

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

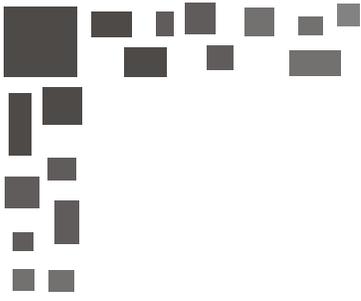
Paul

**Sneak
Peek**

320 pages

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Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

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Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

Best Practice in Standards-Based Classrooms

Differentiation Non-Negotiables

Collegial Collaboration

Data-Driven Decisions

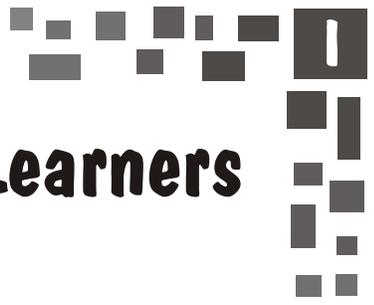
A variation of the next four pages appears in each of the books I have written because they communicate the foundation of our work in promoting high levels of learning for all students. Embedded in these pages are the strongly held beliefs and practices in which we must engage if we truly want to meet the needs of diverse learners. The five key points are:

- Standards guide all classroom decisions.
- The focus is always on student learning.
- Expectations for learning are the same for all students, even those who have traditionally performed at low levels.
- The final determination of the effectiveness of instructional practices is whether or not they result in higher levels of achievement for students.
- Assessment results are used to inform the teacher about the effectiveness of curricular and instructional decisions.

Following an elaboration on those five key points is a brief discussion of some component parts necessary to act on those points. This includes a look at the Standards-Based Education (SBE) Planning Process, a focus on essential understandings, big ideas, and key concepts as well as detailed information on how to task analyze the work we ask students to do.

After a brief review of the key elements of standards-based teaching and learning, the focus shifts to the role that differentiation plays in helping students achieve at the highest possible levels. Also included in this section is a brief history of **IDEA** and **Response to Intervention (RtI)**.

This chapter closes with an investigation of the ways we use data to inform our instructional practices and to frame our collegial interactions.



Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

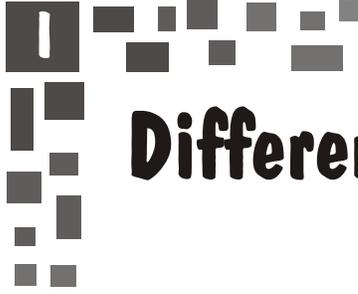
Response to Intervention (RtI)

Response to Intervention (RtI) means “How are my students responding to the interventions/instructional strategies I implement?” Debby Mossburg, ASK Group Associate, helped clarify the intent of the law by explaining that **RtI** is a general education mandate embedded in **IDEA**, a special education law. Districts and states using the **RtI** approach provide intensive general education support for student learning prior to students exhibiting learning deficits that might lead to placement in a special education program; they expect that 80-85% of their students can be successful in the general education classroom. This means that classroom teachers need to continue to expand and refine their repertoires of instructional strategies, become more purposeful in the selection of strategies, and build expertise in using appropriate data to make instructional decisions.

It is a cause for celebration that we are now tasked with asking ourselves what is working and what is not working with given students and then planning and implementing interventions (changes) in instructional practice without waiting for a label to be placed on the child or for an outside “expert” to tell us what we should be doing. If we use our collective will and expertise in this way, we should be able to educate almost all students in general education classes and still ensure that the 5% who need special education services receive the intensive support they need.

Jon Saphier, author and founder of Research for Better Teaching, clarified my thinking about selecting interventions long before the term was used the way we are now using it. He taught me that the more closely we can identify the cause of a behavior, the better we can select an intervention. A review of multiple dictionary definitions did not yield any examples of the use of “intervention” in a classroom setting but future dictionaries no doubt will include the construct that there are classroom interventions we can use to eliminate or minimize learning problems.

See **Best on the Web** on page 2 for web-based resources on **RtI**.



