Strategram ™

Critical Teaching Behaviors
Validated Teaching Behaviors

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"Regardless of where students are being taught (i. e., the regular classroom or the support classroom), teachers must ensure that students are taught in accordance with what is known about effective instructional principles. "

Teachers often indicate that they never have enough time to do all of the teaching that needs to be done! Even when they do have the time, the best teachers are always asking themselves whether the ways they are teaching are really the best and is their teaching making a difference in the lives of their students. This is especially the case when teachers are working with students who have disabilities or who are at risk for some other reason. Jacques Barzun, the noted commentator on western education, underscored the extreme challenge of the educational process with the following observation:

> **The difficulties of schooling do not change. Please note: difficulties, not the problems. Problems are solved or disappear with the revolving times. Difficulties remain. It will always be difficult to teach well, to learn accurately; to read, write, and count readily and competently; to acquire a sense of history and develop a taste for literature and the arts—in short, to instruct and start one's education or another's.....no school is ever just right; it is only by the constant effort of its teachers that it can even be called satisfactory. (p. 13-14)**

One of the singular most significant things that teachers can do to make a difference in the educational progress of students with learning difficulties is to make a firm personal commitment to use effective instructional procedures. Regardless of *where* students are being taught (i.,e., the regular classroom or the support classroom), teachers must ensure that students are taught in accordance with what is known about effective instructional principles.

A major quest underlying the research and development mission of the KU-CRL has been to determine what instructional actions and conditions are most closely related to successful student performance. One project at the KU-CRL was aimed at identifying what the research literature suggested to be the most "critical teaching behaviors" for teachers to use in impacting the performance of students. Once this set of validated teaching behaviors was identified, they were incorporated in a study to determine their influence on the performance of students with learning disabilities when they were used by teachers during learning strategy instruction. In essence, the question was whether the factors that were deemed "critical" in the process-product research literature were "critical" in the instruction of learning strategies to students with learning disabilities.

Student Gains

The teaching behaviors that emerged through the search of the literature were the following:

- Use of advance and post organizers
- Use of rationales
- Communication of expectations
- Use of reviews and checks
- Facilitation of independence
- Insuring intensity of instruction
- Instructional monitoring
- Provision of feedback
- Requiring mastery of learning

A positive relationship was found between the use of these critical teaching behaviors by teachers and the number of students with LD who reached mastery on task-specific learning strategies! Specifically, teachers who

achieved high posttest scores on critical teaching behavior measures also made the greatest gains with their students in teaching them learning strategies. In short, student progress in learning strategy instruction can be enhanced by the careful and systematic use of critical teaching behaviors. The following tables depict definitions and practical examples for each of the nine critical teaching behaviors. Many of these behaviors have been embedded in the *Learning Strategies Curriculum* manuals.

A Call to Action

   The importance of focusing our attention as teachers on *how* we deliver instruction to students with learning disabilities is of paramount importance because of the importance of closing the gap as quickly as possible between the student's skill or strategy deficiencies and the demands of the curriculum. Jim Kauffman (1994) has recently argued that the field of special education is in deep trouble because, as a field, we have been casual in our application of sound instructional principles. Specifically, he has asserted:

USE OF ADVANCE & POST ORGANIZERS

Critical Teaching Behaviors	**Classroom Examples**
<u>Advance Organizer</u>: Any statement at the beginning of a lesson or instructional activity that provides an overview, cites the purpose or goal(s) of the lesson or activity, states the topic or presents a specific order that the lesson or activity will follow.	"Yesterday we discussed what a subject and a verb were. As you recall, the subject of a sentence is a person, place or thing that the sentence is about. The verb is the word or thing in a sentence that denotes action or a state of being. Today we will continue to talk about subjects and verbs. We will see how sometimes we use more than one word in a subject or more than one word for a verb. These are called subject phrases and verb phrases." Today we are going to talk about the Lost Colony the first English Settlers in America. First, we will talk about Sir Walter Raleigh, the man who brought the settlers over to the New World. Second, we will talk about the lifestyles and culture of the settlers. Third, we'll discuss the first English child in America. Finally, we'll talk about the Croatan Indians and their impact on the survival and disappearance of the colony."
<u>Post Organizer</u>: Any statements at the end of the lesson or instructional activity by the teacher that summarizes the main points of the lesson or activity.	"As you can see, there is much more to consider than just estimated earnings per month when you get a job. The check is quickly decreased by a variety of deductions. Keep these adjustments in mindas we prepare to spend you income on necessities such as rent." "As we have seen, there are many situations in life where you need to get information. However, we have also seen that certain steps involved in getting ready to get information and in talking to someoneand in following up are helpful in a variety of situations. Keep these steps in mind and see where they can be used in your life."

