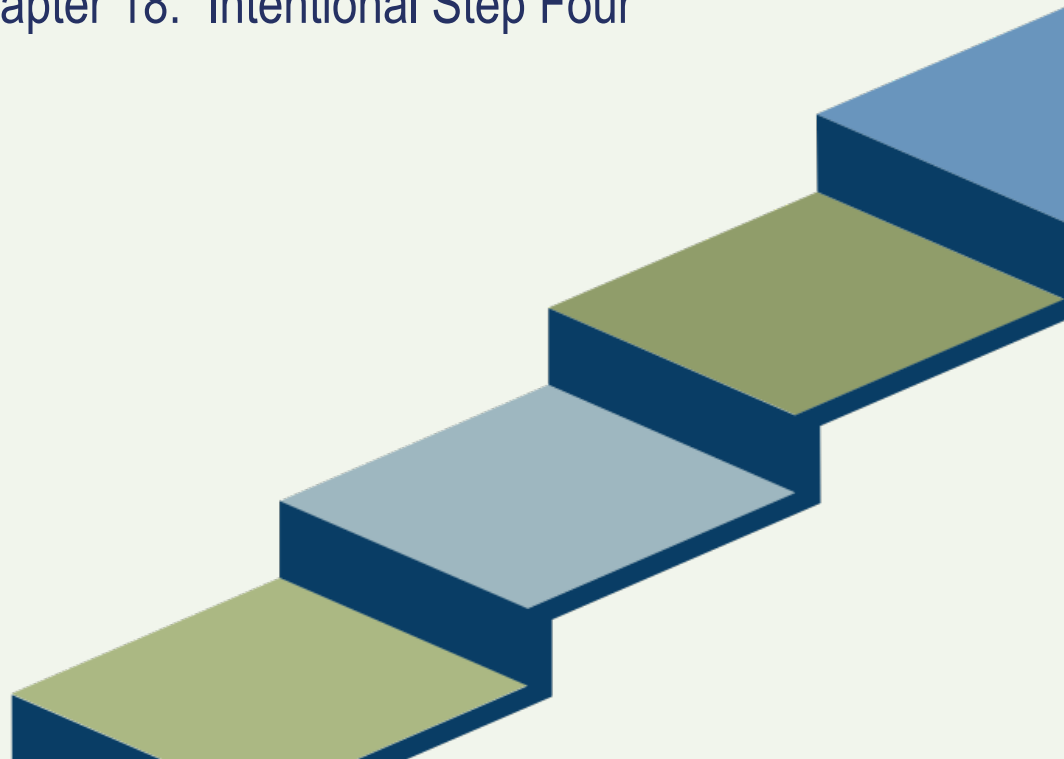


Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to
Accelerate Student
Learning

Companion Guide

Chapter 18: Intentional Step Four



Chapter 18

Intentional Step Four: Design Intentional Student Tasks

Teachers can also design intentional tasks that invite students to build stronger ties with each other and their learning community. These tasks should be relevant and meaningful, while promoting social and emotional skills that will help learners grow together as a community and as global citizens. Tasks can be content related and/or target specific community-building skills. Ultimately, the goal is to model how students can continue to grow as members of a healthy and productive community.

Strategy 1: Acts of Kindness

The teacher gives students secret missions where they can complete acts of kindness for other students. For instance, a teacher might ask a student to help clean up a mess another student made, invite a new student to join them for lunch, or write a note to a peer who is struggling. Students can also comment when they see their peers doing random acts of kindness. If a student notices another peer tidying up the room, they can write them a thank you note. The teacher can post these notes or acts of kindness on a Kindness Wall in the classroom or digitally.

Secret acts of kindness help students grow closer to their peers. They also coach students to be considerate toward their peers and to practice kindness unprompted. Over time, the teacher can reduce their support and let students lead these kindness missions. This form of positive peer influence (.53) develops students' empathy, flexibility, motivation, and social skills.

Strategy 2: Appreciation, Apology, Aha

Students gather in a circle and share an appreciation, apology, or light bulb moment from that day (Minero, 2019). To begin, the teacher can model the activity and then ask students to volunteer to share, call on students, or go around the circle and invite everyone to share a moment. Students might offer gratitude to a peer who helped them with a problem, apologize for a behavior that didn't meet class norms, or share an achievement. This can be done daily, as a closing activity following a lesson or at the end of the day. As students grow more comfortable with the activity, the teachers can invite students to facilitate, either in small groups or with the whole class.

This strategy promotes community recognition, reflection, and conflict resolution. Students are invited to think about their behavior and that of their peers and point out moments of kindness, positivity, and/or achievement. They can also acknowledge mistakes, learn from them, and work to repair any misunderstandings. In addition to positive peer influence (.53), Appreciations, Apologies, and Aha's cultivate active listening, empathy, and leadership skills.

Strategy 3: Partner Clock

The teacher hands out a graphic organizer that depicts the face of a clock. Beside each number on the clock, there is a space for students to record the names of their partners. The teacher then invites students to walk around the room and find 12 different partners to work with on an activity (Boehm, 2013). Students will work with one partner at a time and write that partner's name on the corresponding line; for example, if this is their five o'clock partner, then both students will record their peer's name on line 5. The teacher can direct students when to find their next partner, or allow students to move to their next partner as they complete the

activity.

It can be helpful to begin this activity by giving students ideas for how to find a partner. Teachers can create a list of partner prompts, such as: find a partner with a similar reading ability, find a partner with a different math ability, free choice, or work with someone you don't know very well. For a sample Partner Clock graphic organizer, see the corresponding handout.

This strategy gives students some choice in who they partner with. Students also change partners multiple times throughout the activity, so they work with and get to know more of their classmates. Teachers can also control some of the pairings, so students of different abilities, learning styles, and backgrounds can work together. Working with multiple partners allows students to practice flexibility, self-awareness, active listening, and teamwork.