Teachers’ skills and their confidence in their skills are pivotal to improved student achievement (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Many of the “new” schoolwide initiatives target the adoption of evidence-based instructional practices; however, the rate at which they are implemented by teachers is quite low (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007). A critical factor in ensuring implementation is obtaining teacher “buy-in.” This is best accomplished when teachers see the need for a change and have the skills necessary to implement the change or perceive that they have the support to acquire needed skills (Batsche, 2008; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, & Wallace, 2007).

Presentation of school data in a user-friendly format can be pivotal in providing general and special educators the rationale and motivation to acquire new teaching skills (Batsche, 2008). Grade-level data teams can adapt school-level strategies to promote literacy, numeracy, and social competence to a specific grade level and classroom as well as create opportunities for learning and implementing evidence-based strategies (Ervin, Schaughey, Goodman, McGlinchey, & Matthews, 2007). Grade-level data help to focus discussions, answer basic questions, and drive instruction.

Determining Which Types of Data to Use
Determining what data to use is a crucial first step in using data to improve student achievement (Center for Performance Assessment, 2006). Different kinds of data answer different types of questions for schools and teachers. Data from state tests can assist in identifying trends among content areas and student subgroups. Referral data can help schools examine times and places resulting in most referrals. Benchmark tests and classroom-based assessments give teachers a better understanding of what their students know and where students need help.

Classroom Assessments
Use of classroom-based assessment data can most impact instruction on a daily basis. Designing classroom-based assessments prior to teaching a unit allows educators to determine what they want their students to know and how they will know that the students know it (DuFour, 2004). Classroom assessments may consist of pretests, end-of-unit tests, or brief formative assessments given throughout a unit.
Analysis and Interpretation of Data
Perhaps the most important issue to address is how teachers will respond to the results of assessments. Data teams, consisting of teachers from the same grade level, content area, or co-teaching pairs, can work together to make sense of the data as well as design instruction to meet the needs of their students. (To hear a positive discussion that includes connecting assessment and instruction from an effective co-teaching pair, listen to the new co-teaching podcast available at http://fdgeis.people.wm.edu/podcasts.php)

By examining the results for each student, teachers can begin to ask and answer the following questions (Center for Performance Assessment, 2006):
1. Which students are making progress and which need further help?
2. What is working where students are being successful?
3. What does instruction look like in these areas?
4. How can all teachers build on this success?
5. Are there other instructional strategies that could help meet the needs of the students?

Designing Effective Instructional Practices
The way that data and other types of assessment information are used determines the effectiveness of data analysis. While answering the questions is part of the process of meeting the needs of ALL students, it also provides an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other's strengths (DuFour, 2004). General and special education teachers can share their areas of expertise to assist each other in learning new strategies to benefit students. The way that one teacher teaches fractions may work very well, while another teacher's approach to decimals is successful. By being exposed to others' ideas, teachers are able to choose what works best for a given student. Examining the results for individual students also helps teachers decide who needs additional instruction, practice, or enriching experiences. Groupings may be arranged within a single classroom, particularly a co-taught classroom, or they may be formed across two or three classrooms.

Data analysis provides a forum for co-teachers and grade-level teachers to share their skills and focus on students’ needs. Data should become the key for designing and implementing effective evidenced-based instructional practices that best ensure student success.

References
DuFour, R. (2004). What is a "professional learning community"? Educational Leadership, 61(8), 6-11.
Linking Research-Based Strategies with the Virginia Grade-Level Alternative Assessment
By Tina Spencer, M.S., and Cathy Buyrn, M.Ed.

Teachers often use the nine research-based strategies described in Classroom Instruction That Works by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) to teach the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). These research-based strategies, listed in the table below, have been shown to increase student achievement. They can also be used to assess students’ mastery of content. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans are at times unable to express their knowledge of the standards in a multiple-choice test format and may be candidates for the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) Assessment.

