The Teacher as Classroom 'First Responder': Strategies to Help the Struggling Learner at the Middle or High School

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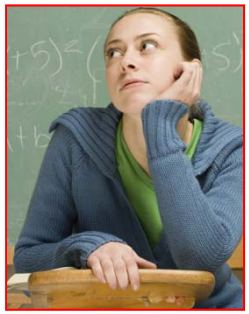
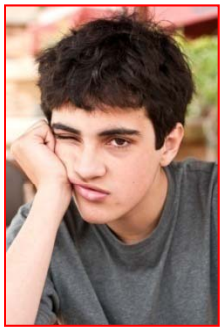
Classroom Challenges: Supporting…

- the **inattentive/impulsive** student.

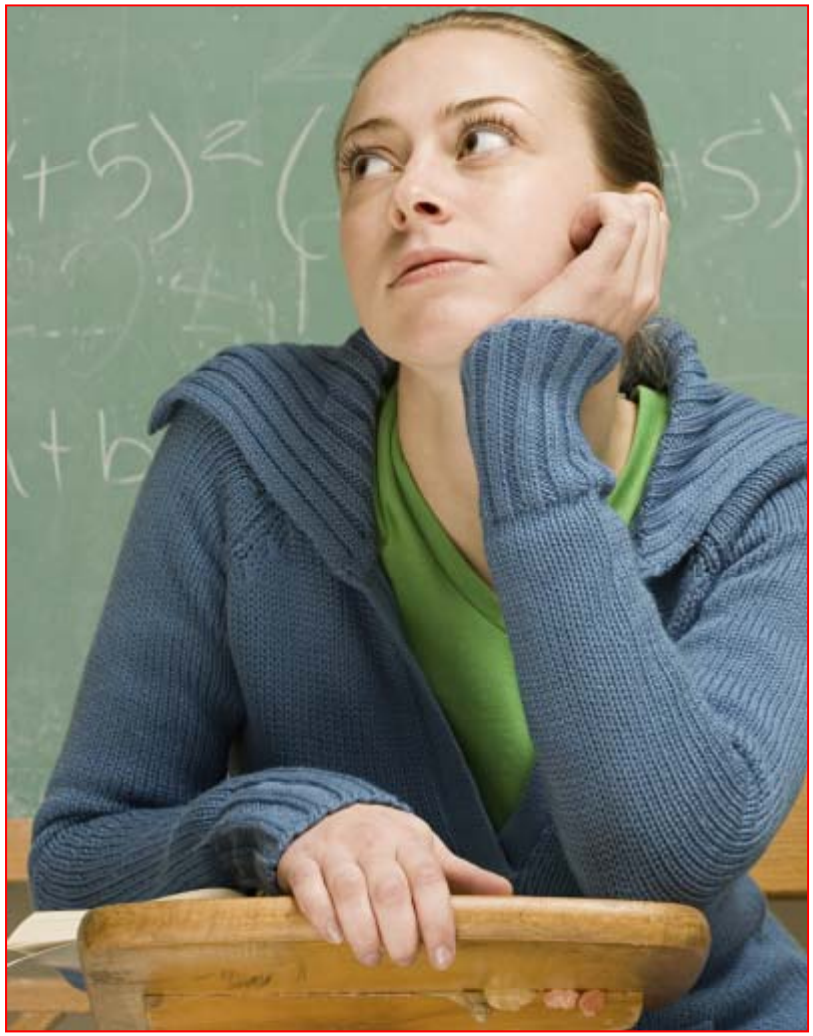


- the **non-compliant** student.



- the **anxious** student.

The Inattentive/ Impulsive Student



Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Essential Features

- The individual displays a level of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning:
- Inattention. Six or more symptoms over the past six months to a marked degree that impacts social/academic functioning:
  - Fails to give close attention to details
  - Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play
  - Seems not to pay attention when spoken to
  - Does not follow through on instructions or finish schoolwork
  - Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
  - Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort
  - Often loses things needed for tasks or activities
  - Is distracted by extraneous stimuli
  - Is often forgetful in daily activities (e.g., chores, errands)

Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Essential Features

- The individual displays a level of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning:
- Hyperactivity/Impulsivity: Six or more symptoms over the past six months to a marked degree that impacts social/academic functioning:
  - Fidgets or taps hands or feet or squirms in seat
  - Leaves seat when expected to remain seated
  - Runs around or climbs in situations when the behavior is not appropriate
  - Is unable to play or take part in a leisure activity quietly
  - Seems “on the go” “as if driven by a motor”
  - Talks incessantly
  - Blurts out an answer before a question has been fully asked
  - Interrupts others

Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Prevalence

- It is estimated that perhaps 5% of children may meet criteria for ADHD (APA, 2013).
- However, the percentage of children diagnosed with ADHD in America has grown substantially over time:
  - 2003: 7.8% ADHD
  - 2007: 9.5% ADHD
  - 2011: 11.0% ADHD

Sources: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

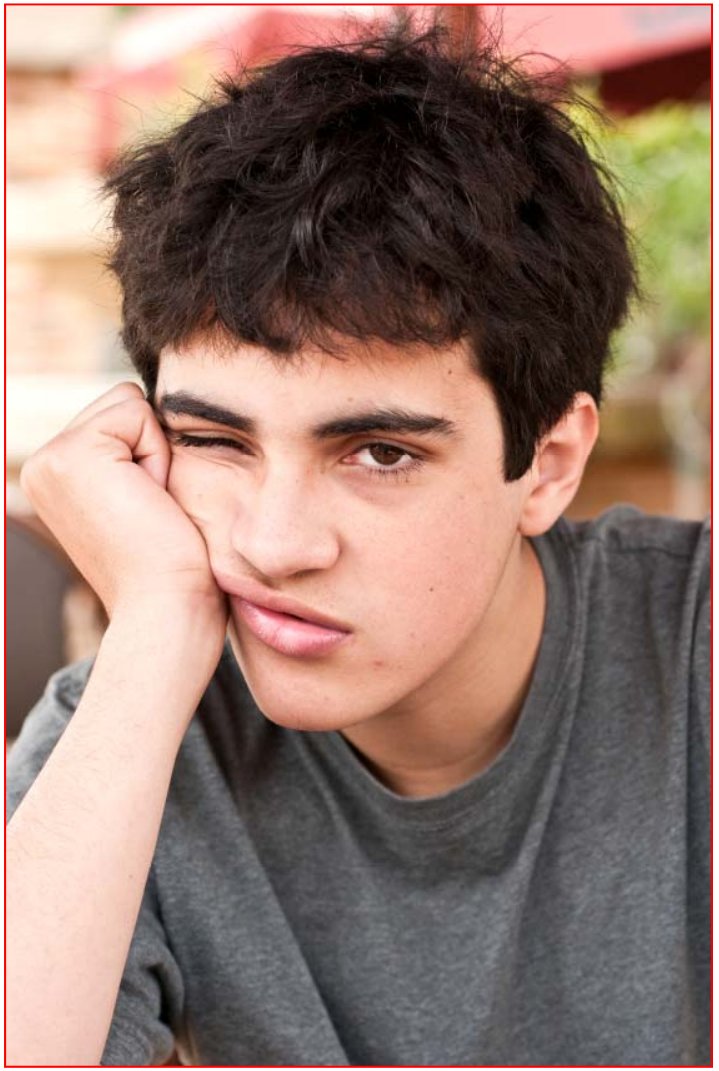
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) ADHD: Data & statistics. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/data.html

The Inattentive/Impulsive Student: Prescription

Here are 3 general strategies for working with these learners:

- ✓ Ensure that the student is taught step-by-step behavioral expectations for common routines and transitions.
- ✓ Provide cues at 'point of performance' for expected behaviors.
- ✓ Have the student monitor his or her own behavior.

The Non-Compliant Student



Oppositional Defiant Disorder: Essential Features

- *[ODD is one of the Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders.]*
- The individual shows a pattern of oppositional behavior lasting at least 6 months that includes elevated levels of at least 4 of the following:
  - Often loses temper
  - Often argues with adults
  - Often defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
  - Often purposely annoys people
  - Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
  - Is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
  - Is often angry and resentful
  - Is often spiteful or vindictive
- The individual displays these oppositional behaviors significantly more frequently than typical age-peers.

Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder: Prevalence

- "The prevalence of oppositional defiant disorder ranges from 1% to 11%, with an average prevalence estimate of around 3.3%." (APA, 2013; p. 464).

