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# UNIT: MENTAL SKILLS NEEDED FOR GOOD WORK HABITS FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

**Essential elements:** To develop skills that enable students to establish good work habits and interpersonal relationships.

**Objective:** Students will learn the importance of following directions both in life and in the workplace.

**Group size:** Whole class (some activities may require one-to-one or small groups depending on student ability).

**Materials needed:** A favorite recipe and ingredients, materials for sorting (e.g., colored bowls, trays, file folders, etc.).

**Resources:** *Following Directions* by Jill Norris, Marilyn Evans; *Follow the Directions* by Denise D. Nessel, Joyce Marie Graham; *I'm Following Directions* by Sherri M. Butterfield.

**Note:** These lessons may take several days and need to be repeated depending on student success and understanding

## Teaching Activities

1. Choose a recipe that your students will like (you could even make peanut butter sandwiches if you don't have access to an oven). The best suggestion is to choose something sweet like a favorite cookie recipe. Show students the recipe (make picture recipe cards if your students cannot read). Tell students, "When you cook, it is very important to follow directions. If you don't, your food might not taste right." Demonstrate the recipe step by step for your students. When finished, take students through the recipe a second time, but this time leave something out, like the sugar. Have students compare the two end results. Which was better? Why was it better? Reemphasize the importance of following directions.
2. Tell students, "It is also important to follow directions when you are working. If you don't follow directions, you will not be successful at your job. Today we are going to practice following directions. You will each be given a job to do. You will have to listen to my directions and follow them for your job to be complete." (Sample jobs: laundry, sorting papers in various marked folders, delivering messages to various people (they have to pay close attention to which message goes to which person), setting the table, etc.). Give each student oral directions to complete their job. Depending on student ability, give one, two, or three directions at a time.
3. Give each student a sorting activity with written or picture directions that they must follow. The difficulty of the activity should be based on student ability. Feel free to use your own sorting activities. Examples are:
  - A. **Easy:** Have three different colored bowls. Written directions should read, "Put all the paper clips in the red bowl, the pencils in the blue bowl, and the stamps in the green bowl."
  - B. **Difficult:** Provide three file folders and various documents. Instructions should read, "Put the attendance in the red folder, the grades in the blue folder, and the homework in the yellow folder."
4. Using the sorting activities mentioned above, pair up students. Have each student teach his or her partner how to complete his or her sorting activity. Have the partner follow his or her team member's instructions.

5. Have students collect written instructions for activities of interest, such as auto repair, cooking, etc. Select one or two activities to model in the classroom. Or students could take field trips to see their activity performed.
6. Have parents discuss with their children the importance of following directions as well as examples where they follow directions in their jobs.

7. Invite an employer to discuss the importance of following directions in the workplace.

**Reflection:** Review and summarize following directions and why it is important in the students' daily lives.

**Evaluation:** The student completes a task with 80 percent accuracy.