

Teacher Language Module Facilitator Guide

Audience: Administrators and teachers can use the module to learn about teacher language as a best practice to integrate social and personal competencies into instruction. This information, knowledge, and tools can be used by professional learning communities focused on social and personal competencies and by administrators to support the social and emotional skills of their teachers and students.

Duration: 40 to 70 minutes

Materials needed:

- PowerPoint Slides: Teacher Language Module
- Teacher Language Handout 1: Self-Assessment
- Teacher Language Handout 2: See it in Action
- Teacher Language Handout 3: Types of Teacher Language
- Teacher Language Handout 4: Reflection and Additional Information
- [Toolkit for Integrating Social and Personal Competencies into Instruction](#)
- Internet, projector, audio (speakers)

Objective: Through the Teacher Language Module, participants will learn about strategies to provide feedback on performance and behavior to students.

Learning Outcomes: Participants will learn about the five core principals of teacher language and the four types of teacher language: reinforcing, reminding, redirecting, and reflecting.

Assessment and Evaluation: Participants will self-assess and self-reflect on how well their teacher language and its impact on students.

How to Use This Guide: Below you will find a script of the content that is associated with each PowerPoint slide. In addition, we include optional activities, videos, and guiding questions that may want to incorporate to make the professional learning more interactive if the online module is conducted in a professional learning community.



Audio Option: There are two options to disseminate the PowerPoint. You can use the PowerPoint found on YouTube that provides audio, in which a narrator takes you through the presentation. Conversely, you can use the PLC version, in which the script for the narration can be found below. The PLC version also allows for a narration to play if preferred.

Materials	Content	Time
Slide 1	Introduction: Have you ever found yourself saying the exact same things to your students over and over? Things like, “Good job” or “Great work.” Sure, these are important for students to hear, but these phrases may not always be the most helpful to students. How do we know? Students have told us.	1 minute
Slide 2	Importance of Teacher Language In a survey administered to almost 90,000 Tennessee middle and high school students in 2013-14, only 50 percent of students reported that teachers praise them for working hard in school. Just over half indicated that their teachers provide them individual attention. As teachers, the type of language we use with students, particularly the feedback we provide about their performance <i>and</i> behavior, has a dramatic effect on them and the ways in which they succeed and behave in our classrooms. So, what can you do about it? How can you help your students succeed? What are the some of the best strategies to consider? This module will provide you some strategies to consider, specifically the type of language you use with your students.	1minute
Slide 3	Ten Teaching Practices: Teacher Language Teacher language is the second learning module in the Social and Personal Competency series. If you haven’t already, you can review the Introduction to Social and Personal Competency module to learn more about the goal and purpose of this series. Each of the 10 modules in this series has been developed around one of the 10 teaching practices that promote social and personal	1 minute

	<p>learning as described in the Tennessee Toolkit called <i>Incorporating Social and Personal Competencies Into Classroom Instruction and Educator Effectiveness: A Toolkit for Tennessee Teachers and Administrators</i>.</p>	
<p>Slide 4</p>	<p>Introduction to Teacher Language Simply put, teacher language refers to how you talk to students. It sets the stage for how students will respond to you. Effective teacher language encourages student effort and work, and reinforces positive student behaviors. It also can help students redirect and reflect on their behavior. Effective teacher language <i>avoids</i> language that is humiliating or sarcastic. It avoids discipline by fear or intimidation and does not show indifference to students.</p> <p>The goal of this module is to help you develop the skills to use language in your classroom to support students as they develop social, personal, and academic skills. Using effective teacher language helps motivate students to want to learn, as well as allows them to feel safe when they contribute in your classroom. Effective teacher language can encourage students to take risks and learn from their mistakes.</p> <p>If you haven't already, be sure to download the handouts for this module. You'll be directed when to refer to them.</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 5</p>	<p>Objectives for This Module You use teacher language every day in the classroom, but on any given day, it can have different results. This module is not about teaching you a new language, stock phrases, or key terms. Instead, it's intended to help you reflect on the language you use in your classroom and consider how language motivates and encourages students to succeed. You also may consider how you can use teacher language to guide behavior so students can be successful in your classroom. You'll also learn at least one strategy you can incorporate into your classroom that supports teacher language. At the completion of this module, you should know how you</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>

