Common Reason for Academic Failure: It is too hard

Intervention Name: **Instructional Match**

Brief Description:

> The purpose of this intervention is to improve instruction through the accurate assessment of the student's current instructional level and selection of appropriately matched curriculum and materials to the student's current level and ability. A student's prior knowledge, the difficulty of the learning task, and the pace of instruction differ, and therefore instruction must be tailored to the individual student to generate an instructional match.

What "common problems" does this address?

> A mismatch between student skill and level of difficulty of academic tasks can create significant problems for the student. Through the use of instructional-based assessment, teachers can move toward enhanced instruction and student learning. The extent of the match between student ability and difficulty of instructional materials affects student productivity/performance and attention. Through adaptation of instruction, students can make significant academic progress and will be most successful when taught at their instructional level.

Procedures:

1. Gather more information about the students' abilities to clarify the problem, which will help with goal setting to increase student success.
2. Analyze the demands and learning conditions of classroom tasks and determine if the difficulty level and grade-level materials are appropriate for the student. Consider how the student relates to and approaches the learning materials/tasks.
3. To assess the degree to which there is an appropriate instructional match, you must first identify the student's current level of skill development using the appropriate curriculum-based measurement (CBM) or curriculum-based assessment (CBA) for the skill area. CBA are better for information on teaching or instructional planning (deciding what curricular level best meets a student's needs). CBA is used to identify what a student has and has not mastered. Using this information, it will be possible to match instruction to the student's current level of skills. Give the student a variety of probes with varying difficulties to define various skills that students should master, and identify a balance between instruction that is too difficult and instruction that is too easy for the student (i.e., the student's instructional level).
4. Match tasks to current student ability by matching the materials to the student's instructional, not frustrational or mastery, level.
5. Assign tasks that are relevant to educational goals, and use the instructional hierarchy (i.e., acquisition, fluency, generalization, adaptation) to link current stage of skill development with appropriate teaching techniques.

6. Ensure high student academic success by choosing a specific evidence-based intervention to implement with the student in the classroom.
7. Conduct progress monitoring to document student academic performance, and analyze the performance data at regular intervals, approximately once a week.
8. Based on the student's response to instruction, the intervention may be changed or modified as needed.

Critical components that must be implemented for intervention to be successful:

This intervention requires that you accurately assess the student's current level of ability and implement a curriculum and teaching materials that are on the student's instructional level. The educational demands/difficulty of the task and the student's skills must match to ensure high student success rates. Interventions should be delivered in any setting where the teacher is differentiating instruction.

Critical assumptions/problem-solving questions to be asked:

Ensure that the curriculum-based probes are appropriate for the area of concern and that the student's abilities and instructional level is correctly assessed. Make sure to address any environmental factors that have an impact on the student's learning.

Materials:

- Array of appropriate CBM/CBA probes for the area of concern
- A variety of instructional materials with varying levels of difficulty
- Progress monitoring charts

References:

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Use of CBM/CBA for Identifying Appropriate Instructional Match

There are three levels of instructional match using CBM/CBA: the *frustrational level* (i.e., tasks are too difficult and student becomes frustrated, student is disengaged from task, and is lacking understanding to obtain and maintain the skill set); *instructional level* (i.e., student is engaged in tasks, the demands of the task balance task difficulty, and still requires come guidance or task may become frustrating) and *mastery level* (i.e., tasks are very easy for the student to complete independently, student is fluent in skill and makes little/no mistakes, and the skill comes "natural" to them).

For example, a reading passage in which the child correctly reads 92% or fewer words is considered to be reading at the frustrational level for that reading level; a fourth-grade student completing math worksheets at a rate of 19 or less correct digits per minute is considered to be in the frustrational level.

Academic Skill
- Reading
  - Proportion of known words in a passage
    - Independent Level:
      - 0-92% (frustrational level)
      - **93-96% (instructional level)**
      - 97-100% (mastery level)
    - Supported Level:
      - 0-69% (frustrational level)
      - **70-85% (instructional level)**
      - 86-100% (mastery level)
  - Rate of oral reading (1st and 2nd grade)
    - Independent Level:
      - 0-39 words/min or more than 4 errors/min (frustrational level)
      - **40-60 words/min and 4 or fewer errors/min (instructional level)**
      - More than 60 words/min and 4 or fewer errors/min (mastery level)
  - Rate of oral reading (3rd-6th grade)
    - Independent Level:
      - 0-69 words/min or more than 6 errors/min (frustrational level)
      - **70-100 words/min and 6 or fewer errors/min (instructional level)**
      - More than 100 words/min and 6 or fewer errors/min (mastery level)
- Mathematics
  - Proportion of correct math problems
    - Supported Level:
      - 0-74% (frustrational level)
      - **75-90% (instructional level)**
      - 91-100% (mastery level)
  - Digits correct/minute (1st-3rd grade)
    - Supported Level:
    - 0-9 (frustrational level)
    - **10-19 (instructional level)**
    - 20+ (mastery level)
  - Digits correct/minute (4th and up)
    - Independent:
    - 0-19(frustrational level)
    - **20-39 (instructional level)**
    - 40+ (mastery level)

Note: Adapted from Braden, J. P. (2003). Psychological assessment in school settings. In I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.) & W. C. Borman, D. R., Ilgen, & R. J. Klimoski (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology: Vol. 12*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.