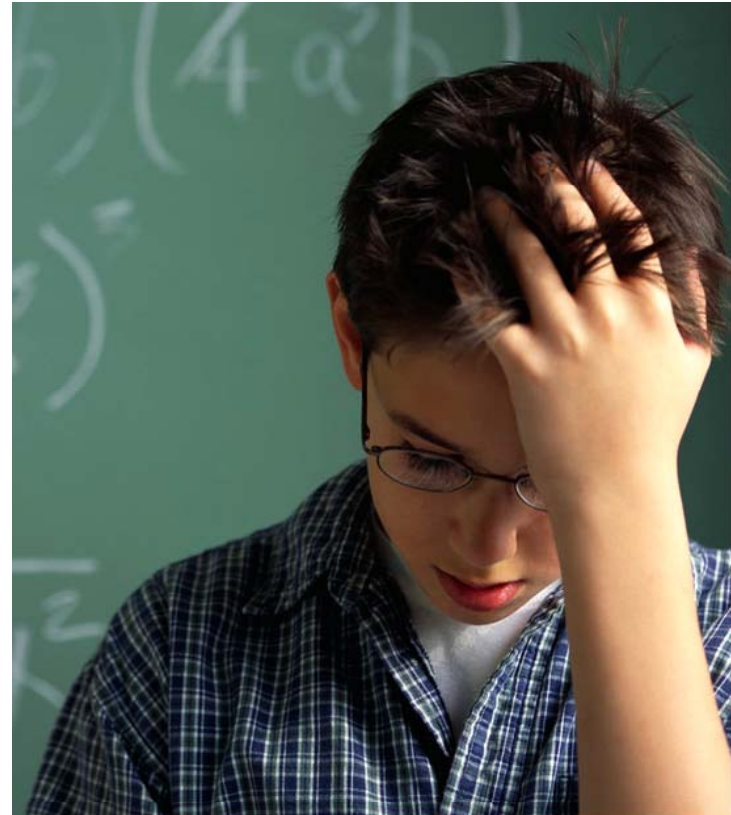# Academic Enabling Skills: Interventions for Middle and High School Students

Jim Wright
www.interventioncentral.org

INTERVENTION CENTRAL

Workshop Questions…

- How can schools describe academic enabling skills in a specific manner to allow them to actually select interventions for them?

- What is an example of a 'package' that gives students ideas (and the responsibility) to better manage their own study and review of course material?

- How can schools harness the power of the parent(s) to help the student to get homework done?

- How can the teacher play a role in helping students to stay organized and caught up on course work?

http://www.interventioncentral.org/ccse

Secondary Students: Unique Challenges…

Struggling learners in middle and high school may:

- Have significant deficits in basic academic skills

- Lack higher-level problem-solving strategies and concepts

- Present with issues of school motivation

- Show social/emotional concerns that interfere with academics

- Have difficulty with attendance

- Are often in a process of disengaging from learning even as adults in school expect that those students will move toward being 'self-managing' learners…

Students at Risk and the Need for Intervention

"A common response to students who struggle in sixth grade is to wait and hope they grow out of it or adapt, to attribute early struggles to the natural commotion of early adolescence and to temporary difficulties in adapting to new organizational structures of schooling, more challenging curricula and assessment, and less personalized attention. Our evidence clearly indicates that, at least in high-poverty urban schools, sixth graders who are missing 20% or more of the days, exhibiting poor behavior, or failing math or English do not recover. On the contrary, they drop out. This says that early intervention is not only productive but absolutely essential."

Source: Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., MacIver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist, 42*, 223–235. .

What Are the 'Early Warning Flags' of Student Drop-Out?

A sample of 13,000 students in Philadelphia were tracked for 8 years. These early warning indicators were found to predict student drop-out in the sixth-grade year:

- Failure in English

- Failure in math

- Missing at least 20% of school days

- Receiving an 'unsatisfactory' behavior rating from at least one teacher

Source: Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., MacIver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist,42*, 223–235. .

# What is the Predictive Power of These Early Warning Flags?

Number of 'Early Warning Flags' in Student Record	Probability That Student Would Graduate
None	56%
1	36%
2	21%
3	13%
4	7%

Source: Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., MacIver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist, 42*, 223–235. .

Global 'Academic Enabling' Skills

Focus of Inquiry: How can schools describe academic enabling skills in a specific manner to allow them to actually select interventions for them?

