

## RTI Classroom Teacher Toolkit

## HANDOUT 1

Tier 1: The Classroom Teacher as Intervention 'First Responder'

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## The Struggling Student in a General-Education Setting: Pivot Points



Ranking	Student Competency
	A. Basic Academic Skills. The student has sufficient mastery of basic academic skills (e.g., reading fluency) to complete classwork.
	B. Academic Survival Skills. The student possesses the academic survival skills (e.g., homework skills, time management, organization) necessary to manage their learning.
	C. Work Completion. The student independently completes in-class work and homework.
	D. <b>Transitions.</b> The student flexibly adapts to changing academic routines and behavioral expectations across activities and settings (e.g., content- area classes; specials).
	E. Attentional Focus. The student has a grade- or age-appropriate ability to focus attention in large and small groups and when working independently.
	F. Emotional Control. The student manages emotions across settings, responding appropriately to setbacks and frustrations.
	G. Peer Interactions. The student collaborates productively and has positive social interactions with peers.
	H. Self-Efficacy. The student possesses a positive view of their academic abilities, believing that increased effort paired with effective work practices will result in improved outcomes ('growth mindset').
	I. Self-Understanding. The student can articulate their relative patterns of strength and weakness in academic skills, general conduct, and social-emotional functioning.
	J. Self-Advocacy. The student advocates for their needs and negotiates effectively with adults.

## How To: Implement Strong Core Instruction

When teachers must present challenging academic material to struggling learners, they can make that material more accessible and promote faster learning by building assistance directly into instruction. Researchers use several terms to refer to this increased level of student instructional support: explicit instruction, direct instruction, supported instruction (Rosenshine, 2008).

The checklist below summarizes the essential elements of a supported-instruction approach. When preparing lesson plans, instructors can use this resource as a 'pre-flight' checklist to make sure that their lessons reach the widest range of diverse learners.

1.	1. Increase Access to Instruction		
Inst	ructional Element	Notes	
	Instructional Match. Lesson content is appropriately matched to		
	students' abilities (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).		
	Content Review at Lesson Start. The lesson opens with a brief review		
	of concepts or material that have previously been presented. (Burns,		
	VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).		
	Preview of Lesson Goal(s). At the start of instruction, the goals of the		
	current day's lesson are shared (Rosenshine, 2008).		
	Chunking of New Material. The teacher breaks new material into		
	small, manageable increments, 'chunks', or steps (Rosenshine, 2008).		

### 2. Provided 'Scaffolding' Support

Ζ.	2. Provided Scanolaing Support		
Ins	tructional Element	Notes	
	Detailed Explanations & Instructions. Throughout the lesson, the teacher provides adequate explanations and detailed instructions for all concepts and materials being taught (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).		
	Think-Alouds/Talk-Alouds. When presenting cognitive strategies that cannot be observed directly, the teacher describes those strategies for students. Verbal explanations include 'talk-alouds' (e.g., the teacher describes and explains each step of a cognitive strategy) and 'think-alouds' (e.g., the teacher applies a cognitive strategy to a particular problem or task and verbalizes the steps in applying the strategy) (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).		
	Work Models. The teacher makes exemplars of academic work (e.g., essays, completed math word problems) available to students for use as models (Rosenshine, 2008).		
	Active Engagement. The teacher ensures that the lesson engages the student in 'active accurate responding' (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005) often enough to capture student attention and to optimize learning.		
	Collaborative Assignments. Students have frequent opportunities to work collaborativelyin pairs or groups. (Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).		
	Checks for Understanding. The instructor regularly checks for student understanding by posing frequent questions to the group (Rosenshine, 2008).		



Group Responding. The teacher ensures full class participation and boosts levels of student attention by having all students respond in various ways (e.g., choral responding, response cards, white boards) to	
instructor questions (Rosenshine, 2008).	
High Rate of Student Success. The teacher verifies that students are experiencing at least 80% success in the lesson content to shape their learning in the desired direction and to maintain student motivation and engagement (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).	
Brisk Rate of Instruction. The lesson moves at a brisk ratesufficient to hold student attention (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).	
<b>Fix-Up Strategies.</b> Students are taught fix-up strategies (Rosenshine, 2008) for use during independent work (e.g., for defining unknown words in reading assignments, for solving challenging math word problems).	

