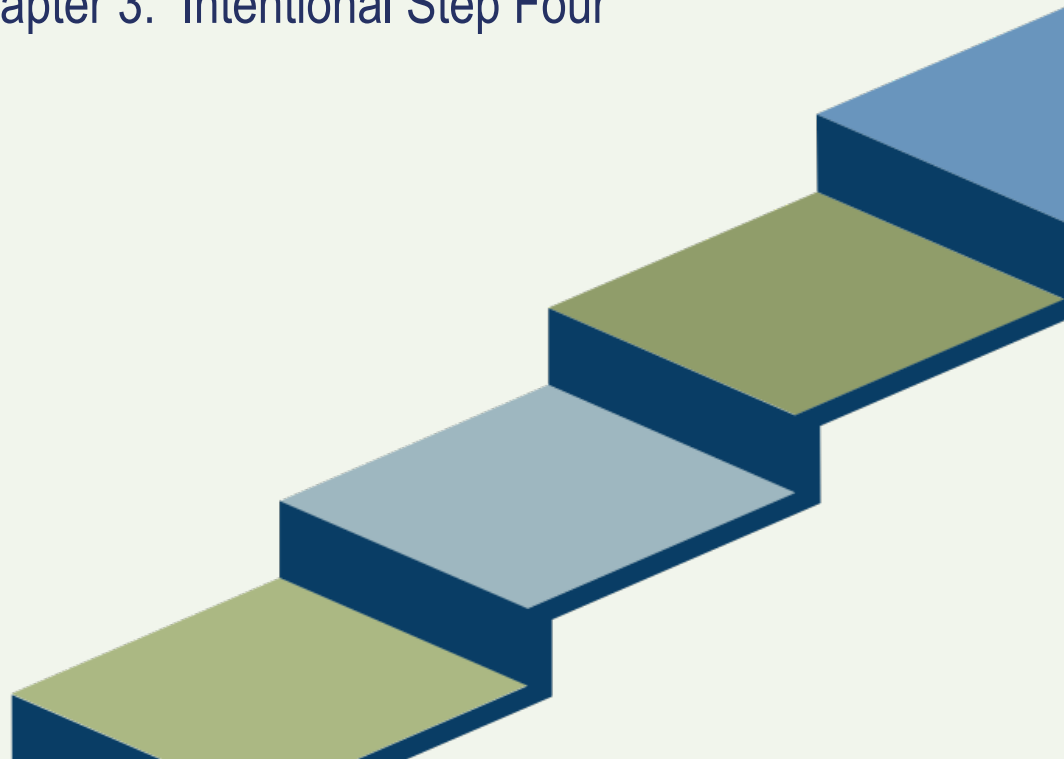


# Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to  
Accelerate Student  
Learning

## Companion Guide

Chapter 3: Intentional Step Four



## Chapter 3

### Intentional Step Four: Promote a Growth Mindset

As students are learning classroom expectations and routines, be sure to acknowledge their achievements and promote a growth mindset. Praise is a simple, yet powerful tool. Recognizing students' progress and good conduct reinforces these behaviors and motivates them to keep working toward their goals. Effective praise can also improve students' attitudes toward learning and can redirect challenging behavior (Benner, 2023). Cultivating a growth mindset reminds students that progress is more important than perfection. Mistakes are part of the process and are opportunities to learn and grow.

Be genuine when praising students. Offer different forms of praise, such as verbal, rewards, certificates, and celebrations. Promote positivity in the classroom by modeling affirmations and self-confidence. Give students tools for developing their own positive affirmations and growth mindset. For more tips on cultivating a growth mindset, see Chapter 14.

#### Reflection Questions:

- How often do you praise student behavior and achievement?
- Do you use various forms of praise, such as verbal, rewards, and classroom celebrations?
- Do you model positive affirmations and a growth mindset?
- Do you help students cultivate self-confidence and self-efficacy?
- Do you encourage students to set SMART goals and monitor their progress?

### Strategy 1: Behavior-Specific Praise

Acknowledge positive behaviors in the classroom. For example, the teacher can say: “Great work getting to your seats quickly,” or “You did an excellent job of walking quietly in the hall.” Teachers can praise SEL behaviors as well. Choose a SEL quality to highlight that week/month, and acknowledge when students demonstrate that behavior. Teachers can even select a Student of the Month who really showed progress in a SEL competency, like grit or flexibility.

While it’s sometimes necessary to point out undesirable behaviors and correct them, many issues can be redirected using positive, behavior-specific praise. Recognizing desirable behaviors helps students learn what they are doing well and how they can continue improving. It also builds a positive, forward-focused mindset that encourages students to practice self-regulation, reasoning and reflection.

### Strategy 2: Communicate Positively with Families

Contact at least one family a day and share positive news about a student. To help with this process, teachers can make a daily list of successes and share these with families. What is going well in the classroom? What strengths did students display and how did they practice classroom norms and procedures? Which students made progress toward their goals? Recognize and celebrate wins, no matter how small.

Positive communication with families helps teachers notice and acknowledge what’s going well in the classroom, rather than focusing on the negatives. It also promotes family engagement, which can support classroom management. Celebrating students’ achievements

reinforces desirable behaviors in the classroom and motivates students to keep improving (We Are Teachers, 2023).

### Strategy 3: It Pays to Behave

The teacher hands out two raffle tickets to each student, one for academic effort and one for good behavior. Students write their names on the tickets and when the teacher recognizes a student for good behavior, they get to drop their ticket into a Reward Jar. At the end of the week, the teacher randomly draws tickets, and those students receive a reward (Finley, 2017).

This strategy helps build accountability and incentivizes positive behaviors. Students who adhere to classroom norms and procedures are recognized for their achievements, which inspires them to keep improving and encourages other students to follow suit. The more students display appropriate behaviors, the more likely they are to receive a reward. This cultivates student leadership and positive peer influence (.53).