-Academic Enabling Skills
  Observational Checklists pp. 2-6
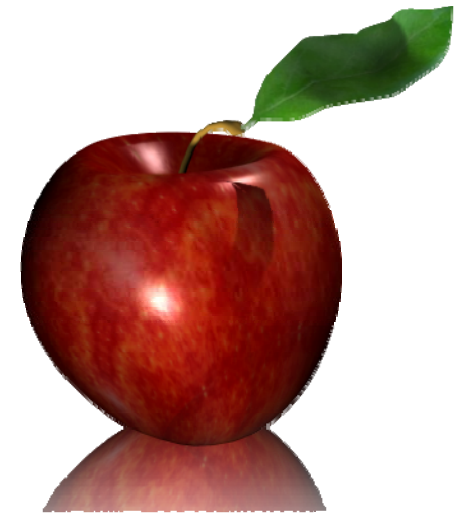
Classroom Data Collection

Global skills checklist. The teacher selects a global skill (e.g., homework completion; independent seatwork). The teacher then breaks the global skill down into a checklist of component sub-skills--a process known as 'discrete categorization' (Kazdin, 1989). An observer (e.g., teacher, another adult, or even the student) can then use the checklist to note whether a student successfully displays each of the sub-skills on a given day. Classroom teachers can use these checklists as convenient tools to assess whether a student has the minimum required range of academic enabling skills for classroom success.

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Why Are They Important?

Student academic success requires more than content knowledge or mastery of a collection of cognitive strategies. Academic accomplishment depends also on a set of ancillary skills and attributes called 'academic enablers' (DiPerna, 2006). Examples of academic enablers include:

- Study skills
- Homework completion
- Cooperative learning skills
- Organization
- Independent seatwork

Source: DiPerna, J. C. (2006). Academic enablers and student achievement: Implications for assessment and intervention services in the schools. *Psychology in the Schools, 43*, 7-17.

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Why Are They Important? (Cont.)

Because academic enablers are often described as broad skill sets, however, they can be challenging to define in clear, specific, measureable terms. A useful method for defining a global academic enabling skill is to break it down into a checklist of component sub-skills--a process known as 'discrete categorization' (Kazdin, 1989). An observer can then use the checklist to note whether a student successfully displays each of the sub-skills.

Source: Kazdin, A. E. (1989). *Behavior modification in applied settings* (4th ed.). Pacific Gove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Why Are They Important? (Cont.)

Observational checklists that define academic enabling skills have several uses in Response to Intervention:

- Classroom teachers can use these skills checklists as convenient tools to assess whether a student possesses the minimum 'starter set' of academic enabling skills needed for classroom success.

- Teachers or tutors can share examples of academic-enabler skills checklists with students, training them in each of the sub-skills and encouraging them to use the checklists independently to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

- Teachers or other observers can use the academic enabler checklists periodically to monitor student progress during interventions--assessing formatively whether the student is using more of the sub-skills.

Source: Kazdin, A. E. (1989). *Behavior modification in applied settings* (4th ed.). Pacific Gove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Study Skills. The student:					
☐ takes complete, organized class notes in legible form and maintains them in one accessible note book	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ reviews class notes frequently (e.g., after each class) to ensure understanding	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ When reviewing notes, uses highlighters, margin notes, or other strategies to note questions or areas of confusion for later review with teacher or tutor	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ follows an efficient strategy to study for tests and quizzes	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ allocates enough time to study for tests and quizzes	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ is willing to seek help from the teacher to answer questions or clear up areas of confusion	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ Other: _____				
Comments: _____ _____				

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Organization Skills. The student:				
❑ arrives to class on time.	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ maintains organization of locker to allow student to efficiently store and retrieve needed books, assignments, work materials, and personal belongings	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ maintains organization of backpack or book bag to allow student to efficiently store and retrieve needed books, assignments, work materials, and personal belongings	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ brings to class the necessary work materials expected for the course (e.g., pen, paper, calculator, etc.)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ is efficient in switching work materials when transitioning from one in-class learning activity to another	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ Other: _____	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —

Comments:

_____

_____

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Homework Completion. The student:				
☐ writes down homework assignments accurately and completely	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ makes use of available time in school (e.g., study halls, homeroom) to work on homework	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ has an organized, non-distracting workspace available at home to do homework	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ creates a work plan before starting homework (e.g., sequencing the order in which assignments are to be completed; selecting the most challenging assignment to start first when energy and concentration are highest)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ when completing homework, uses highlighters, margin notes, or other strategies to note questions or areas of confusion for later review with teacher or tutor	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ turns in homework on time	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
☐ Other: _____	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA _
Comments: _____ _____				

