

PAT QUINN'S FOUR STEPS TO MAXIMUM CORE INSTRUCTION

STEP 1: REMOVE BARRIERS

- **Power and Control**
 - Student choice
 - Individual accountability for punishment and reward (for both behavior and grading)
 - Suggested Reading: *Classroom Power Relations* by Mary Manke
- **Lack of Student Confidence**
 - "If I try, do I have a chance of being successful?" If the student answers no to this question, s/he has no reason to even try.
 - Rather than pointing out deficiencies, spend time more time teaching where the deficiencies are and more time pointing out and building strengths.
- **Lack of Relationships**
 - Students must feel safe in order to take risks.
 - A student needs a trusting relationship with the teacher and/or other students.
 - If students are isolated, they will struggle.
 - "Scripted conversation" – Write down things that are happening in each child's life so you can make sure to comment on them, ask questions and connect with each child.
- **Lack of Student Goals and Life Plan**
 - The most high-risk student is the one without a plan.
 - Teach students how to set weekly goals. Set them on Mondays and reflect on them on Fridays. Not only will this help the students, it will also give you a lot of information about who they are, what they think about, etc.
 - Have students set long term goals too. The point is to work toward something; it doesn't matter if those goals will eventually change.

STEP 2: TEACH ROUTINES

- **Increase Your Instructional Time by Developing Good Routines.**
 - Start of class & end of class routines
 - Routine for asking questions (direct instruction, guided practice, independent practice)
 - Routine for what to do when finished with work
- **Four Steps to Teach Routines**
 - Model it (What does it look like? What does it sounds like?).
 - Teach why we have these routines.
 - Provide counter examples (what it does NOT look and sound like).
 - Have students actively practice it. Ask, "What do we do when that happens?"

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STEP 3: SPLIT THE CLASS

- **Split the Full Class Into Two Groups**
 - Those that get it
 - Those that don't get it

- **Ease the Transition**
 - Week 1: Teach kids about individual differences. "Fair is not when everyone gets the same thing. Fair is when everyone gets what they need."
 - Week 2: Hand out the same worksheet for the whole class to do, but make half of them one color and the other half another color.
 - Week 3: Create two different assignments that are equal in length and difficulty. Hand them out randomly to students.
 - Week 4: Create two different assignments with the same content, but one is easier and the other one is more difficult. Assign them to students based on ability.

- **Two Important Routines for When the Class is Split Into Groups**
 - What to do when they are finished.
 - How to ask a question.

- **Helpful Routines**
 - "Assess & Adjust" – Have students do part of the assignment and then check in with them. Those who get it can move on, those who need more practice can keep going and those who don't get it can get help from teacher.
 - "Begin & Branch" – Earn your assignment. Teach concept quickly and kids show what they know. If they know it, they can begin independent practice. Those who don't know it can keep getting instruction.
 - Only assign a portion of the assignment and then check student work. If they get it, they can move on. If they don't get it, reteach and let them move on once they get it.

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STEP 4: SHORTEN THE FEEDBACK CYCLE

- **TRY SOMETHING – GET FEEDBACK – TRY AGAIN**
- **Increase the Rate of Learning**
 - The more times you go through the feedback cycle, the more your students will learn.
 - Aim for going through the feedback cycle 10-20 times per subject per day.
- **Common Mistakes**
 - More practice without feedback – Never practice without feedback!
 - Late feedback – The closer the feedback is to the student work, the better.
 - Too much peer feedback
 - Grading too early – Never grade a student while they are still in the learning process; grading should only come at the end of the learning process.
- **Essential Lesson Design Components**
 - Pre-Assess – Don't assume anything; check to see what students know and don't know.
 - Instruction and Check for Understanding – Give students something to try and check to see if they are getting it.
 - Guided Practice – Students should get feedback every minute or so, for a faster rate of learning. Keep students here as long as they need to be. Let kids move from guided practice to independent practice on an individual basis.
 - Independent Practice – Shorten these kinds of assignments and build in natural breaks. Don't let students work for 20 minutes or do 20 problems without checking! Do a "checkpoint" after 5 minutes, or 5 problems, or 2 sentences, etc.
 - Feedback – Provide as much feedback as possible. Only give assignments for which you will provide timely feedback. If you won't give feedback on an assignment before a test, don't even bother giving the assignment.
- **The Best Assessments**
 - Give data to the *student*.
 - Do not surprise students (when, format, content, etc.)
 - Allow multiple opportunities – At the very least, students should get a second chance.
- **Homework**
 - The purpose of homework is to: 1) to get faster at a skill; 2) to get better at a skill 3) to make a skill permanent. Use the shortest assignment possible to achieve these goals.
 - Homework is not a research-validated practice. If you want learning to increase, provide ample feedback *during school*.
 - Homework discriminates against those who don't have support at home.
 - If you don't assign homework, research shows that students will read and exercise more.
 - No one should ever fail a class because they didn't turn in their homework. If a student fails, it should be because they haven't learned the standards.
 - Never give homework as a punishment and never take away homework as a reward.

