



Instructional Practices to Boost Student Engagement and Accelerate Student Learning



Are you a school leader looking to establish or enhance your schoolwide expectations for providing Tier 1 instruction? Are you a classroom teacher looking for ideas to revive student engagement in your classroom this spring? Check out these 5 evidence-based instructional practices to boost engagement and accelerate student learning.

- ★ Use the first two practices to establish a safe and supportive learning environment.
- ★ Implement the third and fourth practices to prompt active participation during instruction.
- ★ Apply the fifth practice to reinforce the application learner skills.

The **Steps to Boost Student Engagement and Accelerate Student Learning** (Figure 1) provide an organizational layout of the document, and links to corresponding tables with details about each instructional practice. Per practice, a highlight of its critical features, related tips and examples, along with prompts for self-assessment are included. After reviewing the document, classroom educators can choose to focus on one or all five of the practices or school leaders can use the [DDOE Tier 1 Planning Guide](#) to integrate these practices into their schoolwide expectations for Tier 1 instruction. For additional information per practice, see the table of [Reference Links](#).

Figure 1: Steps to Boost Student Engagement and Accelerate Student Learning

	Step 1: Create a safe and supportive learning environment	Step 2: Prompt active participation during instruction	Step 3: Reinforce the application of learner skills
Instructional Practices	Active Supervision	Opportunities to Respond	Strategic Use of Feedback
	Rules and Routines	Explicit Instruction	

Use **active supervision** during instruction to monitor student progress, build relationships, and prevent interfering behavior.

Critical features <i>What does this practice look like in a classroom, and why use it?</i>	Tips and examples <i>How can I use this practice in my classroom?</i>	Self-Assessment <i>How am I doing with this practice?</i>
<p>Teacher movement around the room to maintain frequent proximity to all students is an important predictor of student engagement (Cooper & Scott, 2017).</p> <p>Teacher movement enables the teacher to monitor student engagement and understanding.</p> <p>Proximity is used to provide additional prompting and feedback to students as needed.</p> <p>The teacher positions themselves in such a way that any student could easily be observed with a quick turn of the head.</p>	<p>Ensure there are no barriers (i.e., furniture) to scanning and easy eye contact with students.</p> <p>Active supervision is easier in locations that have an organized physical environment that allows for ease of movement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I move and circulate through all parts of the classroom using close proximity to students needing additional support. 2. I scan the classroom, looking for appropriate and interfering behaviors. 3. I interact frequently with my students, providing additional support to those needing help with academic behavior and social behavior. 4. My room is set up in such a way that I can scan and make eye contact with any student in less than 1 second.

Establish consistent **rules, and routines** during instruction to help students feel safe, confident, and ready to learn.

Critical features <i>What does this practice look like in a classroom, and why use it?</i>	Tips and examples <i>How can I use this practice in my classroom?</i>	Self-Assessment <i>How am I doing with this practice?</i>
<p>Teaching students the behaviors that you expect to see (e.g., rules) and what to do during daily routines minimizes interfering behavior and helps them be successful.</p> <p>Student success is influenced by the degree to which the daily classroom routines occur in the same order, at the same times, and in the same way each day (Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013).</p> <p>Establish a predictable schedule with clear procedures for teaching and learning activities.</p> <p>There are four elements to effectively defining and teaching classroom rules and routines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. define the rules and procedures, 2. teach/review the rules and procedures, 3. practice the rules and procedures, and 4. give lots of positive student feedback for following the rules and procedures. 	<p>Co-develop classroom rules and definitions with your students.</p> <p>Regularly refer to the rules when interacting with students, and teaching content.</p> <p>Post steps for specific rules and routines to promote independence.</p> <p>Consider routines for times of day that often prompt ineffective behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elementary examples: arrival/dismissal, accessing help, technology use ● Secondary examples: making up missed work, turning in assignments, handing out materials/equipment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My classroom rules are defined by being observable, measurable, and are positively stated. 2. My classroom rules are prominently posted in an area for all to see. 3. My behavioral expectations for routines are succinct, positively stated, and in appropriate language and/or visuals. 4. All of my students are aware of the routines and consistently demonstrate them throughout the day. 5. My daily schedule is posted and visible to all students and visitors. 6. When changes to the schedule occur, I inform students well in advance.

