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CASE STUDY UNIT

Fostering Student Accountability for Classroom work

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Please read this introduction before continuing with the accompanying case study set.

Teachers often complain that students don't complete the classwork they have been assigned. Before we can diagnose the probable causes of failure to start or complete class assignments, we need to ask several questions: Has the content been taught sufficiently well that students can begin and complete their work successfully? Are routines and procedures in place for checking, getting help, and getting timely feedback? Have key concepts been modeled and demonstrated? Is there an appropriate match between what students know and what they are to accomplish? These five questions form the basis for an accountability system for doing academic work. Helping students take responsibility for completing assigned work begins with the teacher developing a system that supports and enables them to become accountable.

To foster student accountability for academic classwork, teachers need to develop and implement strategies that support students' efforts at various stages of doing their classwork. This case study set focuses on five key components of an effective accountability system.

Providing content instruction: Assuring that all students understand and can apply the content associated with classwork means students make helpful connections between their previous learning experiences, the content, and the assigned classwork.

Creating supportive settings: Establishing a classroom environment that supports students' academic efforts requires building a positive and productive tone that is structured to encourage student effort and is inclusive of each student's cultural traditions and understandings.

Modeling desired outcomes: Providing a model of both the process and the completed classwork sought from students means that the students have access to tangible examples of the teacher's expectations.

Assigning appropriate tasks: Assuring that tasks are appropriately matched to students' skills and abilities means carefully assessing students' understandings to have a clear idea of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Offering timely feedback: Knowledge of the results is a powerful motivator for students. To keep students engaged and focused on their classwork they should receive feedback both in progress and at completion.

Once these five areas have been addressed, the teacher's next step is to focus on ways of teaching students to be responsible for following the established procedures for completing and submitting assignments at a high level of performance.

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BACKGROUND

Student: Raoul
Age: 9.4
Grade: 3rd

SCENARIO

Raoul is a third-grade student born in the United States to Costa Rican parents who are pursuing U.S. citizenship. Raoul's parents moved to the U.S. as graduate students at the local university. Though he speaks Spanish with his parents at home, Raoul is fluent in English and often serves as their translator. As a result, he is comfortable speaking with others in either language. Raoul is a very likeable child. He is good-natured, has a wonderful sense of humor, and treats others with respect. However, Raoul struggles in school because he is hard of hearing. In particular, he is frequently unable to follow oral directions and has difficulty when content is only presented orally (e.g., through a lecture). Because Raoul is friends with many of his classmates, his difficulty with oral information occurs mostly in whole-class situations. Raoul's teacher has set the following goals for him across the year:

- Increase his ability to gather information orally in whole class settings

- Use his skills with peer interactions to increase his access to class information

Raoul's class has been learning about endangered species. Though Raoul is interested in animals and tries extra hard to listen and pay attention during science, the majority of the content presentation has been lecture. Two weeks into their endangered animals unit, Raoul's teacher explains their unit assignment: a solo 5-minute presentation to the class on the endangered animal of their choice. The teacher tells the class they need to include the same types of information about the animal that she talked about in class. She also indicates that since some students may choose the same animal, she wants them to work independently without talking to one another. She gives them the next four class sessions to work on their presentations. She asks the students to include a picture of the endangered animal they choose in their presentations. The teacher closes her instructions by stressing that the presentation will equal one test grade.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Providing content instruction
- Creating supportive settings
- Modeling desired outcomes

✎ ASSIGNMENT

1. Read the Case Study Set Introduction and the STAR sheets for each possible strategy .

2. For each of the three strategies, write a statement describing a potential difficulty that Raoul could have with his assignment.

3. For each potential difficulty (for each of the three strategies) describe an instructional sugesstion to support Raoul in meeting his two goals.

BACKGROUND

Student: Shelley
Age: 6.5
Grade: 1st

SCENARIO

Shelley is a first-grader at a rural elementary school in a farming community. Her parents have to work hard just to subsist on the poverty-level income from their small farm. Shelley contributes to the family farm work through chores she completes before and after school, such as collecting eggs. Though they did not complete high school, Shelley's parents value education highly and are eager to help Shelley and her siblings with schoolwork however they can.

