Most teachers care about their students’ results, and if you are reading this article, you are undoubtedly one of them. If you want to make a larger difference to how well your students do, then learn about this core list of 10 evidence-based teaching strategies.
What is an evidence-based teaching strategy?

An evidence-based teaching strategy is any approach to teaching that is supported by research. However, research shows that some strategies have far more impact than others. Often, reviews of research and meta-analyses can shed light on these strategies.

There is no doubt that teachers make a difference in how well their kids do at school. However, when you explore the thousands of research studies on the topic, it is clear that some teaching strategies have far more impact than others. These evidence-based teaching strategies are grounded in solid research.
For core list of teaching strategies to make it on this list, they had to:

- Be supported by hard research, rather than anecdotal case studies or untested theories
- Have an impact on student results that it is substantially higher than typical strategies
- Be able to be used on a wide range of subject areas and in all year levels

The results may surprise you.
Evidence Based Teaching Strategy 1: Clear Lesson Goals

It is crucial that you are clear about what it is you want your students to learn during each lesson. The effect that such clarity has on student results is 32% greater than the effect of holding high expectations for every student (and holding high expectations has a sizeable effect).

Lesson goals state what you want your students to:

- Know and understand
- Be able to do

Clear lesson goals help you (and your students) to focus every other aspect of your lesson on what matters most.

EBT Strategy 2: Show & Tell
The second core teaching strategy in this list is **show and tell**. You should start most of your lessons with some show and tell. Put simply:

- **Telling** involves sharing information or knowledge with your students.
- **Showing** involves modelling how to do something.

Your lesson goals clarify what you want your students to **know** and be able to **do** by the end of the lesson. Now, you need to **tell** them what they need to **know** and **show** them how to do the things you want them to be able to do. You don’t want to spend your entire lesson having the kids listening to you, so it is essential to focus your show and tell on things that matter most. To do this, have another look at your lesson goal.

Show and tell is the essence of the **I Do** phase of the **I Do – We Do – You Do** model and it is integral to true teacher clarity.
EBT Strategy 3: Questioning to Check for Understanding

Once you have told students what they need to know, you need to check their understanding before moving on. You can do this using:

- Random sampling
- All student response system

**Random sampling** involves asking a question, pausing and then randomly choosing a student to answer. The pause is to allow all students to think of their answer. And, the random sampling can be as simple as names out of a hat. Other popular techniques include popsicle sticks In sand and an online name picker.

By using **random sampling** regularly, students get used to having to have an answer ready in case you select their name. By asking a small number of questions about the content you have just shared and randomly selecting students to answer them, you can get a reasonable estimate of the class’s understanding.
### EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five Fingers</td>
<td>Students hold up 1-5 fingers reflecting 1-5 multiple-choice responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True-False Cards</td>
<td>Students hold up in response to T-F questions. You can also use yes-no cards in a similar way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini Whiteboards</td>
<td>Students write their answer on a mini-whiteboard (or similar) before holding them up for everyone to see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard Clickers</td>
<td>That some schools purchase so students can submit answers to your interactive whiteboard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EBT Strategy 4: Summarise New Learning In A Graphical Way

Understand the interrelationships between the aspects of what you have taught them.

Discussing a **graphical summary** is a fantastic way to finish off your *show and tell*. You can then refer to it one more time at the end of your lesson.

**Research** shows that graphical ways of organising and reorganising. Studies show that it doesn’t seem to matter who makes the **summary graphic**, be it you or your students, provided the graphic is accurate.

Discussing a **graphical summary** is a fantastic way to finish off your *show and tell*. You can then refer to it one more time at the end of your lesson.
EBT Strategy 5: Plenty of Practice

As the saying goes, *practice makes perfect*.

**Practice** helps students to retain the knowledge and skills that they have learned during your *show* and *tell*.

Therefore, you need to choose practice tasks related to your lesson goal. Doing so also gives you another opportunity to check for understanding. You can then use this opportunity to:

- Re-explain things to the class or groups
- Offer personalised feedback to individual students
However, research also shows that students do better when you give them multiple opportunities to practice spread out over time. So, you need to build in opportunities to practice past material either as:

- Part of the lesson
- Stand-alone sessions by themselves

For more on this, see my articles:

- Distributed Practice & Massed Practice
- Deliberate Practice In Education

EBT Strategy 6: Provide Your Students With Feedback
Feedback is the breakfast of champions, and it is the breakfast served by extraordinary teachers around the world. Giving feedback involves telling a student:

- how they have performed on a particular task
- along with ways that they can improve.

