

TEACHER PERFORMANCE SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

TIER 1: STUDENT MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE

- Expectations for student achievement are obvious throughout the lesson and are reiterated consistently
- Students execute transitions, procedures, and/ or routines efficiently
- Student behavior is reinforced with positive feedback consistently
- Students are focused on the lesson activities and actively participate by answering questions and attempting the work
- Students complete tasks & lesson activities with a fast pace and a sense of urgency consistently
- Students are respectful to one another and the teacher and respond with constructive language

TIER 2: STUDENT INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT

- Lesson structure and activities are aligned to a specific standard or lesson objective
- Instructional materials, instructional prompts, and other instructional tools are high quality and demanding for all students and match the rigor and grade level required of the objective
- Lesson is well- planned and instructional content is delivered clearly and accurately to students
- Lesson delivery reaches every level of student and is differentiated appropriately when necessary
- Goals for student mastery and achievement are measurable and the plans in place to achieve objective mastery goals are appropriate for all students

TIER 3: STUDENT OWNERSHIP AND LEARNING

- Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate content & objective mastery using a variety of methods to check for understanding: oral, written, computation, etc.
- Students, and not the teacher, complete the majority of the learning through multiple methods: discussion, analysis, writing, etc.
- Students answer questions that require them to cite specific evidence to support their ideas through both oral and written methods and have opportunities to build on each other's ideas
- Students take the initiative to ask questions or clarify concepts to improve their understanding of the lesson
- Students use methods to monitor their own learning and can assess whether they met the mastery level of the lesson objective

Reflections

Ask yourself these questions to help guide you toward effective instruction

TIER 1	TIER 1 - Student Management & Culture	
	Performance Standard	Ask yourself:
	Expectations for student achievement are obvious throughout the lesson and are reiterated consistently	Do I provide specific, structured, and clear instructions sequentially and frequently to students that are aligned with clear goals for student achievement? Must all students meet the goals I set in class, and do students understand that I expect them to demonstrate full knowledge of the content always?
	Students execute transitions, procedures, and/or routines efficiently	Are procedures and transitions internalized in students? Do students follow clear roles and procedures daily, and do they immediately implement a task upon command? Are sessions consistent and predictable daily?
	Student behavior is reinforced with positive feedback consistently	Do I follow the 70/30 rule, where at least 70% of my interactions with each student are positive and constructive? Are positive student behaviors highlighted consistently daily instead of negative behaviors? Do I support proper student behaviors by using specific, positive examples and modeling consistently in my sessions?
	Students are focused on the lesson activities and actively participate by answering questions and attempting the work	Have I minimized downtime and transition time so that students are always focused on an academic-related task? Are students consistently completing work that drives their academic progress for the entire lesson?
	Students complete tasks & lesson activities with a fast pace and a sense of urgency consistently	Do I maintain a high and enthusiastic energy that my students can match throughout the lesson? Do I provide clear expectations to students that their work is urgent and requires attention, detail, and efficiency?
	Students are respectful to one another and the teacher and respond with constructive language	Do students feel safe answering or asking questions and discussing information with their peers? Do I model positive and active behaviors and require all students to respond with appropriate language, and do I immediately redirect students who do not do so?

TIER 2	Tier 2 - Student Instruction & Content	
	Performance Standard	Ask yourself:
	Lesson structure and activities are aligned to a specific standard or lesson objective	Do I have a specific standard and a clear goal outlined and planned for every single session, and can students communicate exactly what they learn in the session that day?
	Instructional materials, instructional prompts, and other instructional tools are high quality and demanding for all students and match the rigor and grade level required of the objective	Are my lessons and instructional materials challenging enough for each child but leveled to their ability? Do I clearly understand the rigor for the grade level, and am I building appropriate instructional prompts and crafting rigorous questions that move students towards mastery of standards and grade-level relevant content?
	Lesson is well-planned, and instructional content is delivered clearly and accurately to students	Is my lesson sequence evident and clear? If an observer were to walk into the lesson at any point- beginning, middle, or end- would he be able to quickly understand and follow the purpose and goals of the lesson? Am I sure that students understand the task and content at every step of my lesson?
	Lesson delivery reaches every level of student and is differentiated appropriately when necessary	Are my lessons differentiated, and am I providing every student with activities that are appropriate in scope and rigor? Do I promote strategies for differentiation within groups to ensure that all students are learning at their ability level?
	Goals for student mastery and achievement are measurable, and the plans in place to achieve objective mastery goals are appropriate for all students	Do I have a clear method of checking for student understanding and mastery of objectives, and can students communicate their specific learning goals to me? Do I have a plan in place to track and measure student progress consistently, and can I use this information to target student misunderstandings or weaknesses and continuously improve instructional practices?