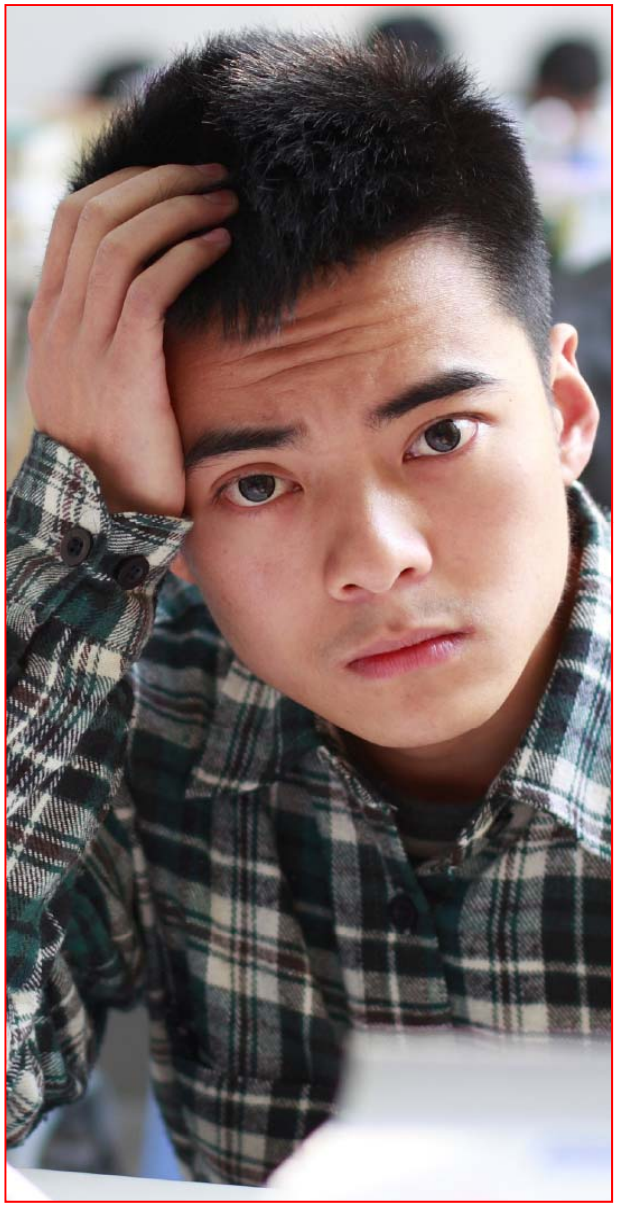
Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

The Non-Compliant Student: Prescription

Here are 4 general strategies for working with these learners:

- ✓ Ensure that the student has the skills and strategies necessary for academic success.
- ✓ Teach behavioral expectations…then hold the student accountable for following those expectations.
- ✓ Keep interactions at a minimum when the student is uncooperative.
- ✓ Work to establish a personal connection with the student.

The Anxious Student



Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Essential Features

- *[GAD is one of the Anxiety Disorders.]*
- The individual experiences excessive anxiety and worry about a variety of topics, events, or activities over a period of at least 6 months. Worry occurs on the majority of days. It is difficult for the individual to control the anxiety/worry.
- The worry is associated with at least 3 of these 6 symptoms:
  - Restlessness.
  - Becoming fatigued easily
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Muscle tension
  - Sleep disturbance
- The individual experiences 'clinically significant' distress/impairment in one or more areas of functioning (e.g., at work, in social situations, at school).
- The worry or anxiety cannot be better explained by physical causes or another psychiatric disorder.

Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

‘Normative’ Anxieties/Fears in Childhood & Adolescence

Stage/Age	Anxieties/Fears About…
Later Infancy: 6-8 months	• Strangers
Toddler: 12 months-2 years	• Separation from parents • Thunder, animals
Early Childhood: 4-5 years	• Death, dead people, ghosts
Elementary: 5-7 years	• Germs, natural disasters, specific traumatic events • School performance
Adolescence: 12-18 years	• Peer rejection

Source: Beesdo, K., Knappe, S. & Pine, D. S. (2009). Anxiety and anxiety disorders in children and adolescents: Developmental issues and implications for DSM-V. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 32(3*), 483-524. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3018839/

Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Prevalence

- The 12-month prevalence of GAD among adolescents is estimated to be 0.9% while among adults the rate is 2.9%.