The VGLA provides eligible students in grades 3 through 8 with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of grade-level content. Instead of taking these high-stakes multiple-choice tests, students may demonstrate their knowledge of the SOL by successfully completing a variety of activities aligned with Marzano et al.’s (2001) research-based strategies. Student work is organized in a portfolio as a Collection of Evidence (COE) documenting student proficiency in the assessed SOL.

The chart below will assist teachers as they collect evidence for student portfolios.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nine Categories of Strategies</th>
<th>Student Activities</th>
<th>Collection of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifying similarities and differences</td>
<td>▪ Comparison of historical events</td>
<td>▪ Venn diagram&lt;br&gt;▪ Comparison matrix&lt;br&gt;▪ Student-generated metaphor or analogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Summarizing and note taking</td>
<td>▪ Use of note-taking tools to process and record content</td>
<td>▪ Student-generated web diagrams and explanation of the connections&lt;br&gt;▪ Teacher-generated anecdotal observation of the student’s explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition</td>
<td>▪ Set learning goals and write commitment statements to learn the content</td>
<td>▪ Student-generated learning contract and products that demonstrate content mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Homework and practice</td>
<td>▪ Play a computer math game to practice skills</td>
<td>▪ Copies of computer-generated reports of skill mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nonlinguistic representations</td>
<td>▪ Analyze a set of data and produce a pictograph</td>
<td>▪ Student-generated pictograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cooperative learning</td>
<td>▪ Work with a small group to read a short story</td>
<td>▪ Student interview by teacher demonstrating his ability to identify story elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Setting objectives and providing feedback</td>
<td>▪ Set learning goals for new content and write learning contracts</td>
<td>▪ Student-generated learning contract and products that demonstrate content mastery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Generating and testing hypothesis
   - Under supervision, create a science project depicting the water cycle in the classroom
   - Science board
   - Teacher-completed project scoring rubric

9. Questions, cues, and advance organizers
   - Create questions about a story
   - Copy of the story with student-generated questions attached


For specific lesson plans, resources, and additional research-based strategies to assist with the VGLA collection of evidence, visit the following websites:
www.wm.edu/ttac
www.ttaconline.org (SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS Lesson Plans)

References

Family Partnership
Making It Happen: Encouraging Self-Determination in Pre-Adolescent Children
By Dale Pennell, C.A.S., and Elaine Gould, M.Ed.

This is the second in a four-part Link Lines series. Part I (September/October 2008) emphasized the importance of teaching self-determination skills to children with disabilities; see www.wm.edu/tta/Newsletter/index.html). Part II provides suggestions for activities parents may use to promote self-determination in their pre-adolescent children at home, at school, and in the community.

Family members play a critical role in teaching self-determination skills to their children with disabilities. Thoma, Williams, and Davis (2005) define self-determination as “both the attitudes which lead people to define goals for themselves and their ability to take the initiative to achieve these goals” (p. 104). Parents have the earliest opportunity to model and promote self-determined behavior in their children, thus laying the foundation for continued skill development (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003; Sands & Doll, 1996).

The table below identifies skills that foster self-determination and as well as corresponding examples of activities parents may use to encourage self-determination in preschool and elementary-aged children. The following suggestions are based on the work of Palmer and Wehmeyer (2003), Sands and Wehmeyer (1996), Sands and Doll (1996), and Thoma et al. (2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Determination Skills</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice-Making</td>
<td>Allow your child to make choices/decisions, such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What to wear to school (from among several choices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Which of several entrees to have for dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Which of two social activities to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem-Solving</strong></td>
<td>Discuss with your child:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How to resolve an argument with a schoolmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What to do when there is homework to do, but friends are asking him to play outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How to deal with unhappiness about not getting as much playing time on the soccer team as she would like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal-Setting</strong></td>
<td>Model these behaviors by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal-Attainment</strong></td>
<td>- Posting a schedule of your daily chores and checking them off as they are completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Listing on a calendar the steps you will follow to create a summer vegetable garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Involving your child in planning a family vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>Provide your child with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Opportunities and time for independent self-care activities, such as filling the bath tub, washing her hair, making her bed, packing her own school lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Instruction in how to do chores and the opportunity to do them without help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time to complete homework independently, even if he makes errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Observation</strong></td>
<td>Teach your child to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>- Ask for help before he gets too confused or frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Reinforcement</strong></td>
<td>- Discuss the positive and negative consequences of her actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participate in extracurricular activities to promote her self-worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>Encourage your child to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>- Order and pay for his own lunch at a restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organize a recreational activity for the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Run for a student organization office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness</strong></td>
<td>Teach your child to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>- Identify his interests and strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Explain his disability and how he learns best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognize the challenges his disability presents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents who seize these early opportunities to encourage their children’s self-determination promote the development of students who are in control of their learning and behavioral outcomes (Sands & Doll, 1996; Zhang, Wehmeyer, & Chen, 2005).