TIER 3	Tier 3 - Student Ownership & Learning	
	Performance Standard	Ask yourself:
	Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate content & objective mastery using various methods to check for understanding: oral, written, computation, etc.	Have I incorporated multiple activities and methods for students to demonstrate mastery of ideas in every lesson? Do I ensure that every lesson engages students with multiple ways of approaching content and demonstrating mastery of ideas?
	Students, not the teacher, complete most of the learning through multiple methods: discussion, analysis, writing, etc.	Do I reduce teacher-to-talk to no more than 10% of every lesson, and do I shift the focus of learning, discussion, analysis, etc. to students and student groups? Am I consistently requiring students to discuss and analyze ideas with each other and communicate them to me? When students ask me a question, do I make sure to phrase a response that pushes the learning back to the student by offering guidance or deeper-level questions?
	Students answer questions that require them to cite specific evidence to support their ideas through both oral and written methods and have opportunities to build on each other's ideas	Do I require students always to support their answers with a clear response rooted in evidence? Do I require students to build off each other's ideas by promoting collaboration and by requiring students to add to evidence until a deeper and more complex understanding of the concept evolves?
	Students take the initiative to ask questions or clarify concepts to improve their understanding of the lesson	Do I promote student independence and create a culture in my sessions where students take the initiative to ask deeper questions and take steps to ensure they understand the lesson scope and concepts? Do I always focus on student questions and clarifications and make sure never to rush or move a lesson along until all students are satisfied their misunderstandings are now clear?
	Students use methods to monitor their own learning and can assess whether they met the mastery level of the lesson objective	Are my lessons structured so that all students can move toward their goals and identify areas in which they need to grow and improve to reach their academic goals? Can students communicate to me their specific areas of strengths and weaknesses, and can they map out a plan to improve their understanding of lesson concepts?

Strategies for Effective Instruction

TIER 1: STUDENT MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE

I. Expectations for student achievement are obvious throughout the lesson and are reiterated consistently

Example Strategy 1: Require in-depth answers and responses that fully address the lesson questions or content and produce exactly correct responses

Students should be held accountable for producing exactly correct responses that are in-depth and fully address the prompt. Require students to use appropriate descriptive words, correct vocabulary, and responses that completely address your questions. This means that the instructor should not fill in student responses with his own explanation. Instead, require other students to complete the response if necessary, or prompt a student to provide a more complete answer.

Example Strategy 2: Avoid all or none responses to student questions and instead build increasingly complex questions into your lesson prompts

Avoid using terms like “that is correct, yes, great, etc.” and moving on to the next question when responding to a student response. Instead, ask follow up questions to push student understanding. For example, if a student provides a correct response to a prompt, you may ask “How did you arrive at this answer?” or “Explain to me your reasoning in completing this problem”. You can push students to describe in more details their thoughts, use evidence to support their reasoning, or provide a step by step rationale for arriving at their answer choice. This allows students to dig deeper into an idea and promotes a culture of achievement where students must justify answers and push their limits of knowledge. Even when incorrect responses are produced by students, this technique can be used by rephrasing your prompts so that the students can think about the content from a different perspective.

Example Strategy 3: Do not allow any student to “opt out” of an instructional task

Require every student to participate in a lesson thoroughly, even if that child is consistently producing incorrect responses. Never allow a child to sit out of a lesson due to misunderstanding, behavior, being tired, etc. Every student, every day should participate in the lesson activity. For example, if a student produces an incorrect response or says “I don’t know”, you can provide additional prompts to help lead the student to the answer. You could also ask another student to respond to the prompt, and when the correct answer is finally produced return to the original student and require that student to repeat the correct answer. Consistently coming back to a student shows that you expect high achievement and participation from every child, every day.

II. Students execute transitions, procedures, and/ or routines efficiently

Example Strategy 1: Create silent signals and indicators for students to follow to respond to needs of students without interrupting your session

Silent signals are an efficient way of communicate basic information to students without interrupting the lesson flow. For example, if a student needs to use the restroom, you can create a simple hand signal for students to implement without speaking, and a separate signal you can implement to indicate “yes” or “no”. Additionally, silent signals are excellent tools to check for understanding and to engage all students in the lesson: thumbs up could mean that a student agrees with another student who is speaking; a shaking fist could indicate a student has a comment they’d like to add. Create a few hand signals that can be implemented with fidelity to facilitate a rich class that maintains the focus on instruction and not distractions.