GIVING RATIONALES

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
Verbal Statements on Rationales/Relevance: Any statement by the teachers that explains the benefits for learning a concept or skill, or completing a task. At the beginning of the lesson or task, the teacher provides rationales to show students how they can benefit from the activity. **Verbal Solicitation of Student Responses About Rationales/Relevance**: Any question or statement that requires the students to give rationales and explain the application of the concept or skill in their lives at school, home, and work.	"If you learn the *Paraphrasing Strategy*, then you will be able to remember what you read. You'll be able to talk and write about it like on tests. Your test scores may improve." "If you learn about the human body, you'll know how to take care of your own body so you can live a long and healthy life." Teacher: "How can the *Paraphrasing Strategy* help you in school?" Student: "It can help me in biology and health." Teacher: "Can you give me some examples of how it can help you in these classes?" Student: "Yes. I think the Paraphrasing Strategy will help me to write better research reports and book reports."

COMMUNICATION OF EXPECTATIONS

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
1. Statements on Classroom Procedures: Any statements on rules regarding student movements in the classroom, student verbal participation and talk during activities.	1. "In this class, I expect you to come to class on time, get out your folders, and begin work immediately."
2. Statements on Task Specific Requirements: Any statements on how long a task should take to complete or how long it will take to learn a skill or strategy.	2. "I expect you to finish this task in 15 minutes." 2. "I think most of you will learn this strategy in 4 weeks."
3. Statements on Student Capability: Any statements about the student's abilityto master a certain skill, complete a task short or long term.	3. You have the ability to reach mastery, John. Sometimes it takes a while to reach mastery, but we will work through this, and you will reach mastery."

REVIEWS & CHECKS

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
Statements on Reviews and Checks: Any question(s) on concepts and strategies based on content only.	Teacher asks, "What are the differences between a complex sentence and a compound complex sentence?" Teacher asks, "Which ways can you combine any of the *Paired Associate Strategies* to create a firmer or clearer memory tool for the facts to be memorized?"

FACILITATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
1. Structuring Independent Work Initiation: Any instance of the student's obtaining materials and/or starting work without specific instruction by the teacher. 2. **Promoting Independent Thinking on Goal Setting**: Any statement or question that requires the student to think or talk about his/her goal setting. 3. **Promoting Independent Thinking Self-Evaluation**: Any statement or question that requires the student to think or talk about his/her progress. 4. **Promoting Individual Performance Within a Group**: Any instance in which a student is asked to perform for the group.	1. The student comes into the classroom and gets out a folder and a book and begins reading the book without interacting with the teacher. 2. When the student asks a question, or asks for help (e.g., "I can't find the answer to this question."), the teacher asks the student a question (e.g., "Where do you think would be the most likely place to look for it?") that will help the student find the answer him/herself. 3. Teacher asks, "What is your goal?" 3. Teacher asks, "Do you need to change your goals?" 3. Teacher asks, "Do you think this goal was set too high or too low?" 3. Teacher asks, "What do you think of your progress so far?" 4. Teacher asks, "John, will you role-play your telephone conversation with the Meadowland apartment manager."

INTENSITY OF INSTRUCTION

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
Intensity Activities: Any act by the teacher that promotes a high level of on-task behavior by the students.	At the time established by the schedule, the teacher promptly starts relevant administrative procedures, such as roll call, or starts instruction, such as explaining the lesson or instructional activity. Teacher gets students to begin active involvement in tasks appropriate to the lesson or instructional activity (e.g., listening, writing, verbal participation, etc.) Teacher shifts students from one lesson or activity to another by directing them to move physically or simply by changing their focus of attention. The emphasis is on the efficiency (absence of wasted effort) and smoothness (lack of halts) of these in-between times that student on-task behavior remains at a high level. Maintains business-like procedures for housekeeping activities such as passing out paper and usin\g audiovisual equipment and supplementary materials. Asks questions that require the student to recognize or recall information such as facts, definitions, and names.

