NEWS FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
Special Edition

Behavior Mini Series - Part III

Actively Engage Students in Observable Ways

A third critical feature of classroom management is actively engaging students in observable ways. Engagement includes how a student participates during classroom instruction and consists of both passive and active behaviors. Passive behaviors, for example, include listening to the teacher, reading silently, or looking at academic materials. Active behaviors include actively writing, raising his or her hand, reading aloud, answering questions, flipping through a book, and talking to others (concerning academics). In a study conducted by Greenwood, Terry, Marquis, and Walker (1994), engagement was found to be the best mediating variable between instruction and academic achievement. If students are actively engaged in instruction, it is more difficult for them to engage in incompatible behaviors like talking and getting out of their seat. There are a variety of evidence based strategies a teacher can use to increase student engagement such as increasing student opportunities to respond, using direct instruction techniques, peer tutoring, computer-based instruction, and providing guided notes.

Opportunity to respond: Efforts made by teachers to prompt or solicit a student response such as asking a question or presenting a demand.

To increase opportunities to respond, teachers can utilize such methods as choral responding (i.e., students answer a question in unison and response cards (i.e., erasable boards that students can write answers to a question on and then hold up for teachers to view).

Increasing student opportunities to respond positively impacts student achievement and behavior. There is a relationship between increased pace of providing opportunities to respond with an increase in on-task behavior, academic engagement, and the number of correct responses being provided by students, along with a decrease in disruptive behavior. Choral responding and use of response cards have also been found to have a positive effect on academic achievement and on-task behavior. Teachers may opt to use response cards over choral responding, as they are better able to monitor individual student responses.

Direct instruction: An instructional approach that is characterized by:
- Clear presentation of content (e.g., use of signals)
- Carefully sequenced (i.e., components and sub-components of skills are seamlessly and progressively presented) and supported instruction (e.g., prompts are added and systematically faded out
- High rates of OTR's
- Judicious review of content
- Systematic feedback (i.e., specific praise or planned error corrections)
- Initial and ongoing assessment of student progress and placement
- Students learning concepts and skills to mastery

The use of direct instruction is supported heavily by research. Project Follow Through, specifically, found that students who received instruction from Direct Instruction Systems for Teaching and Remediation (DISTAR) made the most gains in the areas of basic skills, cognitive reasoning, self-esteem, and overall academic achievement. These students also demonstrated higher rates of on-task behavior.

Classwide peer tutoring: An instructional method in which students are paired and assigned the roles of tutor and tutee. Students provide one another with instruction typically through response trials or paired reading practice. Immediate error corrections are utilized to provide immediate responses to one another. While students are paired, the teacher has the opportunity to circulate the classroom providing assistance to students who are in need of additional support.

These programs have been found to increase academic engagement and reading achievement. For students with ADHD, they have been shown to lead to a decrease in off-task behavior and an increase in academic performance.

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies or PALS is an example of a classwide peer tutoring approach. This strategy complements existing reading curriculum by providing research-validated learning strategies through peer mediated instruction. In this approach, teachers pair a higher performing student with a lower performing one in order to develop academic skills.

Partner reading is a cooperative learning strategy in which two students work together to read an assigned text. This is often a component of the PALS program. To use partner reading:

1. Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text to the students.
2. Create pairs within the classroom by identifying which children require help on specific skills and who the most appropriate children are to help other children learn those skills.
3. Model the procedure to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy
4. Have each member of the teacher-assigned pair take turns being "Coach" and "Player." These pairs are changed regularly, and over a period of time as students work. Thus, all students have the opportunity to be "coaches" and "players."
5. Note: It is important for teachers to monitor and support students as they work together.
6. Ask the stronger reader to begin this activity as the "Player" and read orally for 5 minutes. Have the "Coach" follow along and correct any mistakes when necessary.
7. Have the pair switch roles and ask the weaker reader to become the "Player." The "Player" rereads the same passage for the next 5 minutes and the "Coach" provides corrective feedback. One point is earned for each correct sentence read (optional).

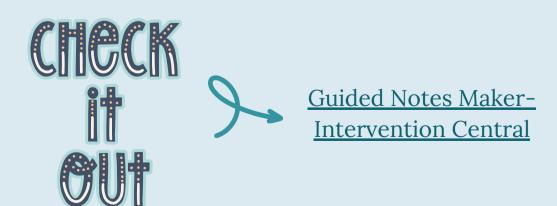[PAL/Partner Reading Example](#) (click link to view)

Computer-assisted instruction: In this instructional strategy, teachers utilize technology to provide the benefits of one-on-one instruction, such as frequent opportunities to respond, immediate corrective feedback, and material tailored to students' instructional levels.

Research has shown that this approach increases active engagement time and on-task behavior for students with ADHD. Further, for students without ADHD, computer-assisted instruction improved student oral reading fluency and achievement.

Guided notes: A strategy in which the teacher provides outlines of content containing main ideas and spaces for students to fill in missing key details. This strategy prompts students to make frequent, relevant responses during a lesson. In doing so, students learn more compared to students who are acting as more passive observers.

Research found increases in academic achievement measured by quiz scores for students who used guided notes during lectures and readings. This strategy may be particularly beneficial for secondary students who receive higher amounts of instruction through lectures.

CHECK it Out

[Guided Notes Maker- Intervention Central](#)

Sources:
https://global-uploads.webflow.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5d6ff9631919dc0c79fc0bee_e1_simonsen.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236785368_Evidence-based_Practices_in_Classroom_Management_Considerations_for_Research_to_Practice

Partner Reading | Classroom Strategies | Reading Rockets

IRIS | Page 1: Overview of PALS (vanderbilt.edu)

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