



**Instructional Choice:
Getting More Bang
for Your Buck**

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**Presentation
Outline:**

- Introductions
- Background Information
- Types of Instructional Choice
- Considerations for the Classroom
- Planning Choices
- Questions



Background Information

Context

- Both classroom management and strong instruction prevent problem behaviors and contribute to student achievement (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002).
- Effective classroom management includes a variety of antecedent, instructional, consequence, and self-management strategies (Conroy, Alter, & Sutherland, 2014; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).
- Empirically-supported instructional strategies include providing students with choice (Kern, George, & Weist, 2016; Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015).

Instructional Choice

Any instance where a teacher provides one or more students with two or more options from which to select as part of an academic assignment or activity.



(Kern & Clemens, 2007; Lane et al., 2015)

Instructional Choice

- Choice has been shown to reduce problem behavior and increase academic engagement across a range of students and content areas (Kern & State, 2009; Lane et al., 2015), even when the choices presented were non-preferred tasks (Kern, Mantegna, Vorndran, Bailin, & Hilt, 2001).
- Choice is a flexible strategy; it can be implemented across tiers as a universal, targeted, or individualized intervention.

Instructional Choice

- A recent meta-analysis analyzed the effects of choice on 85 classroom behaviors across 50 students (Wilkinson, in preparation).
- Preliminary results indicate that, on average, appropriate classroom behavior improves by 51% when students are presented with choices related to their academic tasks and assignments.

Why does choice work?

- Already part of a teacher's repertoire of skills
- Does not require time, money, or materials beyond typical instruction
- Supports the development of student self-determination
- Allows students to select tasks they enjoy or prefer (among the choices provided)
- Supports preferences that change over time

(Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015)

Types of Instructional Choice

Within Task Choice

- Teacher provides student(s) with two or more options of activities to complete within one assignment.
 - On a math worksheet of 20 problems, choose any 10 to complete.
 - On a list of 10 vocabulary words, choose any 5 to use in a sentence.
 - When writing a history essay about the policies of absolutism, choose one absolute monarch to discuss.

Between Task Choice

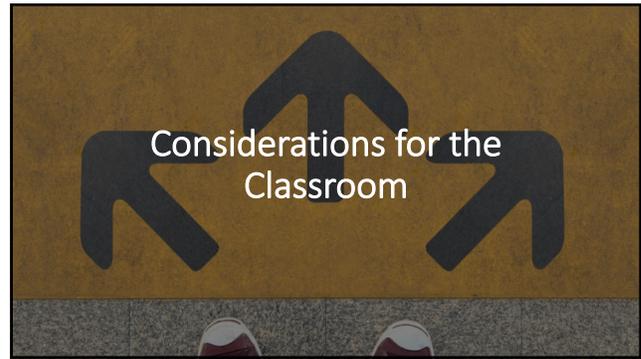
- Teacher provides student(s) with two or more options between different assignments, one of which must be completed.
 - For a spelling assignment, choose to write the words in ABC order or to write each word three times.
 - For a writing assignment on a topic about a novel, choose to write a persuasive essay or create a video presentation.
 - For a science project, research a famous scientist or a famous invention.

Choice of Task Order

- Teacher provides student(s) with a set number of assignments or activities all of which must be completed, but allows student(s) to choose the order in which to complete them.
 - In math, students must complete (in any order) flashcards, a worksheet, and a computer game before the class is over.
 - On a social studies test, students can choose to answer the multiple choice questions or to write the essay first.

Choices Related to External Factors

- Teacher provides student(s) with two or more options related to factors related to completing the assignment, but unrelated to the assignment itself (e.g., where to complete the task, how to complete the task, who to work with, when to complete work).
 - During independent reading time, each student chooses where in the classroom to read their book.
 - Students can choose a peer to work with during a review activity.
 - Students can handwrite or type their responses to questions.



Benefits

- Feasible for teachers.
- Can be implemented across grade levels, content areas, and settings.
- Supports academic and behavioral growth.
- Strengthens teacher-student interactions.
- Increases academic engagement.
- Supports decision making skills and self-determination.
- Gives students a sense of control.

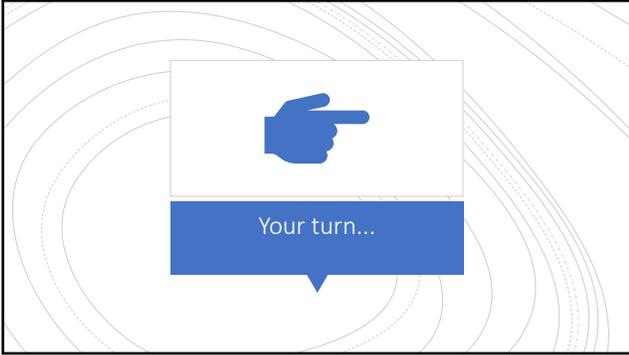
Challenges

- Ensuring the learning objectives for tasks are equivalent.
- Can take more time upfront to plan until procedures are in place.
- Methods of collecting different assignments.
- Developing a grading plan (e.g., rubrics).
- Students may need to be taught choice-making skills.

Planning Choices

Steps for Success (from Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015)

1. Determine what types of choices you would be willing to offer students and create a menu of options.
2. Use the menu to select what type of choice to add to a lesson.
3. Build the choice into the lesson.
4. Ask student(s) to make a choice.
5. Provide wait time for the student to select the option.
6. Listen to or observe the response.
7. Prompt student(s) to choose if they do not within the allotted time.
8. Provide student(s) with the option selected.
9. Offer student(s) an opportunity to provide feedback on their choice.



Questions?

Thank you!

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A cartoon illustration of a person with brown hair and glasses, with a large, colorful question mark floating above their head. The graphic is split into a white left half and a dark gray right half.