INCREASING RIGOR THROUGHOUT THE LESSON: DATA-DRIVEN CLASSROOM BEST PRACTICES

1. Re-Write/ Tighten Objectives with Assessments in Mind
   - Connect objective to how the students will be assessed
   - Write “know/do” objectives: Students will know _______ by doing _______.
   - Look at test questions beforehand to be sure the skills assessed on the test were worked into
     the daily lesson
   - Write an assessment of the skills immediately after the objective, at the top of the lesson plan
   - First write assessment questions that align to objective; then break the objective into smaller
     chunks that will ensure mastery of all the skills needed to answer the question correctly
   - Use verbs from Bloom’s taxonomy to ensure rigorous objective

2. Do Now (brief 5-10 minute individual exercise to start class)
   - Use Do Now as a re-teach tool: write questions that students struggled to master on the last
     interim assessment
   - Use mixed-format questions for a skill: multiple choice, short answer, open-ended, etc.
   - Organize questions sequentially according to difficulty
   - Spiral objectives/ skills/ questions from everything previously learned to keep student learning
     sharp
   - Develop Do Now tracking sheet for teachers and students that shows student performance on
     the skills in each Do Now
   - Make Do Nows that look like a test question and make sure it is reviewed in class
   - Observe students answers during Do Now and note kids with wrong answers to follow-up with
     them during oral review
   - Add multiple choice questions to Do Now to allow real-time assessment
   - Add how/why questions (e.g., Why did you choose this answer? How do you know your
     answer is correct?) for different levels of learners and to push thinking
   - Revisit yesterday’s objectives in the Do Now
   - Collect and grade four straight Do Nows, and for the 5th day let students correct their previous
     four Do Nows for extra points towards their Do Now grades

3. Questioning to Checking for Understanding & Increase Engagement:
   - Develop whole class responses to student answer (e.g. snap if you agree, stomp if you don’t) to
     engage 100% participation
   - Use cold call: avoid just calling on students with hands raised
   - Move from “Ping Pong” to “Volleyball:” instead of teacher responding to every student
     answer, get other students to respond to each other: “Do you agree with him?” “Why is that
     answer correct/incorrect?” “What would you add?”
   - Script questions in advance of the lesson to make sure they scaffold appropriately and address
     rigor at varied levels
   - Have observer record teacher questions: highlight where students are succeeding and where
     they can grow

Student Error: Techniques for Helping Students Encounter the Right Answer
   - Have student who struggled initially repeat correct answer produced by the class
Use whiteboards to have every student write down response to question: whole class shows answers simultaneously so teacher can immediately check to see how many students answered correctly

Write questions in plan to specific students who are struggling with a standard; jot down their responses in the plans during class

Note in your book or lesson plan what questions students answer incorrectly; call on them again when you re-visit that sort of question later in the week

Choose “No opt out”: do not let student off the hook when struggling with an answer

After getting to the right answer, have student articulate their original error and how to avoid making the same error in the future

“Think” Ratio: Techniques to Reduce Teacher Talk & Push Student Thinking

- Require students to support answers with evidence from the text
- Feign ignorance (e.g., write wrong answer that student gives on the board, let students find the error rather than correcting it yourself; pretend you don’t even know that the answer is wrong)
- Ask students: “put it in your own words” about a classroom definition, concept, etc.
- Reword question to force student to think on feet about same skill
- Use Wait Time to give more students the chance to think through the answer
- Model “Right is right”: press to get the 100% correct answer
- Check for student use of specific strategies and not just correct answers
- Ask “what if” question: “What if” I took away this information from the problem, how would you approach it?

4. Differentiated Instruction: Teaching Students at Different Levels

- Create leveled questions for assessments
- Include a Bonus section of challenging questions
- Utilize different Do Nows, worksheets, etc.
- Use data (tracking sheets, IA, exit tickets) to determine the degree of scaffolding/extra support each student needs
- Group students according to the skills they need to develop
- Communicate and collaborate with Skills Room/Special Education teachers to develop appropriate scaffolding for special needs students
- Implement station work
- Create individual “work contracts”—student has clear path of what s/he is working on
- Use Do Now, exit tickets and assessment data to drive small group re-teach
- Create assignments with menu options by level (easy, medium, hard) – students can choose or teacher can assign
- Plan a seating chart so that struggling students are seated where you have easy access to support throughout the class
- Have observers sit by a lower-achieving student during an observation to provide extra support

5. Peer-to-Peer Support Strategies

- Observe student work carefully during independent work – leverage strong students to help weaker students determine right answer during review of assignment
- Have students teach parts of the lesson to small groups of their peers
- Have students run stations
- Train peer tutors –teach student tutors how to ask questions instead of giving answers and how to get tutee to do most of the talking
Think, pair, share: have students think of answer, talk with partner and then share as a large group
Turn & talk: students turn towards a partner and explain answers to a question
Peer to group: student models think-aloud
Implement peer editing and revision
Develop study groups that jigsaw activities and content
Create mentoring relationships: 12th to 10th grade, 11th to 9th grade, etc.
Share strong anchor papers and have students lead other students in identifying how their essays have errors

6. Student Self-Evaluation:
Create weekly skills check with a tracking chart: students track their own progress on each skill
Go over tests afterwards – “Why is choice A wrong,” etc.
Have students grade own paper based on rubric
Give students independent practice worksheets with answers on the back so that students can check their own work once completed
Create a cumulative rubric (add skills as taught): have students do periodic self-evaluations with the rubric

7. Exit Tickets (brief class-ending activity to check for understanding of that day’s lesson)
Create a tracking sheet to match the exit ticket
Assess the same skills through varied methods
Align format to interim assessment
Grade immediately
Immediately follow up (breakfast, lunch, home-room)
Answer essential questions on Exit Ticket
Follow up data from Exit Ticket with following day’s Do Now
Use exit ticket to determine small group re-teach
Leverage instructional leaders to design effective exit tickets for newer teachers
Monitor whether exit tickets reflect scope and sequence

8. Homework
Develop homework center targeted on specific skills identified by interim assessments
Review problem areas within homework assignment in class soon after assignment
Have students fix homework errors and teach them how to scrutinize errors
Make tracking sheet by skill
Incorporated spiraled review in homework assignments: include questions/tasks from previously learned standards
Create leveled homework (student-specific)
Design homework that is aligned with interim assessments, state test, SAT
Use homework for open-book quizzes
Incentivize homework completion with class-wide competition or school-wide competition
Include above-grade-level challenge problems
Differentiate homework based on exit ticket results