Source: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

The Anxious Student: Prescription

Here are 4 general strategies for working with these learners:

- ✓ Make classroom expectations predictable.
- ✓ Offer choice opportunities as appropriate to allow the student a say in structuring his or her own learning experience.
- ✓ Teach the student how to translate global tasks into manageable sub-tasks.
- ✓ Use affirming statements that motivate the student to take risks and apply his or her best effort.

Motivator: Growth Mindset: Teachers can combat 'learned helplessness‘ by structuring classroom statements to encourage optimism and motivation.

Mindsets: Determining Limits on Potential

Research in cognitive psychology (Dweck, 2006) demonstrates that individuals' performance as learners is profoundly influenced by

- their perceptions of their intelligence and/or abilities and
- their reinforcing these perceptions through an ongoing monologue as they encounter new challenges.

The habitual ways that people have of thinking about their abilities can be thought of as '**mindsets**'. Mindsets fall into two categories: **Fixed** vs. **growth**.

Source: Dweck, C. S. (2006). Mindset: The new psychology of success. New York: Ballantine.

Beliefs About Mindsets: Fixed vs. Growth

- Fixed Mindset	+ Growth Mindset
Intelligence (general ability) is fixed. **Effort** plays a **minor role** in determining one's level of accomplishment. Thus, **setbacks** are viewed as a **lack of ability** and result in the student "giving up or withdrawing effort" (Blackwell, et al., 2015).	Intelligence and other attributes are '**malleable**'--they can increase with effort. This perspective views **struggle** as a **positive**-- "an opportunity for growth, not a sign that a student is incapable of learning." (Paunesku, et al., 2015).

The ‘Malleability’ of Intelligence

“It is important to recognize that believing intelligence to be malleable does not imply that everyone has exactly the same potential in every domain, or will learn everything with equal ease.

Rather, it means that for any given individual, intellectual ability can always be further developed.”

Source: Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. Child Development, 78(1), 246-263.

Contrasting Mindsets: Responses to Setbacks

- Fixed Mindset: The student may:	+ Growth Mindset: The student will:
• give up • withdraw effort • 'disidentify' with challenge subject: e.g., "*I don't like math much anyway.*" • be at greater risk for cheating	• view setback as an opportunity for learning • increase effort • figure out deficiencies in work or study processes and correct them

Source: Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. Child Development, 78(1), 246-263.

Mindsets: Fixed vs. Growth

Does a student's type of mindset have a significant impact on school performance?

When students are not experiencing significant learning challenges, those with **fixed** and **growth** mindsets may do **equally well**.

However, during times of difficult academic work or dramatic changes in the learning environment (e.g., middle school), g**rowth-mindset** students tend to do **significantly better** than their fixed-mindset peers.

Source: Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. Child Development, 78(1), 246-263.

Fixed-Mindset Statements: What NOT to Say

Fixed-mindset statements are those that reinforce the (untrue) idea that individuals have a fixed quantity of 'ability' that cannot expand much despite the learner's efforts. Here are statements to avoid, because they send a fixed-mindset message to students:

- *"Excellent essay. You are a **natural-born** writer!"*
- *"You need to work harder. I have seen your grades and know that you are **smart enough** to get an A in this course."*
- *"It's OK-not everyone **can be good** at math."*

To Promote a 'Growth Mindset'…Use Process-Oriented Statements

Teachers ' growth-mindset statements are varied. However, they tend to include these elements:

- **Process.** Lays out a specific process for moving forward.
- **Challenge(s).** Recognizes difficulties or struggles to be faced and frames them as opportunities to learn.
- **Confidence.** Conveys optimism that the student can and will move toward success if the learner puts in sufficient effort, follows the recommended process, and makes appropriate use of any 'help' resources.

Source: *Dweck, C. S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. Educational Leadership, 65(2), 34-39.*

Integrate 'Pro-Growth-Mindset' Statements into Classroom Discourse

In day-to-day communication with students, instructors have many opportunities use growth-mindset principles to infuse their statements with optimism, including:

- praise
- work-prompts
- encouragement
- introduction of assignments

Source: *Dweck, C. S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. Educational Leadership, 65(2), 34-39.*

Assignment

"You should plan spend at least 90 minutes on tonight's math homework.

When you start the assignment, some problems might look like they are too difficult to solve.