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Cooperative Learning Skills. The student:				
☐ participates in class discussion	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ gets along with others during group/pair activities	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ participates fully in group/pair activities	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ does his or her 'fair share' of work during group/pair activities	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ is willing to take a leadership position during group/pair activities	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ Other: _____	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
Comments: _____ _____				

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Independent Seat Work. The student:	Poor	Fair	Good	NA
☐ has necessary work materials for the assignment	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ is on-task during the assignment at a level typical for students in the class	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ refrains from distracting behaviors (e.g., talking with peers without permission, pen tapping, vocalizations such as loud sighs or mumbling, etc.)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ recognizes when he or she needs teacher assistance and is willing to that assistance	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ requests teacher assistance in an appropriate manner	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ requests assistance from the teacher only when really needed	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ if finished with the independent assignment before time expires, uses remaining time to check work or engage in other academic activity allowed by teacher	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ takes care in completing work—as evidenced by the quality of the finished assignment	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ is reliable in turning in assignments done in class.	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
☐ Other: _____	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
Comments: _____ _____ _____				

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Motivation. The student:				
☐ has a positive sense of 'self-efficacy' about the academic content area (self-efficacy can be defined as the confidence that one can be successful in the academic discipline or subject matter if one puts forth reasonable effort)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA –
☐ displays some apparent *intrinsic* motivation to engage in course work (e.g., is motivated by topics and subject matter discussed or covered in the course; finds the act of working on course assignments to be reinforcing in its own right)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA –
☐ displays apparent *extrinsic* motivation to engage in course work (e.g., is motivated by grades, praise, public recognition of achievement, access to privileges such as sports eligibility, or other rewarding outcomes)	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA –
☐ Other: _____	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA –
Comments: _____ _____				

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Teacher-Defined Academic Enabling Skill:

Skill Name: _____

Essential Subskills: The student::

❏ _____	Poor Fair Good NA 1 2 3 —
❏ _____	Poor Fair Good NA 1 2 3 —
❏ _____	Poor Fair Good NA 1 2 3 —
❏ _____	Poor Fair Good NA 1 2 3
❏ _____	Poor Fair Good NA 1 2 3

Comments:

_____
_____

'Academic Enabler Skills' Checklist: Example

- Example: A middle school math instructor, Mr. Haverneck, was concerned that a student, Rodney, appears to have poor 'organization skills'. Mr. Haverneck created a checklist of observable subskills that, in his opinion, were part of the global term 'organization skills:

  - arriving to class on time;

  - bringing work materials to class;

  - following teacher directions in a timely manner;

  - knowing how to request teacher assistance when needed;

  - having an uncluttered desk with only essential work materials.

Mr. Havernick monitored the student's compliance with elements of this organization -skills checklist across three days of math class. On average, Rodney successfully carried out only 2 of the 5 possible subskills (**baseline**). Mr. Havernick set the **goal** that by the last week of a 5-week intervention, the student would be found to use all five of the subskills on at least 4 out of 5 days.

Activity: Academic Enablers Observational Checklist

At your tables:

- Review the 'Academic Enablers' Observational Checklists.

- Discuss how your school might use the existing examples or use the general format to create your own observational checklists.

Study Skills

Focus of Inquiry: What is an example of a 'package' that gives students ideas (and the responsibility) to better manage their own study and review of course material?

-Managing Test Anxiety:
  Ideas for Students pp. 18-22

Managing Test Anxiety for Students

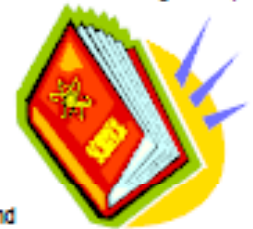# Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students

Tests and quizzes are more widely used in schools than ever. Teachers rely on written examinations to show whether students have learned the information presented in the course. Colleges and universities evaluate applicants' performance on entrance examinations such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to judge whether these applicants are likely to be successful in their programs.

With so much depending on test results, it is no wonder that students often become anxious about taking tests. But don't worry! You can master test-anxiety and improve your performance on exams by following a simple plan: develop good study habits, use effective techniques to memorize content, take steps to reduce test anxiety, and take advantage of smart strategies when taking the test. Read through the tips below for ideas that you can use:

Effective Study Habits
It is not enough just to schedule lots of study time. You also need to make sure that you use effective study *techniques*. Some smart study tips are to:

- *Create a quiet, neat study area.* Distractions and clutter interfere with studying. Select a quiet spot where you are unlikely to be interrupted and organize it so that you can study efficiently. If space is cramped at home, use a corner of the local library or other suitable spot as your 'study haven.'

