

This Spotlight is again focused on our behaviour reset, but moves beyond our 4 non-negotiables. A common behaviour management challenge is to keep a group of students focused on a task with the required effort, intensity and independence, for a sustained period. This is easier to do when the task is a form of guided or independent practice and harder when students continually struggle. It is also easier when students have good habits built around a familiarity with the experience of working hard for an extended time, supported by high expectations that are reinforced so that their stamina for sustained effort has developed.



EXPLAIN THE TASK AND CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



- If students are to sustain effort and attention, they need to know what they are supposed to be doing.
- After explaining the task, use the Check for Understanding process, sampling a few students, to ensure that students know what is expected from them, elaborating further as needed.

SET LEARNING GOALS AS WELL AS TASK GOALS



- Learning goals: the knowledge, skills and understanding students should gain by completing the task, e.g. You should be able to describe all the changes of state in the water cycle.
- Task goals: the products students should produce. e.g. You should have finished labelling the diagram and written an explanation for each step.

ISSUE TIME CUES & GOAL REMINDERS



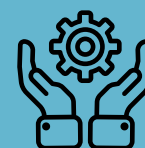
- Time cues: A key element in sustaining focus is to break down the time available into stretches that students can manage. This is a form of scaffolding. Discuss the expected time limit for completing the whole task and some stages within it so that students can monitor their progress.
- Goal reminders: Task completion alone can be an illusion of learning unless the learning goals are reached. Be sure to issue learning goal reminders as well as task completion reminders. Not only 'Have you finished?' but also 'Have you learned it?'

SUPERVISE ACTIVELY



- Students are more likely to drift off-task if they do not feel their teacher's presence while engaged in the task.
- Active circulation is a vital element in keeping students on task.
- The spirit of this is to communicate a sense that you are interested in what they are doing - not merely checking up on them.
- You can pick up on any difficulties at the same time as reinforcing learning goals, task goals and time cues with individuals.

ENCOURAGE, RE-DIRECT OR PUSH ON



- At a simple level, basic supportive encouragement is highly motivational for everyone. It also helps to anticipate a range of responses to any given task:
- Some students will fly - they may drift unless the task is continually challenging. Be ready to push them on to the next stage in the learning.
- Some students might struggle - they start giving up unless they get support and encouragement. Be ready to re-balance the provision of scaffolding with the need to foster independence.