INSTRUCTIONAL MONITORING

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
Physical Observation Monitoring: Any acts of physical observation by the teacher to determine the student's academic progress. **Task-Related Statements or Questions**: Any statement or question by the teacher or task-related talk while at the student's desk. **Generalization Monitoring**: Any statement or question that makes the student aware of the situations in which the skill or strategy should be used or adaptations on the strategy.	Teacher stops at student's work place during student seatwork or other independent or group work to check student's performance and effort on an assigned task, helping those who require assistance, not just those who ask. "Do you have any questions about what you are doing?" "Do you understand what you are doing?" "John, I see you have two reports due in Mrs. Brown's class next week. What strategies should you use?"

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
1. <u>Brief Feedback</u>: When a student gives a correct oral response, the teacher acknowledges it verbally by simply recognizing and accepting the correct response without further elaboration. **2. <u>Promoting Students Feedback</u>**: After a student gives an incorrect answer or fails to respond to the question, the teacher continues the interaction with the student by providing clues, repeating or rephrasing the question, or allowing more time for the student to answer the question. **3. <u>Positive Feedback</u>**: Teacher gives positive feedback, by stating at least three appropriate aspects of the student's performance when going over a task. **4. <u>Corrective Feedback</u>**: The teacher gives positive corrective feedback to the student and makes them aware of the specific aspects of their performance that are incorrect, reviews concepts by asking questions, makes suggestions for improvement, and has the students correct work.	1. "That's right, Jane. Those areexamples of how the ***Paraphrasing Strategy*** can be used." 2. "No Dave, a complex sentence does not have 2 independent clauses and 1 dependent clause. Look at this sentence on the board. What is the independent clause? Good. What is the dependent clause? Right. Now what is a complex sentence? Great job!" 3. "Mary, your left and right hand margins are equal. You have indented the first line of each paragraph, and the supporting detail sentences are adequate." 4. <u>Teacher</u>: "Jack, your theme writing sample is much improved. However, your clincher sentence needs to be worked on. Do you remember what a clincher sentence is and what it is supposed to do?" <u>Jack</u>: "The clincher sentence should conclude the paragraph and give an appropriate ending to the theme." <u>Teacher</u>: "Yes, that is correct. The clincher sentence should also be different from other sentences in the theme, and it should be a complete sentence. Your clincher sentence is very similar to another sentence, and it is also incomplete. I want you to write a new clincher sentence for this theme that is different and complete." <u>Jack</u>: "Okay."

REQUIRING MASTERY

Critical Teaching Behaviors	Classroom Examples
<u>**Verbal Statements on Requiring Mastery of Learning**</u>: Any statements by the teacher that define the mastery criteria, whether mastery was reached, and how mastery can be obtained.	"Mastery must be reached on this task before moving to the next one." "John in your paragraph, all of your sentences were complete. You reached the 100% criterion for this portion; however, mastery was not reached on the number of complicated sentences. Only 35% of your sentences were complicated, and 50% must be complicated to reach mastery." "John because mastery was not reached on complicated sentences, you'll have to practice again on another paragraph."

If we allow special education teachers to use methods of questionable virtue or to implement them carelessly or sporadically, then we have no right to expect that special education will work, by any reasonable criterion. Special education succeeds or fails not so much by its structure as by its instructional effectiveness. Special educators are so called because they are to offer instruction that is particularly intensive and effective.

For far too long, we have failed to come to grips with the issues of best practice. For a variety of reasons, we have conveniently sidestepped the issue of insisting that our teachers use those methods with the strongest support in theory and reliable empirical research. We have opened our professional doors to well-intentioned but misinformed people and ever to quacks, self-promoters, and scoundrels who peddle methods that will not stand up under careful scientific scrutiny......too many of our teachers and teacher trainers have bought into the latest fads while rejecting the methods with the best credentials.

Unfortunately, too often our style has been to reject the proven but homely method for something popular but untested, something supported only by fervent testimony or antiscientific sentiment. This may be our worst implementational sin of all. (p. 616)

One of the differences between teachers who move students to a position of success and those who don't is the degree to which they focus on consistently imbedding instructional behaviors that facilitate the learning process for students. The challenge is a difficult one, but the data suggests that it is a worthwhile quest.

References

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