<p>Optional Discussion</p>	<p>can model effective teacher language, and you'll determine at least one action step that focuses on the language you use in your classroom.</p> <p>Think about type of language that you use in your classroom. What are some common phrases that you say with your students?</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 6</p> <p>Optional Discussion</p>	<p>Benefits for Students</p> <p>When you use teacher language in your classroom, not only will you develop more positive relationships with your students and create a more positive and respectful learning environment, but also your students will develop skills that will help them be successful in school and life.</p> <p>Other benefits of effective teacher language include motivating students to improve their work habits or to use positive language with you and their peers. For example, students will be better able to regulate their behaviors using the feedback received by teachers. In addition, you'll help students think about and reflect upon their behavior based on the language that you use with them.</p> <p>Thinking back at the previous discussion about the teacher language you use, think about the effect your language has on your students? What evidence do you have that allows you to know your language helps develop social, personal, and academic skills? What other pieces of evidence do you need to help you determine the effect?</p>	<p>2 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 7</p>	<p>Alignment to TEAM Evaluation</p> <p>Teacher language is reflected within components of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, what many educators in the state refer to as TEAM. For example, effective teacher language can be seen within the <i>motivating students</i> component, given teacher language has the capacity to reinforce and reward student behavior. Similarly, it can be found within the <i>activity and materials, academic feedback, expectations, and</i></p>	<p>2 minutes</p>

	<p><i>respectful culture</i> components of the TEAM General Educator Rubric. This module will help you learn how to use teacher language in a way that is consistent with the “Significantly Above Expectations” category within the TEAM Rubric.</p>	
<p>Slide 8</p> <p>Refer to Handout 1</p>	<p>Self-Assessment and Self-Reflection</p> <p>Before you get started, take a few minutes to reflect on how you use teacher language in your own classroom and the ways students react to it. How does your language impact their academic work? Their behavior? If it’s helpful, reflect on your use of language in a recent class, one that you can easily remember. Otherwise, try to think more holistically about your use of teacher language during a typical day.</p> <p>You can refer to Handout 1, <i>Teacher Language Self-Assessment</i>, to reflect on how you implement teacher language in your classroom.</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Activity</p>	<p>Have participants complete Handout 1: Teacher Language Self-Assessment</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 9</p> <p>Refer to Handout 2</p>	<p>See It in Action</p> <p>Now that you’ve reflected on your own use of teacher language, take a deeper look at teacher language in action. Select one of the short videos based on whether you are interested in viewing an elementary or secondary classroom. As you watch the video, pay close attention to the language this teacher uses. Refer to Handout 2, <i>See It in Action Reflections: Teacher Language</i>, for some questions to reflect on as you watch the videos.</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Videos</p>	<p>Teacher Language in the Elementary School: https://youtu.be/CI3cTkfA39c</p> <p>Teacher Language in the High School: https://youtu.be/5QFjm5cSU-o</p> <p>Have participants complete the reflection questions in Handout 2, <i>See It in Action Reflections</i>.</p>	<p>6 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p>

