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Decide What to Teach

Component

Planning Instruction

Principle

Decide What to Teach

Strategy

Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance

Establish Logical Sequences of Instruction

Consider Contextual Variables

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy: Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance

Learning Difference: Cognition Mixed; Attention; Study Skills; Processing Visual Information; Memory Short-term; Memory Long-term; Self-confidence; Cognition Low; Cognition High; Processing Verbal Information; Receptive Language/Decoding (listening, reading); Expressive Language/Encoding (speaking, writing, spelling)

Tactic Title: Testing the Limits of Assessments

Problem: Teachers use the results of tests/quizzes/assessments to determine “what to teach.” Therefore, it is often frustrating when students perform poorly on assessments, especially on a multiple-choice test where responses are limited and require only the recognition of information.

Tactic: First, give students a multiple-choice test. Grade the test. Give students the opportunity to discuss their correct and incorrect responses with their peers and you. This discussion could include their perceptions of the “best” possible answer to each item on the test and how they reached those conclusions. Allow students to use information from texts, notes, and other sources. You can choose to monitor and include conversations in determining the final grade.

Example: I’ve never totally relied on just a test score or a letter grade when I am deciding what to teach next. At the very least, I do a task analysis of the test and my students’ responses to each item [See Task Analysis: Assessment worksheets below]. Sometimes, I have individual conferences to determine why they responded as they did. I may not retest the exact same material; however, as a result, I do know what they need to learn. Great tactic!

Amalio T., teacher

Benefits: Testing the limits of assessment results

- allows students to think about and defend their answer selections;
- provides students with motivation to understand, analyze, and synthesize testing procedures and their thinking processes;
- helps students learn to question and to debate answers;
- enables students to become involved and motivated to gain “extra points” and improved grades;
- contributes to the students’ motivation, participation, and understanding;
- enables teachers to measure the depth of students understanding and involvement; and
- provides a tool for teachers to evaluate students and their performance in an authentic way that facilitates students’ involvement.

*RTI Accommodations/Modifications:**Tiers I & II: Provide*

- tests-on-tape;
- extended time;
- altered test format to include both open- and closed-ended question formats; and/or
- questions aligned with Bloom's taxonomy (revised) and student abilities (see Assessment Planner).

Tier III: In addition, provides

- smaller units of information;
- additional prompts/visual cues;
- daily progress monitoring and immediate feedback; and/or
- charts for visual analysis of student performance.

Literature:

Algozzine, B., Campbell, P., & Wang, A. (2009a). *63 tactics for teaching diverse learners: Grades 6–12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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Yunker, B. D. (1999). Adding authenticity to traditional multiple-choice test formats. *Education*, 120, 82–87.

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy: Establish Logical Sequences of Instruction

Learning Difference: Attention; Study Skills

Tactic Title: Using The T-G-I-F Model

Problem: Student with learning differences frequently have “skill deficits” or “learning differences” that affect their ability to perform certain tasks in the classroom.

Tactic: The T-G-I-F model presents a well-organized process of instruction that addresses the deficits of students with ADD.

T: Teacher-directed instruction: Present and model new information and ask questions to probe for student understanding. Promote active participation by the students and provide immediate positive feedback and supportive informative error correction.

G: Guided practice instruction: Provide structured activities for the students to practice new skills.

I: Independent practice activities: Provide activities, such as enrichments or labs, that lead to extended practice of skills.

F: Final measurement: Continuously monitor student understanding. Keep ongoing records of student progress and teach students how to keep track of their own progress.

Example: The T-G-I-F model is an excellent model for instruction in any classroom—general or special education, inclusive or not. However, in my inclusive general education classroom, I’ve found that I need to make modifications for individual students, according to their learning differences. In some instances, I might need to seat the student closer to me, while in others, I would pair the student with a peer or paraprofessional. It all depends on the needs and abilities of my students. But that’s what makes teaching so exciting, isn’t it?

Schranda C., teacher

Benefits: Using the T-G-I-F model

- provides just enough structure and immediate feedback to students with attention issues;
- enables all students to succeed; and
- incorporates evidenced-based, effective instructional practices into an easy-to-remember acronym (TGIF).

