PRACTICING SKILLS, STRATEGIES & PROCESSES

CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP PROFICIENCY
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CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP PROFICIENCY

Kelly Harmon
Robert J. Marzano
With Kathy Marx and Ria A. Schmidt
The Essentials for Achieving Rigor series of instructional guides helps educators become highly skilled at implementing, monitoring, and adapting instruction. Put it to practical use immediately, adopting day-to-day examples as models for application in your own classroom.

**Books in the series:**

*Identifying Critical Content: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Know What is Important*

*Examining Reasoning: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Produce and Defend Claims*

*Recording & Representing Knowledge: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Accurately Organize and Summarize Content*

*Examining Similarities & Differences: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Deepen Their Understanding*

*Processing New Information: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Engage With Content*

*Revising Knowledge: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Examine Their Deeper Understanding*

*Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Develop Proficiency*

*Engaging in Cognitively Complex Tasks: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Generate & Test Hypotheses Across Disciplines*


*Organizing for Learning: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Interact Within Small Groups*
Dedication

To the people in my life who get me:

Randi Anderson—Thank you for listening to me and giving me so many ideas and resources for this book. You are awesome!

My husband, Jack—You are so patient, kind, and encouraging. Thank you for keeping me going with all your love.

—Kelly Harmon
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Introduction

This guide, Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Develop Proficiency is intended as a resource for improving a specific element of instructional practice: practicing skills, strategies, and processes.

Your motivation to incorporate this strategy into your instructional toolbox may have come from a personal desire to improve your instructional practice through the implementation of a research-based set of strategies (such as those found in the Marzano instructional framework) or a desire to increase the rigor of the instructional strategies you implement in your class so that students meet the expectations of demanding standards such as the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards, or state standards based on or influenced by College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards.

This guide will help teachers of all grade levels and subjects improve their performance of a specific instructional strategy: practicing skills, strategies, and processes. Narrowing your focus on a specific skill, such as practicing skills, strategies, and processes, allows you to concentrate on the nuances of this instructional strategy to deliberately improve it. This allows you to intentionally plan, implement, monitor, adapt, and reflect on this single element of your instructional practice. A person seeking to become an expert displays distinctive behaviors, as explained by Marzano and Toth (2013):

- breaks down the specific skills required to be an expert
- focuses on improving those particular critical skill chunks (as opposed to easy tasks) during practice or day-to-day activities
- receives immediate, specific, and actionable feedback, particularly from a more experienced coach
- continually practices each critical skill at more challenging levels with the intention of mastering it, giving far less time to skills already mastered
Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes

This series of guides will support each of the previously listed behaviors, with a focus on breaking down the specific skills required to be an expert and giving day-to-day practical suggestions to enhance these skills.

Building on the Marzano Instructional Model

This series is based on the Marzano instructional framework, which is grounded in research and provides educators with the tools they need to connect instructional practice to student achievement. The series uses key terms that are specific to the Marzano model of instruction. See Table 1, Glossary of Key Terms.

**Table 1: Glossary of Key Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS</td>
<td>Common Core State Standards is the official name of the standards documents developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), the goal of which is to prepare students in the United States for college and career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards are broad statements that incorporate individual standards for various grade levels and specific content areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired result</td>
<td>The intended result for the student(s) due to the implementation of a specific strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>The act of checking for evidence of the desired result of a specific strategy while the strategy is being implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional strategy</td>
<td>A category of techniques used for classroom instruction that has been proven to have a high probability of enhancing student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional technique</td>
<td>The method used to teach and deepen understanding of knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The knowledge and skills necessary for students to demonstrate standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolding</td>
<td>A purposeful progression of support that targets cognitive complexity and student autonomy to reach rigor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending</td>
<td>Activities that move students who have already demonstrated the desired result to a higher level of understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The educational pendulum swings widely from decade to decade. Educators move back and forth between prescriptive checklists and step-by-step
lesson plans to approaches that encourage instructional autonomy with minimal regard for the science of teaching and need for accountability. Two practices are often missing in both of these approaches to defining effective instruction: 1) specific statements of desired results, and 2) solid research-based connections. The Marzano instructional framework provides a comprehensive system that details what is required from teachers to develop their craft using research-based instructional strategies. Launching from this solid instructional foundation, teachers will then be prepared to merge that science with their own unique, yet effective, instructional style, which is the art of teaching.

Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes: Classroom Techniques to Help Students Develop Proficiency will help you grow into an innovative and highly skilled teacher who is able to implement, scaffold, and extend instruction to meet a range of student needs.

Essentials for Achieving Rigor

This series of guides details essential classroom strategies to support the complex shifts in teaching that are necessary for an environment where academic rigor is a requirement for all students. The instructional strategies presented in this series are essential to effectively teach the CCSS, Next Generation Science Standards, or standards designated by your school district or state. They require a deeper understanding, more effective use of strategies, and greater frequency of implementation for your students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required by rigorous standards. This series includes instructional techniques appropriate for all grade levels and content areas. The examples contained within are grade-level specific and should serve as models and launching points for application in your own classroom.