- *Study from good notes.* Your study sessions will be productive only if you are studying from a legible and complete set of notes. If your notes are incomplete, see if your teacher has a loaner set of master class notes that you can review to get the missing information. Or ask a classmate who takes thorough notes if you can borrow them.

- *Use bits of unexpected free time to study.* Carry 'pocket work' with you to review whenever you have a few minutes of free time. For example, have a set of index cards with course notes on hand that you can conveniently pull out and look at during spare moments.

- *Make a study schedule to avoid 'time-drains'.* People often don't realize how much time they spend on activities such as watching TV, surfing the Internet, talking with friends on the phone, and so on. If we aren't careful, though, we may discover that our leisure activities 'drain away' time that could have been better used for study. Create a general study schedule, with time set aside for fun activities. Then be sure to limit those fun activities to the time allotted.

- *Take advantage of your peak energy levels.* Pick the time of day when you tend to have the most energy and try to schedule your study sessions at this time. Also, study your most difficult or challenging material first, while you are still fresh. When you study at the same time each day, you will also find that studying begins to turn into a habit!

- *Create a study group.* Gather together classmates to form a study group. Groups can make studying more fun. Another advantage of groups is that its members can consult multiple sets of notes whenever a course concept is unclear. (Just be sure that your group takes studying seriously and

Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students

Intended Purpose:

Students may become anxious in testing situations because they have never learned effective note-taking, study, and test-taking skills. This package maps out a comprehensive strategy for any student to follow when preparing for an important examination.

Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students

Doing well on a test starts with careful preparation. Students should have the essential skills to:

- *Study effectively.*
- *Memorize instructional content.*
- *Reduce test anxiety.*
- *Adopt a 'smart' approach to test-taking.*

Student Tips: Effective Study Habits

It is not enough just to schedule lots of study time. You also need to make sure that you use effective study *techniques.* Some smart study tips are to:

- *Create a quiet, neat study area.*
- *Study from good notes.*
- *Use bits of unexpected free time to study.*
- *Make a study schedule to avoid 'time-drains'.*
- *Take advantage of your peak energy levels.*

Student Tips: Effective Study Habits
(Cont.)

- *Create a study group.*

- *Teach content as a 'learning check'.*

- *Recite information aloud.*

- *Pose difficult questions.*

- *Don't forget to review previously learned material.*

- *Avoid cram sessions.*

- *Reward yourself.*

Student Tips: Tips to Memorize Content

The best way to remember information from your notes or reading is to set aside enough time to study it well. Some tips for memorizing information are to:

- *Read and review using SQ3R : (1) **S**urvey the chapter, (2) Create **Q**uestions based on chapter headings(3) **R**ead through the chapter (4) **R**ecite the questions and answer aloud; (5) **R**eview your answers.*

- *Make up flashcards.*

Student Tips: Tips to Memorize Content *(Cont.)*

- *Create acronyms or acrostics: e.g.,**R**ed-**O**range-**Y**ellow-**G**reen-**B**lue-**I**ndigo-**V**iolet =ROY G. BIV.*

- *Use visualization tricks: Chaining.*

- *Use visualization tricks: Familiar places.*

Student Tips: Reducing Test Anxiety

A little nervousness before a test can be good
—but when we become too anxious that anxiety can undermine our confidence and interfere with our ability to solve problems. Some tips to reduce test anxiety are to:

- *Remember to take care of yourself first.*
- *Take practice exams.*
- *Come prepared.*

Student Tips: Reducing Test Anxiety
(Cont.)

- *Make an effort to relax periodically during the test.*

    1. *Take several deep breaths.*

    2. *Tense your muscles, hold, relax.*

    3. *Think of a peaceful, quiet setting (e.g., the beach).*

- *Engage in positive self-talk.*

Student Tips: Test-Taking Strategies

Become familiar with the test that you are about to take and have a mental plan for how you will spend your time most productively during the examination. Here are some useful test-taking strategies:

- *Listen carefully to directions.*

- *Perform a 'brain dump'.*

- *Preview the test.*

- *Multiple-choice: Don't get sidetracked looking for patterns of answers.*

Student Tips: Test-Taking Strategies

(Cont.)