Differentiation Non-Negotiables

We Must

- Be knowledgeable about and skillful with the **content** to be taught.
- Acknowledge, understand, respect, and respond to the **differences** in, and **needs** of, the learners to be taught.
- Hold and select purposefully from a deep and broad **repertoire of instructional strategies**.
- Use **multiple sources of data** to inform decisions about instruction.
- Realize that differentiation is not a set of strategies but is instead a **way of thinking** about the teaching and learning process.
- **Not differentiate who will learn what but rather, how we will teach** so that all students have access to, and support and guidance in, mastering the district and/or state curriculum.

Actions to Take

- Design learning experiences based on a task analysis that includes an analysis of the skills and knowledge embedded in the task plus an analysis of student readiness, background knowledge levels, interests, and information processing styles.
- Provide sources of information at various reading levels, in different languages, and in varying formats to match the needs of learners.
- Provide appropriate scaffolding and extensions.
- Provide students precise and public criteria and guidelines prior to the beginning of the learning experience or assessment; include models and exemplars with the guidelines.
- Ensure that grouping is flexible so that students are working and learning with a variety of classmates.
- Orchestrate the learning environment so that the student is given both choice and responsibility around learning.
- Collaborate with colleagues and parents.
- Ask ourselves:
 - What will we do if some students do not learn?
 - What will we do if some students already know what we want them to learn?



Who Are Our Learners?

Our Diverse Learners
Gifted and Talented or Advanced
At Risk (At Promise)
Resistant and Reluctant
Struggling
Culturally Diverse
English Language Learners
Students with Learning Disabilities
Students Diagnosed with ADHD
Students on the Autism Spectrum
Students with Other Exceptionalities

This chapter provides an overview of the wide range of student similarities and differences represented in our schools. Some of our students have traveled abroad, some have lived abroad, and others were born abroad. Some have not yet traveled beyond state borders or city limits. Some were born into affluent families and others into families with far fewer financial means. Some speak English with everyone they know and others speak two or more languages on a daily basis and English may or may not be their first language. In both groups there are some who cannot read or write proficiently in any language while others read well beyond grade level not only in English but other languages as well. Some of our students are born with special needs and all are born with interesting and possibly challenging quirks. Certainly all process information and learn in different ways.

In reality, our students are more alike than they are different. William Glasser was right on the mark when he wrote that beyond survival needs, our basic needs are to belong, to gain power, to be free, and to have fun. If we pay attention to those needs we are off to a good start with most of our students. Unfortunately, some of our students come to the classroom without their basic needs for safety and security being met. For those students, the focus is on survival. The challenge for us is to know our children well and to accept them as they are with respect.

It is essential for us to believe in our capacity to teach the children who enter the schoolhouse doors, to believe in their capacity to learn given the right conditions, and to act on those beliefs each and every day.

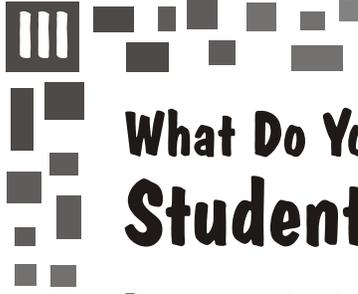


High School Learning Preferences Survey

Check the boxes in the survey that best describe your learning preferences.

- I am curious about how things work and like to investigate new things.
- I can react quickly if there is an emergency situation.
- I do well in math activities.
- I like word-based humor and puns.
- I prefer individual sports and games, including swimming, fitness machines and bowling.
- I like to study about a subject or topic completely, knowing all of the details.
- I prefer knowing the routine of my day.
- I enjoy animals and animal care.
- I like participating in community service and volunteering.
- I like to do artistic work.
- I like to investigate new places or activities.
- I prefer to make decisions based on a set of rules.
- I prefer team sports and games, including soccer, baseball, or basketball.
- I prefer days that are not routine and are full of unexpected events.
- I prefer to make decisions based only on my own experiences.
- I enjoy listening or singing to music.
- I enjoy dancing and movement activities.
- I like most computer activities.
- I like being in places where there are lots of people and excitement.
- I like to perform in front of others.

High School Learning Preferences Survey template is available online.
Beth Taylor, Newburyport Public Schools, MA



What Do You Do When...