<p>Activity:</p>	<p>Responsive Classroom Teacher Language during Independent Work Time: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS8aWC-aU-I&index=17&list=PLuTUy5YyCkA2XfKOMb7mlKAYKag48yVN6</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>
<p>Optional Video Ideas</p>	<p>Classroom Chronicles: This Math Teacher Loves Mistakes http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/okay-mess/?mess/</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 10</p>	<p>Exploring Teacher Language Teacher language is a powerful tool in any teacher’s tool belt. It helps build a safe, respectful classroom and school, as well as helps shape the way in which your students see themselves and their role in learning. It’s important for developing positive student-teacher relationships and can model how students can communicate with adults and their peers. There are multiple social and personal competency programs that have teacher language as a core ingredient, such as the Responsive Classroom approach and Developmental Designs. You can find out more about each program in Handout 4.</p>	<p>2 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 11</p>	<p>Learn About Teacher Language Paula Denton, a founder of the Responsive Classroom approach, lists five general guidelines underlying strategies to implement teacher language. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be direct and authentic in what you say to students. • Mean what you say and follow through. • Convey faith in children’s abilities and intentions. In other words, talk in a way that conveys all students want to and can learn the material. • Focus on the discrete actions of students, rather than abstract statements. For example, asking students to be respectful can be vague. Instead, discuss with them what respect looks like in the classroom. • Keep your language brief and pithy. Students can process only so much information at one time. 	<p>2 minutes</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know when to be silent and allow students time to think, reflect, or even rehearse what they need to say. 	
<p>Slide 12</p> <p>Refer to Handout 3</p>	<p>Four Types of Teacher Language</p> <p>For the purpose of this module, we'll look at four types of language to support social and personal learning. They are reinforcing, reminding, redirecting, and reflecting language. Across all four types of language, the goal is to communicate with students in a way that helps them feel competent and that gives students some control and voice in the classroom. One type of language is not better than another; rather, you can use a mix of these four types of language styles in any classroom.</p> <p>You'll review each type of language next. It may be helpful for you to review Handout 3, <i>Four Types of Teacher Language</i>, as we review each type of language, as it includes additional guidelines and examples for each type of language.</p> <p>Review Handout 3: Four Types of Teacher Language and consider additional examples for each type.</p>	<p>2 Minutes</p>
<p>Slide 13</p>	<p>Reinforcing Language</p> <p>Reinforcing language occurs when you encourage students to continue academic and social behaviors that students are doing well. Many times, you might use terms like, "Good job," "I like what I am seeing," or "I'm proud of you." But these phrases often don't go far enough. To motivate your students intrinsically, you need to replace praise with language that <i>reinforces</i> student behavior.</p> <p>You can do this by providing specific, descriptive information about what a student is doing. Focus on the act, not the student. Staying neutral this way moves away from judging the person to describing actions. When doing this, be specific. Avoid vague, exclusive, or manipulative feedback. Also avoid "I" statements when you are reinforcing behaviors. You're talking about student behaviors, not how you feel or what you know.</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Take a minute to review “Reinforcing Language” in Handout 3. As you review the examples of reinforcing language, compare the specificity of the language used in the “Consider saying...” column versus the language in the “Instead of saying...” column. Ask yourself, “Can all students receive this type of reinforcing language?” “How authentic are the statements for students?”</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Optional Discussion</p>	<p>Discuss with your colleagues about the types of reinforcing language you use in your classroom, or how you can modify some of your current language to reflect principles of reinforcing language. It may be helpful to think about the context in which you would like to modify current language.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 14</p>	<p>Reminding Language Reminding language helps students remember for themselves what they are supposed to do and how to behave in a way that will help them achieve their goals. Reminding can help students do this by helping them plan next steps or reflect on their current actions.</p> <p>Thus, you can use reminding language in two ways. First, you can use language that helps students set up a task, reminding students of the expectations and the directions. Second, you can use reminding language when it appears that students are deviating from the expectations and they need assistance to get back on task. Reminding language can provide students an opportunity to correct the behavior themselves without being reprimanded for getting off task.</p> <p>There are a few important things to keep in mind when using reminding language. First, reminding language occurs when students <i>already know</i> the answer or they need to be provided a few brief clues to help them remember what they already know. Reminding language can occur in the form of a question or statement. However, don’t state your question in way</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>