Shelley's kindergarten teacher noticed that Shelley was able to accomplish all of the tasks assigned to her when there were only one or two directions given at a time. However, when Shelley was given more than two directions at a time, she would often confuse the directions or forget some of them. Though she tried to help Shelley to practice following more than two directions, the kindergarten teacher did not feel Shelley made progress in this area. Shelley's performance of kindergarten skills, with this one exception, was sufficient for her promotion to first grade. The kindergarten teacher was concerned that this exception, however, would become more significant over time.

At the beginning of her first-grade year, Shelley's kindergarten teacher shared her observations and concerns with Shelley's first grade teacher, Mr. Brown. After observing the same pattern, Mr. Brown set the following goal for Shelley across the first semester:

- Increase the number of directions Shelley can successfully follow from 1 to 4

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Modeling desired outcomes
- Assigning appropriate tasks
- Offering timely feedback

✏ ASSIGNMENT

1. Read the Case Study Set Introduction and the STAR sheets for each possible strategy.

2. Select 1 strategy from this group that will be most helpful for Mr. Brown to use to support Shelley in meeting her goal.

3. Write a summary of the strategy you selected and an explanation of why it is most helpful in supporting Shelley with this goal.

BACKGROUND

Student: Glenda
Age: 10.1
Grade: 4th

SCENARIO

Glenda is a fourth-grade student in an inner-city neighborhood school. Glenda's neighborhood is a vibrant metropolitan area in which the city has supported safety (e.g., well-lighted, consistent police patrol, quick response to utility difficulties, etc.) and has encouraged several businesses to locate within the community, providing jobs for many of the school's parents. The majority of the people in the community lives in public housing and has a community-run housing governance board, work/school carpool system, and child care center. As a single parent, Glenda's mother feels supported by the community outreach, such as the tutoring Glenda receives at the after-school day care.

Glenda's IEP calls for her to have shortened assignments. This adaptation is particularly important in math where Glenda works much more slowly and becomes easily overwhelmed. In fact, Glenda can only work about one third of the math problems her peers work in the same amount of time. Following a set of lessons on division, Glenda's teacher wants to make a review assignment for the class from a page in the math textbook (see next page) to make sure they are all ready for the upcoming test. Glenda's teacher has set the following goals for her across this nine week period:

- Increase Glenda's facility with multiplication and division

- Increase the types of multiplication and division problems Glenda can work

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Providing content instruction
- Creating supportive settings
- Modeling desired outcomes
- Assigning appropriate tasks
- Offering timely feedback

✏ Assignment

1. Review the Case Study Set Introduction and the STAR sheets for the strategies listed above.

2. Select one option (A,B, or C) for the directions given with the math review assignment (see next page) that you feel will be best for Glenda and her classmates.

        A. Assign problems 1–8 to the entire class including Glenda.

        B. Assign problems 1–22 to the entire class, but only require Glenda to complete problems 1–8.

        C. Assign the review problems in the following order, but only require Glenda to complete through problem 20. Assignment order: 1, 7, 13, 19, 2, 8, 14, 20, 3, 9, 15, 21, 4, 10, 16, 22, 5, 11, 17, 6, 12, 18.

3. In writing, tell which assignment option you selected (A, B, or C). Explain why the option you selected is the best, both for the class reviewing division and for Glenda to meet her goals. Comment on which strategy(ies) you used in making your decision and why this strategy(ies) was (were) helpful.

Remember that division problems have three parts:

quotient
divisor) dividend

Find the *dividend* for each of these problems. Show your work.

1.   10   **2.**   12   **3.**   17   **4.**   21   **5.**   14   **6.**   15
6)   3)   5)   7)   4)   9)

Find the *quotient* for each of these problems. Show your work.

7. ___   **8.** ___   **9.** ___   **10.** ___   **11.** ___   **12.** ___
2) 24   4) 64   8) 104   3) 36   5) 150   7) 119

Find the *divisor* for each of these problems. Show your work.

13.   16   **14.**   20   **15.**   12   **16.**   18   **17.**   22   **18.**   13
) 96   )100   ) 96   ) 54   ) 44   )117

Use the information provided to answer each question. Show your work and any pictures you drew to help you solve each problem.

19. Alex is building a square dog pen for his dog, Spot. Alex measured the perimeter of the area where Spot's pen will be and found that it will take 40 feet of fence to complete the pen. How long will each side of Spot's pen be?