Example Strategy 2: Use specific techniques to call students to attention when they must be addressed and to easily transition students between activities

A common strategy for students is the use of SLANT- sit up, listen, ask/ answer questions, nod to indicate understanding, track the speaker. When you ask students to SLANT, they immediately should follow the acronym and transition from the previous task to focusing on the instructor. This, when practiced and used with fidelity, is a very effective strategy for calling students to attention when needed. Other methods of calling students to attention are ringing a bell in sequence, clapping your hands in a specific pattern that students know to mimic, or shouting a phrase that students immediately repeat. Many of these methods can be combined. Similarly, to facilitate better transitions, a call to attention signal can be used to direct students to listen for instructions. After instructions are given, a quick command, like “GO!” can be used to indicate to students to transition into the next activity as quickly as possible. As students practice these routines, a timer could be used to hold students accountable and ensure the transitions occur in a timely fashion.

Example Strategy 3: Build a clear and structured daily routine that all students follow consistently

Choose 2-3 routines that focus on structuring your session into every single day you meet with students. These routines should be implemented with complete fidelity and should be obvious and predictable for students. Provide students with a very clear and rigid outline for what you expect them to do during key moments of the session. For example, every day at the beginning of a session students can be given a few minutes until a set time (if the session begins at 8:00 am, require all students to have their pencil and folder at by 8:05 am). Reinforce this idea and provide specific step-by-step explanations of what will happen in class every day. Reiterating this continuously and holding students accountable by implementing consequences for not following these routines and procedures will ensure students follow your expectations with fidelity.

III. Student behavior is reinforced with positive feedback consistently

Example Strategy 1: Focus only on what students are doing right in session tasks and call out the names or the number of students correctly completing a task

During transitions or tasks where students should be displaying a very specific behavior, use language to call attention to the students following directions. For example, if you ask students to begin reading a passage but some students are distracted and looking around the group, at other students walking by, etc. call out, "I love the way [student A] has immediately placed his finger on the text and begun reading". If you ask students to put their notes away and only leave out a pencil, you can also note how many students have completed the task: "I see 2 students that have placed their notes under their desk... 3 students... etc." This method of redirection of behavior focuses only on positive behaviors and thus promotes more student engagement than a negative approach. A more tangible approach to reinforcing behavior using positive feedback is creating behavior and/ or academic reward charts where only positive behaviors are charted and tracked, resulting in a reward after a pre- determined goal has been reached.

Example Strategy 2: Facilitate group praise for excellent student behaviors or responses

Create a simple procedure for students to support their peers when answering a question or performing a positive behavior. For example, students can simply snap their fingers to show support of a student or agreement with an answer as the student is speaking. Instructors can facilitate this positive culture by snapping fingers to show support and encouraging students to snap along until it becomes an internalized procedure.

Example Strategy 3: Use affirmative language to call attention to an individual student's academic strengths so that other students can hear and use that student as a model for their own responses

Use phrases like "I liked how you...."; "I noticed that you..."; "I love the thought you put into that response ..." etc. to focus on the behaviors that students are doing well and the responses you like to see in your session. You can positively call out students instead of targeting students for incorrect responses or poor behavior. For example, noting to the entire group that one student did a great job of framing a response to a question can help use this student as a model for other students to follow. Consistent modeling of appropriate responses and behaviors are more effective than calling out individual weaknesses in students. Instructors can also model positive responses by providing a clear and specific example of what they expect a response to look like, then praise students for following the specific guidelines.

IV. Students are focused on the lesson activities and actively participate by answering questions and attempting the work

V. Example Strategy 1: Require 100% attention and participation every day, all session

Before speaking, moving on in a lesson, require 100% student attention. This can be combined with another strategy, like "SLANT", for better effectiveness. If 100% student attention is not achieved prior to moving on in the lesson, this communicates to students that expectations are open to interpretation, and students may challenge this expectation depending on a given situation in the session.

