Welcome to this second edition of a series of “Tips for Teachers,” produced by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. These resources are designed to address teacher and administrator requests for strategies and suggestions related to high-needs areas of student achievement.

Our first edition, “The Reading and Writing Connection,” focused on techniques for improving student reading and writing in multiple genres. This second edition focuses on three important—and frequently underutilized—instructional practices:

- The Power of Re-teaching to Enhance Student Understanding and Mastery
- The Importance of One-on-One Coaching and Formative Assessment Feedback
- The Value of Small-Group Instruction in Promoting Student Engagement and Learning

Research is clear that re-teaching is essential when introducing new content and in helping students to extend and refine their understanding of knowledge and skills previously taught.

When students receive ongoing criterion-based feedback via formative assessment, they can adjust their learning and gain insight into how they can move toward standards mastery.

One-on-one feedback—like all great coaching strategies—personalizes student learning and provides on-the-spot advice to help learners acquire, adjust, and extend their achievement.

Small-group instruction can involve a range of interaction strategies (including cooperative learning structures) that promote student discourse, engagement, and efficacy.

The Power of Re-Teaching Strategies

Students benefit greatly from opportunities to revisit challenging content and clarify questions.

1. **Re-teaching** involves responding to a problem right away, using a new method or approach.
2. The teacher **uses data** to identify areas of misunderstanding.
3. **Re-teaching** can be quick (no more than 20 minutes).
4. **Re-teaching** usually involves three interrelated strategies: error analysis, grouping, and think aloud processes.
5. **Error Analysis:** Discover common errors and misconceptions, encouraging students to self-correct and modify their learning.
6. **Purposeful Grouping:** Use small group tasks and debriefing to clear up errors and misconceptions.
7. **Think Aloud:** Model key skills and processes while explaining your thinking to help students “unpack”
Research-Based Principles for Effective Re-Teaching

- Effective re-teaching requires that instructors continually monitor students’ progress to make sure that they master key skills and concepts.
- Key steps include: (1) deconstructing standards by breaking them down into progressive learning targets; (2) clearly communicating and revisiting learning targets; (3) knowing exactly where each student is in mastering the standard(s); (4) determining specific steps for individual and groups of students to move toward mastery; and (5) reinforcing student goal setting and self-monitoring relative to learning targets.
- After re-teaching, re-assessment opportunities should allow students to demonstrate their growth in learning and understanding. Ideally, re-assessments should allow students different ways to show learning (e.g., oral explanations, graphic organizers, visual representations).

20 High-Yield Re-Teaching Strategies

1. Provide descriptive feedback on tasks and assessments
2. Ask for student examples of learning expectations
3. Model key steps in a strategy or process
4. Engage students in self-assessments and self-reflections
5. Assign objective-related extension and refinement tasks
6. Use manipulatives, models, and visual representations
7. Present content in new, unique, and engaging ways
8. Conduct review sessions, highlighting important content
9. Have students create graphic representations of content
10. Engage students in small-group instruction
11. Provide practice activities that move students toward guided and independent transfer
12. Offer computer tutorials and related forms of blended learning
13. Use games, competitions, and tournaments to revisit key concepts, skills, and strategies
14. Offer opportunities for peer coaching and interaction
15. Break down complex concepts into smaller chunks
16. Encourage parent involvement in supporting learning
17. Use cooperative learning structures to promote student discourse
18. Have students track their own progress using data
19. Allow for small-group independent inquiry and projects
20. Use station teaching to promote differentiation
The Power of Formative Assessment

- Formative assessment is assessment for learning. It involves ongoing feedback and coaching to students to help them understand learning targets and related evaluation criteria.
- This on-the-spot feedback is carried out while learning is in progress. This process ensures that students are clear about what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they can monitor their own progress.
- Effective small group instruction allows the teacher to provide immediate feedback in a direct and personalized fashion. Formative assessment ensures that the instructor knows where each student is in relation to learning targets.
- Formative assessment is the heart of great coaching and involves easy-to-use and efficient strategies such as:
  1. Ask students to elaborate and offer evidence
  2. Reinforcing useful idea, processes, or concepts contained within a response
  3. Encouraging questioning and speculation
  4. Modeling key skills and concepts
  5. Encouraging summarizing and paraphrasing
  6. Asking students to reflect on their use of a strategy or process

