TEACH BIG MINI BOOK

Start with the student, not the score.

The most useful outcome of a data conversation is a specific change in what a student experiences next.

Data Driven Instruction and the Next Best Step

Prepared by Randi Whitney

teachbig.com

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Schedules, examples, and routines are practical design suggestions from the full guide.

Welcome to Your MINI Book

Data driven instruction, made classroom ready

This MINI book turns a full length guide into the essentials you can use this week. A score helps locate a question. It rarely answers the teaching question by itself. Two students can miss the same item for different reasons, and two students can answer correctly while showing very different understanding.

The central idea

The most useful outcome of a data conversation is a specific change in what a student experiences next: a clearer explanation, a brief prerequisite lesson, a better example, or a well matched next challenge.

How to use this book

- Start with the question your team needs to answer. Classroom teachers can begin with the decision routine on pages 11 and 12. Leaders can begin with time on page 13.
- Treat each spread as one idea: a short explanation, a table or routine, and a next action.
- Use the one page spreads on pages 3 and 4 in a team meeting. Use the Begin Tomorrow checklist on page 22 on Monday morning.

Inside this MINI book

- Pages 5 to 10: define the learning, collect evidence, and read student responses.
- Pages 13 to 19: time, spacing, transfer, RLA examples, feedback, and groups.
- Pages 20 and 21: people and systems that serve decisions. Page 23: key references.
- Keep this book where you plan. One spread at a time beats reading it straight through.

Begin Tomorrow

A one page checklist for Monday morning

Pick one recurring decision and walk it through the routine once with your team. One target, one week, one check.

1. **Pick one target.** Choose one recurring decision, such as what to teach after an evidence check.
2. **Clarify the demand.** Agree with your team on what the task truly asks.
3. **Collect a few responses.** Include some success and some uncertainty, never only the weakest work.
4. **Test two explanations.** Use one small diagnostic contrast before choosing the teaching move.
5. **Teach the barrier.** One focused lesson with a model, a guided attempt, and an independent check.
6. **Plan the next encounter.** Schedule retrieval on a fresh task, then a delayed application.
7. **Protect the rest.** Keep new learning, rich texts, and writing time intact for every student.

Monday morning tip

Do this checklist with one team and one target first. Add information only when it resolves a real uncertainty.

One target. One week. One check. Then repeat.

Four Continuing Responsibilities

At a glance: plan for all four, every week

Plan for four responsibilities at once: develop new learning, repair consequential gaps, maintain previous learning, and extend understanding into new situations. A week that only repairs gaps starves new learning. A week that only moves forward lets fragile skills fade.



Develop: teach what is new

Grade level content with clarity and care. Explicit teaching, rich texts, meaningful writing.



Repair: fix what blocks

Short focused lessons on gaps that block what comes next. One teachable barrier at a time.



Maintain: keep what is secure

Brief retrieval and varied application so secure skills stay available over time.



Extend: stretch what is strong

Secure students compare evidence, explain limits, and use ideas in new situations.

Menu of lenses

Use this book as a menu of lenses, not a list of fields to record for every student. Begin with a small sustainable record. Add information only when it resolves a real uncertainty.

A quick weekly check

- Which responsibility got the least attention last week. What one change restores the balance this week.

Organize People and Systems

Frameworks, tools, and meetings that serve decisions

Four comprehension questions keep a team talking about the same thing. Match the support to the question the student is actually missing.



TAUGHT: recall the taught content

Can the student recall what was taught. If not, reteach with clarity before asking for more.



TAP: locate and use evidence

Can the student find and use evidence. If not, teach evidence routines directly.



THINK: explain why

Can the student explain why and make reasoning visible. A student who succeeds at TAP but struggles at THINK needs help with the relationship, not more evidence hunting.



TOGGLE: compare contexts and connect

Can the student compare contexts and connect ideas. If yes, extend into new situations.

Dashboard that serves decisions

A teacher facing dashboard starts with a small action view: needs investigation, teaching in progress, independent on current tasks, retention check due, ready for extension. Keep the deeper record one tap away.

These descriptors illustrate evidence use. They do not establish a validated scale or match official state performance categories.

Evidence Worth Collecting

Products plus the processes that produced them

Collect both products and the processes that produced them, using selective observation rather than trying to document every thought. A completed assignment shows only that something was completed. It does not show who did the thinking, how much support was given, or whether the student could do it again.

Form of evidence	What it can reveal
Item responses	Accuracy and possible confusions
Short and extended responses	Claim, evidence, explanation, organization
Oral reading sample	Decoding, fluency, word level barriers
Oral explanation	Strategy choice and interpretation
Drafts and revisions	What the student can improve and why
Delayed retrieval	Whether prior learning remains available

What not to collapse

Keep reading comprehension separate from handwriting difficulty when that changes instruction. Keep a well developed idea separate from weak spelling. Keep oral reasoning separate from independent writing. An annotation is not proof of comprehension until the student can justify it.

Revising, Editing, and Progress

Separate the performances, then track both levels

Revising and editing call for related but distinct judgments. For one punctuation target, collect three performances: recognize a correct sentence, correct a flawed one, and produce one unaided. Success on one never guarantees the others. Always edit with a denominator: four errors in four sentences and four in a long draft are different patterns.