Example Strategy 2: Create tangible goals for every part of your lesson that require all students to participate

Although students within a session may work at different paces, all students should be expected to reach a certain goal in a given time and then be held accountable for it. For example, communicate clear, precise, and sequential instructions for a lesson activity and for expectations of each student and remind students of the immediate goal at the end of the task- this goal may be "each student will share out one response at the end of the 5-minute time period". Even if a student has not fully completed a task or is still mastering the idea, making clear expectations that all students will participate- and sticking to this expectation- communicates that no student may opt out of a lesson task. Do not allow students to opt out by saying "I don't know". Increase the time you wait for a response, and if necessary move on to another student but come back to the original student so that all students are required to participate.

Example Strategy 3: Require consistent proof of participation in every activity from every student

Enforce silent hand signals consistently so that students can participate readily during the lesson, even when another student or the instructor is speaking. Use call-out tactics, like pulling names written on popsicle sticks, to ensure all students have equal opportunity to speak. Hand out individual questions to each student in advance to instill the idea that each student is an integral part of the session learning. This and other methods of consistently checking for understanding indicate to students that the expectation is for the instructor to check that all students are engaged and participating in each moment of the lesson.

VI. Students complete tasks & lesson activities with a fast pace and a sense of urgency consistently

Example Strategy 1: Promote consistent movement and energy within your session

Keep the energy and pace up by moving between students and roaming the group instead of sitting in a stationary position in your chair- even in a small group setting. Practice wide hand gestures, different inflections of your voice and positive body language. Circle the room, checking in on students throughout the room, and use your movements to indicate the pace of the class will not slow down.

Example Strategy 2: Require multiple participants in any given prompt and quickly move from student to student to establish the pace of the lesson

When prompting students, your questions should be clear, direct, and focused. Plan out a sequence of participants for each prompt, where you can quickly jump from student to student with follow up questions or extension of your prompt. It is critical to minimize any transition time to model the quick pace and preparation you expect from your students for the extent of the session.

Example Strategy 3: Time all activities, stay within the time limits, and create clear divisions of activities throughout the lesson

Allocate a specific time frame for each lesson activity and communicate this clearly to students. Time frames should be short but goal-focused: for example, you may provide a total of 15 minutes for a given activity, but you should break down that time limit further into more manageable chunks- remind students that after 5 minutes they should have completed question 1; after 2 minutes, they should share out their responses with their partner; etc. Announcing the time for each activity and providing warnings to students allows the lesson to flow quickly without wasted time.

VII. Students are respectful to one another and the teacher and respond with constructive language

Example Strategy 1: Provide firm but fair expectations of students

Your sessions should be filled with kindness; however, your sessions should still be governed by order, structure, and everyday procedures where students must meet the specific expectations you set for the session. This means that while you can be caring and nurturing towards all your students, you are still firm in your rules and inflexible in your expectations of the group. For example, instead of providing warnings to students of poor behavior, implement minor interventions fairly to every student, every time. By consistently showing no tolerance for poor behavior yet maintaining a loving tone and positive language, you communicate that sessions are governed with respect for all but within the confines of the rules and procedures set for your session.

Example Strategy 2: Provide constant reminders of expectations for students by modeling appropriate emotions and reminding students of appropriate behaviors at key points in your session

Model appropriate emotional responses to students. Your responses to student behavior should be tied to the academic achievement and goals of the student rather than a personal flaw or emotional characteristic of that student. This teaches students over time to interact in the same manner to his peers and teachers so that responses are tied to what is important- the learning process and academic achievement- and not in behavior.

Example Strategy 3: Encourage failure, practice, and success equally and with the same enthusiasm

Establish a culture of failure within your sessions, where you make clear that failed attempts are better than no attempt, and failure, practice, and success typically work hand in hand during the learning process. Share enthusiasm for attempts that end in failure, and promote the benefits and positive side of incorrect answers or failed attempts. Focus your language on the *process* of learning, instead of focusing on the correct answer.

TIER 2: STUDENT INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT

I. Lesson structure and activities are aligned to a specific standard or lesson objective

Example Strategy 1: Big-picture goals and guiding questions in session lessons are aligned to a specific standard every day

Each day, students should be introduced to the guiding question for the day and tie the answer to this guiding question to an overarching goal that may extend over many lessons. For example, instructors will first select the lesson objective that students must currently master. The big picture goal could be a goal that may encompass many standards over several lessons. The guiding question is one specific question that ALL students should be able to answer at the end of the lesson, and this is tied specifically to the lesson objective. Creating big-picture goals provides students with context on how each activity and objective fits into the big academic picture, and guiding questions help focus student's attention on a very specific response they may work to provide by the end of the session.