- *Multiple-choice: Don't rush.*

- *Essay questions: Underline key terms.*

- *Essay questions: Outline your answer before you write it.*

- *When in doubt…guess!*

- *Skip difficult items until last.*

- *Use leftover time to check answers.*

# *Teacher Ideas for Introducing 'Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students'*

1. *Brainstorm with students their best ideas for (a) studying, (b) memorizing course content, (c) handling test anxiety, and (d) savvy test-taking. Write down these ideas.*

2. Using class-generated ideas and test-tips handout, have students write up their own 'test-readiness' plan.

3. When a test is coming up, remind the students to use their personal test-prep strategies. Debrief after the test about the effectiveness of various approaches.

Homework

Focus of Inquiry: How can schools harness the power of the parent(s) to help the student to get homework done?

-Homework Contract pp. 15-17
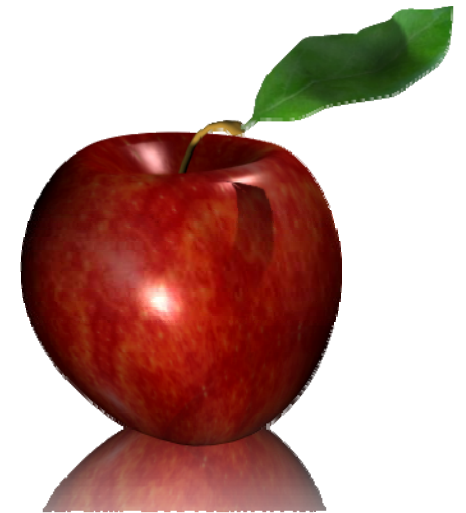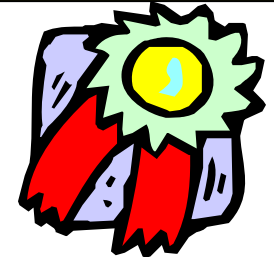
Homework Contract

Intended Purpose:

This *homework contract* intervention (adapted from Miller & Kelly, 1994) uses goal-setting, a written contract, and rewards to boost student completion (and accuracy) of homework. Students also learn the valuable skills of breaking down academic assignments into smaller, more manageable subtasks and setting priorities for work completion.

Homework Contract: Form

Homework Contracts   Jim Wright (www.interventioncentral.org)   4

Daily Homework Planner (Adapted from Miller & Kelly, 1994)

Student: _____   Date: _____

Before starting my homework, do I:
- have all the materials that I need?
- know what homework has been assigned in all subjects?
- have a quiet place to work?

| Task	Academic Subject	Description of Work Goal Set by Student	Time Needed to Complete	Goal Successfully Achieved?
1				Y N
2				Y N
3				Y N
4				Y N
5				Y N

- *Daily reward:* The student will earn the daily reward by completing at least _____ % of the homework goals for that day.

- *Weekly reward:* The student will earn the weekly reward by meeting the daily homework goals for _____ days of the week.

- *Percentage of Goals* Achieved Today (Number of Goals Achieved/Number of Goals Set) _____ %

- Circle those days that the student has met the daily homework goal for this week:
  S   M   T   W   Th   F   S

Parent Signature _____

Homework Contract

1. Parents are trained to be supportive 'homework coaches'.

2. The parent creates a homework reward system for the child.

3. The parent negotiates the homework contract program with the child.

4. The parent and child fill out the Daily Homework Contract.

5. The parent checks the child's homework completion, delivers nightly & weekly rewards.

Homework Contract: Tips & Troubleshooting
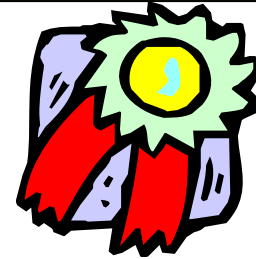
- If the parent finds the Homework Contract program difficult to implement, have an afterschool program implement it.

- The teacher may choose to monitor homework completion and send a note home to the parent, who provides the reward.

'Academic Enabling Skills': Teacher Responsibility

Focus of Inquiry: How can the teacher play a role in helping students to stay organized and caught up on course work?

-Preventing Students from Falling Behind Through Proactive Teacher Communication

-Helping the Student Who is 'Under Water' With Late Assignments: A Structure for Teacher-Student Conferences
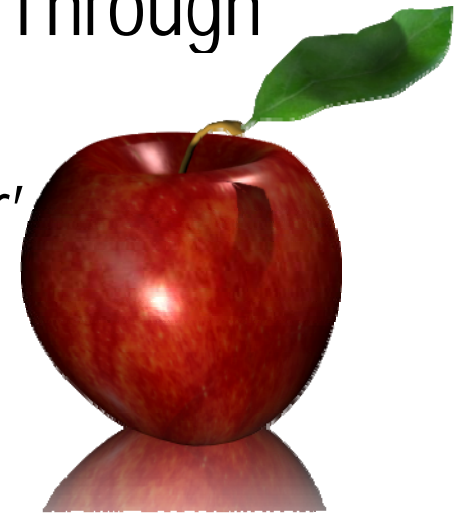
Preventing Students from Falling Behind Through Proactive Teacher Communication (Handout available on conference webpage)

What is the Advantage of 'Proactive Teacher Communication'?