Your skillful implementation of these strategies is essential to your students’ mastery of the CCSS or other rigorous standards, no matter the grade level or subject you are teaching. Other instructional strategies covered in the Essentials for Achieving Rigor series, such as analyzing errors in reasoning and engaging students in cognitively complex tasks, exemplify the cognitive complexity needed to meet rigorous standards. Taken as a package, these strategies may at first glance seem quite daunting. For this reason, the series focuses on just one strategy in each guide.
Practicing Skills, Strategies, and Processes

Practice is the gradual shaping of a skill, strategy, or process over the course of multiple repetitions to some level of proficiency. You have likely experienced several aspects of practice if you have become proficient in a recreational or competitive sport such as golf, swimming, or tennis. First, you had to acquire a variety of facts and concepts—history of the sport, rules of the game, and recommended equipment, as well as the best books and periodicals to read. All of this background knowledge developed a cognitive foundation from which to launch your mastery of the psychomotor processes of the sport. You may have been privileged to work with coaches as they modeled certain strokes and then carefully monitored your moves, providing immediate correction of any errors you made while they moved or positioned your body to set you up for the correct stance or stroke. You were thrilled when you reached the point of independent practice and hopeful that you might achieve fluency in executing all of the discrete skills as a complete package. Practice to proficiency for your students is similar. Practice of critical content is an ongoing, gradual release process that begins with students acquiring and processing the facts, concepts, or principles underlying some type of procedural knowledge, observing a proficient model, and then practicing to proficiency.

Effective teachers have always recognized the need for adequate practice of certain key skills, strategies, and processes. However, they are often conflicted about when and how to organize instruction to provide the needed opportunities for practice. The techniques in this book offer some ways to more effectively structure opportunities for practice in your classroom.

The Effective Implementation of Providing Practice to Proficiency

There is a popular lesson sequence that teachers widely use. Generally known as “I do it, we do it, you do it,” this three-step plan captures the essence of effective practice, but none of its nuances. The effective implementation of providing practice to proficiency requires an understanding of the relationship between declarative and procedural knowledge, as well as an understanding of the sequence or flow of the various aspects of practice.
The Relationship Between Procedural Knowledge and Declarative Knowledge

While this book is specifically written to help you effectively implement the practice of procedural knowledge, keep in mind the close relationship that exists between procedural and declarative knowledge. Declarative knowledge consists of the facts, concepts, and generalizations students need to know about content. Procedural knowledge consists of the skills, strategies, and processes students need to be able to do or demonstrate. Procedural knowledge is always rooted in some aspect of declarative knowledge. Although the title and techniques of this book refer specifically to the skills, strategies, and processes that constitute procedural knowledge, never overlook that the acquisition of procedural knowledge always begins with the teaching of its inherent declarative knowledge.

The Critical Aspects of Practice

The effective implementation of providing students with opportunities to practice procedural knowledge to proficiency requires an understanding of the sequence or flow of the various steps necessary for effective practice. The term sequence suggests that practice must follow a certain set of steps akin to walking up a set of stairs to reach the top. The term flow, on the other hand, suggests that the process of practice can move freely from one place to another making unhindered and steady progress, somewhat like a river—sometimes rushing, sometimes meandering. In reality, practicing procedural knowledge is a little bit of both. However, to effectively help your students practice procedural knowledge to proficiency, you must understand all aspects of the process and implement all of them faithfully as the needs of your students dictate.

The sequence necessary for effective practice includes the following:

1. The teacher models the procedural knowledge.
2. The teacher guides students as they work to replicate the teacher’s model.
3. The teacher monitors students and corrects any errors they make, providing additional opportunities to repeat the execution of the skill in more frequent structured practice sessions.
Practicing Skills, Strategies, and Processes

4. As students become more proficient, the teacher provides varied opportunities for students to combine discrete skills or strategy steps together into more complex processes such as writing an essay or editing one’s own work.

5. Students engage in independent practice to build fluency for skills that need automaticity, such as skilled reading, or to enhance their controlled processing, that requires students to combine various skills at a more conscious level.

6. Students reflect on their practice.

7. Students repeat the practice as often as needed.

Modeling

Modeling is the most critical, yet overlooked, aspect of practicing critical content. If you are overly eager to dive into the talking and telling parts of practice and skip the showing and doing, practice will be far less productive. Teaching students how to do things requires that you show them how an expert does it. Your role in implementing practice is to model how to execute a skill or process. In cases of more complex procedural knowledge, your modeling should take the form of thinking aloud for students. If you skip the modeling in the interest of time, you will limit your students’ opportunities to learn.

Guiding

In this aspect of practice, you become the guide, hence the term guided practice. Once you have modeled, you cannot just give students a practice assignment and move on to another group. You must continue to demonstrate and prompt students as they work to replicate your model. The time you spend guiding is a wise investment that will pay rich dividends in terms of students’ mastery of critical skills, strategies, and processes.

