# 6. Opportunities to Respond (OTR)

## Definition

* An instructional question, gesture or visual cue made by the teacher explicitly designed to elicit a student response.
* They are curriculum relevant and instructionally related, not a direction to perform a task or a social question.
* They can be presented to an individual student, group, or whole class.
* Student responses may be verbal (e.g., calling out the answer to a question), written (e.g., writing a response on a whiteboard and holding it up), or non-verbal (e.g., thumbs up if you agree).
* The teacher then provides feedback to students.

## Rationale

* Increase student on-task behaviour
* Increase academic/learning outcomes
* Increase positive to corrective feedback ratio
* Makes learning visible
* Allows for differentiated responses.

## Guidelines

### **OTRs have three main elements:**

1. identifying the content or skills to be targeted
2. preparing questions that offer students practice with the material
3. leading the lesson with a high rate of questioning, rapid student responding, and immediate teacher feedback. (Lane et al., 2015)
* Ideally, teachers present students with multiple and varied OTR at a brisk pace, but not so rapid that students are unable to participate
* Use pre-correction to remind students of the procedures for responding.
* Studies have suggested optimal rates of 3 to 3.5 OTRs per minute during direct teacher instruction. (Cooper & Scott, 2107)
* A mixture of unison and individual OTRs appears to be a more effective instructional strategy.
* New material – a minimum of 4-6 responses per minute with 80% accuracy.
* Review of previously learned material – 8-12 responses per minute with 90% accuracy. (Council for Exceptional Children, 1987)

## Getting started

### Step 1:

#### Plan a variety of verbal response opportunities

There are two common types of verbal response strategies:

* Individual responses – strategies involve the teacher using methods to invite many students to answer instructional questions.

Choral responses – when all students respond in unison to a teacher question.

### Step 2:

#### Allow sufficient ‘think time’

Provide a 3-5 second thinking pause or wait time, between asking a question and prompting students to respond.

### Step 3:

#### Plan non-verbal responses

* Non-verbal responses involve all students actively answering or responding to each question or problem asked by the teacher.
* Whiteboards
* Response cards
* Signalling and movement responses
* Technology

### Step 4:

#### Collect baseline data

Calculate your current use of OTRs.

### Step 5:

#### Plan to increase OTRs

Set goals for yourself based on this information.

## Techniques

### Verbal

#### **Individual questioning:**

* Use seating chart, tallying to monitor rate of questions presented to each student.

Pulling a student’s name out of container.

#### Choral responding:

* Teacher signals and students respond in unison.

Develop questions with only one single right answer.

### Non-verbal

* Personal white boards
* Pre-printed written response cards
* Student response systems
* Signalling or movement activities
* Guided notes
* Stop and jot.

## Trauma lens

* Teacher presentation of frequent opportunities for students to respond provides time to process or apply what students are learning, allowing neural networks to be strengthened.

Footnotes:

Cooper, J. T., & Scott, T. M. (2017). The keys to managing instruction and behavior: Considering high probability practices. Teacher Education and Special Education, 40(2), 102-113.

Council for Exceptional Children. (1987). Academy for effective instruction: Working with mildly handicapped students. Reston, VA: Author.

Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Ennis, R. P., & Oakes, W. P. (2015). Supporting behavior for school success: A step-by-step guide to key strategies. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Scott, Terrance M.; Hirn, Regina; Cooper, Justin. Teacher and Student Behaviors (pp. 60-61). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

“The degree to which students are actively engaged with the curricular content during instruction is perhaps the most powerful predictor of student achievement.”

Cooper & Scott, 2017

“The primary strategy used by teachers to increase engagement in educational settings is the provision of opportunities to respond.”

Scott, Hirn & Cooper, 2017