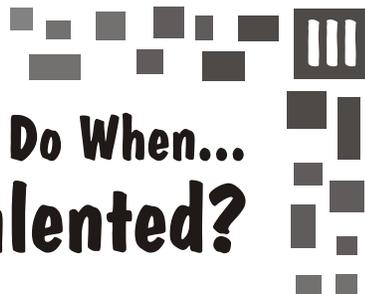
Students Do Not Demonstrate Mastery?

It is important to remember that the emphasis should be on learning and not just grading. When students have been unsuccessful in demonstrating their mastery of content it is vital that we take the time to analyze the assessment results and to determine the next steps. We should routinely make data-driven decisions by asking ourselves:

- Which students need additional support?
- Which students require some tutoring, re-teaching, or one-on-one assistance?
- Which students need an additional opportunity to reach mastery on the current content?

After the Assessment

- Allow students to re-take assessments to correct errors or mistakes. Students often miss questions because they read them too quickly or make careless errors.
- Make it a regular practice to give students multiple opportunities on assessments to reach mastery level learning (e.g., 80% or above).
- Break down the skills or content on the assessment to determine where misunderstanding occurred after an assessment and use the data to provide follow-up support.
- Change roles. Ask the student to teach the content to you (in his or her own words) to determine where the breakdown in comprehension occurred.
- Make a copy of the student's test. Have the student make corrections in a different color (for emphasis). Review the student's work and give the student credit for the corrected work.
- Return the assessment to the student. Have the student re-write missed questions in his or her own words, then answer the questions, and resubmit the test for credit.
- Complete an error analysis after the students finish an assessment to ensure that questions were clearly stated.
- Re-teach the incorrect or misunderstood content to students in one-on-one sessions and allow re-testing.
- Reflect on the unit just completed in order to determine what worked well and what may need revision in instructional delivery in upcoming unit(s).
- Have students write out their improvement plans in preparation for future units for both in-class behaviors as well as ways to improve study habits. (Written plans are more likely to be followed than simply "thinking" about how to improve.)
- Build on mistakes or answers that are partially correct instead of emphasizing what the student(s) did wrong.



What Do You Do When... Learners Are Gifted and Talented?

Students who are gifted and talented or students who already know what they are supposed to learn could provide a real challenge for classroom teachers. There is a natural tendency to give them more work to do which they, quite correctly, see as patently unfair. There are many ways to plan learning experiences for these learners, ensure that their school experiences are rich and engaging, and still have time to have a life. The reality is that many times they are more than able to help you figure out what they might do next. (N.B. This grandmother/author is delighted to know that her gifted grandchildren know far more about Panama, Fantasy Football, rock climbing, Peru, crafting, computers, and our national park system than she does.) As you work with these students to plan their learning experiences, consider the following suggestions.

- Use task analysis and pre-assessment to determine mastery of the regular curriculum.
- Based on the indicated mastery, compact the curriculum and design learning experiences that allow these students to explore the content in depth or engage in study of related content of interest to them. See page 152.
- Use flexible grouping so that they are frequently allowed to work together.
- Base and teach students to base their study on essential understandings, big ideas, and key concepts, and then develop essential questions to investigate.
- Use an inductive rather than deductive approach. See Bruner's Concept Attainment Model on page 145 and Taba's Inductive Thinking Model on page 173.
- Use analogies and teach students to use analogies and metaphorical thinking. See pages 132-133.
- Set up and help students set up situations where they can explore information and ideas from multiple perspectives, investigate alternative ways of completing tasks, and solve problems.
- Do not require gifted/accelerated students to do more work; ask them to do different work that keeps them engaged and moving forward in their learning.
- Structure the learning environment so that students are required to use multiple kinds of thinking and analyze their thinking as to its effectiveness and transferability to other situations.
- Purposefully set up situations where learners are challenged and need to develop skills at working through challenges without undue frustration.
- Set up opportunities for the use of research skills used by professionals, both traditional and 21st century.
- Focus their work on real-world applications.
- Eliminate or at least reduce the amount of direct instruction, lecture, worksheets, drill, and practice.
- Create opportunities for students to present their learning and products to real audiences.



What Do You Do When... Learners Are Struggling?

