Strategies for Sylvan Sync

Resource Guide for Sylvan Instructors

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Strategies for SylvanSync

Before the Hour

✓ After you log into SylvanSync, make sure that you select the right student and the right program from the My Students or All Students menu.

✓ On the Binder screen, tap on some of the ILOs (individual learning outcomes) that the student will be working on during the hour. If you notice that the student has a low score on a previous exercise, then read over the comments from the previous teacher by tapping the notepad next to the exercise. This can help you plan how to review or reteach the skill!

During the Hour

✓ While you are teaching a Guided Practice (GP) lesson, the other students at your table should be working on independent activities (Independent Practice, Applied Practice, Mastery Test, or Pretest). This is good table management!

✓ Even though you and your student(s) are looking at the iPad a lot during the hour, try to make eye contact with students as much as possible. This is especially important during Guided Practice when you are teaching a skill to a student. Making eye contact will help establish rapport with the students at your table!

✓ Remember to leave specific comments after grading each exercise!
  ▪ If the student does well, describe why the student did well or how the student might have improved from the last time he or she worked on that ILO.
  ▪ If the student does not score well, describe what errors the student made in the exercise or how the student could improve the next time he or she works on that ILO. Leave comments that other teachers can use the next time!

✓ Remind students to keep the iPad on the table and put snacks or drinks on the floor!

After the Hour

✓ Tap on the End Session button at the end of the hour. Type in your final comments in the Notes section. Remember to include one positive comment, one comment about what the student could improve, and one behavior comment!

✓ You can always go back to the Binder screen to see what the student worked on during the hour. Just tap on the Binder button in the top left corner. To return to the Notes section, tap on End Session again. Any comments that you started to type will still be there!

✓ Give stars for the student’s motivation, pace, time on task, cooperation, and fluency during the hour under the Ratings section. When you are done, tap on the Close Session button at the top of the screen!
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**Academic Reading**

### Pretest (PT)

- Before the pretest, ask the student if the skill is something he or she has done before at school. If so, then ask the student to share his or her experiences. What did they like about it? What did they not like?

- Even if he or she has not done the skill before, encourage the student to try his or her best!

- You can help the student with understanding the directions on the pretest, but don’t help with reading any unknown words or figuring out what an unknown word means.

- If you see that the student is struggling after working on it for a few minutes, then grade the pretest. **Mark any problems that the student missed or did not attempt as incorrect.**

### Guided Practice (GP)

- Read over the **Objectives** found at the beginning of the GP with the student. Ask the student if the skill is something he or she has done before at school or if he or she knows anything about the skill.

- Read over the **Introduction** with the student. The student should read **at least part of the Introduction aloud**. Help the student read any unfamiliar words.
  - You could take turns reading sentences or paragraphs with the student.
  - You could have the student read all of the definitions or bulleted lists.
  - The student could read the entire Introduction aloud to you.

- **Highlight** any important terms and definitions! You can also highlight what you want the student to read aloud. **This is especially helpful for visual learners!**

- Complete the **Examples** and **Try Together** questions **together with the student**. If there is not enough room, the student can write over the gray Reveal or Show Answer boxes!

- **Keep asking the student questions** to check his or her understanding of the skill! Ask the student to provide support that proves **why** his or her answers are correct!
  
  - If the student is working on a Comprehension skill, a great idea is to ask the student to **highlight support for their answers in the passage** – even if it’s not one of the questions given in the exercise!
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✓ Help the student connect the skill to their prior knowledge of reading concepts or ideas.

✓ Tap on the Reveal or Show Answer buttons to check the student’s answers. **Always help the student correct any mistakes if his or her answers are incorrect!**

✓ For questions that ask students to type their answers, **focus more on the ideas** that the student is writing instead of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Students might not be familiar with some of the rules of writing, but you can always help students improve!

  - If the student does not know how to spell a word, encourage the student to find the word in the passage first! Reward the student with tokens if they can find the word!
  - If a question asks the student to write complete sentences, then reward the student with tokens if they do so!

✓ For Comprehension lessons, always encourage the student to **use the passage** to help answer the questions!