20. Tonia has seven friends coming to her birthday party this afternoon. Tonia baked 88 cookies to serve at the party. Tonia wants to make sure she puts an equal number of cookies on the plates for herself and her friends. How many cookies will Tonia put on each plate?

21. Dewayne's little brother and sister are going with him to the candy store. His mother gave them $0.75 to spend when they get there. Dewayne's mother told him that he was to spend the money equally on each of them. How much money will each child be able to spend on candy?

22. Susan and her sister have a newspaper route. Each morning Susan and her sister prepare for their route by rolling the papers, putting rubber bands around them, and then placing them into one of the two carry bags they wear on their route. Susan and her sister make sure they carry an equal number of papers on their route. If Susan and her sister deliver a total of 114 papers each morning, how many papers are in each carry bag?

BACKGROUND

Student: Joe
Age: 8
Grade: 2nd

SCENARIO

Joe is a second-grader at an affluent suburban elementary magnet school. Joe's parents are both involved in community leadership and are extremely active with the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization at Joe's school. Though their intent is to be supportive of his schooling, Joe's parents are sometimes considered by the school staff to be intimidating and pushy. The principal has also sensed that Joe's parents are somewhat embarrassed that Joe is receiving Title I tutoring in reading.

Joe attends a Title I tutoring session from 10:00 to 10:30 each morning with four second-graders from other classes. When he leaves for the Title I tutoring, his class is still having reading instruction (9:30–10:10). Therefore, Joe misses the last ten minutes of reading class each day. Joe's teacher and the Title I tutor have been working together all year to make sure that Joe doesn't miss any reading instruction from the classroom.

The story that Joe and his classmates will read next week is about friendship. Joe's teacher is planning to use the last ten minutes of each reading class to help the students write a four-sentence paragraph about what makes a good friend. She has the following plan for the five lessons she will teach next week during the last ten minutes of reading class:

Monday: Have the students brainstorm words that describe a good friend. List these on a poster for students' access. Ask the class why it is important to have a good friend and to be one. Tell the class we will write a paragraph about what makes a good friend this week to read aloud on Friday.

Tuesday: Review the word list on yesterday's poster. Ask the class if there are any additional words we could add today. Add any new words to the poster. Introduce the topic sentence, "A good friend is a special person." Discuss students' ideas for other topic sentence options. Ask students to choose one topic sentence and copy it on their papers. Walk through the room to monitor students' progress and help when needed.

Wednesday: Review the word list on the poster. Ask the class if there are any additional words we could add today. Add any new words to the poster. Share the body sentence, "A good friend will help you smile if you are sad." Ask the class how this sentence relates to the topic sentence. Ask students to offer other example body sentences. Have students write two body sentences that tell more about their topic sentences from yesterday. Encourage them to use the word poster for ideas. Walk through the room to monitor students' progress and help where needed.

Thursday: Review the topic and body sentences given for examples. Talk about closing sentences and give the example "I want to be a good friend." Ask students to think of a closing sentence

for their paragraph. Walk through the room to monitor students' progress and help where needed. As students finish, ask them to find a partner and practice reading their paragraphs out loud.

Friday: Have students read their paragraphs about good friends to the class. Post the completed paragraphs on a bulletin board called "Good Friends are Special."

Joe's teacher shares these plans with the Title I tutor on Monday of the week before she plans to begin these lessons. She explains that Joe will miss both the instruction and the opportunity to interact with his peers. Joe's teacher is especially concerned that he continue working toward the following goals she set for him this nine week period:

- Increase the number of Joe's written responses to reading

- Increase Joe's confidence in his writing

- Increase Joe's ability to read his writing aloud

She asks the Title I tutor to help her think of how she could best adjust the assignment for Joe.

Possible Strategies

- Providing content instruction
- Creating supportive settings
- Modeling desired outcomes
- Assigning appropriate tasks
- Offering timely feedback

✎ Assignment

1. Review the Case Study Set Introduction and the STAR sheets for the strategies listed above.

2. Select one recommendation from the Title I tutor (A, B, or C) as the best for adapting this assignment for Joe.

   A. Have the Title I teacher teach the same lessons each day in tutoring that Joe would miss in his regular class, even if the other second grade students are not having to write a paragraph in their classes.

   B. Let Joe participate with his class in this set of lessons and miss half of his tutoring sessions for a week, even if this means he has to interrupt the tutoring session in progress for the other four students.