All learners have unique learning profiles, but some learners have greater needs than others. Our goal is to have as many students as possible participate in regular classroom instruction. The **Response to Intervention (RtI)** model is a strength-based rather than a deficit-based model that requires that we try multiple interventions to help students be successful in a general education setting. One important tenet of this model is that when students are provided appropriate scaffolding they should be able to achieve in our classrooms; only a few should need special education placement.

When we are committed to educating all students in the least restrictive environment, we have to identify the ways in which the learning problem is manifesting itself and then have a repertoire of strategies to consider in planning our interventions and teaching approach with that student. The list below provides an extensive array of interventions to consider.

If Reading Is an Issue

- Use paired reading or **Think-Pair-Share** to allow students who have difficulty decoding words the opportunity to work with a partner. See page 202.
- Provide a variety of books at different reading levels for students to select and read independently.
- Use books on tape, when available, or engage parent volunteers to read with students.
- Provide books at the student's instructional level with pictures and/or diagrams to aid in comprehension of the text.
- Teach students to use supports built into most textbooks:
 - Headings, sub-headings, and captions
 - Increased font size, bolded text, and italicized words
 - Pictures, maps, charts, graphs, and other visuals
- Use peer tutoring.
- Ask students to quietly read aloud.
- Teach self-questioning.
- Paraphrase and summarize key points and have students do the same.
- Use and teach students to use graphic organizers.
- Sequence key points as a reading guide for students.
- Identify main ideas, especially if they are not stated in the first sentence of the paragraph.
- Identify 5 Ws: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Encourage highlighting of text passages, key words, or concepts. Use inexpensive transparencies to lay over the page so text is not permanently marked up.



What Do You Do When... Your Students Are English Language Learners?

General Guidelines for Instructional Decisions

To determine the best approaches to use with an individual student consider:

- The student's background knowledge and life experiences
- The student's previous educational experiences
- The level of student's receptive (listening and reading) and expressive language (speaking and writing) in his first language
- The language(s) used in the home
- The command of the language used at home by the student's family members
- The student's information processing style or preference
- The student's strongest modalities
- The role of the family in the education of this student
- Cultural norms that might impact student behavior in the classroom

Speech

- Ask all students to speak in complete sentences. Such an expectation provides frequent and positive models of correct speech, reinforces correct grammar, and promotes meaning-making because sentences represent complete thoughts.
- Use active rather than passive voice.
- Speak slowly.
- Enunciate clearly.
- Use wait time. Wait time gives students time to translate an oral question or comment or written word into their first language, formulate a response in their first language, and then translate that response into English.
- Use nonverbal language such as facial expressions, gestures, and dramatization.
- Read students' body language.
- Do not interrupt or correct grammar errors when ELLs are speaking. Interrupting is rude in almost all situations. When one of the speakers is using a second language, it not only breaks the speaker's chain of thought, it slows down translation and English word retrieval. Most importantly, it reduces the willingness of the speaker to continue or try again. Do model the correct use in your response.

Use Sheltered Language

- Simplify the language of instruction, not the concept being taught.
- Shelter (control or guard) academic vocabulary embedded in the directions or explanations. Be mindful that academic use of words may not match how they are used in social settings.

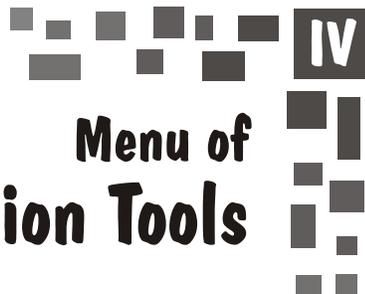
Menu of Scaffolding and Extension Tools

Just as scaffolding is used to support buildings during the construction process, educational scaffolding provides support systems for students during the learning process. And, just as extension ladders allow us to reach higher levels than we might if we stood on the ground, educational extensions promote new heights (depths) and breadths of learning. Each of the research-based scaffolding and extension tools discussed in this chapter can be used with all students or used to differentiate instruction.

In addition to the scaffolding and extension possibilities explored in this chapter, there are more suggestions throughout the text especially in **Chapter III: What Do You Do When...?** and **Chapter V: Literacy Across the Curriculum**.

