Effective Classroom Practices

Opportunities to Respond

Practice

Multiple instructional questions, statements or gestures are implemented. Opportunities to respond (OTR) can be provided individually, to groups of students or to a whole class.

Research

Simonsen, Meyers & DeLuca (2010) define OTR as a teacher behaviour that prompts or solicits a student response (verbal, written, gesture).

When teachers increase their rates of opportunities to respond, student on-task behaviour and correct responses increase while disruptive behaviour decreases (Carnine, 1976).

Frequent responses from students provides continual feedback for the teacher on student learning and the effectiveness of teaching strategies (Heward, 1994; Carnine, 1976; Skinner, Smith & McLean, 1994; Skinner, Belfior, Mace, Williams-Wilson, & Johns, 1997).

Implementation

Guidelines for response rates

- Teacher talk should be no more than 40-50% of instructional time.
- Learning new material - strive for a minimum of four to six responses per minute with 80% accuracy.
- Review of previously learned material - strive for eight to twelve responses per minute with 90% accuracy.
- Provide a thinking pause or wait time, between asking a question and prompting students to respond.
Strategies for increasing student opportunity for response are detailed in the table below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal strategies - individual questioning. These strategies focus on students answering a question or sharing ideas.</th>
<th>Verbal strategies - choral responding. These strategies focus on students responding in unison to a teacher question.</th>
<th>Non-verbal strategies. These strategies allow all students to actively answer or respond.</th>
<th>Other practices that increase OTR.</th>
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<td>1. Use a seating chart and call on students randomly, tally on that chart to monitor rate of questions presented to each. 2. Student names can be on strips of paper. As questions are posed a student name is drawn. 3. Use above random strategy and call on another student to repeat or summarise what the previous student has just said.</td>
<td>1. Develop questions with only one right answer that can be answered with short, 1-3 word answers. 2. Provide wait time of at least three seconds between asking the question and prompting response. 3. Use a clear signal or predictable phrase to cue students to respond in unison. 4. Use a brisk, lively pace. 5. Provide immediate feedback on the group response.</td>
<td>1. Personal white boards. 2. Pre-printed written response cards. 3. Electronic student response systems. 4. Signalling or movement activities, e.g. thumbs up/down. 5. Guided notes (Teacher prepared handouts).</td>
<td>1. Computer-assisted instruction. 2. Class-wide peer tutoring. 3. Direct instruction. 4. Peer coaching.</td>
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References


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