

Section: Instruction
Topic: Reinforcing Correct Responses

There are six rules you will want to know about reinforcing correct responses: 1) only reinforce correct responses, 2) if you provide assistance, also provide reinforcement, 3) use a positive tone, 4) be brief, 5) vary what you say, and 6) make sure you and your peer enjoy working together.

Only reinforce correct responses. Before you praise a student, make sure the student responded correctly. In most situations you will know this right away. For example, in the weight room at school the student sets up the bench press machines correctly; at Wendy's the student walks right up to the line. In both cases, you would praise the student immediately.

In some cases though, you will need to look more carefully before you reinforce. At the store, Todd has a shopping list for bread and butter. You tell him to find the items and meet you at the counter. A couple of minutes later, Todd approaches the counter with a big smile on his face, and two items in his basket. Should you reinforce him? You don't really know until you look into his basket. If he does have bread and butter, then you'd say, "Great job!" If, however, he had bread and cream cheese, you might say, "You found the bread, Todd, that's good. But this isn't butter, it's cream cheese. Let's go back and practice finding butter."

If you provide assistance, also provide reinforcement. When you help a student respond correctly, make sure you also reinforce him. Your reinforcement strengthens his response. Next time the student does the same thing, he may do it with less help or no help. For example, in the weight room you help Chris put the weights on the leg lift table, by showing him what to do, and then saying, "Now you do it." Following your model, Chris does it correctly. You say, "Nice going, you put them on!" The next day, you say, "Chris, let's see you put the weights on by yourself today." Chris puts them on correctly. You say, "I didn't have to show you, awesome!"

Use a positive tone. This is especially important for students who have more severe handicaps. Sometimes they don't really understand the meaning of your words. But they do understand your tone. For example, if you say, "you did a great job, Joe," in a dull tone of voice, Joe may not know he did anything correctly. But if you say to Joe, "wonderful" with an enthusiastic voice and a smile on your face, Joe will definitely know he did something right.

Keep it brief. The briefest reinforcement is to say a superlative in a positive tone, e.g., "Marvelous!", "Super!", "Tubular!". You can also briefly say what the student did in a positive tone, e.g., "Wow, you found all your items!", "Great, you cashed your check!", "You cooked the soup by yourself!" You want to be brief because you do not want to interrupt the student and take them off task. After you reinforce a student you want them to continue with the activity they're doing without stopping and

without looking at you. An example of poor reinforcement looks like this: In the classroom, John correctly answered, "Two" after you said, "\$1.95, next number?" You then looked at John and said, "That was really nice, John, you said \$2.00. I really like it when you work so well." John then says "Thanks." This reinforcement interrupted John from doing the next step, counting out two dollars. Here's what should have happened: John answers "Two." You say "Right!" John then counts out two dollars. You say, "Good job. That'll be \$3.60, next number? (you present the next trial)."

Vary what you say. The next page lists 99 ways to say "Very good." By varying what you say, you keep your peer interested in learning from you.

Are you and your peer enjoying yourselves? This is an important question to ask yourself while teaching. When you and your peer both enjoy what you're doing together, then the whole situation is reinforcing. When this is true, learning and teaching are much easier. If this is not true, don't hesitate to ask the teacher for help. Remember, we want you to enjoy being a peer tutor. If you're not, there are things we can do that may help. We can give you some extra teaching tips, change the activity you are doing together, or let you work with a different student, among other things. Let us know, and we will be happy to help.



99 Ways to say "Very Good"

1. You're on the right track now!
2. You're doing a good job!
3. You did a lot of work today!
4. Now you've figured it out.
5. That's RIGHT!!!
6. Now you have the hang of it!
7. That's the way!
8. You're really going to town!
9. You're doing fine!
10. Now you have it!
11. Nice going.
12. That's coming along nicely
13. That's great!
14. You did it that time!
15. GREAT!
16. FANTASTIC!
17. TERRIFIC!
18. Good for you!
19. GOOD WORK!
20. That's better.
21. EXCELLENT!
22. Good job, (name of student).
23. You outdid yourself today!
24. That's a good (boy-girl).
25. That's the best you've ever done.
26. Good going.
27. Keep it up!
28. That's really nice.
29. WOW!
30. Keep up the good work.
31. Much better!
32. Good for you!
33. That's very much better!
34. Good thinking!
35. Exactly right!
36. SUPER!
37. Nice going.
38. You make it look easy.
39. I've never seen anyone do it better.
40. You are doing that much better today.
41. Way to go!
42. Not bad.
43. Superb!
44. You're getting better every day.
45. WONDERFUL!
46. I knew you could do it.
47. Keep working on it, you're getting better.
48. You're doing beautifully.
49. You're really working hard today.
50. That's the way to do it!
51. Keep on trying!
52. THAT'S it!
53. Nothing can stop you now!
54. You've got it made.
55. You are very good at that.
56. You are learning fast.
57. I'm very proud of you.
58. You certainly did well today.
59. You've just about got it.
60. That's good.
61. I'm happy to see you working like that.
62. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
63. That's the right way to do it.
64. You are really learning a lot.
65. That's better than ever.
66. That's quite an improvement.
67. That kind of work makes me very happy.
68. MARVELOUS!
69. Now you've figured it out.
70. PERFECT!
71. That's not half bad!
72. FINE!
73. You've got your brain in gear today.
74. That's IT!
75. You figured that out fast.
76. You remembered!
77. You're really improving.
78. I think you've got it now.
79. Well look at you go!
80. You've got that down pat.
81. TREMENDOUS!
82. OUTSTANDING!
83. I like that.
84. Couldn't have done it better myself.
85. Now that's what I call a fine job.
86. You did that very well.
87. Congratulations!
88. That was first class work.
89. Right on!
90. SENSATIONAL!
91. That's the best ever.
92. Good remembering!
93. You haven't missed a thing.
94. It's a pleasure to teach when you work like that.
95. You really make my job fun.
96. You must have been practicing.
97. You've just about mastered that!
98. One more time and you'll have it.
99. Congratulations, you got (number) right!



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Assignment # _____
Due Date _____
Name _____

Below are situations where some aspect of instruction has been provided. For each situation, your task is to decide if there was a problem with the instruction provided; if so, what the problem was; and what you would have done instead.

1. At Safeway, Stephanie locates all 4 of her items and pays for them with no help. As Stephanie takes her bag and starts to exit the store, the tutor says, "Let's hurry, Stephanie, I want to get to my next class on time."
 - a. Is there a problem?
 - b. What is the problem?
 - c. What would you do instead?

2. Charlena is in the girls' locker room getting ready for a jazzercise class. A tutor is supervising her in the locker room. Charlena gets her P.E. clothes on correctly, and then puts her slip-on gym shoes on the wrong feet. The tutor says, "Nice job, Charlena, you got dressed by yourself. Let's go to jazzercise class."
 - a. Is there a problem?
 - b. What is the problem?
 - c. What would you do instead?