3. Give Timely Performance Feedback	
Instructional Element	Notes
Regular Feedback. The teacher provides timely and regular	
performance feedback and corrections throughout the lesson as	
needed to guide student learning (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice).	
□ Step-by-Step Checklists. For multi-step cognitive strategies, the	
teacher creates checklists for students to use to self-monitor	
performance (Rosenshine, 2008).	

4. F	4. Provide Opportunities for Review & Practice		
Inst	ructional Element	Notes	
	Spacing of Practice Throughout Lesson. The lesson includes		
	practice activities spaced throughout the lesson. (e.g., through teacher		
	demonstration; then group practice with teacher supervision and		
	feedback; then independent, individual student practice) (Burns,		
	VanDerHeyden, & Boice).		
	Guided Practice. When teaching challenging material, the teacher		
	provides immediate corrective feedback to each student response.		
	When the instructor anticipates the possibility of an incorrect response,		
	that teacher forestalls student error through use of cues, prompts, or hints. The teacher also tracks student responding and ensures		
	sufficient success during supervised lessons before having students		
	practice the new skills or knowledge independently (Burns,		
	VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).		
	Support for Independent Practice. The teacher ensures that students		
	have adequate support (e.g., clear and explicit instructions; teacher		
	monitoring) to be successful during independent seatwork practice		
	activities (Rosenshine, 2008).		
	Distributed Practice. The teacher reviews previously taught content		
	one or more times over a period of several weeks or months (Pashler et		
	al., 2007; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1995).		



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References

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# How To: Define Intervention-Related Terms: Core Instruction, Intervention, Instructional Adjustment, Modification

Educators who serve as interventionists should be able to define and distinguish among the terms *core instruction*, *intervention, instructional adjustment*, and *modification*. (In particular, interventionists should avoid using modifications as part of an intervention plan to support a general education student in core instruction--as they can be predicted to undermine the student's academic performance.) Here are definitions for these key terms. (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999; Wright, 2007).

### Intervention-Related Terms & Definitions

Core Instruction. Those instructional strategies that are used routinely with all students in a generaleducation setting are considered 'core instruction'. High-quality instruction is essential and forms the foundation of classroom academic support. NOTE: While it is important to verify that a struggling student receives good core instructional practices, those routine practices do not 'count' as individual student interventions.

Intervention. An academic *intervention* is a strategy used to teach a new skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage a child to apply an existing skill to new situations or settings. An intervention can be thought of as "a set of actions that, when taken, have demonstrated ability to change a fixed educational trajectory" (Methe & Riley-Tillman, 2008; p. 37). As an example of an academic intervention, the teacher may select question generation (Davey & McBride, 1986.; Rosenshine, Meister & Chapman, 1996), a strategy in which the student is taught to locate or generate main idea sentences for each paragraph in a passage and record those 'gist' sentences for later review.

Instructional Adjustment (Accommodation). An *instructional adjustment* (also known as an 'accommodation') is intended to help the student to fully access and participate in the general-education curriculum without changing the instructional content and without reducing the student's rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). An instructional adjustment is intended to remove barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their typical peers. An instructional adjustment for students who are slow readers, for example, may include having them supplement their silent reading of a novel by listening to the book on tape. An instructional adjustment for unmotivated students may include breaking larger assignments into smaller 'chunks' and providing students with performance feedback and praise for each completed 'chunk' of assigned work (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).