   C. Give Joe the assignment to write a paragraph on his own at home, even if he doesn't get to participate in the lessons or to read his paragraph out loud on Friday with the rest of the class.

3. In writing, tell which recommendation you selected (A, B, or C). Explain why the option you selected is the best for Joe to meet his goals. Comment on which strategy(ies) you used in making your decision.

BACKGROUND

Students:	Ali	Beth	Robert	Shania
Age:	10.5	11	11.2	10.8
Grade:	5th	5th	5th	5th

SCENARIO

Ms. Taylor is a senior at a small liberal arts college seeking her teaching certificate for the elementary classroom. The student-teaching placements at this college are made at schools within the community-oriented public school district. The local town is supportive of the district administration both financially (e.g., approving property tax increases as needed to build new schools) and through community-led volunteer tutoring programs. The community also offers many group activities for children outside of school (e.g., sports leagues, conservation club, library club, etc.). Ms. Taylor is a student teacher in Mr. Branch's room. She has planned a unit on baseball to combine the language arts, math, science, and social studies lessons that she will be teaching in two weeks. Mr. Branch has read through Ms. Taylor's unit plans and thinks she has done a marvelous job with her planning and that the students will really enjoy learning through this unit. However, he has noted that Ms. Taylor has not made any adaptations in the unit assignments for his students with IEP or 504 plans.

When Mr. Branch and Ms. Taylor meet together to talk through her unit, Mr. Branch brings the following information with him about four students who are receiving special services:

Ali:
- Attends Title I reading tutoring three times a week
- Speaks and reads English as a second language—is a fluent speaker, but still working on reading and writing in English; reads English on a second-grade level
- Needs written assignments and tests read aloud
- Excels in math
- Works well in partner and small group situations (provides the advantage of working with other English speakers)

Beth:
- Attends daily special education classes in math
- Is working on two-digit addition and subtraction; knows multiplication facts (1–5)
- Likes reading; reads on a fourth-grade level
- Works well on assignments when tasks are broken down into smaller sections with two to three steps per section

Robert:
- Attends Title I reading and math tutoring three times a week
- Doesn't like to read, reads on a fourth-grade level
- Knows basic math facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Uses a wheelchair for mobility
- Works well as the leader of a group activity and independently

Shania:

> Attends daily special education classes in reading and math
> Doesn't like to read; reads on a first-grade level
> Is working on one-digit addition and subtraction
> Only attends 1 1/2 hours of regular class instruction during science and social studies in the afternoons
> Works diligently on any task assigned and completes it to the best of her ability

Mr. Branch suggests that he and Ms. Taylor try to adapt the unit assignments for these four students. He uses the introductory baseball card activity (see next page) Ms. Taylor is going to use to open the unit as an example for the two of them to consider possible adaptations for the four students.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- Providing content instruction
- Assigning appropriate tasks
- Creating supportive settings
- Offering timely feedback
- Modeling desired outcomes

✎ ASSIGNMENT

1. Review the Case Study Set Introduction and the STAR sheets for the strategies listed above.

2. Choose one student described in the scenario (Ali, Beth, Robert, or Shania) and answer the following questions in writing:

   a. Which student did you select?

   b. Why will the baseball card activity be beneficial for this student?

   c. How will this student's strengths and difficulties affect his or her performance on each section of the assignment?

   d. How would you adjust one section for this student?

   e. Which strategy(ies) did you use to make this adjustment?

   f. Why was this strategy (were these strategies) helpful?

3. Respond in writing to the following questions concerning all four of the students:

   a. How will the adjustments Ms. Taylor needs to make on the baseball card activity be different for the four students?

   b. How might she keep track of the different adjustments for the different students?

Baseball Cards

Today we will be exploring baseball cards. This activity will take all day and has five sections; therefore, you need to carefully read the directions for each section. It will be important for you to stay at the same pace as your peers on this assignment. Do not begin a new section until it is assigned. Check with Ms. Taylor on how to help your peers if you finish a section early.

1. Getting to know a baseball card.
Look at the baseball card handed out to you. Consider all of the different parts that make up a baseball card. Make two lists of baseball card parts, one for the front of the card and one for the back of the card. For example, your list for the front of the card might start like this:

• **Baseball Card Front**
• **Player's name**
• **Team name**

Find as many parts for each side as you can. At the end of 10 minutes, we will combine our individual lists to form a class set.