  - If the student is having trouble locating an answer, then give the student the sentence or paragraph number where the answer can be found within the passage. You can also ask the student guiding questions about what is happening in the passage to help.

✓ **Engage in constant dialogue** about the skill with the student during the Guided Practice! Always answer any questions the student has about learning the skill. This will help you evaluate if the student is ready to move on to Independent Practice!

Oral Reading Practice

✓ During a Guided Practice lesson for a Comprehension ILO, it is **very important** that the student reads **at least some of the passages** aloud. Students can practice their oral reading skills, and you can model good oral reading skills for the student!

  - Since the passages are usually shorter for younger students, you could take turns reading sentences in the passage.
  - Since the passages are usually longer for older students, you could take turns reading paragraphs in the passage.
  - If the student wants to read the entire passage aloud, go ahead and let them try! Reward the student with tokens if they can read the entire passage!
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- Help the student read any unfamiliar or unknown words. Highlight what you want the student to read aloud. This is very helpful for visual learners!

- During a Guided Practice lesson for a **Vocabulary** ILO, you can read the vocabulary words aloud and then have the student repeat them. Then the student can read the definitions for the new words aloud. The student can read any of the questions aloud, too!

- During a Guided Practice lesson for a **Word Analysis** ILO, the student needs to read as many words aloud as possible because being able to pronounce these words correctly is part of the objectives for all of the Word Analysis lessons.

**Magnifying Feature**

There is a magnifying feature in SylvanSync if students have trouble reading smaller print in a passage. This feature works for both Guided Practice and Independent Practice lessons.

- The magnifying feature only works for passages that students have to tap on the title to open up within a GP or IP. It does not work for questions, paragraphs, or other text that appear within an exercise.
  - While reading a passage, students can press down on the text with one finger. A small round “magnifying glass” will appear over the text.
  - Students can drag the “magnifying glass” across the text with their finger as they are reading the passage.
  - The word that appears in the middle of the “magnifying glass” is highlighted as the student drags it across the text.
  - The “magnifying glass” disappears if the student takes his or finger off the iPad.

**Independent Practice (IP)**

**Introduction**

- Since students completed the Guided Practice for the corresponding ILO during a previous session, have students **read the Introduction at the top of the IP aloud** to remind them about key terms or ideas for that ILO. **This helps to review what was taught during the GP!**
  - Students should always read any definitions or bulleted lists aloud, since these are often important for the students to know to be successful on the IP!
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- If the Introduction is rather long, then you can take turns reading parts of it aloud.
- Highlight any important terms, definitions, or ideas that you think are important! You can also highlight anything that you want the student to read aloud, so it will be easier for the student to find it.

Highlighting a Passage

✔ If students have to highlight words or details in a passage to answer questions:
  1. Have students choose a highlighter color using the Highlighter tool from the tool bar at the top of the screen.
  2. Ask students to highlight their answer(s) to that question in the passage using the same highlighter color they just chose.
  3. Ask students to highlight the actual question(s) in the IP exercise using the same highlighter color they chose.

✔ If there are multiple questions that ask students to highlight words or details in a passage, then have students choose a different color for each question. If students do this, then it will be a lot easier to grade the student’s work after they complete the exercise!

Longer Passages for Older Students

Middle school and high school students often have longer passages to read while completing an IP. Sometimes these passages cover the entire screen. Here are some helpful strategies:

1. Please encourage students to highlight or underline any important facts or details as they read the passage. Students can use the pencil, highlighter, or the underline tool. This will help them be engaged in the reading process!

2. If students do not want to write on the passage, then encourage students to take notes in their notebooks while they are reading. Students can create a “table of contents” by writing down the topic or main idea of each paragraph. This can help students locate answers to the questions within the passage.

3. When students start answering questions after reading a passage, encourage them to have the passage covering about the top half of the screen and the questions covering the bottom half of the screen. This makes it easier for the student to manage going back and forth from the passage to the questions.