Monitoring and Correcting

While you are modeling and guiding, you are simultaneously closely monitoring and correcting. The adage that practice makes perfect is somewhat erroneous. Only perfect practice makes perfect. Each repetition that occurs in the course of the various kinds of practice must be as accurate as possible. Imperfect practice without systematic error correction or specific
feedback and modeling will lead to students’ gradually shaping and developing incorrect and inefficient skills, strategies, and processes. Once imperfect practice becomes permanent, you and your students must then double down to relearn the skill or process, often delaying their progress toward proficiency.

Combining Discrete Skills Into More Complex Processes

As students become more skilled, teachers provide varied opportunities for them to practice combining discrete skills or individual strategy steps together into more complex processes. At this point in the practice sequence, expect your students to understand the big picture so they can understand that mastering one discrete skill is not your learning target. The combination of these skills and strategies into more complex processes is the goal. Gradually release them to begin shaping and fine-tuning a complex process to make it their own.

Automatic or Controlled Processing

Practice to develop fluency is the final aspect of mastering procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge developed to automaticity means that students are able to execute a process without giving it any conscious thought. This degree of automaticity enables students’ working memories to deal with more complex processes. Controlled processing, on the other hand, takes more conscious attention to a process and involves more thought and decision making about what to do next and how to do it. Processes that initially require more controlled processing can eventually become more automatic after extensive practice, but achieving that level of fluency may be well beyond the scope of your classroom.

Reflection

Ideally, you will be asking your students to reflect on their learning regularly in the process of practice. When you engage your students in the reflection process, they will become more engaged in practicing to proficiency.

Repetition

At the heart of practice is repetition. The more students engage in productive independent practice, the more they begin to shape their own execution of various kinds of procedural knowledge. Some students may fall in love with a certain type of procedural knowledge and be willing to practice beyond perfection. However, for all students, your role in the sequence and
flow of practice is to provide enough opportunities for productive practice so that all students are able to master the skills, strategies, and processes they need to succeed at the next grade level and beyond their formal education.

The following teacher behaviors are associated with planning and implementing effective practice techniques for procedural knowledge in the classroom:

- identifying critical content that is foundational to the procedural knowledge
- facilitating the processing of this critical content
- directly instructing and modeling new skills, strategies, and processes
- providing close monitoring and structured practice at the outset of teaching a new skill, strategy, or process
- correcting errors students make and presenting correct examples immediately
- matching practice activities to students’ current skill levels
- gradually decreasing the amount of support provided to students
- gradually increasing the complexity of practice tasks as students become more fluent with new critical content

There are several common mistakes the teacher can make while seeking to become skilled at implementing this instructional strategy:

- The teacher fails to teach inherent conceptual knowledge before scheduling practice of procedural skills.
- The teacher fails to assess students’ skill levels before scheduling practice.
- The teacher fails to release responsibility to students for independent practice.
Failing to Teach Conceptual Knowledge in Advance of Scheduling Practice
As noted previously, all types of procedural knowledge, whether discrete skills, strategies, or more complex processes, are based on declarative knowledge. In efforts to cover material and hurry students through the acquisition of procedural knowledge, teachers often feel pressured to shortchange the teaching of declarative knowledge that will enable students to fully understand the nuances of a specific skill, strategy, or process. As a result, practice, rather than deepening students’ ability to demonstrate procedural knowledge, fosters rote learning.

Failing to Assess Students’ Skill and Knowledge Levels in Advance of Scheduling Practice
The assessment of students’ conceptual understanding and current skill levels is essential to planning productive practice. Students who are assigned a practice task for which they have no background knowledge or prior practice will struggle in frustration, while students who have a solid conceptual understanding of the skill, strategy, or process and can execute a procedure will not lose valuable instructional opportunities.

Failing to Release Responsibility to Students for Independent Practice
The ultimate goal of all practice activities is to move students toward mastery of procedural knowledge. They will achieve that goal only if teachers structure increasingly more challenging practice activities and then expect students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Monitoring for the Desired Result
The effective implementation of practicing skills, strategies, and processes requires more than merely providing students with opportunities for practice. Effective implementation also includes monitoring. Monitoring is checking for evidence of the desired result of the strategy during implementation. In other words, effective implementation of a strategy includes monitoring for the desired result of that strategy in real time. The essential question is did your students develop confidence and competence during their practice sessions? A more specific question to be addressed is, was the desired result of
Practicing Skills, Strategies, and Processes

The most elaborately planned lessons can be exercises in futility unless they begin with instructional strategies in mind, focus on the standards, and are monitored by the teacher for the desired results.

There are multiple ways teachers can monitor whether the majority of students are achieving the desired results of practicing skills, strategies, and processes. Here are some ways to tell if your students are increasing their accuracy and automaticity executing skills, strategies, and processes:

- Students can perform skills, strategies, and processes with increased confidence.
- Students perform skills, strategies, and processes with increased competence.
- Formative data indicates that students are able to tackle increasingly rigorous tasks with accuracy and automaticity.
- Students can break more complex processes into the appropriate discrete tasks.
- Students need little, if any, support to successfully complete tasks involving the target skills, strategies, and processes.