2. What does it all mean?
We will work in pairs in this section to discover what each part of a baseball card means. Each pair will work on different parts that Ms. Taylor assigns from the class list we generated in section 1. To complete your research, you may use the many library books on baseball that Ms. Taylor placed on the center bookshelf, the four Internet stations, and the encyclopedia set on the center bookshelf. In order to make sure every pair has access to the resources, you and your partner may use one library book at a time, one encyclopedia volume at a time, or you may use the Internet for 15 minutes at a time.
For example, if you and your partner are to find out what the word "position" (located on the front of the baseball card) means, you might look in the B volume of the encyclopedia to see which positions a baseball player can play. You would find there are 9 field positions: **catcher, pitcher, first base, second base, shortstop, third base, right field, center field, and left field.**
To help our class understand these positions, you would also want to know what players in each of these positions do. At 11:00 we will gather back as a class to present our research to each other.

3. Figuring statistics.
After recess, we will line up with the other classes, but we will be staying outside to play paper wad baseball. You will have the chance to see how statistics for players are figured for the back of baseball cards. You will each have a turn at pitching and a turn at batting to collect data for us to use when we return to the classroom. You will be using addition and division to find your paper wad baseball statistics.

## 4. Guest speaker on collecting baseball cards.
At 2:00, Mr. Washington, our school janitor, will be our guest speaker on collecting baseball cards. He will bring some of his collection with him as well as his pricing catalogs. You need to handle his collection and books with care.

5. Creating our own baseball cards.
Using all of the information about baseball cards that we have gathered across the day, you will have the opportunity to make your own baseball card. You will be able to select the team of your choice, but will draw for your field position from a set Ms. Taylor has prepared. When you draw for a position, it will also indicate your playing statistics and any awards you have earned. As you make your card, each part you add from our class list will be worth 10 points. So, if you have ten parts on your card, you can earn 100 points. Your card must have the following five parts:

Front of Card: **1) A drawing of you in your team colors 2) Your Name 3) Your Team Name**

Back of Card: **4) Your Playing Statistics 5) Awards You Have Earned**
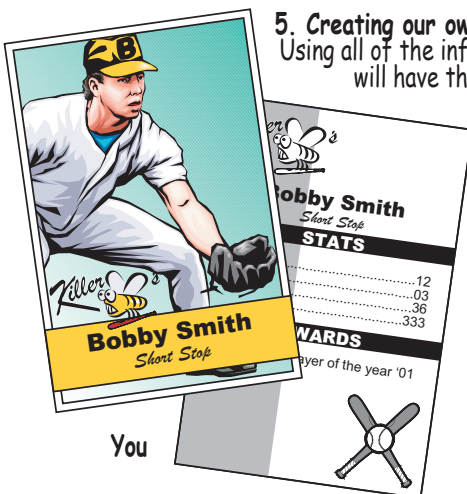
will have until the end of the school day to complete your own baseball card.

★ What a STAR Sheet is...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

What it is...

Providing content instruction involves teaching students the content from which classwork is drawn. This means a teacher provides specific instruction in the area of study, not simply directions for completing a task.

What the research and resources say...

- Students struggle when teachers explain only the directions for a task rather than the content needed to understand and learn from the task (Doyle, 1983).

- Students need to know "what they are to learn, how they are to learn it, how they are to demonstrate what they have learned, and how the quality of their learning will be evaluated" (Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 233).

- Students' engagement with content through classwork should help them build flexible understanding of the content (Anderson, 1995).

- Students learn content when it is presented coherently, tied to their present understandings, and supported with learning activities that authentically connect students with the content (Brophy, 2000).

- "When the focus of classwork is on its completion rather than on understanding the content being practiced through it, students may not connect their practice with past, present, or future learning" (Anderson, Brubaker, Alleman-Brooks, & Duffy, 1985; Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, & Oakes, 1995). In particular, low-achieving students may learn that their classwork does not need to make sense, just to be finished (Anderson et al., 1985).

- Connecting content with students' personal lives is a key criterion for effective seatwork (Osborn, 1984).

- Teachers planning to provide quality content instruction develop classroom learning environments that are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, and assessment-centered. The following table defines the different types of classroom environments.