But if you give it your best and follow your problem-solving checklist, you should be able to answer them."

Growth Mindset: Teacher Examples
Assignment

The teacher can give assignments a growth-mindset spin--describing challenge(s), appraising the effort required, reminding what strategies or steps to use, and stating confidently that following the process will lead to success.

EXAMPLE:

"You should plan to spend at least 90 minutes on tonight's math homework.	Effort Needed
When you start the assignment, some problems might look like they are too difficult to solve.	Challenge
But if you give it your best and follow your problem-solving checklist,	Process & Effort
you should be able to answer them."	Confidence

To Promote a 'Growth Mindset'…Use Process-Oriented Statements

Teachers ' growth-mindset statements are as varied as the students and situations they address. However, they tend to include these elements:

- **Process.** Lays out a specific process for moving forward.
- **Challenge(s).** Recognizes difficulties or struggles to be faced and frames them as opportunities to learn.
- **Confidence.** Conveys optimism that the student can and will move toward success if the learner puts in sufficient effort, follows the recommended process, and makes appropriate use of any 'help' resources.

Source: Dweck, C. S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. Educational Leadership, 65(2), 34-39.

Growth-Mindset Statement: A Motivational Push

Research studies have shown that even students with an ingrained ‘fixed-mindset’ view of academics can gain a brief motivation ‘push’ when the teacher reframes a past, present, or future learning activity in ‘growth mindset’ terms.

Each classroom, then, becomes its own motivational micro-climate.

And with the teacher’s continued expression of an optimistic, growth-mindset view, students are more likely to apply more effort, attain greater success, and become self-directed learners.

Source: Dweck, C. S. (2006). Mindset: The new psychology of success. New York: Ballantine.

Promoting Independent Academic Skills: Students gain motivation when they have the independent skills required to complete academic work.

“*The secret of getting ahead is getting started.*”

-Mark Twain

Self-Regulation: Motivation…With a Plan

"*Self-regulation of learning* involves learners setting goals, selecting appropriate learning strategies, maintaining motivation, engaging in self-monitoring, and evaluating their own academic progress." p. 451

Source: Bembenutty, H. (2011). Meaningful and maladaptive homework practices: The role of self-efficacy and self-regulation. Journal of Advanced Academics, 22, 448-473.

How to…Promote: Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension: Self-Management Strategies

- RETAIN TEXT INFORMATION WITH PARAPHRASING (RAP). The student is trained to use a 3-step cognitive strategy when reading each paragraph of an informational-text passage: (1) READ the paragraph; (2) ASK oneself what the main idea of the paragraph is and what two key details support that main idea; (3) PARAPHRASE the main idea and two supporting details into one's own words. This 3-step strategy is easily memorized using the acronym RAP (read-ask-paraphrase). OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED: Create an organizer sheet with spaces for the student to record main idea and supporting details of multiple paragraphs—to be used with the RAP strategy-to be used as an organizer and verifiable work product.

Source: Hagaman, J. L., Casey, K. J., & Reid, R. (2010). The effects of the paraphrasing strategy on the reading comprehension of young students. Remedial and Special Education, 33, 110-123.

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READ-ASK-PARAPHRASE (RAP) Sheet: Reading Comprehension: Cognitive Strategy (Available on Conference Web Page)

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Read-Ask-Paraphrase (RAP) Sheet

Name: Date: Title/Pages of Reading:

Student Directions: For *each paragraph* from your assigned reading, (1) READ the paragraph; (2) ASK yourself what the main idea of the paragraph is and what two key details support that main idea; (3) PARAPHRASE the main idea and two supporting details in your own words and write them in the blank provided.

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

Reading Comprehension: Self-Management Strategies

- CREATE A PLAN FOR ASSIGNED READINGS (ART). A means to develop self-monitoring skills in comprehension is to teach students a cognitive strategy : ART: Ask-Read-Tell (McCallum et al., 2010). For challenging passages, the student is trained to apply a 3-step ART sequence, which maps to the pre-reading/reading/post-reading timeline:

1. ASK: Before reading the text, the student looks over the title of the passage, asks what the topic is likely to be, considers what he or she already knows about that topic, and generates 2 questions that the student hopes to answer through reading.
2. READ: While reading, the student stops after each paragraph to query whether he or she has adequately understood that section of the passage and, if necessary, applies comprehension fix-up skills.
3. TELL: After reading, the student attempts to answer the 2 questions posed earlier based on the content just read.