Example Strategy 2: Communicate the actual objective to students- in their own words- throughout the entire lesson

The lesson objective should be clear every day. This will always be tied to the state or academic standard and should be either displayed clearly in the classroom or introduced at the beginning of the session and reiterated throughout the class: "Today, we will learn ____ by doing ____ activities. By the end of the session you should be able to tell me/ answer ____". Asking students to repeat the lesson objective or discuss what they should be doing to help answer the question is also an important method to keep students engaged on the specific lesson objective.

Example Strategy 3: Remove any activity or dialogue that is not 100% aligned to a tangible standard or lesson objective and ensure each mini-activity is aligned to the goal

There should be no free time or chat time during the session. Every moment should be purposeful and strategic and specifically tied to the lesson standard. You should consistently ask yourself: "How does this activity move students toward our end goal and mastery of the stated standard(s)?" If students finish an assignment early, for example, additional learning opportunities should be presented to students- not as busy work- but as an extension of the lesson objective to help students gain deeper mastery of the standards.

II. Instructional materials, instructional prompts, and other instructional tools are high quality and demanding for all students and match the rigor and grade level required of the objective

Example Strategy 1: Hierarchical questioning prompts are developed with the same level of rigor as the standard and sequentially move students toward mastery

Using a questioning prompt guide aligned to Bloom's Taxonomy: construct questioning prompts on multiple levels, with the majority of questioning prompts aligned to the same rigor of the stated standard. Rigor can be determined by identifying the specific verbs associated with each standard and aligning appropriate question stems. Creating multiple levels of questioning prompts allows for all students to participate and builds a lesson that sequentially moves towards deeper content understanding in a systematic manner.

Example Strategy 2: Identify the purpose and expectations for achievement for any lesson prompt and check-in

Students (and instructors) should be able to answer the question: "Why is this activity/ question /lesson important to master the lesson's standard?" Expectations for student achievement must also be clear. For example, in each lesson students should be able to communicate *why* they must demonstrate mastery of a concept and *how* to do so in a given time frame. Answering a "What's the point" question also provides instructors with an opportunity to bridge concept understanding across multiple objectives or disciplines to ensure that students deeply understand the content in the lesson.

Example Strategy 3: Build lesson activities that bridge past and future standards

Deeply understand your student's grade level standards and expectations. To truly understand the level at which students must master ideas, learn the grade level standards for the previous year and the future year. For example, if you are responsible for teaching a 4th grade level standard, understanding the vertically aligned 3rd grade and 5th grade level standards too. This serves two purposes: 1) it allows you to diagnose whether the child has previously mastered the prior grade level standard necessary for success for the current standard and 2) it allows you to create a clear goal for where the student will be the following year. Often, standards jump in complexity year over year so understanding each grade level allows you to better prepare students at the appropriate level of rigor.

III. Lesson is well- planned and instructional content is delivered clearly and accurately to students

Example Strategy 1: Break down lesson into manageable and clear steps that are introduced early and routinely re-emphasize concepts

Students should be able to recite back to an observer, student, or instructor the exact sequence of the lesson for the day. This means that when delivering your lesson, communicate with the students the expectations for the class, what will happen at *each time point* in the lesson, and deliberately design your lesson to have specific and clear portions that concludes with a take way, assessment, or strong transition before moving on to the next lesson activity. Each lesson activity, the lesson scope, and the lesson goals should be repeatedly re-emphasized to students several times throughout the lesson. This method requires students to become engaged learners that are moving through the lesson with the instructor, instead of passive bystanders awaiting instructions.

Example Strategy 2: Create a focused lesson that, when necessary, breaks down the standard into strategic and specific parts

Remember that effective teaching means teaching lesson content *in depth*. Often, a given standard covers several topics; for students to truly be able to grasp ideas in depth and demonstrate mastery of concepts, break standards down into smaller standards and strategically link each part over time. This may also mean that standards are broken down into simpler components to check for mastery of previous grade-level expectations. For example, if a math standard requires students to: *solve for quotients of decimals to the hundredths, up to four- digit dividends and two- digit whole number divisors, using strategies and algorithms* the standard can be compartmentalized and broken down to target deep content understanding. Lesson 1 may re-teach and review decimals up to two-digit, then four- digit dividends for example, then before moving on to the current standard, may require students to develop their own strategies for solving using algorithms, pictorial models, etc. and share with the group. Later lessons may focus on the four- digit dividends and two- digit whole number divisors but break down individual lessons into an exploratory lesson involving manipulatives, with later lessons focused on strategies, then finally the standard algorithm. Sequential planning with compartmentalized lessons allows for deeper content mastery.

