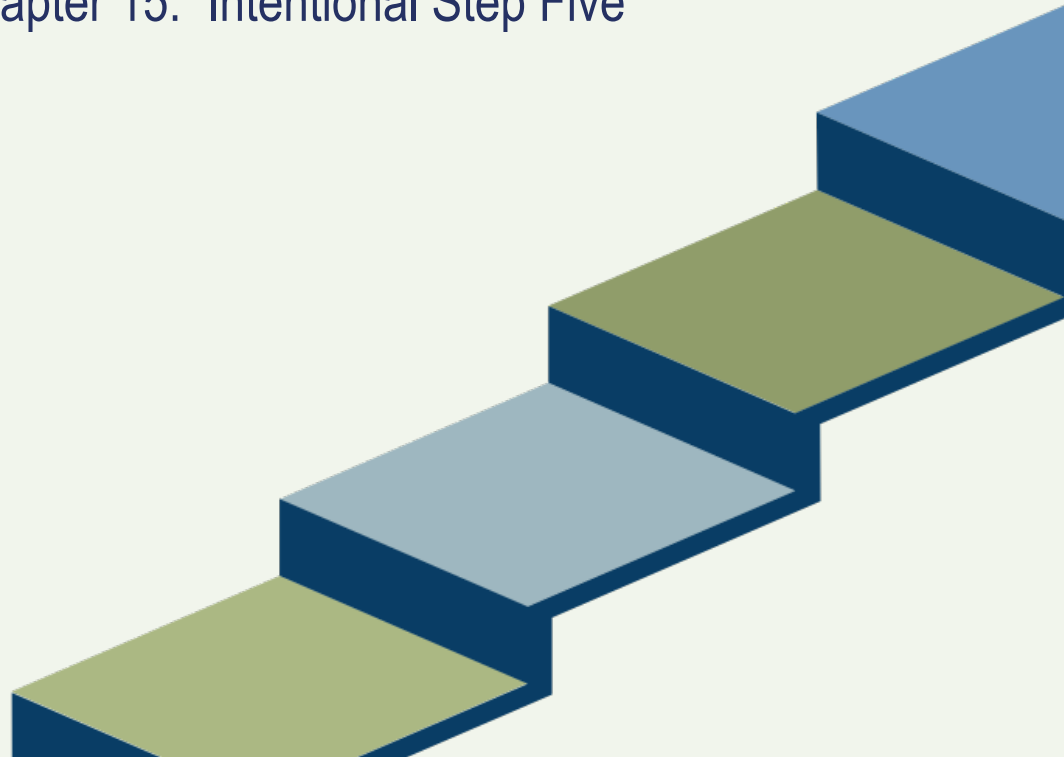


Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to
Accelerate Student
Learning

Companion Guide

Chapter 15: Intentional Step Five



Chapter 15

Intentional Step Five: Conduct Informal and Formal Assessments

Teachers can assess students before, during, and after they complete the group work. Informal assessments should happen in the moment and focus on encouragement and support. More formal assessments should occur at the completion of the task or project and should include teacher, peer, and self-evaluations. These assessments should also consider both individual and group accomplishments. How well did the group meet their goals? How well did each student perform their role? Teachers can also reward groups for other performance criteria, such as most original solution, best research, best discussion, and best listener (Graduate School, 2017).

Strategy 1: Author's Chair

Working in small groups, students use specific guidelines to review, edit, and discuss the work of their peers. Often, this exercise is performed in pairs, with students swapping papers and offering feedback. But I've found that peer editing can be very successful when students form slightly larger groups (3-5) and all of the group members read and edit the same paper. The designated student sits in the "Author's Chair" and the rest of the group reviews and offers feedback on their writing. Collectively, the group can brainstorm, generate ideas, ask questions, and provide constructive comments. This activity can work at any stage of the writing process, from generating ideas to editing a draft of a paper.

This peer feedback strategy is applicable to other subjects as well. For instance, in a CTE class, students can present part of a presentation or project to their group and receive feedback on what's working and how they can improve it. Oftentimes, I see these critiques

happening after the project is completed, but the feedback will be more effective if students can go back and revise their work. Thus, teachers should plan to utilize the Author’s Chair strategy in the middle of a project or assignment, rather than always at the end. For more suggestions on effective feedback, see Chapter 9.

Note that peer review works best when students understand how to give and receive constructive comments. An easy template to follow is the feedback sandwich: students can begin by praising the strengths of their peer’s work, then provide constructive feedback, then offer next steps and words of encouragement. See the “Author’s Chair” handout for a sample graphic organizer that prompts students to record what they like about a peer’s work along with questions and suggestions. There is also a list of Author’s Chair Reflection Ideas to help strengthen the kind of feedback students provide.

The Author’s Chair gives students experience in showcasing their work, gathering feedback, and then improving their work based on the feedback. It hits on many of Hattie’s top strategies, such as evaluation and reflection (.75), self-efficacy (.92), and feedback (.70). It also allows students to practice flexibility, receptiveness, creativity, analytical thinking, ideation, originality, and social and self-awareness.

Strategy 2: Carousel

The teacher writes different questions on posters or chart paper and hangs the posters around the room. Students form groups of 3-4 and each group starts at a different poster. The groups have a set period of time to discuss the questions and write down their responses on the poster. Each group will use a different colored marker to record their answers. When time is up, groups rotate to the next poster and repeat the process. Teachers can also require that all group

members must write down their idea or place their initials beside their idea. Once groups have rotated to all of the posters, the groups will discuss and share-out their answers.

The Carousel exercise can be used before, during, and after a unit. This strategy helps activate prior knowledge, check for understanding, and reinforce content and concepts. It also encourages cooperative learning, as opposed to individualistic (.55), and helps students practice social-awareness, self-management, active learning, and initiative.