References


Check It Out!

The following materials may be borrowed by individuals in Superintendents Regions 2 and 3 free of charge from the College of William and Mary T/TAC lending library. To request materials, please phone 1-800-323-4489 and leave a message or order them online. The materials will be sent along with a postage-paid return mailer. A complete listing of professional resources available through the T/TAC W&M lending library may be viewed at http://www.wm.edu/ttac. Simply click on the Library link to view holdings, complete an online search, or order materials.

The resources below are companions to the articles appearing in this issue of Link Lines. These resources offer more in-depth, expanded coverage of the topics in the newsletter.

**Postsecondary Education and Transition for Students with Learning Disabilities**  
By Loring C. Brinckerhoff, Joan M. McGuire, and Stan F. Shaw  
The second edition of this best-selling book has been updated and expanded to include eight new chapters plus an accompanying CD-ROM appendix. The new chapters add in-depth information on transition planning from high school to college, eligibility determination for services and testing accommodations, policy development, provision of accommodations, service delivery options for college students with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, the latest advances in assistive technology, approaches to professional development, program evaluation, and marketing considerations. (TR145.1)

**Response to Intervention Policy Considerations and Implementations**  
By National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
This manual gives a brief overview of Response to Intervention (RtI) and provides guidance to state and local educational agencies in fostering leadership in the design and implementation of RtI across general, remedial, and special education. (TS90)

**Cooperative Teaching: Rebuilding and Sharing the Schoolhouse**  
By Jack J. Hourcade and Jeanne Bauwens  
*Cooperative Teaching* includes an overview of collaborative teaching and information on planning, implementation, and evaluation of co-teaching. The authors discuss the resolution of issues in cooperative teaching and the use of technology for collaboration. (CC55.1)

**Best Behavior: Building Positive Behavior Support in Schools**  
By Jeffrey Sprague  
This book provides educators a clear, concise “how to” for developing schoolwide, classroom, and individual supports. *Coming Soon!*

**Administrator’s Guide to Student Achievement and Higher Test Scores**  
By Marcia Kalb Knoll  
Created for elementary and secondary principals and other key supervisory personnel, this book gives K-12 school leaders a comprehensive action plan for improving instruction, student achievement, and student test scores. (AL85)

**In and Out of School: Family-School Partnerships in Math and Science**  
By Stenhouse Publishers  

**Instructional Classroom Management: A Proactive Approach to Behavior Management**  
By Edward Kameenui and Craig Darch  
This volume describes concepts and strategies for thinking about instructional classroom management and reviews general strategies for reorganizing a classroom to reflect an instructional classroom management approach. The book also outlines strategies for teaching appropriate behavior that parallels methods for teaching academic skills using language that is clear, unambiguous, considerate, and passionate. (TT8)
The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has identified the development of “assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress” (ISLLC, 2008, p. 14) as a key function of school leaders. Cotton (2003) notes that “successful principals ensure that there are systematic procedures for monitoring student progress at both schoolwide and classroom levels” (p. 71). Student progress monitoring, characterized by the use of “quick, brief probes designed to gauge progress toward grade-level goals and to fine-tune instruction as it is delivered” (Virginia Department of Education, 2007, p. 25), can provide schools with a rich data source as they seek to improve educational outcomes for all students.

