May 2019 Teaching Tip



Green Light Education
A new perspective



Chunk, Teach … and Verify

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Chunking is a well-known, highly effective teaching strategy. But, in the rush of teaching, we often miss the vital final phase of this technique: to verify each student fully understands the first chunk before introducing the next one.
When a student grasps the first step or concept, this establishes a cornerstone foundation to which the next piece of learning can connect. We will build true understanding and strong recall, by checking the integrity of understanding piece by piece:

- Using teeny, tiny steps. What teachers see as a simple step can actually be several much small steps to a learner. Break. It. Down.

- Teaching one step at a time. Even though a step may be small, never combine 2 or 3 together. Always separate, teach and verify.

- Verifying, not grading. Your goal is 100% comprehension before moving on. Otherwise, the students who don't understand this step will struggle to grasp your final concept.

- Reviewing one more time. Set up your next chunk by reviewing the previous step first. This only needs to be a 1-minute check-in with a partner. But it's a critical moment that will embed a strong memory and surface the step for the next connection.

Verifying each step ensures students do what we know is good for memory – review within 1 hour and 24 hours. It also stops a student from missing a key step – which later might cause the entire structure of understanding to crumble.