CLASSROOM TYPE	DEFINITION
Learner-Centered	Students construct their own meanings, beginning with the beliefs, understandings, and cultural practices they bring to the classroom
Knowlege-Centered	Teachers help students make connections among various kinds of information, the rationale for learning the information, their own experiences, and their past, present and future learning
Assessment-Centered	Classrooms evolve from teachers' consistent, supportive feedback to students that challenges them to reflect on both their understanding of information and its connection with their learning

NRC, 2000

Tips for implementation...

• Be familiar with district and state curriculum guidelines for your area of teaching. Use these guidelines in conjunction with other instructional aids (teacher's guide for text, etc.) to write your lesson objectives. These objectives should outline your learning goals for students.

• Coordinate your instruction, assignments, and assessments for students around these objectives.

Keep in mind...

• Students will be more likely to learn to be accountable for completing classwork when they can connect the content to their learning and experiences.

• Completing the course curriculum with your students is not the same thing as providing content instruction. Along the same lines, having students read a specified section of text and answer questions about it does not necessarily help them connect the content of that section with their own experiences or previous learning.

• The content you select to teach will be influenced by subject-specific big ideas; your classroom goals; district, state, and national standards; textbook, reference, and teacher-created materials available; your teaching peers; your professional expertise; and other important areas.

• While learning to teach, seek guidance from professional educators (e.g., teachers, administrators, national teaching organizations) to effectively select instructional content.

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★ What a STAR Sheet is...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

What it is...

Creating supportive settings involves coordinating the classroom, the assignment, and the instruction that has been provided. An assignment that is given to individuals to complete is structured differently than an assignment given to small groups of students to complete collaboratively. The strategy of creating supportive settings establishes a positive, productive tone for the situation in which the assignment is completed. Using this strategy means attending to one or more of the following areas: classroom membership, student cultural background, assignment length, assignment structure, assignment grading weight, assistance provided, resource location, classroom seating arrangement, and individualizing the assignment to meet IEP or other guidelines.

What the research and resources say...

- Students "learn best within cohesive and caring learning communities" (Brophy, 2000, p. 9).

- When teachers coordinate assignments with instructional objectives, state directions precisely, and focus on the student's accomplishment, the frequency of students completing assignments is maximized (Wong & Wong, 1998).

- Monitoring student work in progress provides the teacher with a sense of student success or difficulty and provides the student with access to assistance as needed (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003).

- When the structure of the academic setting conflicts with students' cultural traditions or understandings, students' learning can be hampered (Delpit, 1988; Ellison, Boykin, Towns, & Stokes, 2000; Philips, 1972; Romo, 1999).

- Culturally relevant teaching acknowledges the skills and abilities students bring to the classroom and connects this knowledge with the content presented. In addition, culturally relevant teaching bridges students' individual, academic, and cultural identities (Ladson-Billings, 1996).

Tips for implementation...

- From the beginning of the year, work to establish and maintain a positive, productive learning tone in your classroom.

- Structure assignments in a way to support both the connection of students with content and the positive, productive learning tone established in your classroom.

- Evaluate students' progress and adjust the setting as needed to assist their successful learning.

Keep in mind...

- Different students will find different activities more or less engaging. Therefore, alternating the types of assignments will offer a variety of tasks to engage students. This will also address learning differences among students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- Some assignments will need to be adjusted for individual students. For example, for an assignment to be completed independently, you may wish to pair a student whose IEP calls for having directions read aloud with a student who is a strong reader. Choosing whether to adjust the individual's assignment or to adjust the assignment for the entire class will require you to weigh the costs and benefits of your decision in advance.

- Your enthusiasm as a teacher is contagious. Alternatively, if you present or monitor an assignment in a manner that demonstrates your tension or boredom, your students may have a similar reaction to the assignment.

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★ WHAT A STAR SHEET IS...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

WHAT IT IS...

Modeling desired outcomes involves demonstrating or providing a structure for the completed assignment. Demonstrations might include working sample problems or providing an example completed at the level of performance expected. The structures provided may be in the form of grading criteria, rubrics, or displayed assignment procedures.

WHAT THE RESEARCH AND RESOURCES SAY...

- Modeling, in particular cognitive modeling, is one teaching method that helps to develop student expertise (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991).

- When students are given a model of excellence, they have a better understanding of the goal and of the teacher's expectations (Wong & Wong, 1998).