What can principals do to support the use of student progress monitoring in their schools? First, instructional decision-making based on data for the purpose of continuous improvement should be part of the school culture. Schmoker (1999) notes that data are “the signposts on the road to school improvement…. and should be an essential feature of how schools do business” (p. 36). Principals can encourage meaningful schoolwide conversations about data and student progress by (a) creating and guiding a data team that is responsible for gathering and organizing data into user-friendly formats for teacher use, and (b) setting up collaborative structures (e.g., grade-level or content-area meetings) where student achievement data and the implications for instruction are discussed regularly (Boudett & Moody, 2005).

Principals can further support effective use of student progress monitoring by:

- Introducing the concept of student progress monitoring and stressing the importance of responding with a change in instruction if necessary,
- Helping teachers understand that student progress monitoring has grown out of previous practices in education (e.g., formative assessment) and is not a new initiative, and
- Helping school personnel secure resources and professional development needed to effectively use student progress monitoring. (VDOE, 2007, p. 45)

By embedding student progress monitoring within the context of a school that uses data to make instructional decisions and by establishing collaborative structures that allow teachers to talk about the impact of instruction on student learning, principals will help to ensure that the school is using effective strategies to meet student needs.

For additional information on student progress monitoring, visit http://www.studentprogress.org/. Intervention Central (www.interventioncentral.org) features free probes and other tools for educators. Further, visit the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ for comprehensive information about current research and effective instructional practices. Finally, to learn more about school data teams, refer to Collaborative Leadership: Creating and Guiding a Data Team to Support School Improvement in the November/December 2007 issue of Link Lines. The article is available online at http://web.wm.edu/ttac/Newsletter/2007-novdec.pdf.

References


Teachers want their students to follow requests, be prepared for class, and do their best (Walker, 1995). Self-management is a skill area in which the students learn to assess what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and if it was done correctly (Sprague & Golly, 2005). Directly teaching and modeling self-management makes these skills overt, increases student independence, and promotes positive social skills. Self-management also helps increase positive behaviors and skills and decrease problem behaviors. Self-management strategies are derived from behavior intervention theory and focus on teaching students to self-instruct (the antecedent), self-monitor (the behavior), and self-reinforce (the consequence).

Self-monitoring is a component of self-management and serves as the initial step in learning the what, when, and how of performing a particular skill. The student practices self-monitoring by asking, “What am I doing?” The student may then record the behavior occurrences on a data collection form (see Figure 1 for an example) and, later, evaluate progress by graphing data (Gunter, Miller, Venn, Thomas, & House, 2002). Self-evaluation involves the student asking, “How did I do?” Teacher feedback occurs after the student evaluates his or her performance. Charting and evaluating progress helps students visualize their behavior and how it is viewed by others, and set goals (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004). In addition to the reward of seeing progress, the student may earn tokens, praise, or recognition for improved performance and accurate self-monitoring.

The following example illustrates a process for teaching self-management based upon the steps offered by Sprague and Golly (2005, p. 208).

- Select a behavior you want to change. For example, engaging in off-task behavior.
- Select a desired behavior that either replaces or competes with the former behavior. For example, completing an assigned task.
- Teach the student to self-monitor by giving the rationale for the behavior, showing examples and non-examples, and practicing. For example, discuss how engaging in the specific off-task behaviors is a barrier to achieving the learning goals the student has set for the week. Demonstrate how to get materials ready, review the instructions for the assigned task, determine what may be needed to start the assigned task, and work without interruption. Give the student a chance to practice and reinforce the correct demonstration completing the steps necessary for completing an assigned task.
- Choose a method for recording the behavior and teach the student how to use it. Show the student the recording form and explain when to check the box.
- Coach the student in self-monitoring and recording. Prompt the student to record when the student demonstrates the desired behavior. Recognize the student when he or she records independently and correctly.
- Set a criterion for reward and teach how to track progress. Plan a time during the day when you will meet with the student to evaluate progress and provide recognition and/or reward.
- Determine how rewards will be delivered. Schedule a time when the student will receive the reward.
Self-monitoring teaches students how to identify and manage behaviors that foster the academic outcomes both teachers and students desire. A self-monitoring tool maps progress toward the mutual destination and illustrates, “how we got there together.”