Example Strategy 3: Lesson plan focuses on student and instructor activities throughout the time period

Often, instructors focus on what the student should be doing and demonstrating in each phase of the lesson. This is important for an effective lesson. However, an equally important component of strategically planned, clear lessons, are ones in which the instructor has pre- scripted questions, mannerisms, and activities during the session. For example, you may pre- script exactly which students you will require to speak in a small group discussion for each activity; you may pre- plan follow-up questions in anticipation of student responses; you may plan to move in a certain manner about the room, change the inflection of your voice during certain lesson activities or instructions, etc. It's important for you to plan for what you will be doing, saying, and showing to students to help maintain a clear lesson.

IV. Lesson delivery reaches every level of student and is differentiated appropriately when necessary

Example Strategy 1: Build hierarchical questions for individual students but focus on the same main lesson goal

Even within leveled groups or classrooms, and even when students are presumably at the same level, differentiation is nearly always necessary. Since it is important to ensure every student still is moving toward mastery of the concept and the lesson's goals, developing hierarchical questions for individual students is critical to challenge all students and move them toward mastery. For example, for a student below the grade level standard within the group, prompt them with hierarchical questions that align with the "comprehension" and "knowledge" levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. For other students, moving up levels in Bloom's Taxonomy is more appropriate. The goal should always be to move students toward the rigor of the standard and the main lesson goal; but giving students individual stepping stones to meet those goals in the form of specific, leveled, questioning prompts help students master concepts more deeply.

Example Strategy 2: Create peer groups within the session that are appropriately leveled and require differing levels of progress tied to the session goal

Strategically group students, and build purpose for those groups into your lesson plans daily. Often, instructors struggle with setting different, appropriate expectations for the whole group when different students are present in the group at different levels. Strategically group students using multiple methods, depending on your desired outcome. For example, at times it may be appropriate to group lower-level reading students together and higher-level reading students together to provide appropriate leveled texts and questions, and move between groups to push them each toward mastery of the stated goals. In peer groups, require students to serve a role as either coach or student, where students take turns explaining the process of solving a problem, correcting the student's mistake during independent work, and asking appropriate questions that would model a teacher. Create prompts for peer groups to follow and require deep explanation of content, answer justification, and collaborative dialogue between students.

Example Strategy 3: Create varied graphic organizers, homework, prompts, centers, expectations etc. to address student need at all levels

In addition to building a differentiated structure for your lesson, create individual student expectations. For example, in an assignment that requires students to write an expository essay, you may assign the strongest writers clear instructions on how to write the essay, while providing weaker writers with both clear instructions and a graphic organizer to help organize their thoughts.

V. Goals for student mastery and achievement are measurable and the plans in place to achieve objective mastery goals are appropriate for all students

Example Strategy 1: Backwards plan all assessments and check- ins when building lessons

Begin with the end in mind: Use a calendar to plan specific timelines and goals leading up to the end-of-year assessment or other measure of student progress. When building assessments and other check- ins, specifically and strategically map which objectives should be mastered. Then, plan your calendar to ensure the standards and lessons taught are directly aligned with the content and rigor of your assessments.

Example Strategy 2: Create clear group and individual goals that are “SMART”: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistically, and Timely

Setting mastery goals for students should always follow SMART goals because it allows you to self-check that the goals make sense to students, can be tracked, show growth over time, and can actually be achieved. For example, setting a goal that a child be on 5th grade reading level at the end of the year, when he is starting at a 1st grade reading level is not a SMART goal, because that child likely cannot achieve that great of a leap in one year. Goals can instead be sequential and even fluid over time: The goal for this child could be to demonstrate fluency, proficiency, and reading comprehension skills as measured by specific rubrics at a 2nd grade level by a given time. When the child reaches that goal, a new goal can then be set to continue to advance the student toward a goal in a realistic manner that keeps the student motivated and focused.

Example Strategy 3: Utilize individual progress assessments focused on student growth and require students to track their own progress over time

Build individual progress assessments outside of regular content assessments. For example, a “reading behaviors” chart depicts the behaviors a student should exhibit over time in reading at a certain level: testing these behaviors many times throughout the semester or year allows the students to see growth in abilities that may not directly be tied to an absolute content assessment. Objective/ content mastery charts may also be utilized in a similar manner, where students and instructors each track to what degree a student has mastered an objective, allowing for additional opportunities for students to re-learn and re-attempt the assessments required to showcase the skill, showing improvement over time.

