

LESSON 24

Telling the Truth

Objective

Students will distinguish the truth from fantasy and tell the truth.

Performance Criteria

This skill will be *performed adequately* when the student:

1. Can identify a true fact.
2. Can identify a made-up statement.
3. Can verify a statement of fact.
4. Consistently makes true statements when asked.

Materials Required

Book on the theme, such as *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* (various authors), *Pinky Promise: A Book About Telling the Truth* by Vanita Braver (2004), *The Berenstain Bears and the Truth* by Stan and Jan Berenstain (2004), *Tooth Fairy* by Audrey Wood (2003), or *I'm Telling the Truth: A First Look at Honesty* by Pat Thomas (2006).

Felt storyboard

Two or three hand puppets, dolls, or stuffed animals

Other Preparation

Additional resource: *Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships* by Grandin & Barron (2005), Rule #4 on honesty.

Special Considerations

Some students with ASD are compelled to tell the whole truth, even when it is socially inappropriate. Adapt the lesson to incorporate encouraging restraint in conversations for these students, by teaching them to examine their intent (do not want to embarrass/hurt others) and adjust their response accordingly.

Forms and Supplementary Materials (see CD)

None for this lesson.

Technology Resources

None for this lesson.

Related Lessons

Lesson 37: How to Describe a Personal Experience, Memory, or Dream

PROCEDURES 7 STEPS

Step 1 Establish the Need

- a. Use a felt storyboard while reading one or more books on the theme. Ask students to identify the consequences of not telling the truth.
- b. Distinguish between telling a lie, an accident, or someone misunderstanding what you say.
- c. Present the class with “what if” situations (e.g., “What if you break something and your mom asks you what happened?” “What if you see a friend do something wrong and your teacher asks you what happened?”)
- d. Establish why it is important to tell the truth: Elicit from students that *it makes them unhappy, it makes others not trust them.*

Step 2 Identify Skill Components

- a. Using some very blatant examples, ask students to distinguish fact from fiction (e.g., “It’s nighttime,” “Susie has orange eyes,” etc.).
- b. Tell the class a story that is mostly true but includes some “tall tale” elements. Ask students to identify which statements are probably not true.
- c. Tell students they must:
 - 1) Decide what is true and what is not.
 - 2) Tell the truth.
 - 3) Be able to show that they are telling the truth.

Step 3 Model the Skill

- a. Using the thinking aloud procedure, demonstrate for the children the processes for deciding what truth is and telling the truth. For example, (thinking aloud) “I think I’ll tell the class that I have three dollars in my wallet. I know this is true because I counted it this morning.” Then show money to verify the true statement.
- b. Using puppets, dolls, or stuffed animals, model telling the truth in response to a question. After modeling, ask the class to state what consequences might occur if the character had not told the truth.

Step 4 Role-Play

- a. Ask each class member to tell the class something true, tell how they know it is true, and tell what might happen if they told a lie.

- b. Give students feedback on their performance.
- c. Make sure every student role-plays a different example and not the one they just heard from another student.

Step 5 Practice

- a. Play the game Button, Button (Who's Got the Button?): with one person (first a student, then the teacher) covering his or her eyes, the class passes a small object (e.g., button, marble) from hand to hand for a certain amount of time. When time is up, everyone puts their hands behind their back. The "guesser" tries to guess who has the object. Reinforce students for telling the truth.
- b. Read scenarios or watch short video clips or movies (e.g., *Sesame Street: Telling the Truth*). Have students identify the true and false statements. Reinforce the importance of telling the truth.
- c. During class lessons, have individual students restate a fact in the lesson. Ask them to tell whether or not what they said is true or untrue and how they know it is true.

Step 6 Generalization

- a. When students struggle with telling the truth, prompt without accusing (e.g., "Why don't you tell me what happened?" or "Can you tell me that, again?").
- b. Use a "not sure" bucket to collect statements that seem out of the ordinary; with the student, conduct Internet research to establish the truthfulness of the statement.
- c. Review the skill components on occasion and praise students for telling the truth.
- d. Reinforce the skill by calling attention to it when a student tells the truth and praising the behavior (especially if there are consequences).

Step 7 Evaluation

After a period of time it is necessary to determine if the skills taught are being sustained and generalized. The following practices are used to determine long-term success of instruction.

- a. Periodically observe the students in general education settings and rate their performance according to the performance criteria listed at the beginning of the lesson.
- b. Ask general education teacher(s)/other support staff to rate students according to the performance criteria.

- c. Collect data using progress-monitoring strategies.
- d. Design individual interventions for students not benefiting from small-group interventions (i.e., students who perform the skill inadequately or fail to generalize the skill to other settings).