



12 Ways to Respond to Students Needs While Making Progress Together

When students in your classroom are not progressing at the same rate or better as their peers, supplement their learning with researched based strategies that increase achievement. These are also Tier Two interventions for Response to Intervention.

Use classroom adaptations that do not reduce content, yet make the curriculum more easily accessible to all learners:

1. Check the readability level of materials and adjust where appropriate.
2. Ask students to repeat instructions to ensure understanding.
3. Use books on tape to allow students to keep up with the reading even if they are slow readers.
4. Provide an outline or a copy of notes and teach students how to make notes memorable rather than taking class time to engage students in the mechanical act of copying.
5. Encourage the use of word-processing software with auditory feedback so students can use higher level cognitive skills without being hindered by writing difficulties.
6. Use proofing aids: proofreader buddy, spell checker, grammar checker.
7. Provide spacing guides: graph paper, vertical lines, darkened horizontal lines to assist students with visual organization.

Avoid Confusing Directions:

8. Look for confusing directions in handouts, tests, and especially project descriptions; even if you provide clarification in class, students might miss it and be confused later.
9. When possible, break instructions down into bullet points. Provide examples whenever possible.

Patterns Are the Keys to Intelligence

10. Students will retain information better when patterns are used to connect and organize what is being learned. Patterns might include colored graphic organizers, grouping and classification charts, sequence charts (presenting timelines, story lines, etc.), storytelling instead of lecturing, and having students point out cause and effect, problem and solution, and similarities and differences. Patterns support long-term memory.

Use Audio Cassette Tapes for Feedback

11. Students hand in a blank cassette tape with their subassignments or drafts. While reviewing the assignment, the teacher records comments about the piece (grammar, content, etc.) on the tape. Teacher hands back the assignment with the tape so the student can listen to the "audio coaching." Audio coaching gives students verbal feedback at different stages of their assignments, enabling them to improve over time.

Have Students Identify Similarities and Differences

12. Engage students in classification, creating metaphors or analogies, or categorizing information. This encourages students to connect to previous learning & feeds long term memory.

About the Author



Susan Fitzell is a nationally recognized speaker and author of several educational resource books. She has over two decades of experience with differentiated instruction, teaching youth with special needs, students with behavioral and anger management issues, and students who experience bullying. Susan's company, AIMHI Educational Programs, focuses on building caring school communities. <http://aimhieducational.com/>