Modification. A modification changes the expectations of what a student is expected to know or do—typically by lowering the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated. Examples of modifications are giving a student five math computation problems for practice instead of the 20 problems assigned to the rest of the class or letting the student consult course notes during a test when peers are not permitted to do so. Instructional modifications are essential elements on the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans of many students with special needs. Modifications are generally not included on a general-education student's classroom intervention plan, however, because the assumption is that the student can be successful in the curriculum with appropriate interventions and instructional adjustments alone. In fact, modifying the work of struggling general education students is likely to have a negative effect that works *against* the goals of intervention. Reducing academic expectations will result in these students falling further behind rather than closing the performance gap with peers

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### Classroom Accommodations for Academics: A Teacher Toolkit

An accommodation ("instructional adjustment") is intended to help the student to fully access and participate in the general-education curriculum without changing the instructional content and without reducing the student's rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). An accommodation is intended to remove barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their typical peers.

Here is a list of possible accommodations that teachers can consider using for specific students or with the entire class.

2.	student work sessions into smaller segments and include brief breaks to sustain student attention.	Atter
3.	CREATE LOW-DISTRACTION WORK AREA. Set up a study carrel in the corner of the room or other low-distraction work area. Direct or allow distractible students to use this area when needed.	Attention/Impulsivity
4.	USE PREFERENTIAL SEATING. Seat the student in a classroom location that minimizes distractions and maximizes the ability to focus on the teacher's instruction.	slndu
5.	USE SILENT CUES. Meet with the student and agree on one or more silent teacher cues to redirect or focus the student (e.g., placing a paperclip on the student's desk) during class instruction. Use the cue as needed.	ivity
6.	USE 'VISUAL BLOCKERS'. Encourage the student to reduce distractions on assignments by using a blank sheet of paper or similar aid to cover sections of the page that the student is not currently working on.	

7.	REPEAT/REPHRASE COMMENTS. Repeat or rephrase student questions or comments to the class or group before responding.	
8.	DIRECTIONS: ASSIGN A BUDDY. Assign a study buddy who is willing and able to repeat and explain directions to the student.	Comn
9.	DIRECTIONS: SIMPLIFY. Simplify written directions on assignments to promote student understanding.	nunic
10.	PROVIDE SCHEDULES/AGENDAS. Provide the student with an academic agenda or schedule for the class period or school day, to include: instructional activities, independent assignments, other tasks to be covered during the period, as well as their approximate duration. Preview with students to prepare them for upcoming activities.	Communication

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	ALLOW EXTRA WORK TIME. Allow the student additional time to complete an in- class activity or assignment. (For longer assignments, the instructor can announce to students at the start the amount of extra time available for those that need it.)	
IZ.	ASSIGN A 'FALL-BACK' PEER. Choose a peer whom the student can check in with to get details about missing or lost homework assignments.	
13.	DEVELOP A STUDENT SELF-CHECK ERROR CHECKLIST. Meet with the student to generate a short list of their most common errors made on course assignments (e.g., 'In writing assignments, some words are illegible', 'Not all words at sentence beginning are capitalized'.) Format that list as a customized error-correction checklist for the student to use before turning in the work.	
14.	GIVE AN ASSIGNMENT HEAD-START. Allow students who require extra time to complete a lengthy or involved assignment to start it early.	
15.	HIGHLIGHT ESSENTIAL MATERIAL. Have the student use a highlighter to identify key ideas and vocabulary in text. (Provide training in this skill if needed.)	
16.	OFFER CHOICE: MODES OF TASK COMPLETION. Allow the student two or more choices for completing a given academic task: e.g., keyboarding vs. handwriting an essay; oral vs. written responding to math-fact worksheet.	In
17.	OFFER CHOICE: ASSIGNMENT SUBSTITUTION. Present the student with two or more alternative activities to choose from with equivalent academic requirements: e.g., to review a textbook chapter, student can answer a series of questions independently or discuss those questions in a structured cooperative learning activity.	Independent Work
18.	OFFER CHOICE: TASK SEQUENCE. When the student has several tasks to complete during independent work time, allow the student to select the order in which she or he will complete those tasks.	t Work
19.	PROVIDE A WORK PLAN. For a multi-step assignment, give the student an outline of a work plan that breaks the task into appropriate sub-steps (e.g., 'find five research articles for the paper', 'summarize key information from research articles into notes', etc.). For each sub-step, (1) estimate the minimum amount of 'seat time' required to complete and (2) set a calendar-date deadline for completion.	
20.	PROVIDE TEXTS WITH EASIER READABILITY. Locate alternative texts for course readings with the same vocabulary and concepts as the standard text(s) but written at a lower reading level. Allow students to select the easier texts as substitute or supplemental course readings.	
21.	PROVIDE WORK SAMPLES / EXEMPLARS. Provide samples of successfully completed academic items (e.g., math computation or word problems) or exemplars (e.g., samples of well-written paragraphs or essays) for the student to refer to when working independently.	
22.	RESPONSE EFFORT: CHUNK INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS. To reduce the required response effort, break a larger in-class or homework assignment into smaller, more manageable 'chunks'.	

