

Intervention Strategies

Motivation

1. Choice-making

Research demonstrates that opportunities for students to make choices about their work is associated with higher rates of assignment completion and on-task behavior (Dunlap, DePerczel, Clarke, Wilson, Wright, White, & Gomez, 1994; Seybert, Dunlap, & Ferro, 1996).

Below are several suggestions for classroom practices that provide students with opportunities to make choices:

- a) **Menu of assignments:** Teacher controls number, due dates, and value of each assignment, but student free to choose from list of acceptable options (e.g., book report takes different forms—skit, interview, commercial, etc.)
- b) **Self-scoring and self-correction:** (e.g., Cover, Copy, Compare; use of audiotapes dictating words and their spelling; use of answer key for assignments at “independent” level)
- c) **Requests for assistance:** Student signals when help is needed; student’s permission is asked before adult gives help/ advice; student pairs with “study buddy” whose help can be solicited when own efforts inadequate—e.g., at board.
- d) **Varying assignment length:** Worksheets contain critical items within first section; students self-correct when reach designated point in worksheet; if criterion (e.g., 90% accuracy) is met, student exempt from remainder of assignment and can choose among alternative activities. Students told to “do the first __ problems, and as many more as you wish” ... or ... “study for __ minutes, and for as much longer as you wish.”
- e) **Goal-setting and progress charting:** Routinely set short-term goals by asking student, “Tell me the number of problems you think you will be able to work correctly today. Select a number between __ and __ problems.” Graph performance outcomes.
- f) **Student-created homework:** As a homework assignment, students create a homework assignment for a peer, along with an answer key. The assignments are then exchanged and completed by peers as homework on a subsequent day. Also, as a homework assignment, students can be instructed to create questions (again, with an answer key) that will be entered into a pool of items to be used by the teacher in test construction.
- g) **Work for less:** This intervention can be used with any child who fails to complete assigned tasks, but can be especially useful for students with mild disabilities as a way for them to exert choice in reducing the length of their assignments (in place of a unilateral decision about assignment reduction made by the teacher). The teacher gives the child an envelope, which is attached to the child’s desk. The

teacher awards one colored, adhesive "dot" to the child when s/he is working appropriately on an academic assignment; the child puts these dots in the envelope. Later, when the child is working on another assignment (in class or at home), and s/he comes to an item that s/he prefers not to do, s/he can affix one of the collected dots on the paper next to the item, which signals the teacher that the student has chosen not to do this item. Dots can be awarded for other appropriate academic behaviors, such as accuracy of assignments; also, different colored dots can be used for different subject areas.