- Cognitive modeling is helpful in teaching learning and problem-solving strategies to students. It involves the teacher talking through his or her thinking processes while completing a task (Brophy, 2000).

- Teachers themselves serve as model learners. When teachers show they are enthusiastic about and value learning, their students see the reward of learning (Good & Brophy, 2000). As teachers model their thinking processes about content, they influence their students' interest in that content (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990).

- Modeling can help students to see how experts approach a task and can help students develop their own skill in approaching the task (CTGV, 1997).

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

- It is always helpful for the teacher to personally complete an assignment prior to assigning it to students. This preview enables the teacher to know the flow of the assignment, the questions students might ask, the difficulties they might encounter, and the level of performance expected. The example a teacher completes can then serve as a demonstration of what to do, a key for students to check their work, or a framework for designing grading criteria.

- Provide a model demonstrating what to do or how to do it. This is particularly useful for multi-part projects or for assignments that have new content material or a new level of difficulty. Your model may be a teacher-completed example or a student-completed example. Both positive (what to do) and negative (what not to do) examples are productive *if* they are explained.

Commas in a series
(positive examples)

- Susan, Orion, and Remarquiz participated in the spelling bee.
- Grandma and I went to the grocery store, bought the ingredients, and then baked a cake for my mother.

Commas in a series
(negative examples)

- I, want, to, invite, Ron, Grant, Dewayne, and Pablo, to my birthday party.
- The recipe calls for sugar flour cinnamon and vanilla.

- Alternatively or in addition to your example, provide students with grading criteria for the assignment to compare their performance with your expectations. The example below could serve both as a display in the classroom and as a grading sheet for submitted paragraphs.

Paragraph Writing Expectations (3rd Grade)

_____ (10 pts) Main idea stated in topic sentence
_____ (10 pts) Paragraph written neatly
_____ (15 pts) Three body sentences support
_____ (5 pts) Correct punctuation used main idea
_____ (5 pts) Correct spelling used
_____ (5 pts) Closing sentence repeats main idea in new words
_____ TOTAL POINTS (50 possible)

Teacher's Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Keep in mind…

- The best model for your students is you —be the type of learner you hope to encourage them to be. Give students access to you as a learner by talking through your thinking processes as you consider content.

- When using a student-completed example, always ask the student for permission in advance to use his or her work in public.

- For lengthy assignments that you will repeat with subsequent classes, consider asking students who have done outstanding work if their assignment can be used as a model for future years.

- If using student-written material as a negative example (what not to do), rewrite the material in your handwriting and keep the model anonymous.

- If you frequently provide the same type of model for students (e.g., heading a paper correctly), consider making a chart or poster of this model to display in your classroom.

- Students enjoy making teaching materials. If you have students who would prefer not to have their work displayed as an example, they may be interested in making an anonymous model for you.

- Your modeling can also take the form of an intentional mistake when reviewing content that students catch and correct (e.g., demonstrating adding from the hundreds column toward the ones column instead of vice versa). Note: If you use this technique, you must be sure that students are confident enough in the content to accurately catch the mistake—otherwise you will teach them incorrect content.

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★ WHAT A STAR SHEET IS...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

WHAT IT IS...

Assigning appropriate tasks involves giving an assignment that is suitable for the students' age, their background with the content, their level of motivation, the type of instruction, and the time provided to complete the assignment. In addition, an appropriate assignment takes into account any specified educational adaptations for individuals (e.g., IEP, 504).

WHAT THE RESEARCH AND RESOURCES SAY...

- Students need to be able to connect the tasks of an assignment to their own experiences in learning – culturally, academically, and personally (Good & Brophy, 2000; CTGV, 1997).

- There are a variety of ways to respond to diversity in student learning, including individualized instruction, computer-based instruction, and adapting individual assignments (Good & Brophy, 2000).

- Students benefit from completing assignments that pose challenges they can solve with peer-, resource-, or teacher-provided support (Anderson, 1995).

- Academic tasks can range from high to low risk (how public they are) and can range from great to little ambiguity (how easy it is to define satisfactory performance). Greater academic challenge occurs with higher risk and more ambiguity. However, students push to have their academic tasks defined as low risk with little ambiguity. The way a teacher responds to this push determines the substance of students' academic work (Doyle, 1983).

- Most academic practice should help students apply their learning within authentic contexts (Brophy, 2000).