4. Remind students that they can always adjust the size of the passage or the questions to make it easier to read.
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**Sponge Activities**

Remember that sponge activities are things that you can ask a student to do while you are teaching another student at your table. Here are some sponge activities that you can ask a Reading student to do when they finish an Independent Practice:

1. Complete a Versatiles activity (see the student’s binder for assigned activities).
2. Highlight support for one or more answers in a paragraph or passage (if not asked in a question from the exercise).
3. Summarize a paragraph or passage in their notebooks.
4. Write an alternative ending that’s creative or unusual for a paragraph or passage.
5. Write a “sequel” or “part two” of a paragraph or passage in their notebooks.
6. If a student just completed a Vocabulary exercise, then have the student write original sentences using the words they are learning about and/or draw pictures of the words.

**Scoring**

✓ If a student has an answer that is similar to the answer that is provided, but still close enough to be marked correct, then have the student read the answer(s) provided aloud to help them understand the passage and what the question was asking a little more!

✓ If you can't figure out what a student wrote, then always ask the student to read it to you!

✓ If a question(s) asked the student to answer using complete sentences, then reward the student with tokens if they did so!

**Fluency**

✓ Make sure that you **read the practice passage aloud** to the student following good oral reading techniques (accuracy, pacing, punctuation, phrasing, expression, etc.)
  - After you have read the practice passage aloud, **the student should read it aloud**!

✓ Before the student starts reading the actual passage that will be scored using the rubric provided, make sure to have the following items at your table:
  - Timer or stopwatch to time the student for the first minute (not required on all Fluency exercises)
  - Dry erase board and marker (or paper and pencil) to tally any miscues the student makes while reading

✓ Take a quick glance at the passage. If you notice any difficult names or places that the student will be reading, then point these words out to the student and provide the correct pronunciation (or what you think the pronunciation should be!).
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✓ While the student is reading the passage aloud, you should be doing the following things:
  - Make a tally mark for each word that the student mispronounces, skips, or adds while reading aloud. This will help you determine the student’s **accuracy** score using the rubric.
  - When the student has read for one minute (and 1:00 is showing on the timer), jot down the word(s) the student was reading at the time. You might forget by the time the student reaches the end of the passage! This will help you determine the student’s **pace** score using the rubric.
  - If a student does not know how to pronounce a word, give the student 3-5 seconds to figure it out. Then you can tell the student what the word is. Make a tally mark to show that the student needed help reading the word.
  - Pay close attention to how well the student groups words into meaningful phrases and pauses at punctuation marks.

✓ After the student reads the passage, he or she can answer the comprehension questions that follow the passage. These questions can be found under the rubric.
  - If the student is doing a **Pretest**, then do not help the student with the questions!
  - If the student is doing a **Guided Practice**, then you can help the student!

**Vocabulary**

✓ During a **Pretest**, introduce the skill to the student and ask the student if he or she has done the skill before at school. Encourage the student to try his or her best, but don’t help them with any of the words.

✓ During **Guided Practice**, read the Introduction together with the student. Highlight what you feel is important. Have the student read part of the Introduction aloud with you.
  - If the Guided Practice gives the student a list of vocabulary words to learn, the first thing you should do is read the words and definitions aloud with the student. Ask the student if he or she is familiar with any of the words.
  - Complete the Examples and Try Together questions together with the student.

✓ Share examples of when you might have used the skill the student is learning in real life!

✓ Share your knowledge of the words that the student is learning! Give examples of where you have seen the words or when you have used the words before.

✓ Help the student develop mental pictures of these new words! Help the student make connections with other words. **Remember that vocabulary is best learned in context!**

✓ On **Independent Practice**, make sure the student is using any Word Banks that are given! Review the directions with the student before he or she starts the exercise.
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Math Essentials

Pretest (PT)

✓ Before the pretest, ask the student if the skill is something he or she has done before at school. If so, then ask the student to share his or her experiences. What did they like about it? What did they not like?

✓ Even if he or she has not done the skill before, encourage the student to try his or her best!

✓ You can help the student with understanding the directions on the pretest, but don’t help with reading any unknown words or figuring out what an unknown word means.

✓ If you see that the student is struggling after working on it for a few minutes, then grade the pretest. Mark any problems that the student missed or did not attempt as incorrect.