**Figure 1.** Example of a self-monitoring tool that can be used in a classroom.

| Name: ________________________________________________ |
| Date: _______________________________________________ |
| **Completing assigned task** |
| I followed the steps and finished my work |
| **Reading** |
| □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ |
| Total: ____ times |
| **Math** |
| □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ |
| Total: ____ times |
| Total number of times I completed my work = ____ times |
| Goal = ____ times |
| Reward for meeting my goal = 10 minutes of computer time |

**References**
This is the second in a four-part Link Lines series. Part I (September/October 2008) defined the domains of transition planning for which LEAs must consider students’ readiness and seven kinds of activities that may be designed to address identified needs (see www.wm.edu/tta/Newsletter/index.html).

IDEA requires IEP teams to design transition activities that address needs identified as potential obstacles to fulfillment of secondary students’ postsecondary goals. These activities describe one-time or short-term events that IEP team members plan and support as students complete them. This article provides illustrations of activities that support students’ transitions to postsecondary, continuing, and adult education environments.

Services that support the transition of students with disabilities to postsecondary education are activities that prepare students to access and make progress in degree-seeking programs at two- and four-year colleges, as exemplified in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student needs (Identified in PLoP)</th>
<th>Sample activities student will complete</th>
<th>Who might support student’s completion of these activities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of how to identify colleges that match preferences and needs</td>
<td>Complete college preferences assessment (functional vocational evaluation activity)</td>
<td>School counselor will administer the assessment, analyze results, and share with student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of colleges that match postsecondary employment goals</td>
<td>Select and visit colleges that meet preferences, needs, and career goals (community experience activity)</td>
<td>School counselor will identify potential colleges based upon student’s college preferences, needs, and career goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent will arrange for student to visit selected schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of how to create and manage a personal budget for living expenses at college</td>
<td>Participate in a budget management workshop (daily living skills activity)</td>
<td>Case manager will link student/parent to local banks that offer these workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent will register student for workshop and provide transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of means by which necessary supports may be accessed and provided at college</td>
<td>Attend Say YES to College conference (instructional activity)</td>
<td>Transition specialist will provide application to student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent will complete and submit application and fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Services that support transition of students with disabilities to continuing and adult education are activities that enable students to enrich their personal and professional lives. These services also prepare students who leave high school without a diploma to access academic coursework to prepare them to pass the general education development (GED) test as adults.

| Transition Activities That Prepare Students for Continuing/Adult Education |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Sample student needs** (Identified in PLoP) | **Sample activities student will complete** | **Who will support student’s completion of these activities?** |
| Knowledge of recreational therapy classes offered in the community | Meet with case manager at the local Community Services Board to identify recreational therapy offerings | Occupational therapist will assist the parent in scheduling the meeting  
(relate service activity) Parent will take student to the meeting |
| Knowledge of how to enroll in a GED preparation program | Interview a representative of the school division’s adult education program to find out how to register for GED preparation courses | School counselor will arrange for the student to meet with this representative  
(adult living activity)  
Case manager will work with student to create a list of questions to ask in the interview |
| Knowledge of resource services provided through the Workforce Development Center | Meet with a representative from the Workforce Development Center who can explain how this agency supports continuing education to enhance professional skills | Transition specialist will arrange a visit to the Workforce Development Center  
(employment activity) Parent will take the student to visit the center |

The next issue in this four-part series will address transition activities that prepare students for vocational education and employment. Look for the February/March edition of Link Lines to view this article.

See insert:

T/TAC W&M will no longer print and mail the quarterly Link Lines’ newsletters. To receive the T/TAC W&M quarterly newsletters electronically, help us update our email list and log on to our website at http://wm.edu/ttac/Newsletter and complete the information on-line or fill out the insert within this newsletter and mail to The Training & Technical Assistance Center, The College of William and Mary, 1215 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Suite E, Williamsburg, VA, 23185.
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