A large red square with a white border, centered on a white background. Inside the square, the words "Teacher" and "Language" are written in white, bold, sans-serif font, stacked vertically.

Teacher Language

**WHO SAYS
TEACHING IS STRESSFUL?**

I'M 39, AND I FEEL GREAT!



Reflections from Last Week

How did the interactive modeling go?

What did you try?

How successful was the practice?

Teacher Language

What we say to students **and how** we say it is one of the most powerful teaching tools. Through careful use of language, we can support students as they develop self-control, build their sense of community, and gain academic skills and knowledge.

How You Sound to Kids

A calm, level tone communicates respect and self-control.

Pacing that is responsive to your classroom's needs demonstrates respect and inclusion of all students (think about students who are ELLs or on IEPs).

Word choice should be deliberate and effective (get to the point)

5 General Guidelines

1. Be Direct & Genuine
2. Convey Faith in Children's Abilities & Intentions
3. Focus on Action
4. Keep it Brief
5. Know When to be Silent

Be Direct & Genuine

When we say what we mean and use a kind and straightforward tone, children learn that they can trust us. They feel respected and safe, which helps them develop self-discipline and take the risks that are necessary for learning. Instead of giving global praise ("Great job!"), name concrete, specific behaviors so students know exactly what they're doing that's helping them learn. Avoid naming individual students as examples for others.

Direct & Genuine Language

State the expectation firmly and calmly, “It’s time to come to the rug”.

Instead of saying, “We are all on the rug waiting for you. You are wasting everyone’s time. I’m really frustrated.”

Say, “I notice many people came to the rug calmly and quietly, making sure to push in their chairs on the way.”

Instead of saying “Good job!”

Say, “I noticed you were really focused on your writing. You added many small details that made your writing more interesting.”

Convey Faith in Abilities & Intentions

Our language shapes how children see themselves and their world. When our words and tone convey faith in children's desire and ability to do well, the children are more likely to live up to our expectations of them.

Communicate a belief that children want to and know how to listen, cooperate, and do good work. Find positives to name in all students - including those who are struggling

Faith in Abilities & Intentions Language

Instead of saying, “This math is not that hard. You can do it!”

Try saying, “I know today’s math was tough for you, but you kept trying! That persistence will help you solve all kinds of problems.”

Instead of saying, “No running in the hallway! Get back here and do it again.”

Try saying, “I see many people walking in line with hands by their sides and voices quiet. That helps students in the other classes keep learning.”

Take a Look at This 3rd Grade Class

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 5WNrjxaX28](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WNrjxaX28)

What did you notice?

Focus on Action

Because children tend to be concrete thinkers, it can be effective to name specific actions rather than abstract terms.

Action Language

Instead of saying, “Be respectful.” or “Stop talking.”

Try saying, “When someone is speaking during a discussion, it’s time to listen. That means eyes on the speaker and hands in laps.”

If students boo or whine when they are not picked, instead of saying “shhhh” or ignoring them,

Say, “When someone gets called to answer a question, we listen and support them.”

Instead of saying, “you need to get your work done or you’ll do it during recess.”

Say, “What would help you focus on your work?”

Keep it Brief

When we talk too much, students tune us out.

It's difficult for children to follow long strings of words, the younger the child, the less words you need.

Avoid lecturing!

Instead of telling students how to address a challenge, include them in creating solutions to challenges they or the classroom community faces.

Keep it Brief Language

If the classroom is getting very noisy and students are beginning to get agitated.

Instead of saying, “I don’t like the behaviors I’m seeing today. You all know better than this. I might have to talk to some of your parents and let them know what their child is doing all day. This is not acceptable behavior. Everyone put your heads down at your desk this minute. If you don’t, you will be staying in for the entire recess. I’ve had enough.”

Say, “I’m noticing that it got really loud in here. Who else noticed that?”

“How can we solve this problem?”

Know When to be Silent

The skillful use of silence can be just as powerful as the skillful use of words.

Silence allows children to think, rehearse what to say, and sometimes to gather the courage to speak at all.

It's okay to feel uncomfortable in the silence, let it happen!

Always pause 3-5 seconds before taking responses to questions. This is called “wait time”.

Sign Language can be a useful tool for limiting your need to talk.

