Classroom Academic Skills: Look-Up Guide

Directions. Use this guide to help you to clearly identify and define a student's academic-skill delays.

Reading: **Alphabetic Principle: Acquisition** (Hudson et al., 2012).	
Check if Critical	Sub-Skill
☐	*Letter-Sound Correspondence.* The student is able to identify the sounds corresponding to specific letters and letter combinations.
☐	*Letter-Sound Blending.* The student can blend the letter sounds that make up a word to correctly pronounce that word.
☐	*Grapheme-to-Phoneme Decoding.* The student can fluently decode all graphemes (letters and letter combinations) that correspond to a particular phoneme (basic unit of speech sound). For example, the student can correctly identify words in which *f, ph,* and *gh* represent the phoneme /f/.
☐	*Phonogram Recognition.* The student is fluent in recognizing within-word phonograms (collections of letters common across groups of words such as -ake or -ick) that help to speed word decoding.
Recommended Interventions. Intervention options for acquisition of basic skills includes direct instruction and use of differentiation and scaffolding techniques.	

Reading: **Vocabulary: Acquisition** (Hudson et al., 2012).	
Check if Critical	Sub-Skill
☐	*Sight-Word Vocabulary.* The student has a sufficient sight-word vocabulary available to boost reading fluency.
Recommended Interventions. Intervention options for acquisition of basic skills includes direct instruction and use of differentiation and scaffolding techniques.	

Reading: **Decoding: Fluency** (Hudson et al., 2012).	
Check if Critical	Sub-Skill
☐	*Efficient Use of Decoding Strategies.* The student decodes text fluently by (1) translating graphemes (letters) into their phonemes (sounds) and then blending graphemes into a word; (2) using recognition of phonograms (familiar letter combinations appearing within words) to aid in decoding; and (3) having a large collection of sight words memorized for instantaneous word recognition.
Recommended Interventions. Intervention options to build fluency in basic skills includes frequent skill-practice with feedback on accuracy and increased speed.	

Reading: **Comprehension**

Check if Critical	Sub-Skill
☐	*Reading Goal(s) & Prior Knowledge.* Before beginning an assigned reading, the student identifies reading goal(s) and taps prior knowledge of the topic to better understand the current passage.
☐	*Monitoring Comprehension.* While reading, the student monitors understanding and applies comprehension fix-up strategies as needed.
☐	*Main Idea.* In informational text, the student can summarize the main idea and key supporting details for each paragraph.
☐	*Notes/Annotation.* The student annotates the text/jots notes to capture or react to key facts, events, and/or ideas.
☐	*Story Grammar.* In fiction, the student applies a 'story grammar' (i.e., a knowledge of the conventions of character and plot development) to understand the narrative.
Recommended Interventions. To promote comprehension skills, the student is trained to use specific strategies during independent reading.	

Writing: **Production**

Check if Critical	Sub-Skill	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Writing Speed.* The student writes or types words on the page at a rate equal or nearly equal to that of classmates.	• Teach keyboarding skills • Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them
☐	*Handwriting.* The student's handwriting is legible to most readers.	• Provide training in handwriting • Teach keyboarding skills

Writing: **Mechanics & Conventions**

Check if Critical	Sub-Skill	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Grammar & Syntax.* Knowledge of grammar (rules governing use of language) and syntax (grammatical arrangement of words in sentences) is appropriate for age and/or grade placement	• Teach rules of grammar, syntax • Have students compile individualized checklists of their own common grammar/syntax mistakes; direct students to use the checklist to review work for errors before turning in
☐	*Spelling.* Spelling skills are appropriate for age and/or grade placement	• Have student collect list of own common misspellings; assign words from list to study; quiz student on list items • Have student type assignments and use spell-check

Writing: **Content**

Check if Critical	Sub-Skill	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Vocabulary.* Vocabulary in written work is age/grade appropriate	• Compile list of key vocabulary and related definitions for subject area; assign