TIER 3: STUDENT OWNERSHIP AND LEARNING

- I. **Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate content & objective mastery using a variety of methods to check for understanding: oral, written, computation, etc.**

Example Strategy 1: Plan 2-3 different methods to check for understanding in every lesson, using a Check For Understanding Guide

Build specific time points to check for understanding in each lesson. Use a Check for Understanding Guide to pre-script the methods in which to gauge student understanding, then create obvious and specific times when this is implemented in the class. This allows for specificity and consistency in always checking for student understanding in each lesson or activity.

Example Strategy 2: Create a student checklist to ensure that all students in the class have demonstrated a level of understanding for each content area in the lesson

All students must demonstrate understanding in a lesson, but some students may also require more check-ins than others. Build in appropriate check-ins by using a student checklist combined with other methods, like pulling popsicle sticks, whole group ABCD cards, etc. to check that all students can communicate their level of understanding. By keeping track of student understanding, it not only allows instructors to check that they know the level of each student at all times in the lesson, but also serves as another method of assessment that can be shared with a student to promote academic growth.

Example Strategy 3: Require a structure and procedure to check student understanding

When building structures and procedures into the classroom management plan, build additional expectations for students to display their knowledge of a topic. For example, if you ask students for a “thumbs-up” for a yes response and a “thumbs-down” for a no response, require 100% participation. If you require a one-sentence summary of a topic to be shared with the class, provide a specific scaffold where students “fill in the blank” with the information so the dialogue is somewhat standardized. If you require “think-pair-share”, provide students specific instructions and timelines on what they are thinking about, how they will discuss with their peers, and who will share out to the group. Building procedures into a check for understanding ensures students appropriately follow instructions and allow you to more clearly assess individuals within a group.

II. Students, and not the teacher, complete the majority of the learning through multiple methods

Example Strategy 1: Require justification, agree/ disagree of responses, and peer work to push the learning onto the students

Each topic discussed in class should be combined with a deep whole group instruction of the lesson. For example, if a student makes a claim, ask the group whether they agree or disagree with the response and why. Receive input from many students in order to generate a consensus on the correct answer, then ask a student to recap the claims made by all students. This allows the students to control the lesson more than the instructor.

Example Strategy 2: Build each lesson with 10% or less teacher-talk time

Lessons that require students to do the majority of the work and discussion in the class tend to be more effective sessions because students are required to be engaged throughout the lesson. Instructors should act as facilitators and not as lecturers. Build lessons where 10% or less of the lesson includes direct teacher talk time. Instead, piece out the lesson by providing an introduction to a topic, then requiring the students to find the information, discuss with a group, or add original comments to build on the thinking in the class. Explanations and descriptions of how to solve a math problem, for example, should be discussed by the students and not the instructor. Instead, guide students to answers and use the time in the lesson to promote student thinking.

Example Strategy 3: Meet student inquiries with deeper questions or strategies to help solve the problem on his/ her own

Greet student questions with deeper questions instead of providing a specific explanation. This teaches students to seek out the information on their own first before passively receiving the content. Instructors may also choose to impose a rule like asking for a peer's help first before asking the teacher to help demonstrate independence in learning.. When a student does ask specific questions, ask other students where the information could be located in the text, ask the student what steps he/ she thinks need to be taken to solve, etc. Even if the student asks for a yes or no question (i.e., is this the correct answer?), require the student to defend why they believe it is the correct answer instead of simply replying "yes" or "no".

III. Students answer questions that require them to cite specific evidence to support their ideas through both oral and written methods and have opportunities to build on each other's ideas

Example Strategy 1: Create a response prompt that all students must follow in the lesson

Often, instructors may ask students to cite evidence in the text or in their lesson during class time but provide little to no scaffolding for the students to use it in class appropriately. Ensure that students can actually clearly cite specific evidence instead of simply using classroom jargon. Create a response prompt that includes the claim, reasoning, and evidence so all students can use each time they cite evidence. For example, require students to fill in the blank a response like this: "I believe the answer is _____ (the claim) because _____ (the reasoning) and I know this because _____ (the evidence)." Requiring a specific format for each time a student answers ensures that they fully apply the reasoning skills required to utilize text evidence in responses.