Guided Practice (GP)

✓ Read over the Objectives found at the beginning of the GP with the student. Ask the student if the skill is something he or she has done before at school or if he or she knows anything about the skill.

✓ Read over the Introduction with the student. The student should read at least part of the Introduction aloud. Help the student read any unfamiliar words.
  ▪ The student should read aloud any math problems found in the Introduction!
  ▪ You can read over any directions or rules that are given to solve the problem(s).
  ▪ The student could even read the entire Introduction aloud to you!

✓ Highlight any important terms and definitions! You can also highlight what you want the student to read aloud. This is especially helpful for visual learners!

✓ Work out the Examples and Try Together problems together with the student. If there is not enough room, the student can write over the gray Reveal or Show Answer boxes!
  ▪ You can also use notebook paper or a dry erase board to work out the problems.
  ▪ The student should read all of the math problems aloud with you!

✓ Help the student connect the skill to their prior knowledge of math concepts or ideas.

✓ Always use any manipulatives that are pulled for that lesson! Help the student see that learning math is a hands-on process! Manipulatives help students visualize the problems they are working on and provide support for why their answers are correct.
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✔ Keep asking the student questions to check his or her understanding of the skill! Ask the student to describe the steps required to solve a problem, explain why he or she is doing a problem a certain way, or provide support for his or her answers.

✔ Tap on the Reveal or Show Answer buttons to check the student’s answers. Always help the student correct any mistakes if his or her answers are incorrect!

✔ Engage in constant dialogue about the skill with the student during the Guided Practice! Always answer any questions the student has about learning the skill! This will help you evaluate if the student is ready to move on to Independent Practice!

Independent Practice (IP)

✔ Many Independent Practice exercises have ten problems for students to complete. However, students do not have to complete all ten of these problems. Have students do just the odd-numbered problems or just the even-numbered problems.

- Since problems on an IP exercise tend to be arranged in increasing order of difficulty, this can help students practice doing easier problems found at the beginning of the exercise and more difficult problems found at the end of the exercise.
- This can also help you as the teacher evaluate if the student can perform the skill on a wide variety of problems and is ready to move on to the Applied Practice.
- This is also a great tip if there is not enough time left in the hour for the student to complete all of the problems in an IP exercise.

✔ If a student earned a low score (less than 80%) on a previous IP for the same ILO, one helpful tip is to open up the previous IP and go over the student’s incorrect answers. Also, read the comments from the previous teacher. This can help the student not make the same mistakes on the next Independent Practice!

- You can also work out any of the problems that the student missed on the iPad or on a dry erase board and help the student see what mistakes they might have made on the previous Independent Practice.

✔ Students can always work out any of the problems on an IP in their notebooks and just write their final answers on the iPad.

✔ If students do all of the work for a problem(s) on the iPad, then have the students circle their final answer(s) on the iPad.
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✓ Review the directions with the student before he or she starts working! Be sure to point out to the student if the directions change during the exercise (i.e. the directions for the first group of problems are different from the second group of problems).

✓ Strongly encourage the student to check his or her work before you grade it!

✓ If a student finishes an IP while you are still working with another student at your table, then the student could one of the following sponge activities:

   ➢ Describe the steps used to solve one of the problems in his or her notebook.
   ➢ Write a word problem in his or her notebook using numbers from the exercise.
   ➢ Draw a picture in his or her notebook to support why an answer is correct.
   ➢ Make up an original problem similar to the ones in the exercise and solve it.

✓ After a student has finished the IP and you have graded it, always go over any problems that the student missed and answer any questions they have before you hit the Submit button!

Applied Practice (AP)

✓ Since the Applied Practice is an extension of the same ILO the student completed during the IP, help the student see the connection between the Applied Practice and the IP that he or she just completed or completed during a previous hour.

✓ If a student earned a low score on a previous AP for the same ILO, one helpful tip is to open up the previous AP and go over the student’s incorrect answers. Also, read the comments from the previous teacher. This can help the student not make the same mistakes on the next AP!

   ➢ You can also work out any of the problems that the student missed on the iPad or on a dry erase board and help the student see what mistakes they might have made on the previous IP.