Provide **high rates of opportunities** to prompt active participation during instruction.

Critical features

What does this practice look like in a classroom, and why use it?

The key to effective engagement is promoting high levels of student interest and success ([Cooper & Scott, 2017](#)).

Research indicates that high rates of opportunities to respond (OTRs) during instruction results in improved learning, increased on-task behavior, lower rates of interfering behavior, and often increases the amount of materials that can be covered ([Midwest PBIS Snapshot](#)).

There are six elements to using OTRs effectively:

1. Ask academic questions that are relevant
2. Incorporate variety and unpredictability into question asking
3. Use OTRs to stimulate interest, challenge the class, and avoid predictability
4. Ask group and individual students OTRs at a brisk pace
5. Ensure all students are provided OTRs
6. Use the level of student accuracy to inform instruction (see: [Classroom Check-Up](#))

Tips and examples

How can I use this practice in my classroom?

There are many strategies to increase opportunities to respond in your classroom. The following resources are helpful to get you started:

- [Classroom Check-Up](#)
- [PCBS OTR Snapshot](#)

If you are looking for a tool to help you monitor and/or increase your use of a specific practice, like OTRs, check out the free [Be+ app](#) from PBIS.org.

Self-Assessment

How am I doing with this practice?

1. When provided with an opportunity to respond, my students are able to answer correctly 80% or more of the time.
2. I provide three or more opportunities to respond to students per minute.
3. My teacher talk time accounts for less than 40% of the instructional time.
4. I use group responses more frequently than one-at-a time responses.
5. My wait time equals at least 5 seconds.
6. I provide an equitable number of opportunities for all student groups (e.g., students of color, ELL students, students with disabilities).

Use **explicit instruction** to teach academic and social, emotional, and behavioral skills

Critical features

What does this practice look like in a classroom, and why use it?

The most effective instruction is delivered to students in a clear and concrete manner ([Cooper & Scott, 2017](#)).

Explicit instruction provides students with unambiguous, clearly articulated teaching and clear instructional expectations ([Center on PBIS](#)).

Specifically, teachers use the following critical features of explicit instruction:

- Connect new content to prior knowledge and skills
- Establish and maintain clear learning goals and expectations for each lesson
- Model concepts and processes clearly in a step-by-step fashion
- Vary instruction in response to immediate and reflective feedback
- Ask questions to continually monitor understanding
- Scaffold learning experiences for students to practice, synthesize, and consolidate learning ([Center on PBIS](#)).

Tips and examples

How can I use this practice in my classroom?

Explicit instructional strategies include teacher modeling, multiple opportunities for practice, and performance feedback when teaching skills and expectations (both academic and behavioral).

Use model-lead-test (i.e., explicit “I do-we do-you do”) format to engage students in instruction.

Consider enhancing key elements of explicit instruction through a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) lens. For guidance, see [Foxworth et al., 2021](#).

Self-Assessment

How am I doing with this practice?

1. I model for the students how to use each step of the task with a practical example.
2. I lead students through doing it on their own.
3. I reteach the steps students were not successful with on their own.
4. I modify my instructional style, pace, and speed to better meet the needs of my students.

Provide **specific feedback** to reinforce the application of learner skills.