Small Group Instruction

- Grouping within the classroom can address a range of student learning needs, including: (1) varying readiness levels, (2) English proficiency levels, (3) interests and choices, and (4) learner profiles (e.g., Concrete v. Abstract; Visual, Auditory, and/or Kinesthetic learning preferences).
- Small group instruction can range from groups requiring high levels of support to those with students ready for independent application and inquiry. Within a small group learning session, the effective teacher:
  1. Presents objectives and evaluation criteria.
  2. Ensures students understand the "compelling why" of the lesson.
  3. Demonstrates key strategy or skill.
  4. Guides the students’ use of the strategy or skill through interaction processes, e.g., writing.
  5. Helps students to apply the strategy or skill.
  6. Coaches students (individually and/or as a small group) as they work.
  7. Makes links and connections to future work.
- Small group instruction uses strategies such as aloud, shared reading and writing, guided reading, oral discourse and reflection, interactive writing, strategy lessons to help students acquire and apply key learning strategies, guided inquiry, literature circles, reader’s theater).

Station Teaching

- A highly effective strategy for small-group instruction and re-teaching is station teaching.
- In traditional station teaching, students rotate through three groups (two incorporating teacher-led instruction and the third station an independent activity).
- Some stations can be used to reteach and reinforce while others can provide extension and/or enrichment opportunities.
- Tasks can be differentiated according to differing levels of complexity or challenge.
- Ideally, stations are designed to accommodate students’ varying readiness levels and prior knowledge. They should help learners move from the Concrete to Representational to Abstract (CRA).

“Teachers have to make specific and continually evolving plans to connect each learner with key content. A flexible approach to teaching makes room for student variance. Teachers should continually ask: ‘What does this student need at this moment in order to be able to progress with this key content, and what do I need to do to make that happen?’” Carol Ann Tomlinson and Marcia B. Imbeau, Leading and Managing A Differentiated Classroom, ASCD, 2010.
A Reflective Questionnaire:
What Should We See in Effective Re-Teaching and One-on-One Small Group Instruction?

1. In my classroom, I use re-teaching as a key part of my instructional delivery process, ensuring that I revisit with students key points of challenge or difficulty.

2. As part of the re-teaching process, I engage my students in error analysis, purposeful grouping, and think-aloud activities.

3. In every lesson, formative assessment provides on-the-spot feedback to learners to help them adjust their learning and move closer to identified learning targets.

4. My feedback consistently helps my students understand lesson objectives and encourages students to monitor their own progress.

5. I make certain that my students understand what they are learning—and why they are learning it.

6. My teaching repertoire reflects many of the high-yield teaching techniques and strategies identified in this “Tips for Teachers.”

7. I use a range of small group instructional techniques, including station teaching.

What Is Current Research Telling Us?

Harvard researchers Will Dobbie and Roland Fryer have identified five practices that together explain 50 percent of the difference between high-performing and low-performing schools (each of which supports the power of formative assessment and one-on-one and small group learning):

1. **Frequent Teacher Feedback**: Providing standards-based, on-the-spot coaching and feedback to help students self-monitor and adjust their own learning.

2. **Data-Driven Instruction**: Using a range of standards-based performance data to monitor and assess student progress.

3. **Coaching and Tutoring**: Providing intensive coaching and early intervention to students requiring extra support.

4. **Increased Instructional Time**: Eliminating distractions and interruptions to ensure on-time, on-task learning for all.

5. **A “Relentless” Focus on Academic Achievement**: Engaging all students in a rigorous and engaging learning process focused upon clearly articulated and well understood performance standards for every lesson and unit.