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23.	RESPONSE EFFORT: START ASSIGNED HOMEWORK IN CLASS. Have students
	begin assigned homework in class. For reading assignments, have a skilled reader
	read the first several paragraphs aloud while students follow along silently. For
	academic homework, have students pair off to complete the first several items.
	Students are then expected to finish the work on their own.
24	CTDUCTUDE ACCIONMENTS FOR INITIAL SUCCESS. Dramata atudant mativatian

24. STRUCTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR INITIAL SUCCESS. Promote student motivation on worksheets and independent assignments by presenting easier items first and more challenging items later.

25.	TEACH FIX-UP STRATEGIES. Teach the student steps to follow when stuck during
	independent work: e.g., "If I don't understand what I am reading, (1) slow my reading;
	(2) focus full attention on the reading; (3) underline unfamiliar words and try to figure
	them out from context."

-		
26	CREATE STUDENT ORGANZATION FOLDER. Help the student to create work	
	folder(s) to organizer materials for a course or content area. Each folder can include	
	dividers and color-coding to organize materials by subject or topic.	
27	CLASS NOTES: CREATE GUIDED NOTES. Prepare a copy of notes summarizing	
	content from a class lecture or assigned reading—with blanks inserted in the notes	
	where key facts or concepts should appear. During instruction, prompt the student to	
	write missing content into the blanks.	
28	CLASS NOTES: PROVIDE A STUDENT COPY. Provide a copy of class notes to	
	allow the student to focus more fully on the lecture and class discussion. This strategy	
	can be strengthened by requiring that the student highlight key vocabulary terms	$\cap$
	appearing in the prepared notes as they are brought up in the lecture or discussion.	)rg
200		Jar
29		Organizatior
	lecture to share with students. Encourage students to use the elements of the	ati
	outline to help to structure their class notes and to ensure that their notes do	or
	not omit important information.	
30	LECTURE: TIE INFORMATION TO COURSE READINGS. When presenting	
	important course concepts during lecture, explicitly link that content to page references	
	in the course text or other assigned readings that also cover that information. Prompt	
	students to write these page references into their notes.	
31	PROVIDE CLASSROOM STORAGE SPACE. Provide the student with shelf space or	
	container in the classroom to store work materials required for class.	
32	PROVIDE MISSING WORK MATERIALS. Provide essential work materials (e.g.,	
	paper, writing utensil) for students who forget to bring them to class.	

33. CUE IMPORTANT INFORMATION. In instruction and on handouts, identify academic content to be evaluated on upcoming tests and quizzes.	
34. TEST: ALLOW EXTRA TIME. For tests that evaluate student knowledge or skills but do not formally assess speed/fluency with fixed time limits, allow the student a reasonable amount of additional time if needed.	est-Taking
35. TEST: HIGHLIGHT KEY WORDS IN DIRECTIONS. When preparing test directions, highlight key words or phrases (e.g., bold; underlined) to focus student attention.	ng

36. TEST: PRACTICE UNDER TEST CONDITIONS. Create practice tests that mimic the actual test in format and environmental conditions (e.g., with time limits). Have the student complete practice tests to build endurance, reduce test anxiety.