Source: McCallum, R. S., Krohn, K. R., Skinner, C. H., Hilton-Prillhart, A., Hopkins, M. Waller, S., & Polite, F. (2010). Improving reading comprehension of at-risk high-school students: The art of reading program. Psychology in the Schools, 48(1), 78-86.

Respor

ASK-READ-TELL (ART): Student Worksheet (McCallum et al., 2010)

Name: Passage/Page Title: Date:

Step 2: Goal While Reading: I READ the passage carefully for full understanding:

While reading, I stop after each paragraph to ask, "Did I **understand** what I just read?"

If I **do** understand the paragraph, I mark it with a plus sign (+) and continue reading.
If I **do not** understand the paragraph, I mark it with a minus (-) sign and:
- reread the paragraph;
- slow my reading;
- focus my *full* attention on what I am reading;
- underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading (context).

Conference Web Page)

understand what I just read?"
If I do understand the paragraph, I mark it with a plus sign (+) and continue reading.
If I do not understand the paragraph, I mark it with a minus (-) sign and:
- reread the paragraph;
- slow my reading;
- focus my *full* attention on what I am reading;
- underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading (context).

Step 3: Goal After Reading: I TELL what I learned from the passage:

Based on my reading, here are answers to my TWO questions from Step 1:

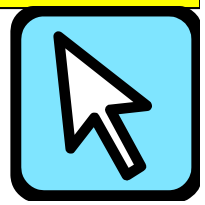
1.

2.

When I meet with my peer partner, we TELL each other what we learned from the passage, sharing our questions and answers. Then we talk about any other interesting information from the reading.

How To…Promote Academic Self-Management: Work Planning Skills

TUTORIAL: How To…Help the Student Develop Work-Planning Skills: Plan, Evaluate, Adjust



The student is trained to follow a plan>work>self-evaluate>adjust sequence in work-planning:

- **Plan.** The student creates a work plan: inventorying a collection of related tasks to be done, setting specific outcome goals that signify success on each task, allocating time sufficient to carry out each task.
- **Work.** The student completes the work.
- **Self-Evaluate.** The student compares actual work performance to the outcome goals to evaluate success.
- **Adjust.** The student determines what to do differently in the future to improve performance and outcomes.

Source: Martin, J. E., Mithaug, D. E., Cox, P., Peterson, L. Y., Van Dycke, J. L., & Cash, M.E. (2003). Increasing self-determination: Teaching students to plan, work, evaluate, and adjust. *Exceptional Children, 69*, 431-447.

Independent Work: Student Planner

Student: Russell Smith **Teacher/Staff Member:** Mrs. Lampe **Date:** 11 /04/15

		Planning	Planning	Planning	Self-Evaluation	Self-Evaluation
	Date: __/__/__	**Task:** Describe the assignment or task to be completed.	**Time Allocated:** E.g., "20 minutes"; "11:20 to 11:40"	**Performance Goal:** Your goal for the amount, accuracy, and/or quality of work to be completed.	**Actual Performance:** Amount, accuracy, and/or quality of the work *actually completed.*	**Goal Met?:** Did you achieve the goal within the time allocated?
1	__/__/__	Select Topic				☐ YES ☐ NO
2	11 10 15	Locate Sources	2 hours	Find at least 3 reputable sources	Found 3 sources	☐ YES ☒ NO
3	__/__/__	Create Notes from Sources				☐ YES ☐ NO
4	__/__/__	Organize Notes into Paper Outline				☐ YES ☐ NO

Adjustment: Find any 'NO' responses in the **Goal Met?** column. In the space below, write the number of that goal and your plan to improve on that goal next time.

Number of Goal Not Met & Action Plan to Fix: 2 Schedule at least 3 hours to find source material on next assignment

Number of Goal Not Met & Action Plan to Fix: _____ _____

Number of Goal Not Met & Action Plan to Fix: _____ _____

Source: Martin, J. E., Mithaug, D. E., Cox, P., Peterson, L. Y., Van Dycke, J. L., & Cash, M.E. (2003). Increasing self-determination: Teaching students to plan, work, evaluate, and adjust. *Exceptional Children, 69*, 431-447.