<p>Activity</p>	<p>that makes it appear that students have a choice. For example, don't say, "Diamond, can you line up like everyone else?" as that implies a student has a choice to line up or not. Similarly, it's always a good idea to follow up with your students to make sure they're exhibiting the behaviors you expect of them. In addition, only use reminding language when both you and your students are calm. Finally, don't overuse reminding language. At times, it's important to just state directly what you want students to do.</p> <p>Return to Handout 3 and review the examples of "Reminding Language." Note how the examples in the "Consider saying..." column are brief and specific. Also notice how they provide directions on what students should do and reinforce student expectations. How might you use reminding language in your own classroom?</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Optional Discussion</p>	<p>Discuss with your colleagues about the types of reminding language you use in your classroom, or how you can modify some of your current language to reflect principles of reminding language. It may be helpful to think about the context in which you would like to modify current language.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 15</p>	<p>Redirecting Language Redirecting behavior is slightly different than reinforcing and reminding language. You use redirecting language when you need to help students regain control.</p> <p>Redirecting language is used when your students are too emotional to think reasonably, may harm themselves or others, or may have a difficult time behaving in an expected manner without assistance. Redirecting language helps to divert students' behaviors and get back on track.</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Redirecting language should be direct and concise. It's not a summary of the student or their routine actions, but the actions that you see at the moment. For example, avoid statements like, "You always act up in class." This is a judgment of the student over time and not based on the immediate situation. Redirecting language is nonjudgmental but still conveys a sense of authority. It lets your students know that you still like them, but you don't like a specific behavior and won't accept a behavior that breaks the classroom expectations.</p> <p>When redirecting students, it's important to be objective. It's not enough to say what the student does wrong, but also state the behaviors you want the student to exhibit. You're not blaming or shaming the student. Instead, you're trying to help your students keep their pride and dignity and follow the social and academic expectations of the classroom.</p> <p>Redirecting language is generally presented as a statement, not a question. If you use a question, it can imply your student has a choice. If students have already deviated from classroom expectations, it's better to tell them the actions you really want to see happen and in a way the student can actually accomplish the task.</p> <p>Handout 3 has some additional information about "Redirecting Language." Again, note how the examples in the "Consider saying..." column are brief and concise. Compare how effective they are when posed as statements, as opposed to some of the questions in the first column. Note how the statements are authoritative, exhibiting strength, while at the same time show concern for students. What similar examples of redirecting language might you use with your own students?</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
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Optional Discussion	Discuss with your colleagues about the types of redirecting language you use in your classroom, or how you can modify some of your current language to reflect principles of redirecting language. It may be helpful to think about the context in which you would like to modify current language.	
Slide 16	<p>Reflecting Language</p> <p>Our final type of teacher language we will discuss is reflecting language. Developing students who can think critically is one of the most important jobs of teachers. One approach to do this is to help students learn to think about and reflect upon both their social and academic behavior.</p> <p>When you use reflective language, it serves multiple purposes, including helping students to develop a deeper understanding of a topic, to make improvements to their work, or to understand what they know or do well. In other words, reflective questions can focus on the outcome of a task or a behavior, or the process of accomplishing that task.</p> <p>Reflective questions can occur at the beginning of an activity in the planning stages or can occur at the end of the activity to synthesize information. Similar to all of the components of effective teacher language, it's important for the reflective question to focus on the actual behavior or task, not the student. Therefore, reflective questions are nonjudgmental. They also may have multiple answers. In addition, it is important to ask rigorous reflective questions, in which students may have multiple answers and they are required to provide evidence to support their responses.</p>	3 minutes
Activity	Take a minute and review the final section in Handout 3 on "Reflecting Language." Note how the examples are neutral and open ended. Consider how they help students to think more critically. What examples of	5 minutes