Struggling students benefit greatly when the teacher provides a clear explanation of course requirements, and offers regularly updated information about upcoming assignments, missing work, and students' current standing in the course. When the teacher makes a proactive effort to keep students fully and continually informed about course expectations and their own performance, the instructor substantially reduces the likelihood that students will fall behind in their work and be at risk for underperformance or failure in the course.

The Elements of 'Proactive Teacher Communication'

1. *Prepare a Course Syllabus.* At the start of the semester, the teacher hands out a syllabus listing all major course assignments, their descriptions, and due dates, as well as dates of quizzes and tests. This syllabus provides the student with a comprehensive map of all of the work to be done in the course for the semester. It also gives a clear explanation of the grading system, including the relative weight toward the final grade of tests, quizzes, homework, classwork, and student participation. Additionally, the syllabus spells out any penalties for submission of late work.

The Elements of 'Proactive Teacher Communication'

2. *Hand Out Weekly Work Agenda.* On Mondays, the teacher gives students a work agenda for the week. The agenda lists any in-class and homework assignments for that week, their descriptions (if necessary), and due dates. [Optional but recommended] The agenda may also include milestone tasks from larger, multi-week projects (e.g., reminding students in a November agenda that they should have their 6 required source documents for a term paper selected by Friday of the current week).

The Elements of 'Proactive Teacher Communication'

3. *Schedule Weekly Student Conferences.* The teacher holds brief meetings with individual students to review their performance in the course to date, note any missing work and get the student to commit to a plan to submit that work, and checks in with the student about upcoming assignments, quizzes, and tests to ensure that the student continues to stay on top of course requirements. NOTE: If time constraints prevent the teacher from being able to conference with the entire class each week, the instructor may instead meet with at-risk students weekly and meet less frequently (e.g., every other week or monthly) with the remainder of the class.

Helping the Student Who is 'Under Water' With Late Assignments: A Structure for Teacher–Student Conferences (Handout available on conference webpage)
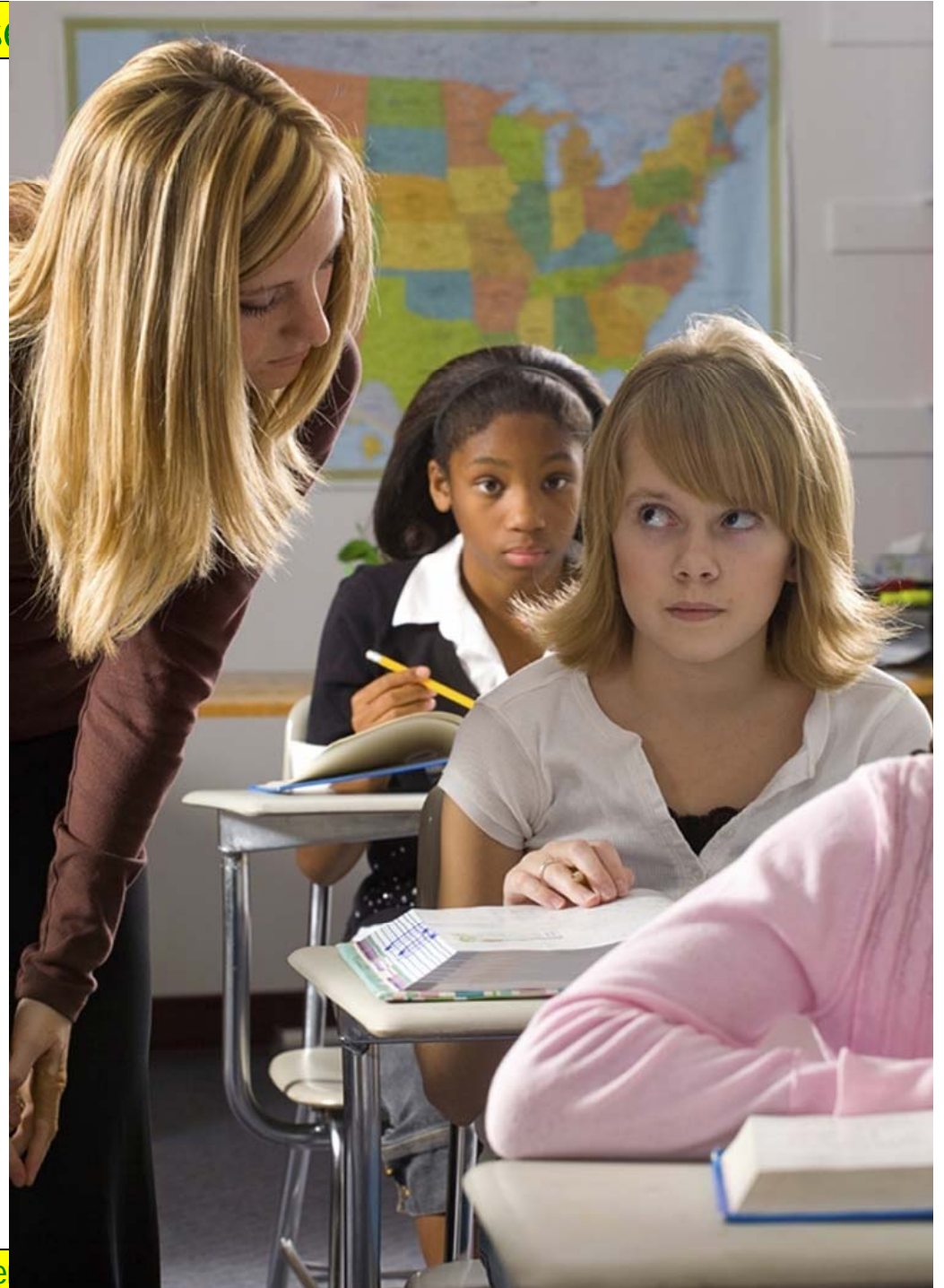
Negotiating Missing Work: Student-Teacher Conference

