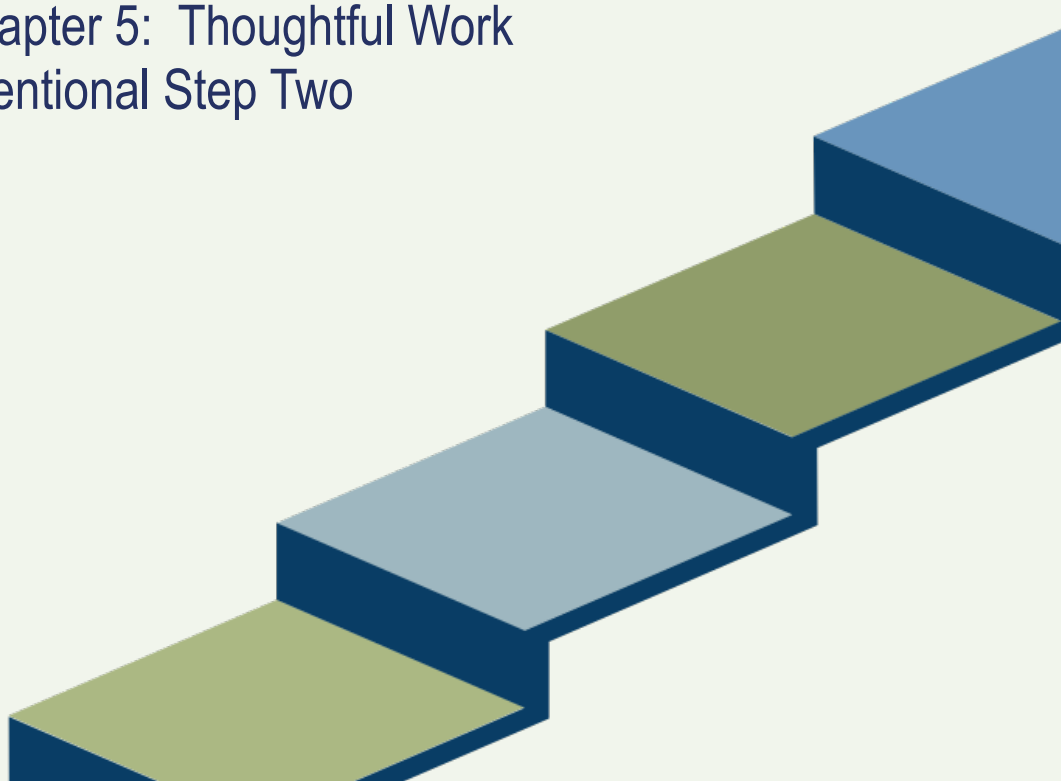
Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to Accelerate Student Learning

Companion Guide

Chapter 5: Thoughtful Work
Intentional Step Two



Chapter 5

Intentional Step Two: Encourage Student Agency When Completing a Task

In this example, the teacher wants students to take responsibility for extending their learning beyond the task assigned. Part of this goal includes determining the degree to which students participate in learning tasks that require them to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create. Let's say that a teacher recognizes that they've increased the rigor of the task, but their students need help to complete it independently. What can the teacher do next?

Strategy 1: Jigsaw

Students form small groups and are assigned various roles while discussing a text they've read. First, students divide up the text into sections. Then, they read their designated sections and make notes of important information on the Jigsaw graphic organizer. When everyone finishes reading, the group members take turns sharing information from what they read. The group then collaboratively writes a summary of the text and records it on the graphic organizer. See the "Jigsaw" handout for a sample graphic organizer.

The Jigsaw strategy has a 1.2 effect size according to Hattie, making it highly effective for increasing student learning. In addition, it gives students a structure for meaningful academic conversations based on their reading. By breaking down the task and dividing it among group members, students can tackle more challenging work with scaffolded support. They can also practice critical thinking, complex problem solving, initiative, ideation, active learning, leadership, responsible decision making, and social and self-awareness.

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Strategy 2: Reciprocal Teaching

This technique assigns roles to small group members based on cognitive strategies: predicting, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying. Together, the group members read a section of the text and then pause at teacher-designated stopping points. During each pause, group members will complete their task, have a discussion with their group, and then continue reading. Students will record their thoughts in a graphic organizer according to their assigned role (summarizing it, making predictions about it, asking questions). The group members then share what they recorded and discuss everyone's contributions. Individual students can also use this strategy. See the "Reciprocal Teaching" handout for a sample graphic organizer.

Teaching something to others helps students learn and retain the information. Students must put the ideas and concepts into their own words and think more deeply about the text. The pauses in this strategy allow students to discuss any misconceptions they might have and refocus their thinking; the stopping points also help struggling readers, as they do not have to read a whole text at once. This strategy has a .74 effect size and supports analytical thinking, problem-solving, flexibility, open-mindedness, cooperation, and teamwork.

Strategy 3: Provide Extra Supports

These activities focus on helping students learn how to learn. Instead of turning to students and giving them the answer when they're struggling, the teacher can scaffold extra support into the task.

One example of this kind of differentiation is **Hint Cards.** Hint Cards are cards that teachers make prior to a lesson where they know students are going to get stumped by a particular section. Teachers who have taught higher-rigor lessons often see patterns of where

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students will get stuck and can plan to include these hint cards. The cards have clues on them that provide answers or resources students can use to find the solution rather than coming to the teacher.

Providing additional support might also include having students read sections of articles, watch a video clip, ask a peer where they can go to learn more about a topic, or use additional hands-on resources to help scaffold the concepts they're trying to master.

These techniques help students think through the task and find solutions independently or by working with their peers. Offering extra supports encourages students to become self-sufficient learners instead of relying on the teacher to provide all the answers. Help-seeking behaviors have a .72 effect size and can also promote self-management and self-efficacy (.92).

Strategy 4: Model Thinking

The teacher will begin by modeling the types of thinking required for the task ("I Do" and "We Do"). For example, the teacher might ask the students: *How would you think through this problem? What steps does it involve and how can we arrive at a solution?* After walking students through a model of how to approach the problem, the teacher then puts students in groups to help them brainstorm answers. Afterwards, the teacher leads a discussion about the ideas students generated.

This tool is best used when students need additional teacher support. Working in small groups (.47) can help students feel more comfortable about not knowing the answer. They're encouraged to collaborate with their classmates and generate new ideas. This activity also promotes core SEL competencies of self-awareness, relationship skills, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making.

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