

- Maintain a lively pace throughout the response cards portion of the lesson (i.e., keep the intervals between trials short [Carnine, 1976]).
- Provide clear cues when students are to hold up and put down their cards (e.g., “Cards up”; “Cards down”).
- Provide feedback based on the “majority response” (Heward et al., 1989). When you see only correct responses, provide a quick and positive comment (e.g., “Great!” “You’re right!”) and present the next item or question. When you see just a few incorrect responses, state or point out the correct answer (e.g., “Yes, the word ‘barn’ is the predicate noun in that sentence”).
- When a significant number of incorrect responses are displayed—perhaps a fourth or more of the class—state or display the correct answer and immediately repeat the same question or item. Check the effectiveness of corrective feedback by repeating, several trials later, any item for which you saw incorrect responses.
- Remember that students can benefit and learn from watching others. Don’t let students think it’s cheating to look at classmates’ response cards.

Specific Suggestions for Using Preprinted Response Cards

- Design and construct the cards to be durable and as easy to see as possible (e.g., consider size, print type, color codes).
- Make the cards easy for students to manipulate and display (e.g., put answers on both sides of the cards so students can see what they are showing the teacher, attach a group of related cards to a ring).
- Begin instruction on new content with a small set of fact/concept cards (perhaps only 2), gradually adding additional cards as students’ skills improve.

Specific Suggestions for Using Write-on Response Cards

- Limit language-based responses to 1 or 2 words.
- Keep a few extra marking pens on hand, and remind students to cap them

tightly when the lesson is over.

- Be sure students do not hesitate to respond because they are concerned about making spelling mistakes. You might use one or a combination of these strategies: (a) provide several practice trials with new words or terms before the lesson begins; (b) write new words or important technical terms on the chalkboard or an overhead projector and tell students to refer to them as needed during the lesson; or (c) use the “don’t worry” technique—tell students to try their best but that misspellings won’t be counted against them.
- Students enjoy doodling on their response cards. Let students draw on the cards for a few minutes after a good lesson.

A Final Note

Providing students with frequent opportunities to respond is one of the most powerful means teachers have for increasing academic achievement. Not only are the outcomes of increasing active student responding significant, but the means for providing these opportunities are currently available to the practitioner. Active student responding is neither a hard-to-pin-down hypothetical construct nor a variable, such as socioeconomic status, on which the teacher can hope to have little or no effect. *ASR is, as Bloom (1980) put it, an “alterable variable”—one that both makes a difference and can be affected by teaching practices.* Response cards provide a proven, easy-to-implement, low-cost, and effective strategy for increasing ASR.

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