

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:
  1. **Individual responses** – strategies involve the teacher using methods to invite many students to answer instructional questions.
  2. **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.

*"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