Evidence Based Instructional Improvement Checklist

Quantitative Strategies

These methods (i.e. change in dosage, time, or learning environment) are recommended as first consideration (although may not always apply) by the National Center on Intensive Intervention

- Increase the length of intervention sessions (note: developmentally younger students do better with multiple, brief sessions as opposed to lengthening)
- Increase the number of weeks the intervention last for (duration)
- Increase the number of instructional sessions or rate of opportunities to respond/feedback to target skills (e.g. use entry routines, exit routines, peer assisted learning, before or after school, etc)
- Decrease intervention group size
- Decrease intervention group heterogeneity for targeted instruction (group students with others closer to performance level and regularly/flexibility regroup based on progress)

Qualitative Strategies

Please note: These hypotheses for academic struggles are listed in order from the least intrusive approach (i.e. easiest to implement within traditional instruction) to the most intrusive to respect that time is our most precious commodity in a classroom (Daly et al 1997). Also, these hypothesis are not independent of one another, but rather interrelated (Daly et al 199&). Before adopting any new strategy, be sure to assess whether previous strategies were implemented with fidelity.

Hypothesis #1: Students do not want to do the task (Won’t Do, Not a Can’t Do)
Goal: Need to increase motivation, engagement, and/or belonging

- Explicitly work to build relationships with students (e.g. consider/align to cultural norms, support acculturation)
- Explicitly teach behavioral expectations (e.g. active participation, organization skills, collaboration skills, etc) needed for engagement and reinforce/provide immediate corrective feedback
- Increase praise ratio (specific, immediate, targeted towards effort NOT ability, and considering student’s preference for public vs private)
- Increase rates of opportunity to respond


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- Use interest inventory to inform reinforcement menus
- Allow choice in activities, learning products, etc
- Intersperse easy or preferred/difficult tasks
- Use group contingencies to promote on-task, appropriate behavior (e.g. Good Behavior Game)
- Utilize peer support to model and encourage desired behavior (e.g. Peer Coach)
- Incorporate student interests, experiences, and identities
- Teach goal setting, contracting, self-reinforcement
- Use visual, structured work systems (what steps, how many, what will happen just after-preferred)
- Allow for multiple means of expression/ways for students to express what they know (e.g. physical action, multi-media, etc)
- Utilize multiple means of representation (e.g. Visuals, Auditory, custom ways of displaying, having students create their own, etc.)

Hypothesis #2: Students have not been engaged in enough practice and feedback to become proficient (Trouble Doing)
Goal: Need to increase practice/opportunities to respond, engaged time and performance feedback WITH INCENTIVES to build fluency and accuracy

- Increase opportunities to respond through formal work on questioning (use paired response, think-pair-share, wait time, no “opt out”, choral response, act out, response cards, white boards, close notes, etc.)
- Increase opportunities to respond through peer tutoring models (i.e. Peer Assisted Learning Strategies [PALS], Classwide Peer Tutoring)
- Teach self regulation strategies
  - Students interact and self-monitor with progress monitoring data
  - Students set goals (short term to achieve long term), develop plans, implement the plans, self monitor and revise
  - All interaction, reflection, goal setting includes direct teaching of a ‘growth mindset’ to help students see that they do have control over their performance (attribution)
  - Embed incentives/reinforcement system into the practice/feedback with a “growth mindset” emphasis (to shape behaviors, reinforce academic growth, etc)
  - Using the Incredible 5 Point Scale, student is taught to identify level of emotion (e.g. arousal, anxiety, etc) and what strategies to employ with each level
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- Utilize cognitive processing strategies (i.e. Guided notes, graphic organizers, mnemonics, verbal rehearsal, self-talk) to reduce cognitive load
  - Utilize Computer Assisted Instructional tools for increased opportunities to respond, targeted practice, and immediate corrective feedback

Hypothesis #3: Tasks are too difficult (poor instructional match) or student understanding is rigid (unable to generalize) (A Can’t Do)
Goal: Modify Instruction

- Prioritize key skills to target, ensure instructional match
- Instruction should be systematic-carefully planned and sequenced so that lessons build on one another, moving from simple skills and concepts to more complex ones or from high-frequency skills to low frequency skills (i.e. task analysis of complex skills, scaffolding with temporary supports to then fade)
- Instruction should be explicit (or direct) teaching a specific skill(s) or concept(s) in a highly structured manner (i.e. clearly identifying the objective/goal, giving precise steps, modeling concepts/procedures, systematically connecting new learning to previous, guided practice, independent practice, looping back previously learned material, etc)
- Use precise, simple, and replicable language (with native language support where applicable) to teach key concepts or procedures
- Provide high rates of opportunities to respond with immediate corrective feedback
- Utilize specific feedback and error correction
- Provide many opportunities to practice, build fluency, and review (struggling learners need 10-30 times more practice opportunities than their peers)
- Provide high quality vocabulary instruction (teach essential words in depth, use both informal and formal evidence based routines, identify supplemental professional development and resources dedicated to this goal) including visual and native language supports when applicable
- Explicitly teach study skills (strategy instruction, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, self regulation, maintenance and generalization)
  - Teach self regulation strategies
    - Students interact and self-monitor with progress monitoring data
    - Students set goals (short term to achieve long term), develop plans, implement the plans, self monitor and revise


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○ Using the Incredible 5 Point Scale, student is taught to identify level of emotion (e.g. arousal, anxiety, etc) and what strategies to employ with each level

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