## How To: Create a Written Record of Classroom Interventions

When general-education students begin to struggle with academic or behavioral issues, the classroom teacher will typically select and implement one or more evidence-based intervention strategies to assist those students. But a strong intervention plan needs more than just well-chosen interventions. It also requires 4 additional components (Witt, VanDerHeyden, & Gilbertson, 2004): (1) student concerns should be clearly and specifically defined; (2) one or more methods of formative assessment should be used to track the effectiveness of the intervention; (3) baseline student data should be collected prior to the intervention; and (4) a goal for student improvement should be calculated before the start of the intervention to judge whether that intervention is ultimately successful. If a single one of these essential 4 components is missing, the intervention is to be judged as fatally flawed (Witt, VanDerHeyden, & Gilbertson, 2004) and as not meeting minimum Response to Intervention standards.

Teachers need a standard format to use in documenting their classroom intervention plans. The *Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet* that appears later in this article is designed to include all of the essential documentation elements of an effective intervention plan. The form includes space to document:

- *Case information.* In this first section of the form, the teacher notes general information, such as the name of the target student, the adult(s) responsible for carrying out the intervention, the date the intervention plan is being created, the expected start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will be in place. Most importantly, this section includes a description of the student problem; research shows that the most significant step in selecting an effective classroom intervention is to correctly identify the target student concern(s) in clear, specific, measureable terms (Bergan, 1995).
- Intervention. The teacher describes the evidence-based intervention(s) that will be used to address the identified student concern(s). As a shortcut, the instructor can simply write the intervention name in this section and attach a more detailed intervention script/description to the intervention plan.
- *Materials.* The teacher lists any materials (e.g., flashcards, wordlists, worksheets) or other resources (e.g., Internet-connected computer) necessary for the intervention.
- *Training.* If adults and/or the target student require any training prior to the intervention, the teacher records those training needs in this section of the form.
- *Progress-Monitoring.* The teacher selects a method to monitor student progress during the intervention. For the method selected, the instructor records what type of data is to be used, collects and enters student baseline (starting-point) information, calculates an intervention outcome goal, and notes how frequently he or she plans to monitor the intervention.

A completed example of the *Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet* that includes a math computation intervention can be found later in this article.

While a simple intervention documentation form is a helpful planning tool, schools should remember that teachers will need other resources and types of assistance as well to be successful in selecting and using classroom interventions. For example, teachers should have access to an 'intervention menu' that contains evidence-based strategies to address the most common academic and behavioral concerns and should be able to get coaching support as they learn how to implement new classroom intervention ideas.

#### References

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## **Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet**

This worksheet is designed to help teachers to quickly create classroom plans for academic and behavioral interventions.

Case Information					
What to Write: Record the important case information, including student, person delivering the intervention, date of plan, start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will run.					
				Date Intervention	
Student:		Interventionist(s):		Plan Was Written:	
Date		Date Intervention		Total Number of	
Intervention		is to End:		Intervention	
is to Start:				Weeks:	
Description of the Student Problem:					

### Intervention

What to Write: Write a brief description of the intervention(s) to be used with this student. TIP: If you have a script for this intervention, you can just write its name here and attach the script to this sheet.

Materials	Training
What to Write: Jot down materials (e.g., flashcards) or resources (e.g., Internet-connected computer) needed to carry out this intervention.	What to Write: Note what trainingif anyis needed to prepare adult(s) and/or the student to carry out the intervention.

Progress-Monitoring			
What to Write: Select a method to monitor student progress on this intervention. For the method selected, record what type of data is to be used, enter student baseline (starting-point) information, calculate an intervention outcome goal, and note how frequently you plan to monitor the intervention. Tip: Several ideas for classroom data collection appear on the right side of this table.			
Type of Data Used to Monitor:		•	Ideas for Intervention Progress-Monitoring Existing data: grades, homework logs, etc.
Baseline	Outcome Goal	•	Cumulative mastery log
		•	Rubric Curriculum-based measurement
		•	Behavior report card
How often will data be collected? (e.g., daily, every other day, weekly):		•	Behavior checklist

## Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet: Math Computation Example

This worksheet is designed to help teachers to quickly create classroom plans for academic and behavioral interventions.

