



Connecting research to practice for stronger teaching, learning, and literacy outcomes.



A+ Focus for the Week

Start small, stay consistent: the power of high-impact instructional routines

As we begin a new month, this is a great time to focus on one simple idea: small, consistent instructional moves create big results over time. Whether you are a classroom teacher, coach, or school leader, sustainable improvement often comes from strengthening everyday routines, not adding more to an already full plate.

This week, I encourage you to choose one high-impact practice to tighten up and repeat consistently (for example: clear modeling, retrieval practice, or guided practice with feedback).

A+ Research to Practice Retrieval practice helps learning stick

One of the most useful findings from the Science of Learning is that students remember more when they are asked to retrieve what they have learned (instead of only rereading or reviewing). Retrieval practice strengthens memory and helps students build confidence with content over time.

In classrooms, this can look like:

- Quick verbal review questions
- Short “write what you remember” routines
- Partner retells
- Daily cumulative review of previously taught skills

Why it matters:

When students practice recalling information, they are more likely to retain it and apply it later,

especially when retrieval is built into daily instruction in manageable ways.

A+ Professional Learning Spotlight

A common coaching conversation: “How do I support all learners without watering down instruction?”

This is such an important question and one I hear often in schools. The answer is not lowering expectations. Instead, it is about using strong Tier 1 instruction, clear modeling, guided practice, strategic scaffolds, and frequent checks for understanding.

A coaching move that helps:

Ask teachers to identify one point in the lesson where students typically get stuck, then plan a support in advance (sentence stems, worked example, partner rehearsal, vocabulary preview, or additional modeling).

Small adjustments like these can make instruction more accessible while keeping the learning goal intact.

A+ Resource Pick [A+ Retrieval Practice Planning Template](#)

This week’s A+ resource idea is a retrieval practice planning template teachers can use during lesson prep. The template includes:

- “What should students recall?”
- “How will they retrieve it?” (oral, written, partner talk)
- “When will I use it?” (opening, mid-lesson, closing)
- “How will I check responses?”

Why I picked it:

Teachers are more likely to use retrieval consistently when it is planned in advance. A simple template keeps the routine focused and manageable.

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