence should be imposed.

Take a look at the two charts below and determine how you could tweak your language in order to improve student behavioral responsibility. We will be using this chart for a learning activity a little later.

## Stop Asking Questions and Start Giving Commands

<b>STOP ASKING</b>	<b>START SAYING</b>
We're going to do math now, okay?	Take out your math book and turn to page ...
John, why are you out of your seat?	John, sit down NOW.
Why are you late?	You are late; see me after class.
What is your problem today? What do you want to do?	I need you to stop doing ... and then start doing ...
Where is your pencil?	You are unprepared. (Assign consequence. Give student a pencil to do the assignment.)
Did you hit John?	You hit John. (Assign consequence.)
Where were you for the last ten minutes?	You were out of the room too long. (Assign consequence.)
What five math problems do you want to do?	Do problems 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.
Susie, why are you talking to Lauren while I'm teaching?	Susie, start focusing and listen to what I'm teaching.
Why are you kids talking in line?	Everyone face forward, stand quietly, and get ready to leave the room.
Where is your homework? You didn't turn it in.	You did not turn your homework in; you will be staying in for recess.
John, where do you get that kind of language?	John, profanity and vulgarity is unacceptable in this class.
Who do you think you are talking to with that tone of voice?	I don't know who you think you are talking to, but I will not be spoken to that way.
How come your project is three days late?	Your project is late. I will be lowering your grade.
John, why is your head down during class?	John, pick your head up and open your book.

**Establish your expectations so your students know what you want in advance and deliver your statement with a leadership posture.**

## Comments That a Teacher Avoids by Making Statements Rather Than Asking Questions

Teacher Says	Typical Student Response
Avoid Saying These So ...	You Don't Get These
We're going to do math now, okay?	I hate math. I don't want to do math.
John, why are you out of your seat?	I had to throw something in the garbage. (Even though out-of-seat behavior is not allowed in the classroom.)
Why are you late?	My mother woke me up late.
What is your problem today? What do you want to do?	School is boring. I don't want to be here.
Where is your pencil?	I loaned it to Jim yesterday; he never gave it back.
Did you hit John?	Yeah, I hit him. He hit me first. (Or the student will lie and deny that he did it.)
Where were you for the last ten minutes?	The principal stopped me in the hall. (The principal talked to the student for ten seconds.)
What five math problems do you want to do?	I don't want to do this page; it's too hard. Can I do another page?
Susie, why are you talking to Lauren while I'm teaching?	I needed to tell her something. God, calm down.
Why are you kids talking in line?	He pushed me.
Where is your homework? You didn't turn it in.	I did it, but I left it in my room.
John, where do you get that kind of language?	Bob talked that way and you didn't say anything to him.
Who do you think you are talking to with that tone of voice?	I didn't like how you spoke to me.
How come your project is three days late?	You didn't give us enough time.
John, why is your head down during class?	I know this stuff; leave me alone.

**Anytime teachers ask questions like these they open the door for the student to transfer responsibility to someone else or to some circumstance**