Scaffolding and Extending Instruction to Meet Students’ Needs

As you monitor for the desired result of each purposefully planned practice session, consider how you can meet the needs of some students for additional support as well as the needs of students who have already mastered the expectations for the grade level or course. Planning ahead prevents wasted time and facilitates engaged learning. Within each technique in the subsequent chapters, there are examples of how to intentionally adjust the technique to meet the needs of all learners. You will find examples of ways to provide additional teacher or peer support, how to break down practice into digestible chunks, and how to use materials to adjust for the learners’ entry point into the skill, strategy, or process.
Teacher Self-Reflection

As you develop expertise in designing and implementing practice opportunities for your students, reflecting on what works and does not work can help you become more successful in the implementation of this strategy. Use the following set of reflection questions to guide you.

1. How can you regularly provide students with meaningful practice opportunities?

2. How can you demonstrate to students the importance of practice in their acquisition of critical content?

3. How can you monitor your students' mastery of skills, strategies, or processes?

4. What are some ways to create new techniques for providing practice opportunities to address unique student needs and situations?

5. What are you learning about your students as you adapt and create new techniques?

Instructional Techniques to Help Students Practice Skills, Strategies, and Processes

There are many ways to help your students master critical skills, strategies, and processes through practice. These ways or options are called instructional techniques. They are described in two categories: guided practice and independent practice.

Part I: Guided Practice

Instructional Technique 1: Close Monitoring

Instructional Technique 2: Worked Examples

Instructional Technique 3: Frequent Structured Practice

Part II: Independent Practice

Instructional Technique 4: Fluency Practice

Instructional Technique 5: Varied Practice
Instructional Technique 6: Practice Before Tests

All of the techniques are similarly organized and include the following components:

- a brief introduction to the technique
- ways to effectively implement the technique
- common mistakes to avoid as you implement the technique
- examples and nonexamples from elementary and secondary classrooms using selected learning targets or standards
- ways to monitor for the desired result
- ways to scaffold and extend instruction to meet the needs of students
As previously stated, the practice of critical content is an ongoing, gradual release process. Think of the practice of skills, strategies, and processes as a continuum along which you begin with a strong presence and close attention to the progress of your students. Your active presence and close attention characterize the category of guided practice. The role you play in guiding the practice activity defines the techniques in this category.
Instructional Technique 1

CLOSE MONITORING

The technique of close monitoring is characterized by a highly structured period of practice in which you observe your students practicing. Close monitoring is essential during the beginning stages of acquiring critical content. Students need guided practice with a teacher or coach who is closely watching their responses to explicit instruction and teacher modeling. During close monitoring, students receive feedback and reinforcement of their correct approximations of the skill and immediate correction of any errors or misunderstandings. Since practice makes permanent, ensure that your students practice accurately from the beginning. Following the initial instruction of any type of procedural knowledge, students will need to execute the initial skill, strategy, or process several times, depending on the ease and speed with which they progress. Close monitoring can occur at any grade level or in any content area, and it is critical when students are beginning to learn the first discrete skills in a process or steps in a strategy and need closer supervision and scaffolding to master those skills.

How to Effectively Implement Close Monitoring

The effective implementation of close monitoring depends on your understanding of and close attention to several variables as you plan and then implement this technique:

- Grouping students in ways that facilitates close monitoring
- Explicitly instructing the key concepts and vocabulary that are foundational to the target skill or process
- Providing opportunities to process the key concepts and vocabulary
- Modeling that shows students how to execute the skill or thinking aloud that shows students how to use a cognitive process
- Successfully practicing immediately following modeling
Table 1.1 contains a template that shows how to effectively implement close monitoring during practice. The template is divided into three parts. Part 1 of the template describes the steps during which you teach the conceptual knowledge that is foundational to the skill. Part 2 describes the steps that lead up to the practice session. These steps include the instructional decisions you make before you are fully prepared to put the practice session in your plan book. Part 3 describes the actual practice session. Column 1 describes each of the steps, while Column 2 provides explanatory notes for the teacher.

### Table 1.1: Sample Lesson Template for Effectively Implementing Close Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1: Teach the Conceptual Knowledge That Is Inherent in the Skill, Strategy, or Process</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Explanatory Notes for the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Select the learning target for which you will implement close monitoring during practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice should always be connected to the learning target you select. Hastily chosen practice from a workbook or website can easily become nothing more than a way to keep students busy that does not produce the desired result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the critical content that you will initially teach your students prior to the practice session.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify the vocabulary and concepts that students need to understand before they can practice meaningfully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify the ways in which students will process the critical content they need to understand as a foundation for practicing the skill.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Once you have introduced the conceptual knowledge, engage students in processing it in a variety of ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2: Do Before Your Practice Session</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Explanatory Notes for the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Determine how you will monitor students’ performance of the skill, strategy, or process.</td>
<td>Close monitoring is immediate monitoring that enables you to correct an error, ask a guiding question, or point students in a more productive direction. Small groups are the most productive way to closely monitor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Determine how you will chunk the skill, strategy, or process to make it more manageable.</td>
<td>Begin with the smallest chunk or step of a skill, strategy, or process to give your students a greater likelihood of experiencing immediate success during their first practice session.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Instructional Technique 1

3. If appropriate for the skill, strategy, or process as well as for the grade and content, prepare an anchor chart that gives students visual cues for reviewing the steps of a skill, strategy, or process.

