

After a long, hard day in the classroom or clinic, that teacher or therapist now needs to make a dozen or so decisions and then they usually need to create the materials to implement the change that has been dictated by the data.

It is not long that the teacher/therapist's worst dream is confirmed by the data. They already intuitively know that they cannot fulfill all of the needs of all of their charges all of the time, but the PT chart data unabashedly smacks them in the face with that stark reality.

Most teachers who unintentionally bite off more than they can chew, burn out in a matter of weeks or months. In their minds, their students are suffering because they cannot provide. They also feel depressed because they cannot do more. They have fallen into the pit of too many expectations.

The only defence against having this powerful system overwhelm you, is to maintain control of it from the outset. You absolutely do not start with a large number of pinpoints. You triage your students and you decide which one or ones that you are going to begin measuring on some specific skill. You have to grit your teeth and try not to do more. Every chart needs to be seen every day. Decisions have to be made and acted on, including creating materials. You need to keep careful control.

It's a little like the old man who was walking down the beach tossing starfish back into the surf. A brash young man derided him by letting him know in no uncertain terms that he could never save all of the starfish on the beach. "I know," said the old man picking up another starfish, "but I can save this one." You may not be able to teach every skill to every student, every day, but you can help this one if you triage well.