Example Strategy 2: Require justification of every right and every wrong answer

When students answer questions in class, always require justification for a response. No classroom response should be a simple correct or incorrect answer that allows you to quickly move on to the next topic. Deeper thinking requires true justification of every claim. Use prompts like "This is the correct answer- why is this true?"; "This is the correct answer, but can anyone add to the reasoning used to get the correct answer"; "This is the incorrect answer, but can anyone explain why it is the incorrect answer?" Lessons should be treated as an analysis of content with deeper thought permeating all activities.

Example Strategy 3: Build on evidence using multiple methods of communication and using multiple students and responses

Lessons should be a collaborative effort to contribute as much knowledge to the content as possible. For this reason, multiple responses and methods of communication are always required when making claims. For example, a lesson may begin with students working alone but in pairs to answer a math problem. Then, time is reserved for that pair to discuss their methods of solving with each other and discuss any similarities or differences in the equations or steps used in solving the problem. Finally, student groups may share with the whole group, with the instructor choosing another group to add to a claim, provide an alternative method of solving a problem, or provide a more robust or different reasoning.

IV. Students take the initiative to ask questions or clarify concepts to improve understanding of the lesson

Example Strategy 1: Build dialogue into lessons by requiring students to record and ask lesson/ peer questions

Not all students ask clarifying questions when they are confused, and often, students think they may understand a concept but have not fully mastered an idea. Build in more dialogue to a lesson by requiring specific time points where students are required to record clarifying questions, explain a concept in their own words, or collaborate with peers on a given idea. Then, allow students to share out this information with the group to establish a culture of collaboration and dialogue within the session.

Example Strategy 2: Ask another student to clarify a concept instead of repeating or rephrasing information to students

Instead of answering a student's question directly, ask another student to explain their rationale or idea in their own words. Complete several iterations of this strategy to fully refine a concept idea, and only interject and reteach if there is a whole group misunderstanding.

Example Strategy 3: Promote reflection and voice within each lesson

Time set aside for reflection, feedback, and student opinions helps promote student voice in the classroom. Allow time for students to reflect on the day's lesson and progress, then request students share what they learned, their feedback on whether the lesson was effective and methods to improve the lesson, their own opinions and ideas on the content, their own strategies for solving problems, etc. Promote the idea that all student feedback is honored and taken seriously, and build student suggestions into the lesson plan to demonstrate that student voice is valued.

V. Students use methods to monitor their own learning and can assess whether they met the mastery level of the lesson objective

Example Strategy 1: Provide rubrics and graphic organizers to students so they can visualize the exact lesson expectations at all times, and require students to use these and other checklists to confirm learning

Students can only monitor their own learning when they have a clear goal and steps put in place to reach that goal. There should be no confusion in the expectations for students completing lesson activities. Provide students with a rubric to assess their progress and require they monitor their progress for mastery. For example, provide students with a writing rubric so they understand how their essay will be scored, then require students to justify the score they received on their practice essay using the rubric expectations. Provide students with checklists or graphic organizers to systematically complete a lesson activity and then require students to show how they followed the checklist or graphic organizer. Peer groups may also be utilized, where student pairs or groups collaborate on student work and gauge the mastery level of their peers using specific criteria set forth by the instructor.

Example Strategy 2: Provide calendars, mastery charts, and SMART goals to students and revisit criteria for success often

Students should have access to the exact same information as the instructor every day. This means that common assessments, other assessments, progress goals, and other information found on the instructor's calendar should be shared with the students. Goals for student progress should be specified by date, and students should constantly revisit their mastery level and progress goals alongside the instructor.

Example Strategy 3: Reflect, revise, and reteach lesson content often and require students to justify responses until they understand their errors

Sometimes, a designed lesson may not be as effective as you thought in moving students toward mastery, so re-teaching lesson content will be critical in moving students toward mastery. To best gauge this, require students to justify their own claims and explain errors or misunderstandings to the class. If many students do not show mastery of an idea, require students to reflect on what they don't understand and then stop and re-teach the lesson. It would be best if you never moved forward in a lesson until all students can show that they have gained clarity in their errors and can demonstrate understanding of the topic. This may also be applied to physical common assessments or quizzes by requiring students to use a test analysis worksheet that analyzes each question/ prompt and use a checklist to define the level of misunderstanding, then reflect on what other information or support they may need to succeed. Checklist responses for their errors will look like: "I knew the main idea but not the details; I was not paying attention or couldn't concentrate"; "I was stuck between two answer choices," etc. This combined with analysis on what the correct answer is and why, will help students assess their level of understanding over time and move toward mastery of the objectives.