When students fall behind in their classwork, they can quickly enter a downward spiral. Some students become overwhelmed and simply give up.

In such cases, the teacher may want to meet with the student –and if possible, a parent--to help that student to create a work plan to catch up with late work.

At the meeting, the teacher and student inventory what work is missing, negotiate a plan to complete that overdue work, and perhaps agree on a reasonable penalty when late work is turned in. All attending then sign off on the work plan. The teacher also ensures that the atmosphere at the meeting is supportive.

Negotiating Missing Work: Student-Teacher Conference (Cont.)

Here in greater detail are the steps that the teacher and student would follow at a meeting to renegotiate missing work:

1. *Inventory All Missing Work*. The teacher reviews with the student all late or missing work. The student is given the opportunity to explain why the work has not yet been submitted.

Negotiating Missing Work: Student-Teacher Conference (Cont.)

2. *Negotiate a Plan to Complete Missing Work.* The teacher and student create a log with entries for all missing assignments. Each entry includes a description of the missing assignment and a due date by which the student pledges to submit that work. This log becomes the student's work plan. Submission dates for late assignments should be realistic--particularly for students who owe a considerable amount of late work and are also trying to keep caught up with current assignments.

Student Late-Work Planning Form: Middle & High School

Teacher: _____   Course: _____

Student: _____   Date: _____/____/_____

Directions: At a teacher-student conference, use this form to create a plan for the student to complete and submit missing or late work.

Assignment	Target Date for Completion	NOTES

What penalty—if any—will be imposed for these late assignments? _____

_____

_____   _____   _____
Student Signature   Teacher Signature   Parent Signature

Negotiating Missing Work: Student-Teacher Conference (Cont.)

3. *[Optional] Impose a Penalty for Missing Work.* The teacher may decide to impose a penalty for the work being submitted late. Examples of possible penalties are a reduction of points (e.g., loss of 10 points per assignment) or the requirement that the student do additional work on the assignment than was required of his or her peers who turned it in on time. If imposed, such penalties would be spelled out at this teacher-student conference. Any penalties should be balanced and fair, permitting the teacher to impose appropriate consequences while allowing the student to still see a path to completing missing work and passing the course.

Negotiating Missing Work: Student-Teacher Conference (Cont.)

4. *Periodically Check on the Status of the Missing-Work Plan.* If the schedule agreed upon by teacher and student to complete and submit all late work exceeds two weeks, the teacher (or other designated school contact, such as a counselor) should meet with the student weekly while the plan is in effect. At these meetings, the teacher checks in with the student to verify that he or she is attaining the plan milestones on time and still expects to meet the submission deadlines agreed upon. If obstacles to emerge, the teacher and student engage in problem-solving to resolve them.

