

# Smart Teaching Tips

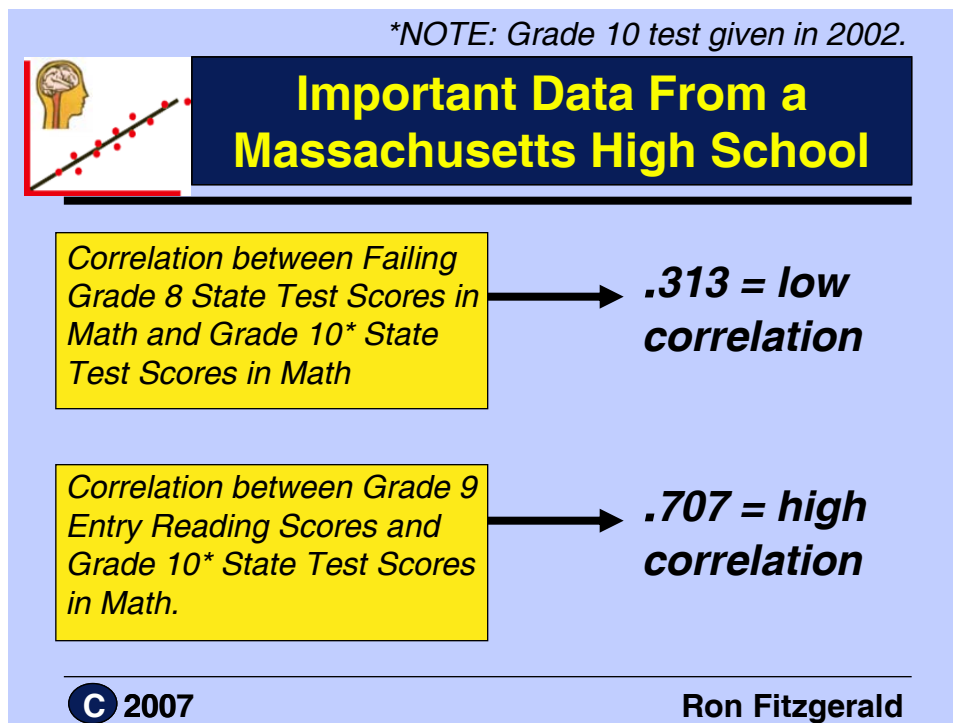


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## *Special Recommendations for Best Use of a Powerful Teaching System*

The teaching system defined in Issue #2 of this newsletter series and in Topic #2 on the SMART TEACHING website [www.SmartTeaching.org](http://www.SmartTeaching.org) is based on over a decade of carefully studied use. During that period the following special recommendations were defined for best use of the system.

1. **Make diagnosing and, where necessary, strengthening reading skills a basic part of any system**  
Consider the statistical analysis in the following graphic.



More analysis showed that reading skills and not previous math scores were the best predictor of passing the Grade 10 (word problem focused) state math test. In fact, having reading skills below the sixth grade level on entering grade 9 was clearly the “red flag” of danger for failure on both the math and English tests in grade 10. Minuteman Regional High School while accepting students from many separate districts used such analysis to design mandatory reading lab help for any ninth grader reading at the sixth grade level or below. No school should neglect reading skills in designing its system for teaching and learning.

Continued.

**2. Address each fundamental component of the teaching system.**

Each component of the system described in Issue #2 of this newsletter is critical. Review that issue again if you are not sure why that is true. Do NOT skip any component.

**3. Teach the students how to learn.**

In a system of brain-friendly teaching with learning options, teaching students to understand learning styles and talent differences helps them to (a) use their individual strengths and (b) improve in areas of relative weakness and (c) raise their levels of learning. The teacher handbook described in Topic #3 of the Smart teaching web site provides student handouts to support such learning for all new students in a school.

**4. Teach students the why and how of pursuing quality in their own performance.**

There are many programs that suggest using challenging courses and related testing to promote improved learning. Every such program has far more positive impact if a philosophy and procedures or culture for constant improvement (i.e., quality) are taught to students using examples and advantages from the world of work. In the high school where the SMART TEACHING SYSTEM was developed and in many other K-12 schools, a specific quality management curriculum has been or is presented to all students. Again, see samples and sources of curricula for elementary and secondary schools in the teacher handbook mentioned and/or in Topics #17 and #18 on the web site listed below.

**5. Ensure that student involvement with learning activities is active, not passive.**

See Topic #43 on the web site to review the constructivism philosophy. Translate this philosophy into action. For example, never be a teacher who has students watch an entire video story or film and then “tests” them with questions to see if they have learned. Be the teacher who shows such a story in segments, each followed by connection types of questions (not for grading) and two-way discussions; then perhaps even use formative assessments to channel help to individual students before giving a summative quiz or test for grading purposes. Your goal is to ensure learning, not to catch students who did not learn!

**Implementing each of these five recommendations will ensure that much more learning will take place than would take place if one or more of the recommendations is ignored.**

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

SMART TEACHING TIPS & MANY RELATED RESOURCES are available on the free web site [www.SmartTeaching.org](http://www.SmartTeaching.org). To view the available mini-newsletters, go to the home page and click on the button:

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