☐		words from list to study; quiz student on definitions of list items • Introduce new vocabulary items regularly to class; set up cooperative learning activities for students to review vocabulary
☐	*Word Choice.* The student distinguishes word-choices that are appropriate for informal (colloquial, slang) written discourse vs. formal discourse	• Present examples to the class of formal vs. informal word choices • Have students check work for appropriate word choice as part of writing revision process
☐	*Audience.* The student identifies targeted audience for writing assignments and alters written content to match needs of projected audience	• Direct students to write a 'targeted audience profile' as a formal (early) step in the writing process; have students evaluate the final writing product to needs of targeted audience during the revision process
☐	*Plagiarism.* The student identifies when to credit authors for use of excerpts quoted verbatim or unique ideas taken from other written works	• Define plagiarism for students. Use plentiful examples to show students acceptable vs. unacceptable incorporation of others' words or ideas into written compositions

Writing: **Preparation**		
Check if Critical	Sub-Skill	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Topic Selection.* The student independently selects appropriate topics for writing assignments	• Have student generate list of general topics that that interest him or her; sit with the student to brainstorm ideas for writing topics that relate to the student's own areas of interest
☐	*Writing Plan.* The student creates a writing plan by breaking larger writing assignments into sub-tasks (e.g., select topic, collect source documents, take notes from source documents, write outline, etc.)	• Create generic pre-formatted work plans for writing assignments that break specific types of larger assignments (e.g., research paper) into constituent parts. Have students use these plan outlines as a starting point to making up their own detailed writing plans.
☐	*Note-Taking.* The student researches topics by writing notes that capture key ideas from source material	• Teach note-taking skills; have students review note-cards with the teacher as quality check.

Writing: **Production & Revision**		
Check if Critical	Sub-Skill	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Adequate 'Seat Time'.* The student schedules sufficient time to the act of writing to ensure a quality final product.	• Use teacher's experience and information from proficient student writers to develop estimates of minimum writing 'seat time' needed to produce quality products for 'typical' writing assignments (e.g., 5-

		paragraph opinion essay; 10-page term paper). Share with students.
		• Have students keep a writing diary to record amount of time spent in act of writing for each assignment. Require that this information be submitted along with the students' assignment. (Additional idea: Consider asking parents to monitor and record their child's writing time.)
☐	*Oral vs. Written Work.* The student's dictated and written passages are equivalent in complexity and quality.	• Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them • Permit the student to use speech-to-text software (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking) to dictate first drafts of writing assignments.
☐	*Revision Process.* The student revises the initial written draft before turning in for a grade or evaluation.	• Create a rubric containing the elements of writing that students should review during the revision process; teach this rubric to the class; link a portion of the grade on writing assignments to students' use of the revision rubric.

Mathematics (National Research Council, 2002)		
Check if Critical	Strand of Mathematical Proficiency	Recommended Interventions
☐	*Understanding:* The student comprehends "mathematical concepts, operations, and relations--knowing what mathematical symbols, diagrams, and procedures mean."	• Teach the missing mathematical concepts, operations, relations, etc.
☐	*Computing:* The student "carries out mathematical procedures, such as adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately."	• Use an explicit-instruction approach to teach the missing mathematical procedures.
☐	*Applying:* The student "is able to formulate problems mathematically and to devise strategies for solving them using concepts and procedures appropriately."	• Teach the student to look for indicators in math problems that identify the problem-type (e.g., 'change' problems, 'compare' problems). For each problem type, ensure the student can access & apply appropriate strategies for solution (Gersten et al., 2009).
☐	*Reasoning:* The student uses "logic to explain and justify a solution to a problem or to extend from something known to something less known."	• Give the student frequent opportunities (e.g., journaling, peer discussion, showing work on problem-sets) to describe the reasoning behind solving assigned math problems.

Academic Survival Skills

Check if Critical	Examples
☐	*Study Skills.* The student possesses and uses strong study skills to proactively stay caught up on class learning.
☐	*Homework Routine.* The student has an efficient routine across school and home to record, plan, complete, and turn in homework.
☐	*Time Management.* The student manages time well, including adherence to a schedule and maximizing use of available work time.
☐	*Note-Taking.* The student takes accurate, compete notes of lectures, assigned readings, and other information sources.
☐	*Organization.* The student maintains organized and easy-to-access physical and digital materials for academic work.
Recommended Interventions. To promote missing academic survival skills, the teacher can create a checklist describing the sequential steps that make up that global skill—and use that checklist to train and evaluate the student's acquisition of the skill.	

References:

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Hudson, R. F., Torgesen, J. K., Lane, H. B., & Turner, S. J. (2012). Relations among reading skills and sub-skills and text-level reading proficiency in developing readers. *Reading and Writing, 25*, 483-507.

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