I. Basic Proactive Classroom Management Strategies Resource

II. Opportunities to Respond Supplement

III. References
### Checks for Understanding

| WHAT is it? | • Prompting students to demonstrate understanding of a concept, expectation, or set of directions before moving forward in the lesson (Allday, 2011).  
• Using a variety of strategies (questions, performance tasks) to check for understanding in different situations. |
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| WHEN should I use it? | • Before students begin a new task, activity, or transition.  
• During a task, activity, or transition - especially if students appear to be off-task or forgetting the expectations. For example:  
  - What are the directions for this activity?  
  - What steps should you follow after…?  
  - What rules are in place right now?  
  - After you finish ________, what should you do? |
| HOW should I do it? | • Give clear and explicit directions that include: expected noise level, how students will move, and what students will do.  
• Ask questions that allow students to verbalize an understanding of directions. For example:  
  - How are you going to walk to your seat?  
  - What's the first step?  
  - What voice level should you be using? |
| What MISSTEPS should I avoid? | • The directions are unclear or non-specific. For example, you should avoid statements like:  
  - “Get out your whiteboard and get started.”  
  - “You have the period today to research your topic.”  
• The check-for-understanding does not actually prompt students to verbalize their thinking and understanding. For example you should avoid statements like:  
  - “Give me a thumbs up/down if you understand.”  
  - “Raise your hand if you don’t get it.”  
  - “Are there any questions?”  
  - “How many understand this?” |

### Opportunities to Respond

| WHAT is it? | Opportunities to Respond (OTRs) are engagement strategies that give students a chance to:  
• Respond to thinking prompts verbally, in writing, or with the use of manipulatives.  
• Interact with peers in a meaningful and academically-focused way. |

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1 Teachers should be selective about using checks for understanding that ask students to self-assess their own understanding (i.e. “thumbs-up/thumbs-down” or “fist to five”), since some students will be able to do this more skilfully than others. These strategies can also be problematic because they don’t actually reveal a student’s thinking.

2 For a more detailed description of how to implement a specific OTR, see the supplement entitled Opportunities to Respond Supplement.
| WHEN should I use it? | Opportunities to Respond should be built into each phase of the lesson. For example:  
**Beginning of lesson:** Teacher uses think-pair-share to have students access background knowledge on the topic of the day’s lesson.  
**Middle of lesson:** Teacher uses choral response to reinforce important concepts in the lesson.  
**Closure:** Teacher posts a sentence frame related to the objective. Students formulate a response, then share with a partner. The teacher then calls on 2-3 students to share their completed frame. |
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| HOW should I do it? | - Establish and practice interaction procedures.  
- Ensure the OTR is aligned to academic content.  
- Confirm that the OTR allows students to verbalize their thinking.  
- Re-teach or continue on in the lesson based on student responses to the OTR.  
- Embed various OTR strategies in the lesson. |
| What MISSTEPS should I avoid? | - Procedures have not been established or practiced.  
- Prompt for student response is confusing or unclear.  
- Sentence frames are confusing or not aligned to content.  
- Prompt for choral response is not connected to lesson objective.  
- Activity or task is not meaningful or well-prepared. |

### Proximity

| WHAT is it? | Proximity is the use of your physical presence as a cue for students to begin or return to an academic task or desired behavior (Allday, 2011). It involves…  
- Moving throughout the room during a lesson to support students both academically and behaviorally.  
- Being available to answer students’ questions, clarify directions, or provide feedback.  
- Using physical presence and close proximity as a cue for students to begin or return to desired behavior.  
- Circulating purposefully; the teacher visits all students during the lesson and knows what directions or behaviors he or she would like to reinforce. |
|---|---|
| WHEN should I use it? | - Use proximity with specific students who demonstrate minor misbehaviors such as talking out of turn or disrupting others.  
- Use proximity and specific praise to reinforce positive behaviors.  
- Use proximity any time students are given a new set of expectations to follow. |
| HOW should I do it? | - Arrange your room so that you can access *all* students quickly.  
- "Break the plane" and walk among students while you are teaching.  
- Face as much of the class as possible when working with individual students.  
- Circulate with purpose. Visit students who tend to exhibit off-task behavior or need behavioral support.  
- Engage with *all* students by redirecting behaviors, clarifying directions, or answering questions. |
| What MISSTEPS should I avoid? | - Using proximity to stop a behavior by hovering over a student. This is a misstep because the behavior has started and proximity is being used *reactively* instead of *proactively*.  
- Only using proximity as an intervention for students who misbehave, rather than as a form of support for all students. |
<table>
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| **Think-Pair-Share** | This structure allows students to process information independently and with a partner before sharing with the entire class.                                                                                 | 1. The teacher poses a question or prompt.  
2. Students independently think about their answer.  
3. The teacher cues students to share with their partners.  
4. Once both partners have shared, the teacher signals for the whole group’s attention.  
5. The teacher then “surveys” the class and calls on 2-3 students to share their responses with the whole group. The teacher uses this information to either re-teach or extend students’ thinking. | - Younger students  
- Older students                                                                 |
| **Choral Response** | This structure is used to engage 100% of students in recalling or reporting information. The teacher poses a question and students respond chorally.                                      | 1. Prepare and use a cue so that students will know when to respond chorally. Examples are “Class!”, “Everyone!”, or “1, 2, 3!” Teach and practice this cue with students.  
2. Decide if you would like students to:  
   - Repeat information you have taught, for example: “When we have a remainder we…Everyone!” (“Keep dividing!”)  
   - Report an answer to something they have worked on, for example: “ON three, tell me your answer to number twelve, 1, 2, 3!”  
3. Be sure that the question or prompt has only one response, so everyone can say it together.  
4. Students respond at the same noise level in which the prompt was delivered. If you whisper, they whisper in response. Keep it fun and engaging. | See it in action                                                                 |
| **Sentence Frames** | This structure is used to reinforce academic vocabulary or promote discussion techniques.                                                                                                                  | 1. Using content from the lesson, create a sentence frame that supports student discussion or their use of key vocabulary.  
2. Have frames posted for students to reference during the lesson.  
3. Support students in using the frames by encouraging, modeling, and holding a high expectation for their use.  
4. Sample sentence frames are listed below:  
   - Academic:  
     - The main idea is ______. I know because ______.  
     - The product of _____ is _____. I know because ______.  
   - Discussion:  
     - I agree/disagree with _____ because ______.  
     - I think _____ because ______. | See it in action                                                                 |
Basic Proactive Classroom Management Strategies

References