Critical features <i>What does this practice look like in a classroom, and why use it?</i>	Tips and examples <i>How can I use this practice in my classroom?</i>	Self-Assessment <i>How am I doing with this practice?</i>
<p>Utilize these five steps to provide students feedback on their progress with academic and SEB skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide timely feedback 2. Provide constructive and corrective feedback 3. Provide specific feedback 4. Focus on the product, or effort and not the student 5. Verify the student understood the feedback (see: the Classroom Check-Up) <p>Deliver frequent behavior-specific praise to inform/remind students of effective classroom behaviors. The more attention you give these behaviors, the more likely they will be to increase.</p>	<p>Feedback should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage perseverance, and use of specific supports and strategies in the face of challenges, ● Emphasize effort and improvement, ● Be frequent, timely, and specific, ● Be informative rather than competitive (CAST, 2018) <p>Tips for making praise informative versus controlling (for more in depth information follow this link):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highlight the future usefulness of the behavior being recognized ● Link the behavior to underlying thoughts, emotions, and dispositions ● Encourage students to self-reinforce and take pride in their own behavior ● Focus on the effort expended (Bear, 2010) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a majority of students are making errors, I use that information to go back and reteach, so that next time students respond correctly 2. I provide specific and contingent praise for academic and social behaviors 3. When needed, I provide clear corrective feedback that informs the student what to do instead 4. I use a 3:1 positive to negative ratio (i.e., three positive statements for each corrective statement)

References Links

Safe physical environment references:

1. [Midwest PBIS Active Supervision Snapshot](#)
2. [Center on PBIS: Supporting and Responding to Students' SEB Needs](#)
3. [Cooper & Scott Article: The Keys to Managing Instruction and Behavior](#)

Consistency references:

1. [Jones, Jones & Vermette Article: Exploring the Complexity of Classroom Management: 8 Components of Managing a Highly Productive, Safe, and Respectful Urban Environment](#)
2. [Classroom Check-Up: Defining and Teaching Classroom Rules](#)
3. [Center on PBIS: Supporting and Responding to Students' SEB Needs](#)
4. [Midwest PBIS Classroom Snapshot: Classroom Teaching Matrix](#)
5. [Classroom Check-Up Rubric](#)

Opportunities to respond references:

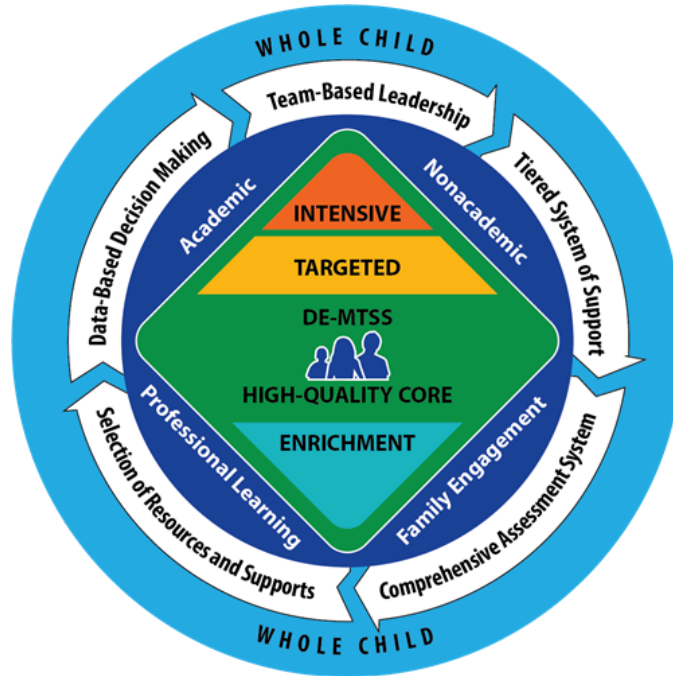
1. [Classroom Check-Up Rubric](#)
2. [Midwest PBIS Classroom Snapshot: Engagement and Opportunities to Respond](#)
3. [Midwest PBIS Engagement and Opportunities to Respond Slides](#)
4. [Center on PBIS: Examples of Engaging Instruction to Increase Equity in Education](#)

Explicit instruction references:

1. [Center on PBIS: Examples of Engaging Instruction to Increase Equity in Education](#)
2. [Foxworth et al. resource: Approaching Explicit Instruction within a UDL Framework](#)

Feedback references:

1. [Center on PBIS: Examples of Engaging Instruction to Increase Equity in Education](#)
2. [UDL: Increase mastery-oriented feedback \(cast.org\)](#)
3. [School Discipline and Self-Discipline \(Links to Amazon\)](#)
4. [Classroom Check-Up: Using Behavior-Specific Praise](#)
5. [DE-PBS Effective Ways to Acknowledge and Praise Students](#)



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