



Teacher Strategies to Promote Learning

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Here are some teacher strategies that research indicates can be very effective in helping struggling learners to successfully master new academic skills:

Jim's Hints for Using... Teacher Strategies to Promote Learning



As an instructor, you can use this 'checklist' of effective instructional practices in two important ways.

First, you can evaluate your group instruction to verify that it includes each of these key educational components.

Second, you can use these strategies as a starting point for making individual educational accommodations for children in your classroom with learning differences.

1. Instructional Match. Ensure that students are being taught at the optimal instructional level, one that challenges them but provides enough success to keep these students confident and invested in learning.



2. Scaffolding. Provide 'scaffolding' support (individual instructional modifications) to students as necessary to help them to master a new task or keep up with more advanced learners. Examples of scaffolding strategies include reducing the number of problems assigned to a student, permitting the student to use technological aids (e.g., word processing software which predicts student word selection to reduce keyboarding), and using cooperative learning groups that pool the group's knowledge to complete assignments.

3. Step-by-Step Strategies. For complex, conceptually difficult, or multi-step academic operations, break these operations down into simple steps. Teach students to use the steps. When students are just acquiring a skill, you may want to create a poster or handout for students to refer to that lists the main steps of strategies that they are to use.

4. Modeling & Demonstration. Model and demonstrate explicit strategies to students for learning academic material or completing assignments. Have them use these strategies under supervision until you are sure that students understand and can correctly use them.

5. Performance Feedback. Make sure that students who are mastering new academic skills have frequent opportunities to try these skills out with immediate corrective feedback and encouragement. Prompt guidance and feedback will prevent students from accidentally 'learning' how to perform a skill incorrectly!

6. Opportunities to Drill & Practice to Strengthen Fragile Skills. As students become more proficient in their new skills and can work independently, give them lots of opportunities to drill and practice to strengthen the skills. Whenever possible, make student practice sessions

interesting by using game-like activities; coming up with real-world, applied assignments; or incorporating themes or topics that the student finds interesting.

7. Student 'Talk-Through' Activities. When students appear to have successfully learned a skill, set up activities for them to complete and ask the students to 'talk' you through the activity (i.e., announce each step that they are taking, describe their problem-solving strategies aloud, describe any road-blocks that they run into and tell you how they will go about solving them, etc.).

8. Periodic Review. Once students have mastered a particular academic skill, the instructor will quickly move them on to a more advanced learning objective. However, the teacher should make sure that students retain previously mastered academic skills by periodically having them review that material. Periodic review is often overlooked but is a powerful method for keeping students' academic skills sharp.

9. Progress Monitoring. Teachers can verify that students are making appropriate learning progress only when they are able to measure that progress on a regular basis. The instructor may want to consider information from several assessment approaches to monitor student progress: e.g., curriculum-based assessment, accuracy and completeness of student assignments, student 'talk-through' demonstrations of problem-solving, etc.