
STUDENT SUPPORTS

REDOS & RETAKES

Redos and Retakes are consistently seen as one of the most beneficial supports by historically underrepresented students of color and low-income students in AP/IB courses. Through evaluation of EOS survey responses and in-depth conversations with students and teachers[1], we learned why students find them helpful and what components are essential to their successful implementation.

WHAT THEY ARE

Redos/Retakes refers to the option for students to redo assignments and/or retake tests if they want the chance to improve on their first attempt. This helps students feel that they are in a safe space to struggle, take risks, and make mistakes. This is especially important during the first months of school as students learn the expectations of an AP/IB class and develop strategies for meeting the challenge. However, ongoing redo/retake options encourage students to persist in learning to the best of their ability.

THE VALUE

Students value redos/retakes because they offer a way for students to **improve their understanding** of the material, opportunities to **build relationships** with teachers, and **assurance that they belong** in the course.

[1] EOS evaluated over 10,000 Student Experience Survey responses from AP/IB students of color and low-income students. Responses were from surveys taken in high schools around the country during the 2017-18 academic year. Academic supports that students most often reported as useful to their success were identified, and the research team then held focus groups with students and staff at schools that had the highest proportion of students reporting that a specific support was most effective.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

PROCESS

Students stress that the process for requesting retakes must be clearly laid out (checklists are helpful) and that deadlines are known well in advance. A school-wide redo/retake policy helps students navigate a consistent process and aligned expectations in each class.

FEEDBACK

Students appreciate in-person conversations with their teacher to get explicit, detailed feedback on what they did wrong the first time around, and how to better prepare for the redo/retake. They also found structured feedback and study opportunities with peers either during or outside of class time to be important.

TEACHER CARING

Students have to perceive their teachers as open, non-judgmental and interested in them, or they may be too intimidated to get help and try again. In addition, students value when teachers initiate a one-on-one conversation to share their high expectations of the student and belief that they can be more successful.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"Being able to redo assignments and do better made me feel like my teacher cared and was willing to help."

"It encouraged me to try harder and study more because I was given a second chance."

"The opportunity to redo assignments has helped me a lot not only to make up for my grade and give me more points but it would also knock some sense into me to keep on going and not slack off."

"...it can help you develop that reassurance that you can do work that is on a higher level and encourages you to become more responsible."

"...I did have options to do test corrections which always helped me to correct what I had learned wrong."

"Without this, I would keep repeating my mistakes. I did have an AP course that didn't offer this and I found myself failing to grow and progress with the material..."

Everett High School, Washington State

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

At Everett High School in Everett, Washington, students are offered a variety of opportunities to retake tests and redo homework assignments. Teachers find that it helps students "build confidence in the beginning." Some teachers offer redos for every assignment and/or test, while others only offer this when students have scored a "C" or lower.

Most classes require that students show specific preparation or understanding prior to trying again. Some teachers want students to do test corrections first and write out why their answer changed. Others ask students to complete all of the relevant homework first. One student explains that a teacher he likes "picks out students that have done well on tests, or has a good grade in that class, and she'll choose that person as a

group leader for tutoring [for retakes]." Another student prefers working one-on-one with his teachers as he finds them "surprisingly good, no matter who it is, at really identifying the areas that you struggle in."

Teachers here know that they have to encourage students often to utilize redos and retakes. One student fondly recalls a teacher who "pushed it into our heads. If you want to do test corrections, I am here after school. We can get it all done. It's literally... 20 minutes that can help you in the future." When teachers keep encouraging a redo, students feel more confident in asking for help and motivated to try again. One teacher shares, "That's how I get students to know that sometimes I make these blanket rules, but I will work with you and I know you're trying and I know you care and I know you can do it."

STUDENT SUPPORTS

STUDY GROUPS

Student study groups are consistently rated as one of the most beneficial supports by historically underrepresented students of color and low-income students in AP/IB courses. Through evaluation of EOS survey responses and in-depth conversations with students and teachers[1], we learned why students find them helpful and what components are essential to their successful implementation.

WHAT THEY ARE

Study groups refer to formalized student-led study teams that work together during and/or outside of class time. These study teams, made up of first-time and experienced AP/IB students with mixed skill sets, ensure that all students discover different perspectives, better content understanding, and new peer relationships.

THE VALUE

Students value student study groups because they offer **opportunities to learn** from student perspectives and explanations, regular **interactions with peers** who help them feel less stressed, and a sense of **peer connectedness**, encouragement, and motivation to keep learning.

[1] EOS evaluated over 10,000 Student Experience Survey responses from AP/IB students of color and low-income students. Responses were from surveys taken in high schools around the country during the 2017-18 academic year. Academic supports that students most often reported as useful to their success were identified, and the research team then held focus groups with students and staff at schools that had the highest proportion of students reporting that a specific support was most effective.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

ENVIRONMENT

Teacher intentionality is key to a **supportive and tight-knit class community that encompasses all demographic groups**. The **physical room set-up, as well as interactive and collaborative instructional practices**, help students develop meaningful bonds with their peers.

MEETING OPTIONS

Most study groups like meeting **in person, either at school or in a public space, in order to develop relationships and trust with each other**. Additional communication through text or social media can be useful, especially for students who do not have extra time and/or transportation.

TEACHER SUPPORT

Teacher encouragement of study groups is cited as crucial to **successful participation for all students**. Many students want teachers' help in creating study groups so that anyone who wants to join one can do so without feeling embarrassed, excluded or too shy to ask their peers.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"[Study groups] made me comfortable with my peers while i was also learning along the way."

