

# STUDENT CHOICE

Ways to use choice for autonomy



## What's In This Handout?

- The Benefits of Using Student Choice
- How to Use Student Choice in the Classroom
- Tips for Success

## Why Use Student Choice in the Classroom?

Providing choice is when you allow students to select a task or assignment from an approved set. Because the student is being given flexibility and ownership of the work, the choice in itself may be reinforcing for the student. As such, providing choices can increase academic engagement and decrease disruptive behavior and oppositionality. Providing choices also communicates that the teacher trusts and respects the students' desires and gives students opportunities to practice making autonomous decisions. By using choice, you also communicate that there are more than one "correct" ways to do things, and that different ways of approaching learning are welcomed and respected.

# Examples of Choice

## Activity Choices:

- Allow students to decide *where* in the classroom they would like to read during daily reading time (e.g., couch, desk, floor, beanbag area, windowsill).
- Let students choose *how* they wish to read (e.g., silently, to a partner, listening to audio).
- Let students personalize assignments.
  - During writing time, students can choose the topic or the character to write about

## Behavioral Choices:

- *You can either follow the carpet rules or watch the activity from your desk; let me know which you prefer.*
- *You can choose to lay your head quietly on your desk or go spend 5 minutes in the "Cool Down" space.*
- *You can either work together in "whisper mode" or you can work separately.*

# Tips for Success

- Provide clear and concrete choices
- Create clear expectations/rules for the choice activity and review those before the activity
- Praise and validate student choices to reinforce the importance of autonomy, positive decision making, and student effort (e.g., "That's a great choice for you")
- As you create your teacher agenda or plan for the day, consider group or independent work blocks that could incorporate an aspect of choice. For example, if you have a reading block or a math work block, can students select from two or three activities that target the appropriate skill? If you have students complete a daily journal prompt, can you provide a variety of prompts from which to choose?



# More Ideas

- Let students choose to answer odd or even questions
- Let students choose a partner or work on their own
- Let students choose the order in which they complete tasks/assignments
- Let students choose the format of an assignment (make a video, design a poster)

# Resources

## Example of choice boards:

<https://www.classroomnook.com/blog/student-choice-in-the-classroom>

## Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L08wNizulOY>

<https://tennesseebsp.org/resources/classroom-management/#/lightbox&slide=15>

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