   Anchor charts should include a definition or description and the steps for executing a skill, strategy, or process. In addition to anchor charts, consider preparing a handout for students to consult. This handout can be useful during later independent practice sessions.

4. Develop a menu of guiding questions that are appropriate for your grade level and content.

   For example, while students practice a math skill, ask the following questions: 1) How should you begin? 2) What do you need to do next? 3) How will you check your work?

### PART 3: Practice the Skill, Strategy, or Process

1. Determine the specific task you want students to practice during the practice session.

   Although this sounds simple, this step often takes the most thought. Will the task produce the desired outcome of your learning target? Do students have the essential conceptual knowledge to understand what they are practicing and why? Is the task too complicated? Is the task relevant?

2. Model the task for students.

   Show students how to execute a skill, strategy, or process before asking them to do it on their own. Even though you are closely monitoring, your students’ first attempts can often establish a pattern of success or frustration.

3. Throughout the practice session, focus on shaping students’ conceptual understanding by asking them to explain what they are thinking or why they did what they did.

   Rather than telling your students what to do, pose a question, provide another model or demonstration, or think aloud. This approach demands that your students do the thinking and learning.

4. After several opportunities for students to respond in which you have closely monitored their progress, ask students to reflect on their practice session.

   As appropriate for your grade level, help your students break down what may not be working for them and what needs to change so they can develop proficiency with a skill, strategy, or process.

### Common Mistakes

The implementation of a new technique can often result in unanticipated mistakes. However, knowing ahead of time where problems might arise will increase your likelihood of success in implementing this technique.
Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes

Watch out for these common mistakes as you implement close monitoring:

- The teacher fails to set the stage for practice by identifying critical content and giving students opportunities to process it before moving into practice.
- The teacher gives students tasks to practice that are far beyond their current skill levels.
- The teacher gives students too many chunks of new material to handle during initial practice sessions.
- The teacher tells the students what to do or think, rather than prompting the students to attend to the demonstration or think-aloud she provides.
- The teacher does not provide students with adequate think (wait) time.
- The teacher provides a question prompt, but then answers the question.
- The teacher provides too much wait time.
- The teacher expects students to practice isolated skills that are not linked to the context of the overall process.
- The teacher fails to guide the students to self-monitor their progress as their competence and confidence develop.

Examples and Nonexamples of Close Monitoring
The following examples and nonexamples of close monitoring of students’ practice may illustrate a different grade level or subject than you teach. View them as you would a fresh perspective from a colleague and consider how you might adapt them in your classroom.

**Elementary Example of Close Monitoring**
The learning target for this elementary classroom example is: *compose and decompose numbers from 11 to 19 into ten ones and some further ones, e.g., by using objects, and record each composition or decomposition by a drawing or equation* (CCSS.Math.Content.K.NBT.A.1). The example demonstrates how to closely monitor students during a kindergarten math lesson guided practice session. The example is divided into two sections: 1) a sample
template that will enable you to gain a comprehensive view of the important aspects of a lesson that must occur before a practice session and 2) a classroom scenario describing the specific aspect of the lesson devoted to the close monitoring of practice.

Sample Lesson Template for Implementing Close Monitoring:
Kindergarten Math

Table 1.2 is a lesson template showing the steps for the close monitoring of math practice in a kindergarten classroom. The first three steps in Part 1 are about teaching and processing the conceptual knowledge needed prior to practicing the decomposing of numbers. Part 2 describes the actual practice session.

Table 1.2: Sample Lesson Template for Implementing Close Monitoring:
Kindergarten Math

<p>| PART 1: Teach the Conceptual Knowledge That Is Inherent in the Skill, Strategy, or Process |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Explanatory Notes for the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Select the learning target for which you will implement close monitoring during practice.</td>
<td>The learning target for this example is compose and decompose numbers from 11 to 19 into ten ones and some further ones, e.g., by using objects, and record each composition or decomposition by a drawing or equation (CCSS.Math.Content K.NBT.A.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the critical content that you will initially teach your students prior to the practice session.</td>
<td>Students will need to be able to count from 11 to 19 and understand the concept of place value (ones and tens). Students must understand the meanings of the terms compose and decompose (or take apart). Students need to understand how to record the concept by drawing, writing an equation, or using manipulatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify the ways in which students will process the critical content they need to understand as a foundation for practicing the skill.</td>
<td>Students will process this critical content by counting manipulatives and objects on a page. In a second session, students will process by writing equations that match a pre-prepared drawing of objects. Students will understand the term digit, as well as understand what a rod represents and what a unit represents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Table 1.2: Sample Lesson Template for Implementing Close Monitoring: Kindergarten Math (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2: Practice the Skill, Strategy, or Process</th>
<th>Explanatory Notes for the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Determine the specific task you want students to practice during the practice session.</td>
<td>Students will, on individual desk mats, decompose numbers from 11 to 19 by placing one base ten rod to represent the number in the tens column and the correct number of units to represent the number in the ones column.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Model the task.</td>
<td>Teacher models the process for students, thinking aloud about how she decides which manipulatives to place on her mat to represent the number 19. She thinks aloud to show students how she is checking her work and replaces her materials in the box. She then models the process with another number between 11 and 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide materials to the students and ask them to decompose the number modeled for them.</td>
<td>Students begin practicing and teacher observes, making sure all students in the group are decomposing the number correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coach, prompt, and praise students as appropriate.</td>
<td>Teacher asks students to place their manipulatives in the box and get ready to decompose another number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have students practice the task three times.</td>
<td>Teacher encourages students to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When students make errors, correct the errors and ask them to start over and practice the correct layout on their mats.</td>
<td>Students practice each layout three times successfully before the teacher presents a new number for them to decompose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Debrief the students by asking questions regarding their understanding of the skill.</td>
<td>Students report excitement about their success and would like to use the rod and units to decompose the numbers from 10 to 29 the next day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom Scenario for Implementing Close Monitoring: Kindergarten Math