Two kinds of evidence

- A targeted measure shows whether the taught component is improving. A broader outcome shows whether that gain matters in real reading or writing.
- Record the date of any instructional change and whether the plan was actually delivered. An upward trend after a change is useful evidence, never proof on its own.

Read level and growth together

Pattern	Likely meaning
Below goal, improving rapidly	Stay the course, confirm with fresh tasks
Below goal and flat	Revisit hypothesis, design, and dose received
Above goal and declining	Investigate before celebrating
Above goal, ready for more	Compact practice and extend

Practical decision rule: after at least three weeks and six data points, compare the latest four points with the goal line, following the measure guidance. A two reds in a row convention is an alert to investigate, never an automatic placement or label.

Check Evidence Quality

Five questions that prevent expensive mistakes

1. **Is the target actually represented.** A label on an item is a claim to examine, not proof of alignment. Check the skill, text demands, and thinking required.
2. **Is there enough evidence.** One correct response is 100 percent of one opportunity. Two of three and twenty of thirty give the same percent with very different information.
3. **Are the tasks comparable.** A rise from 60 to 80 may reflect learning, easier items, added support, or a familiar passage.
4. **Were scoring and directions sound.** Review stems, distractors, rubric wording, and rater agreement. An apparent class pattern can come from one ambiguous item.
5. **What is missing.** Separate not attempted, not reached, absent, and invalid. Missing evidence should never automatically become a zero.

Confidence	Meaning	Action
Tentative	One task or conflicting notes	Investigate, try a reversible move
Developing	Pattern across several tasks	Focused plan, then recheck
Stronger	Consistent and independent	Fade support, maintain, extend

RLA Example: Using Evidence

One passage, four responses, four different needs

A short teaching passage

A class planted seeds in two trays with equal water and sunlight. One tray had deep soil, the other a thin layer. After three weeks the deep tray plants were taller. Task: explain why deeper containers were suggested, using evidence from the passage.

Four responses to the same task

Response	What is visible	Next focus
Because plants need water	A general fact, not the passage reason	Background knowledge versus evidence
Both trays got sunlight	Accurate detail that explains nothing	True details versus supporting details
Deep tray plants grew taller	Relevant evidence, link unstated	Explaining how it supports the idea
Roots had more room, so plants grew taller	Evidence plus causal link	Fresh passage, independent use

Teaching move: present two details, equal sunlight and taller plants in deep soil, and ask what each detail helps explain. Then change the claim (the class kept some conditions the same) and watch the sunlight detail become useful. Relevance depends on the claim.

What a Correct Answer Means

Correct work can hide fragile learning

Correct answers deserve analysis because they can reveal strengths worth extending and fragile learning likely to disappear. Ask students to mark sure, partly sure, or unsure before feedback on selected items, paired with an explanation.

Pattern	What remains uncertain	Next step
Convincing explanation	Will it last and transfer	Delayed varied application
Uncertain reasoning	Understanding or guessing	Fresh example plus rationale
Correct after a cue	Independence	Fade the cue, check again
Only on practiced item	Generalization	New passage or format
Effortful but correct	A consuming component	Find bottleneck, build fluency
Correct every time	Right challenge	Compact practice, extend

A practical response to success

Say: show me how you knew. Now use that idea in a different situation. The first request checks the basis of success. The second creates a meaningful next challenge.

Space It, Retrieve It, Keep It

Spacing and retrieval protect learning over time

Success during practice and lasting learning are different things. A student can complete a supported task today and still lose the skill by next month. Add two questions to any success record: when was the skill last used successfully, and what happened after a delay.

Encounter	Example using evidence	Decision
Day 0	Teach relevance, compare two details	Was the distinction understood
Day 1	Explain why one detail supports a claim	Can the routine be retrieved
Day 3	Fresh short paragraph, less support	Is independence increasing
Day 7	Select and explain in a new topic	Has it lasted and generalized
Day 14	Apply within a longer response	Can it be coordinated
Day 28	Use it in science or social studies	Is it available broadly

- After success, lengthen the gap or raise the demand. After partial success, correct and retry soon. Never space unsupported failure: teach first, then space.
- Track successful encounters, never exposures. Hearing an explanation six times differs from six occasions of recalling, applying, receiving feedback, and retrying.

Choose the Next Best Step

An eight move routine for any data moment: moves 5 to 8

5

Resolve what matters

Choose the shortest diagnostic task that could change the teaching choice. One question, one comparison, or one retry is enough.

6

Choose an instructional move

Select the example, explanation, practice, scaffold, or challenge the student needs. Match the move to the explanation you confirmed.

7

Set the dose and next check

Decide when teaching happens and what will count as improvement. Name the date you will look at new evidence.

8

Return to the decision

From new evidence: continue, adapt, fade support, maintain, or extend. Keep what works and change what does not.

Prioritize by consequence

Give greater attention to a difficulty that blocks several upcoming tasks, concerns a foundational component, or keeps recurring. Never rank standards by lowest percent alone: a rarely sampled standard can look low because of one difficult item.