When a template is available online, it is noted at the bottom of the page. Scaffolding and extension tools discussed in this chapter include:

- Analogies, Metaphors, and Synectics (Gordon)
- Anchoring Activities
- Assistive Technology
- Bookmarks and Highlighting
- Charts, Tables, and Maps: See Visuals.
- Concept Attainment Model (Bruner)
- Cooperative Learning
- Cubing and Think Dots
- Curriculum Compacting (Renzulli and Smith)
- Cyber Guides: See technology integration.
- Digital Recordings
- Directions, Giving
- Effort and Error Analysis with Goal Setting: See Student Self-Assessment.
- Essential Understandings/Generalizations, Big Ideas and Key Concepts: See **Chapter I: Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century**.
- Feedback, Growth-Producing
- Foldables
- Formative Assessment
- Framing the Learning
- Graphic Organizers
- Grouping Practices
- Independent Study
- Inductive Thinking Model (Taba)
- Inquiry Model (Suchman)
- Jigsaw Model of Cooperative Learning (Aronson)
- Learning Buddies



Menu of Scaffolding and Extension Tools

- Learning Centers
- Learning Mats
- Manipulatives
- Mental Imagery/Visualization
- Mini-Lessons/Focus Groups
- Mnemonics
- Models of Process and Product
- Movement and Music
- Note-Taking Formats
- Pictures and Pictographs
- Practice and Rehearsals
- Prior Knowledge
- Props/Realia: See Real-World Connections.
- Questioning
- Reading Materials, Variety of: See Real-World Connections.
- Real-World Connections
- Reciprocal Teaching: See **Chapter V: Literacy Across the Curriculum.**
- Rigor and Relevance Framework® (Daggett): See **Chapter III: What Do You Do When...?**
- Role-Playing and Simulations
- Sheltered Language
- Social Skills Training
- Strategy Instruction
- Student Choice
- Student Self-Assessment
- Task Cards: See giving directions.
- Technology Integration
- Think Alouds
- Tiered Assignments
- Time Management and Organization
- Time Templates
- Tip Sheets: See Learning Mats.
- Visuals
- Vocabulary Development: See **Chapter V: Literacy Across the Curriculum.**
- WebQuests (Dodge): See Technology Integration.
- Word Walls
- Writing Support: See **Chapter V: Literacy Across the Curriculum.**



Assistive Technology

Did You Know...

that PCs and Macs have read-aloud tools as standard components? This feature on the PC is in English and on the Mac is available in both English and Spanish. Additional tools accessible on a PC in the Accessories>Accessibility program option and on a Mac in the Apple System Preferences folder are magnifiers, on-screen keyboards, sticky keys, and slow or filter keys to eliminate extra keystrokes. Additionally the Mac provides speech recognition of commands.

According to the ***Family Guide to Assistive Technology***, assistive technology includes all resources that:

- Enable an individual to perform functions that can be achieved by no other means
- Enable an individual to approximate normal fluency, rate, or standards - a level of accomplishment which could not be achieved by any other means
- Provide access for participation in programs or activities which otherwise would be closed to the individual
- Increase endurance or ability to persevere and complete tasks that otherwise are too laborious to be attempted on a routine basis
- Enable an individual to concentrate on learning or employment tasks, rather than mechanical tasks
- Provide greater access to information
- Support normal social interactions with peers and adults
- Support participation in the least restrictive educational environment

While many of the assistive technology tools are ones we would expect to be listed as technology tools, special educators include tools that they describe as low-tech technology.

Low-Tech Assistive Technology

The tools listed below provide a sampling of assistive technology that is easily useable in general education classrooms and require little, if any, specialized training. The use of these tools should not be limited to students with special needs as there are many students who might benefit from using them.

- Pencil Grips: These can help students grip pencils and pens correctly, relieve hand and finger fatigue, and provide fine motor support.
- Paper Options
 - Raised line paper
 - Grid paper
 - Colored paper

Independent Study

Compacting the curriculum for gifted, talented, and advanced learners not only minimizes student boredom and disengagement, it provides opportunities for students to engage in enriched learning either individually or in small groups. While the term independent study is most often used when discussing instructional programs for advanced learners, such study should be our goal for all of our students. This discussion of independent study is focused on how it can be a part of the instructional program in a general education classroom.