The kindergarten teacher in this example has been working with her students for several weeks on developing the background knowledge and conceptual understanding they need to practice the skill of using manipulatives. They have been practicing counting from 11 to 19, writing their numbers from 11 to 19, and playing various games. They have previously used rods to help them visualize numbers. The scenario begins as the teacher models the task she wants them to practice today (Table 1.3, Part 2, No. 2).
Boys and girls, we have learned that numbers can be taken apart [decomposed] using the base ten rods and units. We’ve been working with the numbers 11–19, and I have a set of cards for you that have these numbers written on them. I’m going to use my set of cards to help me pick a number to take apart. The teacher pulls the number 19 from her set of cards and puts it above her mat. Watch me as I show you how I decompose the number 19. When I get ready to decompose this number, I first say the number, 19, and then I look in the ones place of that number. I see the number 9, and that tells me this number has nine ones. So, I am going to count out nine units. Watch me. I’m going to put them on my mat.

She counts out the nine units again as she puts them on her math mat.

Now I’m going to look at the number in the tens place. That number is 1 and it stands for ten ones, so I am going to choose one rod that stands for ten ones. Now I am going to check my work. I look at the number in the ones place, a 9, and I count my units to make sure I have nine. The teacher counts her units aloud. Now I check the number in the tens place, a 1, and that means I should have one rod, and I do. I have taken apart my number, 19, one ten and nine ones.

After modeling for her students, the teacher introduces the practice session.

Today, you are going to practice taking apart numbers. You each have a mat and some rods and units. First, I want you to take apart the number 19. That’s the one I showed you. The teacher has removed her model to see whether her students are ready to work somewhat independently, although she will closely monitor each student. Try it. Her students hesitate, so she prompts them. Remember you are going to start in the ones place. The prompt is all they need to start them off. All five students are able to decompose 19. Some do it more...
quickly than others, and she decides to have them practice 19 one more time.

Put your rod and units back in the pile above your mat. Show me how you would take apart 19 using your manipulatives. This time the students complete the task more quickly and all have accurately decomposed 19. The teacher then decides to give them another number between 11 and 19 to practice. She gives them the number 15 and watches as they count and place their rods and units in the correct place on the math mat. She notices that Jeremy’s mat looks like the mat in Figure 1.1. She immediately begins to question and prompt Jeremy. Jeremy, read the number that you are decomposing for me. Jeremy correctly answers 15. Good. Now tell me what that 5 means? Jeremy answers, “Five ones.” Good. Now, go to the ones half of your mat and count the number of ones you have placed there. Jeremy begins counting and immediately recognizes that he has made an error. The teacher wants to know what Jeremy was thinking when he thought he was finished after placing four units on the mat. Jeremy explains that he was in a hurry and did not check his work by looking at the number in the ones place and then counting the number of units he placed in the ones half of his mat. The teacher asks him to correct his mat.

Figure 1.1: Jeremy’s Mat Showing the Number 14
Elementary Nonexample of Close Monitoring

The nonexample kindergarten teacher in the next room is teaching the same standard. Throughout the small group lesson, he tells students what to think rather than prompting them with questions. The teacher gives them base ten rods and units to use, but does not model decomposing for the group. When the teacher provides the target number 12, he tells the students “There is a 2 in the ones places, so get two units. There is a 1 in the tens place, so get one rod. Now we have one ten and two ones, or 10 + 2 = 12.” The teacher writes the number 12 on the whiteboard. He gives the students four more target numbers and repeats the sequence. He releases the students to math stations without any reflections or having revised any knowledge. Instead of the teacher guiding practice, the students are merely following directives from the teacher. The nonexample teacher misses a valuable opportunity to develop and shape the students’ base ten conceptual knowledge by asking guiding questions.

Secondary Example of Close Monitoring

The secondary example of close monitoring is based on the following learning target: cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain (CCSS.ELA-Literacy/RL/11-12/1). The example demonstrates how a high school teacher closely monitors her students during a guided practice session in an English class. The example is divided into two sections: 1) a sample template that will enable you to follow the lesson steps and 2) a classroom scenario describing the specific aspect of the lesson devoted to the close monitoring of practice.
Practicing Skills, Strategies & Processes

Sample Lesson Template for Implementing Close Monitoring: Eleventh-Grade ELA

Table 1.3 is a sample lesson template illustrating the secondary example of the close monitoring of practice. Part 1 describes the conceptual knowledge students need to acquire before they can engage in productive practice. The practice session in the scenario is in Part 2.

