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Boosting Your Practice: Anytime is a Good Time With These 12 Tips



By [Shelia Banks](#) | February 24, 2015 2:30 pm

Now that we're getting back into the groove of the classroom, it can be a good opportunity to try some new things, improve on the old, and reignite your classroom vision. With help from Instructional Coach Katie Lyons, I've come up with a list of quick adjustments to your practice that will have big payoffs:

- 1. Revamp classroom management:** Do you have some classroom management loose ends? Take some time to hash out those situations with your students and revisit classroom expectations. Together with the students, form new expectations if necessary, and the consequences for not meeting them.
- 2. Get organized:** Are ungraded papers cluttering your desk? Create an organization system that is easy to manage. If you don't have them already, create a file folder for each student. Have three baskets available on your desk for papers returned, papers that need to be graded, and papers that need to be filed.
- 3. Get timely:** Does it take you hours on end to grade papers? A smart colleague of mine told me that she allocates a certain amount of time for grading each paper and sets a timer. She is more efficient because she doesn't get hung up on one paper or lose focus while grading.
- 4. Communicate with parents:** If the last time you communicated with parents was during Open House, consider sending home letters or calling parents to inform them of your plans for the rest of the school year. They'll want to know what they can do to help their children succeed.
- 5. Spiral lessons:** With spring testing now approaching, this is a great time to revisit concepts learned in the fall that need reteaching or refreshing.
- 6. Revisit your small group lists:** Look at the students you've grouped together for small group instruction and make changes to those lists. Perhaps you have students who have made enough progress to move to another group, or identified students who need extra help.
- 7. Spring cleaning:** When was the last time every desktop was cleaned or the bookshelves dusted? Perform a "clean check" and sanitize areas that are touched often (e.g., pencil sharpeners, door handles, computer mice, etc.).
- 8. Reconnect with colleagues:** Set aside time to collaboratively plan with colleagues. There is nothing more powerful than collaborating and bouncing ideas off of a thoughtful colleague.
- 9. Evaluate your practice and set goals:** Take some time to reflect on your instruction. Have you experimented with a new unit of study, or a new instructional strategy? If so, how did your students respond to it? After your evaluation, set goals for your instruction based on your reflections.
- 10. Reflect on your professional journey:** Have you taken a class or attended a professional development workshop? How did it impact your practice? If you haven't, reflect on an area of practice that you want to develop and seek out opportunities that

will enable your growth.

11. Get your students' input: Students can be our best cheerleaders and our best critics. Ask them which units of study they have enjoyed so far this year, which part of your literacy or math block helped them learn the material the best, and what new learning has impacted them the most. Then, use their feedback to modify your instructional plan for the remainder of the year.

12. Get connected: Join a Professional Learning Community (PLC) of educators (Teaching Channel!) and/or create mini PLCs at your school and dig into your practice together.

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Coaching, Fresh Ideas, Improving Your Practice, Mindset, Motivation | 0 comments

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