- Tasks should be sequenced so that students first build a global understanding of the overall goal and then see the assigned task as a portion of that goal. Task sequencing should then increase in complexity and diversity as student skill and understanding increase (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991).

- Tailoring an assignment for individual students to accommodate disabilities is necessary both for individual assignments and for individuals within collaborative assignments (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

- When preparing assignments, select tasks that help students focus on the learning goals you have established.

- Determine the appropriate length and difficulty of assignments.

- Plan for individual adjustments to assignments as called for by IEP or 504 plans.

- Monitor students' progress on assignments to identify necessary class-wide adjustments in pacing and to provide needed assistance.
- When an assignment carries across several class periods or days, provide students with checkpoint deadlines or completion timelines.

Keep in mind...

- Assignment adaptations for individual students are required by law if the students have an IEP or 504 plan. It is necessary for a teacher to know the specific adaptations required for his or her students and to adjust students' assignments appropriately.

- When a class has a large range of abilities that result in some students completing assignments significantly later than others, you can assign a length of time to complete an assignment rather than a specified number of problems and questions (e.g., 30 minutes to work as many math problems as can be completed correctly versus working problems 1–25). When this type of assignment is given, students need to work a variety of problems and questions. Including a variety may mean that a specific order of problems and questions should be followed ("Work through the page in this order: 1, 6, 12, 15, 22, 2, 7, 13, 16, 23…"). Structuring the assignment this way prevents those students who work a limited number of problems from only working problems on the basic level rather than getting practice working problems on a higher level of application. Note: If you choose this style of assignment, you must present the students with the challenge of working the greatest number of problems or questions they can finish correctly in the time allowed.

- If students with different abilities struggle with an assignment, it may not be an appropriate assignment for the class.

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★ What a STAR Sheet is...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

What it is...

Offering timely feedback involves commenting to students on their classroom work with a frequency that helps the students maintain their interest in and commitment to the work. This strategy offers support as they build understanding of the content, yet allows them independence. Offering timely feedback can occur in the form of verbal comments, written statements, grades, or specific reinforcers (e.g., stickers).

What the research and resources say...

- Feedback should be provided to students while working (while a teacher is monitoring) as well as when the work is completed. Feedback should clearly indicate the student's progression toward the expected learning performance (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003).

- Feedback can help students learn the connection between effort and achievement (Evertson & Harris, 2003).

- Extrinsic motivation, provided through feedback such as praise and rewards, can be used to help build intrinsic motivation in academically unmotivated children (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).

- Teachers can communicate low expectations to low achieving students when they don't give feedback to these students or when they provide inappropriate positive feedback for incorrect responses (Brophy, 1998).

- Feedback can be just as instructive for the social aspects of completing classwork as for the academic aspects. Students learn to better assist their peers, ask more precise questions, and increase their commitment to assisting peers with disabilities (Ross, 1995).

- Informative feedback helps students "assess their progress with respect to major goals and to understand and correct errors or misconceptions" (Brophy, 2000).

- Feedback to students should identify the individual student's progress toward mastery rather than make comparisons between students' performances (Brophy, 2000).

Tips for implementation...

- Once the content has been taught and the appropriate assignment made and modeled, the feedback offered to students needs to balance building independent practice with learning of the content and the need to be reinforced.

- Feedback should be offered with greater frequency at the beginning of the year, the beginning of a study unit, and the beginning of an individual assignment. As you confirm that students are becoming more confident and competent, the time between feedback occurrences should be extended to allow for growth in self-evaluation and independence.

- Provide equitable feedback (in frequency or level of attention) to each student in the class.
- State or write your feedback in a manner that helps students connect their effort on an assignment with their performance.
- Use a variety of feedback types (for successful performances: smiles, praise, written compliments, stickers, etc.; for performances needing improvement: specific suggestions, written encouragement, etc.).
- Provide feedback to students to identify how they are meeting expectations and how their work needs improvement.

Keep in mind...

- Feedback will vary by assignment, grade level, time of the year, and individual.
- More lengthy assignments may need to be broken into steps to offer feedback along the way.
- Remain aware of your students' comfort level with feedback in front of others. Be conscientious about respecting a student's right to privacy—what you may intend as a compliment in front of classmates may be seen by the student as embarrassing. Similarly, what you may intend as constructive criticism in front of classmates may be seen by the student as humiliating.

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