<p>Optional Discussion</p>	<p>reflecting language might you use in your own classroom?</p> <p>Discuss with your colleagues about the types of reflecting language you use in your classroom, or how you can modify some of your current language to reflect principles of reflecting language. It may be helpful to think about the context in which you would like to modify current language.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Slide 17</p>	<p>Nonverbal Communication</p> <p>Communication also is conveyed through your nonverbal behaviors. This can be your tone of voice or the position of your arms while talking. Body language helps get your message across and lets your students know that you want to create a supportive, productive learning environment. Here are some nonverbal communication do's and don'ts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make eye contact: This helps to establish rapport and trust and shows that you are engaged and listening to students. For example, refrain from looking at your watch, phone, or other items you might be holding while the student is speaking. • Be aware of your facial expressions (or lack thereof). • Smiling conveys happiness and encouragement. An animated face draws the listener in. We all know that a frown can convey sadness and anger. Try to be aware of the messages your expressions are sending. • Similarly, pay attention to your tone, volume, and speed as you speak. Enliven students with how you speak to them. • Avoid folding your arms, standing behind a desk, or using other physical barriers between you and your students. These behaviors block you off and can make you appear unapproachable. Instead, be among your students. 	<p>3 minutes</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive, nonverbal communication can include greeting students as they enter the door. This can help create a positive learning environment before they even sit down. • When you place your hand on your chin, it can encourage students to think about their answer and shows you want to hear from them. You can also hold your hands out and palms up, showing that you're open to questions and answering in a nonthreatening way. • Observe wait time by appearing relaxed and ready to listen; don't stare and rush students. 	
<p>Slide 18</p>	<p>Reflect and Plan for the Future</p> <p>The type of language that you use with your students—what you say, how you say it, and the intention behind what you say—is a powerful tool to promote positive social and academic outcomes. This module emphasized that clear and consistent messages can influence your students to see themselves as learners and active participants in the school and classroom community. By being direct, brief, and focused, you can use teacher language effectively with your students.</p> <p>It can take some practice to incorporate some of the effective teacher language strategies presented in this module, but it's something every teacher can master. It's likely you're already using some of these strategies, and it may be a matter of tweaking your language or being more purposeful in some situations.</p> <p>To help you plan for using teacher language more effectively in your classroom, complete the final handout, Handout 4, <i>Teacher Language Reflection and Planning</i>. It contains some questions for reflection that can lead to concrete action steps to impact your use of teacher language. This handout also provides additional resources that you can use to find more information about teacher language, as well as the references found within the module.</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>

	<p>As you consider your own plan of action, keep in mind the following helpful hints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a goal for yourself on the types of language that you will use and when you will do it. For example, you may want to notice when students respond to one another during group discussions. • At the beginning, it may be helpful to choose one phrase that you will attempt to use more regularly that you think might come easily to you. For example, you may have students repeat directions after you provide them with the prompt, “Who can tell us...” • Use aids and prompts similar to the prompts provided in Handout 3, <i>Four Types of Teacher Language</i>, provided in this module. • Let students know that you are attempting to change the language that you use in the classroom, and have them help you be accountable for that change. • This can be a difficult process, but keeping with it will not only help your students develop new language to use but also will make teaching less stressful for you. <p>If you’re reviewing this information in relation to better understanding the TEAM Rubric, consider how you might share your action steps with coaches, mentor teachers, administrators, or those who might observe your class. They will benefit from knowing your efforts and may be able to provide feedback on your actions.</p>	
Slide 19	<p>Module Evaluation</p> <p>The Tennessee Department of Education developed this online module in collaboration with the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, which are funded by the U.S. Department of Education. If you want to find out more information about the online modules or social and personal competencies, please contact the</p>	2 minutes

Evaluation	<p>Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, Division of Student Support Services, at the Tennessee Department of Education.</p> <p>Thank you again for participating in the Teacher Language online module. We encourage you to complete the online evaluation of the learning module. We also encourage you to review the other online modules that provide knowledge, tools, resources, and strategies to embed social and personal competencies within your classroom.</p> <p>http://www.questionpro.com/t/ALa5QZUs5z</p>	
Slide 20	References	
Slide 21	Conclusion	