Case Information					
What to Write: Record the important case information, including student, person delivering the intervention, date of plan, start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will run.					
Student:	John Samuelson-Gr 4	Interventionist(s):	Mrs. Kennedy, classroom teacher	Date Intervention Plan Was Written:	10 October 2012
Date Intervention is to Start:	M 8 Oct 2012	Date Intervention is to End:	F 16 Nov 2012	Total Number of Intervention Weeks:	6 weeks
Description of the Student Problem: Slow math computation speed (computes multiplication facts at 12 correct digits in 2 minutes, when typical gr 4 peers compute at least 24 correct digits).					

#### Intervention

What to Write: Write a brief description of the intervention(s) to be used with this student. TIP: If you have a script for this intervention, you can just write its name here and attach the script to this sheet.

Math Computation Time Drill.(Rhymer et al., 2002)

Explicit time-drills are a method to boost students' rate of responding on arithmetic-fact worksheets: (1) The teacher hands out the worksheet. Students are instructed that they will have 3 minutes to work on problems on the sheet. (2) The teacher starts the stop watch and tells the students to start work. (3) At the end of the first minute in the 3-minute span, the teacher 'calls time', stops the stopwatch, and tells the students to underline the last number written and to put their pencils in the air. Then students are told to resume work and the teacher restarts the stopwatch. (4) This process is repeated at the end of minutes 2 and 3. (5) At the conclusion of the 3 minutes, the teacher collects the student worksheets.

Materials	Training
What to Write: Jot down materials (e.g., flashcards) or resources (e.g., Internet-connected computer) needed to carry out this intervention.	What to Write: Note what trainingif anyis needed to prepare adult(s) and/or the student to carry out the intervention.
Use math worksheet generator on www.interventioncentral.org to create all time-drill and assessment materials.	Meet with the student at least once before the intervention to familiarize with the time-drill technique and timed math computation assessments.

Progress-Monitoring			
What to Write: Select a method to monitor student progress on this intervention. For the method selected, record what type of data is to be used, enter student baseline (starting-point) information, calculate an intervention outcome goal, and note how frequently you plan to monitor the intervention. Tip: Several ideas for classroom data collection appear on the right side of this table.			
Type of Data Used to Monitor: Curriculum-based measurement: math computation assessments: 2 minute single-skill probes		<ul> <li><u>Ideas for Intervention Progress-Monitoring</u></li> <li>Existing data: grades, homework logs, etc.</li> <li>Cumulative mastery log</li> </ul>	
Baseline	Outcome Goal	Rubric	
12 correct digits per 2 minute probe	24 correct digits per 2 minute probe	<ul> <li>Curriculum-based measurement</li> <li>Behavior report card</li> <li>Behavior checklist</li> </ul>	
How often will data be collected? (e.g., daily, every other day, weekly): WEEKLY			

# RTI/MTSS in the Classroom: What Are Your Expectations of the Teacher as Academic 'First Responder'?

Listed below are elements of effective classroom academic intervention.

Imagine a teacher who has a student who struggles with grade-level work and needs ongoing instructor support.

Next to each item jot down what you think should be the *minimum* expectation for any teacher to follow in providing that academic 'intervention' support:

Elements of effective classroom intervention	Minimum expectations
<ol> <li>Describe the student academic problem(s) clearly and specifically</li> </ol>	
<ol> <li>Find/use effective academic- intervention strategies.</li> </ol>	
<ol> <li>Use instructional adjustments/ accommodations as appropriate.</li> </ol>	
<ol> <li>Record (write down) intervention efforts.</li> </ol>	
5. Collect data on whether academic performance improves	
6. Communicate with the student.	
7. Communicate with parent(s).	