Feedback is different to praise. Praise focuses on the student rather, but feedback focuses on what your student did. It provides your students with a tangible understanding of:

- what they did well
- where they are at
- how they can improve

In John Hattie’s view, any teachers who seriously want to boost their children’s results should start by giving them dollops and dollops of feedback.
EBT Strategy 7: Be Flexible About How Long It Takes to Learn

The idea that given enough time, every student can learn is not as revolutionary as it sounds. It underpins the way we teach martial arts, swimming and dancing. It is also the central premise behind mastery learning, a technique that has the same effect on student results as socio-economic status and other aspects of home life.

When you adopt mastery learning, you differentiate differently. You keep your learning goals the same but vary the time you give each child to succeed. Within the constraints of a crowded curriculum,
Evidence Based Teaching Strategy 8: Productive Group Work

Group work is not new, and you can see it in every classroom. However, productive group work is rare. And, it is this productive group work that forms our eighth evidence-based teaching strategy.

Why isn’t all group work productive? Put simply, some students do all the work and all the learning, while others do very little at all. There are several reasons this can happen, but 2 of the main one are that some students are more:
Eager than others
Competent than others

To increase the productivity of your groups, you need to be selective about the:

- Tasks you assign to them
- Individual role that each group member plays

If you want to use the evidence-based teaching strategy of productive group work, you should:

- Only ask groups to do tasks that all group members can do successfully
- Ensure each group member personally responsible for one step in the task

For example, when teaching students to multiply a 2 digit \times 2 digit number:
should you give them groupwork.

3. Place your students into groups of 3, as there are 3 steps involved in 2 digit ‘ 2 digit multiplication. Then have each group member to decide to choose a letter, A, B or C.
Evidence Based Teaching Strategy 9: Teach Strategies Not Just Content

3. Student C adds the answers from step 1 & 2 together

R. Repeat with each student doing a different step.
Repeat again as many times as you wish.

them how to use relevant learning strategies. When teaching students to:

☞ Write you often teach them strategies such as making a plan and checking for transition words.
☞ Read you often teach strategies that will deepen their comprehension.
☞ Mathematics, you often teach them problem-solving strategies.

From assignments and studying, to characterisation, there are strategies that will help your students perform better.

And, just as with content, you need to:

☞ Tell students about these strategies
Evidence Based Teaching Strategy 10: Nurture Meta-Cognition

The tenth and final evidence-based teaching strategy in this list is *meta-cognition*. Many teachers believe they are encouraging students to use *meta-cognition* when they are not. Often, they are just asking their students to use *strategies*. For example:

- Making connections when reading
- Self-verbalising when solving problems
Evidence Based Teaching Strategies - The Core List

Such strategies are useful. However, on their own, they are not meta-cognition. Meta-cognition involves thinking about your options, your choices and your results. And it has an even larger effect on student results than teaching them strategies.

When using meta-cognition your students may think about:

- What strategies they could use (options)
- What strategies they will use (choices)
- How effective their choices were (results)
- Whether to continue with or change their chosen strategies

What Teaching Strategies Didn’t Make the Top 10?
Other evidence-based teaching strategies didn’t make the list for a different reason. They can only be used within a single subject. For example, *reciprocal teaching*. Don’t assume that a teaching strategy is no good just because it isn’t in the top ten. You can find other examples of subject-specific strategies in the article *How to Teach Writing to Adolescents*.

That said, there are some popular teaching strategies that do not have a large effect on student results. These include *whole language*, *teaching test taking* and *discovery-based learning*. 
I first published this article in 2015. Since then there has been additional research. Check out my more recent article 6 High Impact Teaching Strategies.

The Top 10 Evidence Based Teaching Strategies In Brief
3. Use questions to check that your students understand things

4. Have students summarise new information in a graphical way

5. Give your students plenty of practice spaced out over time

6. Provide your students with feedback so they can refine their efforts

9. Teach students 'strategies' as well as content

10. Nurture metacognition

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Shaun Killian (MEd, MLead)

Shaun Killian is an experienced teacher and principal with a passion for helping students to excel. He believes that assisting teachers to adopt evidence-based education is the best way to make this happen. Shaun is committed to bringing you practical advice based on solid research.
In John Hattie’s *Visible Learning*, the effect size for high expectations is 0.43, while the effect size for teacher clarity is 0.75.

2. See *Visible Learning* by John Hattie