Giving students an independent task to do or letting them choose a task to do (watch a DVD clip, read a book, do Internet research and answer questions on a worksheet or summarize what they saw, read, or found) does not fit within the parameters of independent study. In fact, without purpose and thoughtful planning, it is simply bad practice. When planning for independent study there are three levels at which students might work:

- Guided
- Independent
- Self-initiated

According to Tomlinson, an independent study, be it guided, independent, or self-initiated, requires that students:

- Identify a question or a problem to investigate
- Put together a plan for that investigation
- Clearly articulate criteria for evaluating the process and the resulting product
- Complete the investigation
- Plan and implement a presentation of the product/results of the investigation

Needless to say, for independent study to function smoothly and productively, the teacher must know the students well and have a keen sense of their readiness to do each of the above tasks. Additionally, students must be able to or be taught how to self-assess, task analyze, and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts, as well as build the capacity to self-adjust. Even the most advanced students may need scaffolding and structure as they move toward more independence.

For information useful in coaching students in the selection, design, and implementation of independent studies:

- See **Rigor and Relevance Framework** on page 95.
- See **Suchman's Inquiry Model** on page 174.
- See **RAFTs** on pages 205.
- Access the Study Guide for Problem-Based Learning at www.studygs.net/pbl.htm.
- Access the study guides for time management, problem solving/decision making, cooperative learning and more: www.studygs.net/index.htm.

Prior Knowledge

According to the landmark 1984 *Handbook on Reading Research*, accessing prior knowledge has more to do with student achievement than does native ability as we currently measure it. Having students access and use prior knowledge yields a variety of results. The data is clear that this is one of the non-negotiables of best practice because it:

- Levels the playing field
- Surfaces misconceptions and naive understandings
- Promotes personal meaning-making
- Provides the teacher with pre-assessment data so that the teacher can use students' experiences, stories, examples, and mistakes to frame the upcoming learning

Accessing prior knowledge can be scaffolded by modeling, previewing topics or concepts via technology, providing a word bank or providing three possible responses for student use. Accessing prior knowledge can be extended by building on the rich and diverse experiences and thinking academically advanced students bring into the classroom. The four strategies described here and on the next three pages, **Sensational Sentences**, **Frame of Reference**, **Stir the Class**, and **Sort Cards**, are strategies that provide opportunities for advanced learners to build on their own and each other's background knowledge; at the same time, all four strategies can easily be scaffolded.

Sensational Sentences

This strategy is one way to access prior knowledge, surface misconceptions and naive understandings, have students make predictions, set purpose for reading, and introduce new vocabulary all at once. See the template on the following page and online.

To set up the exercise:

- Select 10 words related to the upcoming lesson. Include both known and unknown words and concepts.
- Place or have the students place those words in the Word Box.
- Have students create five sentences by using two words in each sentence until all words are gone.
- Provide input of new information (text, visual, guest speaker, etc.)
- Following the lesson, have students reread the sentences they wrote and correct those that are incorrect.
- For active engagement, have students use some form of a silent signal or cheer when they encounter information that matches what they predicted.

Technology Integration

Interactive Whiteboards

We must not use this tool as an electronic worksheet. The “gee whiz” aspect is certainly appealing to our digital native learners but we, as the adults in the room, have to be sure that we are designing lessons that focus on standards-based rigorous and relevant learning when we use them.