*RTI: Accommodations/Modifications:**Tiers I & II: Provide*

- preferential seating;
- peer tutoring; and/or
- a variety of guided and then independent practice activities that are aligned with individual student strengths.

Tier III: In addition, provides

- additional modeling and scaffolding;
- faster-paced and more specific skills instruction; and/or
- additional cues/prompts.

Literature:

Hudson, P. (1997). Using teacher-guided practice to help students with learning disabilities acquire and retain social studies content. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 20*, 23–32.

Jung, L. A., Gomez, C., Baird, S. M., & Gaylon Keramidas, C. L. (2008). Designing intervention plans: Bridging the gap between individualized education programs and implementation. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 41*(1), 26–33.

Kemp, K., Fister, S., & McLaughlin, P. J. (1995). Academic strategies for children with ADD. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 30*, 203–210.

Kroesbergen, E. H., Van Luit, J. E. H., & Mass, C. J. M. (2004). Effectiveness of explicit and constructivist mathematics instruction for low-achieving student in the Netherlands. *Elementary School Journal, 104*, 233–251.

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy: Consider Contextual Variables

Learning Difference: Low Self-confidence

Tactic Title: Integrating a Social Curriculum Into Daily Instruction

Problem: Many students come to school with less social competence than their peers. They just do not know acceptable social behaviors or how to use them. In addition, they may have difficulty managing their feelings in socially appropriate ways. Therefore, these students frequently lack close, stable relationships with caring adults and typically struggle establishing appropriate peer relationships.

Tactic: Use a “Morning Meeting” every day to create stability, consistency, and community and foster responsive interactions through the designated periods of Greeting, Sharing, Activity, and News & Announcements. Next, set up relaxation centers, where students who are being disruptive or uncooperative can go to “defuse” (by focusing on specific academic activities). Teach students how to prioritize problems and solutions from the lowest scale, first among peers and then by involving the principal or other authority figure as a last resort. Teach students how to resolve dilemmas within the classroom by modeling and coaching via simulations.

Example: Many students lack the caring and support of family and their community and do indeed come into school with their books and frustrations. I’ve always believed that my credibility as a teacher relies on establishing a safe place for learning—both academic and social. If we can’t solve our own issues as a community in our own setting, then I’ve failed my students. Being a wise and caring educator is expected for any student but is absolutely imperative for those less fortunate students who do not have caring role models at home.

Cody T., teacher

Benefits: Infusing a social curriculum into the context of daily instruction

- can meet the needs of students who lack age-appropriate social skills;
- utilizes an instructional process that integrates social and academic goals; and
- creates a sense of social responsibility and community that can extend beyond the classroom.

*RTI Accommodations/Modifications:**Tier I:*

- Match simulation topics to the specific needs in students in your class(es) (for example, for individual students, how to enter a group; for the class as a whole, how to deal with anger);
- establish and enforce rules and expectations consistently; and/or
- be totally aware of *all* of your students *all* of the time.

Tier II:

- Provide activities in centers that match individual student needs;
- use music;
- teach stress management skills and self-talk; and/or
- organize groups that include students with different levels of social skill.

Tier III:

- Use instructional materials that incorporate individual student needs/interests into academic goals;
- use think-alouds to model thinking in responding to social concerns;
- use Positive Peer Reporting; and/or
- provide immediate corrective/supportive feedback.

Literature:

- Applebaum, M. (2009). *The one-stop guide to implementing RTI: Academic and behavioral interventions, K–12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Campbell, P., & Siperstein, G. N. (1994). *Improving social competence: A resource for elementary school teachers*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Christensen, L., Young, K. R., & Marchant, M. (2004). The effects of a peer-mediated positive behavior support program on socially appropriate classroom behavior. *Education and Treatment of Children, 27*, 199–234.
- Meadan, H., & Monda-Amaya, L. (2008). Collaboration to promote social competence for students with mild disabilities in the general classroom: A structure for providing social support. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 43*, 158–167.
- More, C. (2009). Digital stories targeting social skills for children with disabilities: Multidimensional learning. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 43*, 168–177.
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