✓ Review the directions with the student before he or she starts working! Be sure to point out to the student if the directions are different for some of the problems or change during the exercise.

✓ Students can always work out any of the problems on an IP in their notebooks and just write their final answers on the iPad.

✓ If students do all of the work for a problem(s) on the iPad, then have the students circle their final answer(s) on the iPad.
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**Most Applied Practice exercises are five or six problems.** To save time, students can just complete the **odd-numbered problems** or the **even-numbered problems**. This is a helpful tip in case there is not enough time at the end of the hour to complete all of the problems.
- Students must complete at least three problems on an Applied Practice exercise.

**Strongly encourage the student to check his or her work before you start to grade it.**

**Mastery Test (MT)**

- If a student earned a low score on a previous MT for the same ILO, one helpful tip is to open up the previous MT and go over the student's incorrect answers. Also, read the comments from the previous teacher. This can help the student not make the same mistakes on the next Mastery Test!

- Review the directions with the student **before** he or she starts working! Be sure to point out to the student if the directions are different for some of the problems or change during the exercise.

- **Strongly encourage the student to check his or her work before you start to grade it.**

**Math Facts**

- There is a hidden feature of the Math Facts fluency tests that allows students to practice strategies for solving basic math facts before taking a test.

  1. Open up the fact fluency test from the Binder screen by tapping on Practice.
  2. Tap the Deliver button in the top right corner.
  3. **Before starting the test, tap on the small “i” found in the bottom right corner.**
  4. This will take you to a separate page where you can review strategies for solving addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division facts – depending on what the student is practicing. Several examples of math facts are provided to help the student practice using these strategies!
  5. After reviewing and practicing the strategies, click on the Ready button found at the bottom of the screen. This will take the student back to the fluency test.

- **After the student completes the Math Facts test, remember to write down any facts that the student missed on the Computational Fluency tracker in the student’s binder.**

- **If you are reviewing missed facts from the Computational Fluency tracker in a student’s binder, practicing math facts using flashcards, or reviewing facts from a table found in the student’s binder, then open up a Homework Support session on the iPad.**
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✓ During the Homework Support session, you can write down the facts you are reviewing with the student right on the iPad. Just write the facts in the blank white area that appears. The student can also write down his or her answers, too, right on the iPad!

✓ When you are finished, type in the Notes box that you reviewed math facts with the student and include the operation that was practiced. You can also comment on how well the student did or if the student needs more practice.

Comments

Here are general guidelines and suggestions for adding comments using SylvanSync:

✓ Please write comments for all Independent Practice exercises and Mastery Test exercises for which students score below 80%! Please explain what the student could have done better or how the student could improve the next time. Be as specific as possible about what errors the student made or how the student could apply the skill in the future.

✓ When grading a Guided Practice as Okay, please add comments about why the student needs additional guided practice. Explain what part(s) of the skill the student seems to grasp well and on what part(s) of the skill the student needs more instruction. Comments will help the next teacher decide what to focus on when doing the next Guided Practice about the same ILO with the student!

✓ When adding comments at the end of an assignment, it can often be difficult to change something you have written. The cursor never seems to move where you want it to be!
  ▪ If you want to make changes, it is easier to just tap Submit, then tap on the note pad next to the assignment on the Binder screen, and make the changes there.

✓ Remember that the comments you add after an assignment are the only comments that the next teacher will see when he or she teaches that student! Other teachers do not see the comments that you add at the end of the session.
  ▪ Therefore, if you want to leave specific comments that you feel would benefit the next teacher who works with the student, please add these comments after the assignment!! Remember to include specific details about how well the student is doing or how the student could improve.

✓ When adding comments or grading exercises, it is possible that you could hit the Submit button too early. To prevent this, slide the scroll bar from the right side of the iPad to the left side of the iPad.

I hope that you found this Strategies for SylvanSync guide to be helpful! Happy teaching!
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Glossary

AP – Applied Practice

GP – Guided Practice

ILO – Individual Learning Outcome

IP – Independent Practice

MT – Mastery Test