Table 1.3: Sample Lesson Template for Implementing Close Monitoring: Eleventh-Grade ELA

<p>| PART 1: Teach the Conceptual Knowledge That Is Inherent the Skill, Strategy, or Process |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Explanatory Notes for the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Select the learning target for which you will implement close monitoring during practice.</td>
<td>The learning target for this example is cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the critical content that you will initially teach your students prior to the practice session.</td>
<td>There is a great deal of critical content inherent in this literacy process: a) an understanding of how to find textual evidence and embed it in the analysis, b) an understanding of what it means to analyze text, and c) an understanding of the terms analysis, develop, textual evidence, and embed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify the ways in which students will process the critical content they need to understand as a foundation for practicing the skill.</td>
<td>Students will process this critical content over several weeks by looking at worked examples and nonexamples of embedded textual evidence and learning how to analyze a text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2: Practice the Skill, Strategy, or Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Determine the task you want students to practice during their practice session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Prepare any necessary materials to scaffold students in their practice of this process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Instructional Technique 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Model the task.</td>
<td>Teacher models the process for students by thinking aloud for them about how she would write a sentence that embeds textual evidence into a piece of writing. See Figure 1.3 for a more comprehensive version of the modeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students practice and you observe, making sure all students are on track in terms of writing one sentence without evidence and a second sentence with cited evidence.</td>
<td>Teacher walks around the room, stopping and reading what students have written. She coaches, prompts, and praises students as appropriate. If one partner is having more success, she encourages that individual to offer suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students practice writing another sentence that embeds evidence from the text.</td>
<td>After students have written their first sentence embedding evidence and received an OK from the teacher, they move to the next chunk of text to write another sentence that embeds evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.2 is a combination anchor chart/think sheet the teacher has prepared to help her students master the process of finding textual evidence to support a claim they make in their analysis of the text. Once she has modeled the process for them, they can readily follow the steps and then write their responses below each step.

Figure 1.3 is a sample teacher think-aloud showing students how to embed textual evidence. When teachers model a process such as this, students are able to practice with more confidence.
**Figure 1.2: Anchor Chart/Think Sheet for Embedding Textual Evidence**

1. **Pick out some words and phrases in the test that might illustrate or provide evidence of the point you are trying to make in your statement. You might be trying to support a conclusion you have drawn from the text or evaluate an argument and specific claims the author has made in the text. First, write these words and phrases in the space below (1a). As you write them, think about how you could write your own words and phrases that mean about the same thing.**

1a.

2. **Now, think about and jot down some possible ways you might write an original sentence about the central idea of the text, a conclusion you have drawn about what the text means, or how you want to evaluate an argument or claim the author has made. These ideas are the beginning of the rough draft of your sentence. Write that rough draft in the space below (2a).**

2a.

3. **Now, experiment with placing the words and phrases you selected from the text in step 1 into the ideas you want to have in the sentence you wrote down in step 2. Choose the order so that the words flow smoothly. Sometimes the only way to determine whether the sentence “feels” right is to read it aloud to see how it sounds. Write that sentence in the space below (3a).**

3a.

Adapted from McEwan-Adkins & Burnett (2012).
One of the skills you need to master as you analyze and write about text is how to select and use quotations from the text to cite as evidence. This kind of evidence is called **textual evidence**.

Yesterday we read an excerpt from a book in which the author was describing his life growing up as a Native American. I first wrote a statement about the text without providing any evidence to support my statement.

Here’s what I wrote:

> The author develops the text primarily with details about the lessons he learned during his childhood in Virginia.

I can’t use a statement like that in answer to a question or response to a prompt. I have to provide evidence from the text—actual words and phrases that I take out of the text to support my statement.

Here’s what I wrote:

> The author develops the text primarily with details about lessons he learned to "work hard, say little, and blend in," during his childhood in Virginia to explain why he has a "sketchy" background about his tribe and only "stock answers" for his grandchildren whenever they ask his opinion about Indians.

The words and phrases with quotation marks around them in the second example are called **embedded quotations**. These words and phrases are directly copied from the original text. You can copy selected words and phrases from an author’s work if you put quotation marks around them. These embedded quotations are called **evidence** because they illustrate or prove a statement you make about the author’s writing.

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**Classroom Scenario for Implementing Close Monitoring: Eleventh-Grade ELA**

A high school English teacher wants her students to master the process of embedding textual evidence and then practice it while she closely monitors their progress. In the past she has given a brief explanation of the process and followed up with a homework assignment for them to turn in the following day. She now realizes that she needs to show her students how to do this by thinking aloud and modeling and then providing opportunities for them to practice doing this under her watchful eye. She has twenty students in her class, a small class size by any standard, but it is still too large for the kind of close monitoring she wants to do for this particular process. She decides to break up the class into two smaller groups of five pairs of students each and will alternate checking in on each group and its set of partners.

