

I-4: Consistently reinforce academic efforts toward the big goal

Reinforce effort with strategic frequency

Why strategic frequency rather than predictable frequency?

- **It's more effective in building motivation** - when using tangible rewards in your classroom, a variable schedule of providing the reward is more effective than a fixed schedule; if you provide a reward every third time a student completed a task, the reward may soon lose its value. When reinforcement is less certain, student willingness to persist in tasks often improves.
- **It helps lead students to intrinsic motivation** – when extrinsic rewards are overused, students may become dependent upon them for motivation; when they are only used when necessary, they lessen student dependence and allow them to see work and achievement as ends in themselves.

What does this mean?

What It Is	What It Is Not
<p>Providing reinforcements on a flexible schedule and at moments that will yield the greatest impact</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Having celebrations when students have met a significant goal, such as improving class mastery averages by a certain percentage</p> <p>Starting the year by giving tickets and prizes for being Student of the Week, then gradually phasing out the use of the prizes over time as students become more motivated throughout the year</p>	<p>Always sticking to a pre-determined schedule for giving rewards at regimented intervals.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Always giving students a prize for doing their homework for the entire week</p>
<p>Giving students reinforcement as often as they need it</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Adapting your reward system to give more frequent reinforcements to students who become frustrated easily</p>	<p>Overusing rewards such that they lose their meaning and impact</p> <p>Not increasing or decreasing the frequency and size of reinforcement for different students</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Sticking to your system of only giving one prize a day to Luis for hard work, even when he shows that he needs more immediate and consistent reinforcement for remaining persistent throughout the day</p> <p>Giving Tammy the same privilege each time she gets an A on a weekly assessment, even though she does well consistently and shows declining interest in getting the reward every week</p>