Classroom teachers around the country and the Instructional Technology Department of the Wichita Public Schools, Kansas, suggest using interactive whiteboards to:

- Save lessons to present to students who were absent. Notes can be put on a server or posted on a web page or in a blog.
- Present multi-media presentations created by students or teachers. Video clips can be embedded into these presentations.
- Have students create e-folios including samples of their work and narration.
- Do digital storytelling.
- Annotate or take notes directly into PowerPoint presentations and video clips.
- Take virtual field trips to galleries, museums, and on site locations.
- Teach proofreading and editing skills.
- Highlight key steps, big ideas, parts of speech, patterns of errors, similarities and differences, etc.
- Create graphic organizers that teach text structure and pinpoint higher levels of thinking.
- Teach students how to navigate, research, and assess information on the Internet.
- Illustrate and write a book as a class. Use the record feature to narrate the text.
- Analyze and critique complex math problems. (Complexity is relative.)
- Teach vocabulary.
- Act as an interactive electronic Word Wall.
- Have students create class mind maps. Save them for later review.
- Use Windows Media Player or QuickTime to show streaming video or video clips.
- Print notes so that students can concentrate on the learning process rather than trying to take notes at the same time.

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- Have students create class mind maps. Save them for later review.
- Use Windows Media Player or QuickTime to show streaming video or video clips.
- Print notes so that students can concentrate on the learning process rather than trying to take notes at the same time.

Organization and Time-Management Aids

Let's Get Organized... the Bottom Lines

- The first time-management tools that come to mind are a wrist watch, an alarm clock, and other readily accessible clocks at school and at home. Knowing what time it is makes a great starting point.
- Next, one or more time-management and organizational tools such as computer-based or written calendars, task lists, planners, or personally designed to-do lists; more and more people are using iPhones or Blackberrys to send themselves reminders about tasks to complete and have programmed reminders of tasks and appointments on their computers.
- An assigned place for all school materials; students should be able to determine where to keep their materials as long as they can find them when they need them or teachers ask them to use them. Should they not be able to organize their “stuff” in an efficient way, scaffold their organization with an eye to withdrawing that support as they gain skillfulness and confidence.

Helping Students Learn to Organize Themselves

- Work with them in identifying the component parts included in assignments and in establishing goals and timelines with appropriate checkpoints.
- In the beginning, establish interim checkpoints for what appears to be even straightforward and simple tasks. As students begin to be able to handle those tasks, encourage their independence, and then gradually add to the complexity of the tasks while still providing support and scaffolding.
- Provide verbal prompts and cues to ensure the student is prepared to complete homework. For example, ask the student what needs to be done on the given night. If he answers math, ask what is needed to complete the math and what math needs to be done. It may be that the student even needs these questions in written or picture form.

Possibilities

It is counterproductive to require universal organizational systems without periodic analysis of what is working and is not working. It is possible to end up spending way too much time managing student organizational systems and far too little time planning and delivering solid instruction. We serve our students best if we offer and teach them a variety of ways to organize themselves and then have them access the effectiveness of the plan based on clearly established and public criteria. Some strategies to introduce are:

- Tables of contents for three-ring binders with assignments, dates assigned, date due, and date completed listed
- Color-coded folders
- Study logs listing starting and finishing times and tasks accomplished



Book Responses

Alternative Book Reactions/Reports

Choose or have students choose from this list of alternative ways for students to respond to the literature they read. These formats can be used in both high school and elementary settings.

Movie Pitch

Write a one page “pitch” to a producer explaining why the story would make a great movie. Who would you cast in the main roles and where would it be set?

An Anthology of Poetry Dedicated to the Novel

Collect a variety of existing poems that you feel best capture the essence of the novel, its plot, conflict, characters, symbols, theme, etc. and organize the poetry in a framework that parallels the novel. Choose three or four of the poems and write about the connections you made.

Monologue

Create two or three monologues for a character(s) from the novel; go beyond the text and add what you think the character is thinking/feeling at that moment and why? Choose scenes that are central to the conflict and that are spread throughout the book (one from the beginning, middle, and end).

CliffsNotes

For a small group of students that might have read the same book, have each student take a chapter and, using the CliffsNotes’ format, create their own booklet.

Surf the Net

Prior to, while, or after reading a book, check out the web and its offerings about the book, its author, or its subject, and collect additional information you feel contributes to the experience of this book. Annotate the selections in note form, making connections to the book that you think enhance the reading.

Media Moments

Watch a film inspired by a story (e.g. *Franny and Alexander* is inspired by *Hamlet*) and compare/contrast the works in a one-page piece.

Art-a-Fair

Bring in copies/examples of art related to the book's time or themes; in a one-page paper, compare, describe, and discuss the connections you made.

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