Power of Silence Language

You call on a student, but they say nothing.

Instead of saying, “I’m going to call on someone else who was listening.” or “Don’t raise your hand if you don’t have anything to say.”

Say . . . nothing for 3 - 5 seconds. Then say, “Do you need more think time? We can come back to you when you’re ready.”

If students keep asking to use the bathroom during a lesson, replace the verbalized language needed with sign language instead.

Instead of saying, “No! I already told you that we don’t go to the bathroom during my lessons!”

Sign “no”.

Let's watch this Kindergarten class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPdqHW1VVHI>

What do you notice?

Some Helpful Phrases to Practice

“I notice ...”

“That is teamwork”

“Show me how ...”

“I see lots of people ...”

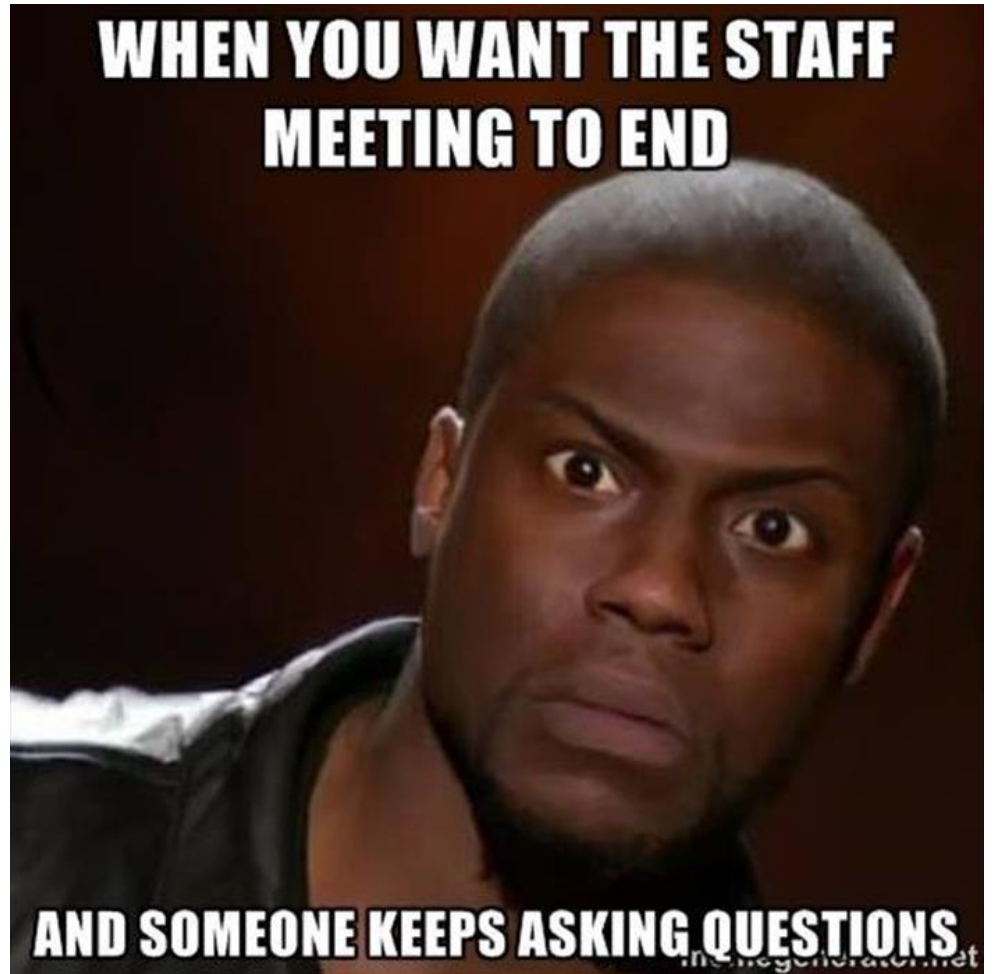
“That was tricky, but we worked so hard and kept trying!”

“We are getting closer to our goals for writing!”



Find a partner...It's time to practice!

Reflections



For more articles and information:

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/category/teacher-language/>

Visit the Responsive Classroom Teacher Language section. There are also many videos on youtube.com the can help show what these principles look like in action.

SEE YA LATER SUCKER