She models the process shown in Figure 1.3, using text the students have previously read. She wants them to practice writing one sentence that embeds
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textual evidence from the second chunk of text. She encourages students to
look at the anchor chart to guide their work. The model she provides cites
evidence from the first chunk of text. There are two additional chunks of text,
and she assigns each pair of partners the second chunk to work on.

Here is how she explains the assignment to students:

Class, I’ve modeled this process for you, and you have a copy
of the text we’ve read that was chunked into three parts.
There are two chunks left, and I want each of you to write
two practice sentences based on the first chunk. I’m going
to be walking around the classroom monitoring your work to
make sure you are following my model and using the steps in
the anchor chart.

The teacher is pleased that her students are taking this assign-
ment seriously and have really benefited from the modeling
and thinking aloud she has provided. Students are helping
their partners polish their sentences.

Near the end of the period, the teacher interrupts students
and calls time. Thank you, class, for the outstanding effort
and quality products you have produced during this class
period. I realize that some of you may still be working, but
I am going to collect all the papers to look more closely at
your work. If you haven’t finished, I will give you the option to
finish it during your lunch period or study hall and drop it off
before you leave for the day.

Secondary Nonexample of Close Monitoring

The nonexample secondary teacher is focused on the same learning
target as the example teacher. She uses the same model, sample text, and
anchor chart. However, the nonexample teacher fails to teach and then have
his students process the conceptual knowledge underlying the skill. Fur-
ther, he does not believe that all the models and charts are necessary for
practicing a simple task like citing evidence to support statements students
have made when writing an analysis of a text. He vastly overestimates his students’ abilities to master this process. When he sits down to read their papers, he realizes they lack the conceptual background needed to execute the skill, and the quality of their papers was not at all up to the standards of the English department.

**Determining If Students Are Proficient in Using Close Monitoring**

There are two aspects of monitoring any practice technique: 1) something that students do to demonstrate the desired result of their practice activity and 2) something the teacher does to check for this desired result and respond to students’ progress. Here are some specific examples of checking for the desired result during a period of close monitoring:

- Listen carefully as students explain their rationale for the choices they made during practice.

- Listen carefully as students read aloud written products to determine whether they meet the task’s criteria for accuracy.

- After demonstrating the skill, strategy, or process, ask students to respond chorally and visually scan the group to determine whether students have responded correctly.

- After it appears that most students are correctly responding chorally, shift to calling on individual students to respond.

- Have students write their responses on whiteboards to demonstrate mastery.

The student proficiency scale for the effectiveness of practice activities during close monitoring is shown in Table 1.4. It will help you assess how well your students are benefitting from the types of practice activities you are using. Use the scale to help you monitor for the desired result of your close monitoring of students’ practice.
Table 1.4: Student Proficiency Scale for Practicing Skills, Strategies, and Processes Using Close Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Fundamental</th>
<th>Desired Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students watch the teacher model the skill,</td>
<td>Students attempt the skill, strategy, or process.</td>
<td>Students execute the skill, strategy, or process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategy, or process.</td>
<td>Students can describe the major points of the</td>
<td>Students can explain what they are thinking or why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>skill, strategy, or process.</td>
<td>they did what they did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students reflect on their practice session.</td>
<td>Students can accurately explain the components</td>
<td>Students are able to explain what may not be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the skill, strategy, or process.</td>
<td>working for them and what needs to change so they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students can describe the needed action for</td>
<td>can develop proficiency with a skill, strategy, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>success with the skill, strategy, or process.</td>
<td>process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scaffold and Extend Instruction to Meet Students’ Needs

There will be some students in every class who need more explicit instruction and longer periods of close monitoring. Likewise, there will be students who need little to no monitoring in terms of a particular skill, strategy, or process. Use the following ideas as springboards to create scaffolds and extensions for these students.

Scaffolding

- Provide an anchor chart or flowchart of steps in the skill, strategy, or process. Have the student label the chart with questions that will prompt the accurate behavior. Allow the student to refer to the drawing during the initial practice sessions.

- Have the student create a mnemonic device to remember the steps in the skill.

- Break the skill into smaller chunks and have the students practice then summarize the step. Students should achieve automaticity before moving to the next chunk of the skill.

- Make sure all students are practicing. Have students practice using whiteboards that can be easily displayed and erased.
Instructional Technique 1

- When possible, use technology-based student response systems to ensure that all students participate in the practice. If you do not have an interactive whiteboard, use free online student response systems such as Socrative.com or Infuselearning.com. Both systems allow students to use a computer or tablet to record responses that demonstrate understanding of procedural knowledge. You can also save the data from student responses for evidence of understanding and application. Both of the applications allow you to download a report that contains student responses.

Extending

- Provide challenging problems and prompt the students to hypothesize how the use/nonuse of the skill or strategy will impact the outcome.

- Have students make and test predictions about what will happen if the skill, strategy, or process is used in different situations or contexts.

- Have students watch live demonstrations (or videos) or critique exemplars of products in which the skill is being or has been used.

- Have students create a set of criteria for determining the quality of the performance. Students will need to deduce the skill being used and critique the performance for mastery of the procedural knowledge.