Tier 1 Case Example: Tina: Test Preparation

Test Preparation: Case Study

- Mr. Salzer, a science teacher, was concerned that a student, Tina, was performing poorly on quizzes even though she seemed to have a good understanding of the material.

- He used the Academic Enabler Observational Checklist to analyze the student's study skills and found that Tina needed help on two items, setting time aside to study for quizzes and having an efficient study strategy.

'Academic Enabler' Skills: Sample Observational Checklists

Study Skills. The student:				
❑ takes complete, organized class notes in legible form and maintains them in one accessible note book	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ reviews class notes frequently (e.g., after each class) to ensure understanding	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ When reviewing notes, uses highlighters, margin notes, or other strategies to note questions or areas of confusion for later review with teacher or tutor	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ follows an efficient strategy to study for tests and quizzes	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ allocates enough time to study for tests and quizzes	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ is willing to seek help from the teacher to answer questions or clear up areas of confusion	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	NA —
❑ Other: _____				
Comments: _____ _____				

Test Preparation: Case Study

- Mr. Salzer had Tina read through a collection of study-skills recommendations on her own.

- He then met with the student and helped Tina to identify areas of time management and study skills that she would like to improve. Tina said that she was often tired when she studied after school and found much of the science content difficult to remember.

Study Skills/Test Preparation: Case Study

Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students

Tests and quizzes are more widely used in schools than ever. Teachers rely on written examinations to show whether students have learned the information presented in the course. Colleges and universities evaluate applicants' performance on entrance examinations such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to judge whether these applicants are likely to be successful in their programs.

With so much depending on test results, it is no wonder that students often become anxious about taking tests. But don't worry! You can master test-anxiety and improve your performance on exams by following a simple plan: develop good study habits, use effective techniques to memorize content, take steps to reduce test anxiety, and take advantage of smart strategies when taking the test. Read through the tips below for ideas that you can use:

Effective Study Habits
It is not enough just to schedule lots of study time. You also need to make sure that you use effective study *techniques*. Some smart study tips are to:

- *Create a quiet, neat study area.* Distractions and clutter interfere with studying. Select a quiet spot where you are unlikely to be interrupted and organize it so that you can study efficiently. If space is cramped at home, use a corner of the local library or other suitable spot as your 'study haven.'

- *Study from good notes.* Your study sessions will be productive only if you are studying from a legible and complete set of notes. If your notes are incomplete, see if your teacher has a loaner set of master class notes that you can review to get the missing information. Or ask a classmate who takes thorough notes if you can borrow them.

- *Use bits of unexpected free time to study.* Carry 'pocket work' with you to review whenever you have a few minutes of free time. For example, have a set of index cards with course notes on hand that you can conveniently pull out and look at during spare moments.

- *Make a study schedule to avoid 'time-drains'.* People often don't realize how much time they spend on activities such as watching TV, surfing the Internet, talking with friends on the phone, and so on. If we aren't careful, though, we may discover that our leisure activities 'drain away' time that could have been better used for study. Create a general study schedule, with time set aside for fun activities. Then be sure to limit those fun activities to the time allotted.

- *Take advantage of your peak energy levels.* Pick the time of day when you tend to have the most energy and try to schedule your study sessions at this time. Also, study your most difficult or challenging material first, while you are still fresh. When you study at the same time each day, you will also find that studying begins to turn into a habit!

- *Create a study group.* Gather together classmates to form a study group. Groups can make studying more fun. Another advantage of groups is that its members can consult multiple sets of notes whenever a course concept is unclear. (Just be sure that your group takes studying seriously and

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- Together, the teacher and student decided that Tina would use these strategies in an attempt to improve her preparation for science quizzes:

  ❑ **Make a study schedule to avoid 'time-drains'.**

  ❑ **Take advantage of peak energy levels.**

  ❑ **Make a point to regularly review previously learned material.**

  ❑ **Use visual 'chaining' to memorize content.** Think of an object to represent each word or term that you must commit to memory. Then construct a mental 'chain' that connects the objects in a short sequence.

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- For the first two weeks of the intervention, Mr. Salzer asked Tina to keep a log of the dates and times that she studied for science. She agreed to do so.

- Mr. Salzer also used quiz grades to measure whether the intervention appeared to benefit the student.

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- After two weeks, her study log showed that Tina was setting aside sufficient time to study and the student also shared that she found her new study habits to be helpful.

- Mr. Salzer found that Tina's quiz grades improved noticeably with her use of the self-selected study strategies. He also noted that she was participating more in class and seemed to have a better grasp of course material and concepts.