Reducing Complexity in the Classroom…Checklists

Antecedents: Strategies That ENCOURAGE Goal Behaviors

Checklist for Academic Skills: Make the Complicated Simple (Alter, Wyrick, Brown, & Lingo, 2008). When the student must apply several steps to complete a complex academic task, the teacher can give the student a checklist detailing each step and instructions for completing it.

Before the activity, the student is prompted to preview the checklist; after the activity, the student uses the checklist to review the work.

Behavioral Checklist: Academic Example: Cognitive Strategy

Math Word Problem: Problem-Solving Checklist
WHEN COMPLETING A MATH WORD PROBLEM, THE STUDENT FOLLOWS THESE STEPS:
1. READING THE PROBLEM. The student reads the problem carefully, noting and attempting to clear up any areas of uncertainly or confusion (e.g., unknown vocabulary terms).
2. PARAPHRASING THE PROBLEM. The student restates the problem in his or her own words.
3. DRAWING THE PROBLEM. The student creates a drawing of the problem, creating a visual representation of the word problem.
4. CREATING A PLAN. The student decides on the best way to solve the problem and develops a plan to do so.
5. PREDICTING THE ANSWER. The student estimates or predicts what the answer to the problem will be. The student may compute a quick approximation of the answer, using rounding or other shortcuts.
6. COMPUTING THE ANSWER. The student follows the plan developed earlier to compute the answer to the problem.
7. CHECKING THE ANSWER. The student methodically checks the calculations for each step of the problem. The student also compares the actual answer to the estimated answer calculated in a previous step to ensure that there is general agreement between the two values.

SOURCE: Montague, M. (1992). The effects of cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction on the mathematical problem solving of middle school students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25*, 230-248.

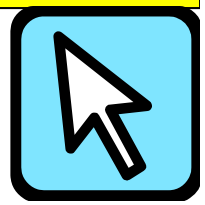
Antecedents: Strategies That ENCOURAGE Goal Behaviors

Checklist for Challenging Situations: Script Transition Times (McCoy, Mathur, & Czoka, 2010). Students often struggle with the complexity of managing multi-step routines such as transitioning between classroom activities or moving to different locations within the school.

Teachers can assist by making up step-by-step checklists that 'walk' the student incrementally through the routine. Instructors can use these checklists as guides to teach and measure student success in navigating transitions. Just as important, the student can use the checklist as a prompt and guide to follow the expected steps.

ADHD
ODD
GAD

Behavioral Checklist: General Behavior
Example: Routine/Transition



Start-of-Class Checklist
❑ AT THE START OF CLASS, THE STUDENT:
❑ has a sharpened pencil.
❑ has paper for taking notes.
❑ has homework ready to turn in.
❑ has put her cell phone away in her backpack.
❑ has cleared her desk of unneeded materials.
❑ is sitting quietly.
❑ is working on the assigned start-of-class activity.

Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker. This online tool allows teachers to define student behavior during classroom routines and transitions – a great way to clearly define behavioral expectations.

Motivating through Personal Connection. Students can gain motivation when they feel they are recognized and valued by their teacher.

Motivating Through Personal Connection

Try These Ideas to Improve the Student-Teacher Relationship:

- *Maintaining a High Rate of Positive Interactions.* Teachers promote a positive relationship with any student by maintaining a ratio of at least **three** positive teacher-student interactions (e.g., greeting, positive conversation, high-five) for every negative (disciplinary) interaction (e.g., reprimand) (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).

Motivating Through Personal Connection

Try These Ideas to Improve the Student-Teacher Relationship:

- *Greeting Students at the Classroom Door.* A personalized greeting at the start of a class period can boost class levels of academic engagement (Allday & Pakurar, 2007) and promote personal connections with students.

  The teacher spends a few seconds greeting each student by name at the classroom door at the beginning of class.

Motivating Through Personal Connection

Try These Ideas to Improve the Student-Teacher Relationship:

- *Two by Ten: Positively Structuring Teacher-Student Interactions* (Mendler, 2000). The teacher selects a student with whom that instructor wants to build a more positive relationship. The instructor makes a commitment to spend 2 minutes per day for ten consecutive days engaging the student in a positive conversation about topics of interest to that student. NOTE: During those two-minute daily conversations, the teacher maintains a positive tone and avoids talking about the student's problem behaviors or poor academic performance.