

Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education
Special Education Observation Instrument
Features of Effective Reading Instruction in Special Education *

Instructional Practices

- 1. Makes connections between and within lesson by relating information to previously learned or mastered content**
 - Reviews ideas previously learned
 - Draws on concepts and ideas learned in other subjects
- 2. Selects and incorporates students' responses, ideas, examples, and experiences into lesson**
 - Connects personal experiences to lesson content
 - Uses background knowledge
 - Makes instruction relevant and meaningful to students
- 3. Organizes instruction in ways that allow most students to respond**
 - Avoids multiple questions when students don't immediately respond
 - Allows time for students to process and doesn't immediately give the answer
 - Uses effective methods for getting most students to respond (thumbs up, teams, erase board, think/pair/share)
 - Calls on multiple students
- 4. Provides support to students who need assistance**
 - Asks students easier questions to get at the bigger concept
 - Reminds students of a rule or strategy to use
 - Teacher provides partial response
 - Breaks the task down when students are struggling
 - Re-explains skills and strategies to students
- 5. Gives feedback on academic performance (i.e. clarifies, reinforces)**
 - Communicates clearly what students did correctly or how they can improve
 - Adds to a student's response to clarify or extend it
 - Focuses on specifics, not just good or wrong
- 6. Provides sufficient and quality practice**
 - The task reinforces concepts taught
 - The task is the appropriate level and length
 - The teacher provides clear directions, checks for understanding, and circulates if appropriate

General Instructional Environment

- 7. Extent to which students are highly engaged during literacy activities**
- 8. Fosters student motivation and interest**
 - Asks good open-ended questions about the text
 - Alerts students to challenging tasks
 - Shows enthusiasm
 - Provides students with choices
 - Uses interesting learning format (e.g., game)
 - Uses interesting/meaningful texts
- 9. Provides continuous and intensive instruction**
 - Short transitions
 - Avoids downtime
 - Evidence of well organized, focused instruction at an appropriate level

Reading Instruction

a. Phonemic Awareness Instruction

10. Provides phonemic awareness instruction

11. Phonemic awareness instruction is systematic, explicit, and appropriate for students

- Uses various techniques for manipulating phonemes (e.g., using Elkonin boxes, having students blend onsets and rimes)
- Moves from less complex to more complex skills (e.g., segmenting compound words, cvc words)
- Combines phonemic awareness instruction with decoding instruction
- Provides sufficient and appropriate practice in selected skills

b. Word Study

12. Provides instruction in word study

13. Provides explicit instruction in word study

- Teaches word identification skills and strategies that are appropriate for the level of the child (e.g., decoding and structural analysis).
- Emphasizes distinctive features or patterns in words (e.g., onset/rime, chunking words, similar vowel and consonant patterns)
- Uses multiple examples to teach and practice skills
- Uses error correction when teaching word study
- Provide opportunities to practice word study in multiple formats (e.g., game formats, magnetic letters, erase boards, word list reading, and linkage to spelling and writing instruction)

14. Applies word study instruction in connected text

- Prompts students to use strategies and rules (e.g., reminds students of the rules, reminds them to look for chunks, reminds them to think about the sounds in the words)
- Multiple opportunities to apply skills with words while reading connected text
- Reinforces rules as students practice with connected text
- Provides connected text that reinforces word study

c. Fluency Instruction

15. Provides fluency instruction

16. Provides explicit instruction in fluency

- Model fluent reading
- Explicitly addresses the purpose and importance of fluency through accuracy, prosody, and speed
- Focuses on fluency at the word, sentence, and connected text level
- Use a variety of teaching strategies to promote fluent reading
- Provides formal and informal feedback on oral reading to help students understand how they are developing fluency, such as charting. Feedback can include specific praise about how well students are reading aloud and discussions of the ways in which students can improve.

17. Provide opportunities to practice fluency

- Provides multiple opportunities to build fluency through repeated readings, timed read aloud, partner reading, and choral reading (multiple opportunities should receive strong consideration in scoring)
- Focuses on automatic and rapid reading at the word, sentence, and connected text level (e.g., sight words, reading phrases)

d. Vocabulary Development

18. Provides vocabulary instruction

19. Provides vocabulary instruction appropriate to the lesson and/or student

- Teaches vocabulary multiple times as appropriate throughout the instructional cycle
- Emphasizes distinctive features of words (examples, non examples)
- Draws student's attention to prior experiences and knowledge
- Focuses on a few key words (at an appropriate level) that are taught thoroughly
- Uses visual organizers to teach vocabulary

*Items adapted from the English-Language Learner Classroom Observation Instrument (Baker, Gersten, Hagger, Graves, & Goldberg, 2001) and the Classroom Observation Checklist (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998)

20. Provides opportunities for students to talk about and apply the vocabulary words

- Gets students to put vocabulary in their own words
- Has students generate examples for words
- Gets students to provide synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
- Asks students to create sentences for words, particularly elaborated sentences
- Uses the vocabulary when talking about text
- Involves students in questioning about words
- Practices words in context

*e. Comprehension***21. Provides comprehension instruction****22. Provides explicit instruction in comprehension skills and strategies**

- Models/explains comprehension skills and strategies (e.g., demonstrates how to find the main idea in a passage)
- Thinks aloud for students in order to demonstrate strategies or skills
- Uses graphic organizers to help students make sense of and organize what they have read
- Prompts students to focus on relevant information in the text or summarize text

23. Prompts and cues students to use comprehension strategies and skills

- Reminds students to use strategies
- Models metacognition
- Promotes self regulation

24. Effectively uses teacher facilitated discussions to build comprehension

- Engages students in meaningful discussions
- Incorporates students' questions
- Monitors comprehension
- Asks more higher order questioning
- Asks students to provide evidence for their responses (asking how and why)
- Encourages students to elaborate when responding to questions about the text or while discussing the text

Classroom Management**25. Classroom routines and a management plan are evident**

- Materials are readily available to students
- Activities run smoothly with few disruptions
- Disruptions are handled quickly and effectively
- Students seem to know what to do and what is expected of them behaviorally
- Teacher appears as the authority figure in class, but not punitive

26. Teacher effectively redirects behavior and proactively addresses behavior

- Redirects in respectful ways
- Emphasizes students change in behavior through praise
- Uses friendly or unobtrusive, respectful gestures to redirect behavior
- Uses proximity control
- Reminds students of behavioral routines
- Ignores inappropriate behavior (but not behavior that should be attended to)
- Provides academic assistance on a task to prevent behavior problems
- Uses antiseptic bouncing (e.g., asking the student to do a favor for them or get a drink of water, no intent to punish)

27. Teacher effectively reinforces appropriate behavior

- Often uses specific praise for behavior
- Recognizes students using verbal or nonverbal praise regularly and with purpose
- Uses tokens and/or points to recognize appropriate behavior

28. Teacher creates a warm and supportive environment for student learning

- Students treat each other with respect
- Teacher talk is encouraging and respectful
- Teacher encourages peer support in the learning process

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