

"Instructional Support Weekly"

Topic: Diversifying Classroom Instruction – Independent Tasks

How to increase the student's persistence with independent academic tasks:

- Decrease assignment length (e.g., reduce number of items, shorten the required length of an essay)
- Break assignment into smaller, more manageable 'chunks'. Acknowledge, praise, or reward student for completion of each chunk.
- Explicitly recognize praise, and reward the effort that a student puts into an assignment-no matter how imperfect the outcome. Students can become more motivated as they learn that effort (a factor is entirely within their control) can actually pay off!
- Have student monitor and chart own work completion as a motivation-builder.
- Provide the student with a copy of reading material (e.g., expository article) with main ideas already highlighted.
- Post a range of modest classroom 'work accommodations' that any student in the room can take advantage of (e.g., moving to a different part of the classroom to work; choosing which of several in-class assignments to do first; using a tape recorder to dictate the first draft of an essay, etc.). Encourage students to choose those accommodations that help them to work most productive.

How to ensure that students who need help with independent classwork get it promptly:

- Create easy-to-follow 'strategy' sheet that lays out academic problem-solving steps in a clear manner for student to refer to as needed. Give copies of this model to each student, and mount poster-size versions on classroom walls.
- Teach students acceptable, unobtrusive ways to get academic assistance from peers.
- Put together 'help-signal' program: when a student gets 'stuck' on seatwork, he or she displays help-signal (e.g., brightly colored index card) on desk, switches to other work until teacher is freed up to approach and provide assistance.
- Train classmates (or even older students from another classroom) to serve as floating 'peer-tutors' during seatwork, circulating around classroom to help students in difficulty.

Wright, Jim. Accommodating All Students: 'Classic' Ideas That Teachers Can Use to Diversify Classroom Instruction. November 5, 2008.

<http://interventioncentral.com/htmldocs/interventions/genAcademic/classic.php>