"It allowed me to discuss the topics taught in class and understand them through different perspectives and ultimately understand them more in-depth."

"It made it easier to understand what was going on and I didn't feel bad when something didn't make sense to me."

"I'm not always sure which people are having study groups and I'm shy, so when the teacher helps coordinate them, it's a lot easier to join. A lot of people want to be in them and would benefit from them."

"We got to socialize but even with all of the possible distractions, it really helped me buckle down and get work done because I felt that I was in a comfortable environment. In a matter of 2 hours I was ahead of my class plan and had already finished my assignment, note cards, and prompts..."

Westerville Central High School, Ohio

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

At Westerville Central High School in Westerville, Ohio, AP teachers actively encourage students in their classes to develop study groups and become a community where everyone belongs. Many of the AP classrooms are set up in tables of 4-6 students where they work collaboratively, so students get to know others they might not normally interact with across racial and social lines. The students say that these seating arrangements have naturally led to tablemates connecting outside of class time as a study group. Some tablemates don't coalesce as well, but since the teachers stress that they are "all struggling together," students from one table will often invite others needing a study group to join them. Study groups often take place outside of school at a local coffee shop, in the school library, or sometimes via social media.

Students say that the study groups enable them to feel less intimidated by the work as "laughing together about it is relieving" and they know that all students "are in the same boat." One student talked about how helpful the group was when he had to miss a class and "the study group explained the work to me and explained it three different ways and at least one of them had to click."

Students also cited that when learning is "communal, it makes you really push yourself to pull your weight" with the group. One student explained that "usually I'll be the one who doesn't understand it and it's the group that helps me get to that level, so I think that's important. And I also think being able to teach someone else that doesn't really understand is also an important part of the learning process."

STUDENT SUPPORTS

TEACHER TUTORING & OFFICE HOURS

Teacher tutoring & office hours are consistently rated as one of the most beneficial supports by historically underrepresented students of color and low-income students in AP/IB courses. Through evaluation of EOS survey responses and in-depth conversations with students and teachers[1], we learned why students find them helpful and what components are essential to their successful implementation.

WHAT THEY ARE

Teacher tutoring and office hours refer to opportunities for students to get specific content help, as well as encouragement and/or relationship-building with their teachers. Teacher office hours involves well-messaged regular and reliable times for students to receive one-on-one assistance outside of class time. Teacher tutoring happens when students receive help from their teacher on a particular topic in a smaller group setting. These options are important for everyone, from high-achieving students to those experiencing difficulties in the class.

THE VALUE

Students value teacher tutoring and office hours because it offers one-on-one attention and small group learning in a non-distracting environment, more focused content help and preparation for tests/assignments, and opportunities for teachers to show students that they care.

[1] EOS evaluated over 10,000 Student Experience Survey responses from AP/IB students of color and low-income students. Responses were from surveys taken in high schools around the country during the 2017-18 academic year. Academic supports that students most often reported as useful to their success were identified, and the research team then held focus groups with students and staff at schools that had the highest proportion of students reporting that a specific support was most effective.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

STUDENT VOICE

More students are willing to speak up during on-on-one conversations or smaller group sessions. They learn that most students don't understand everything, so it's safe to ask questions. They can then speak with less fear of judgement and build courage for speaking in larger classes.

TIMING & METHODS

More students can attend teacher tutoring and office hours when scheduled (or mandated) within school hours. Students like when teachers use this time to relate the material to the students' world with relevant examples and perspectives, and when they get opportunities to practice their understanding. Students also appreciate when teachers try something new during this time, and model risk-taking and making mistakes.

TEACHER ENCOURAGEMENT

Students say that a teacher's support and patience helps them believe that their teacher cares about them. They value teachers who regularly and proactively encourage them to come in for help, acknowledge the student's motivation to learn when they attend, and actively communicate their belief that the student will succeed.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"I was able to have the opportunity to ask as many questions as needed. Not only were the questions I asked beneficial but also the ones my peers asked."

"For the teacher to give up their time in order for their students to succeed makes a lot of us feel like the teacher really does care and believes we can do our best."

"I've wanted to drop my classes because it was overwhelming and too hard to balance with my regular classes but now that I know I have all the help I can get, I can push through it knowing I'm not alone."

"I went in for help at the beginning of the year when I felt the worst about my abilities and he gave me helpful advice that gave me a boost of confidence."

"Teacher study sessions provided helpful support where the teacher would not only review but motivate students and made sure everyone was engaged in the conversation."

Lamar Consolidated High School, Texas

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

At Lamar Consolidated High School in Rosenberg, Texas, administrators have created a unique structure to ensure that every student receives quality time with their teacher as needed. Mustang Hour is an hour-long period that happens once per week when other class periods are slightly shortened. During this time, students who are struggling with a course meet with their teacher in a small group for targeted support. Students who are not struggling in a course choose from a variety of other offerings developed by teachers. Every three weeks, teachers submit lists of the students they would like to have in their support classes, and students can request to participate as well. If a student is requested by multiple teachers, there is an order of placement priority based on the subject.

Students feel that these support classes are helpful. One student explained, "it's... better than regular tutoring just cuz you don't have to go after school or before school, it's ingrained into your schedule, so it's a lot more convenient." Another liked that "it's different than she would teach in a class, she breaks it down in a different way."

Teachers and students both agree that these support classes have had a positive impact on teacher-student relationships and have led to better learning during regular class time. Students said that they felt much more comfortable speaking up in class and sharing in these smaller group environments. One student valued that "it can also be an opportunity to have one on one [with the teacher] because the class is much smaller, and I think it's a good thing for me...to get included."