Two Is the Magic Number – Two Skills Per Week

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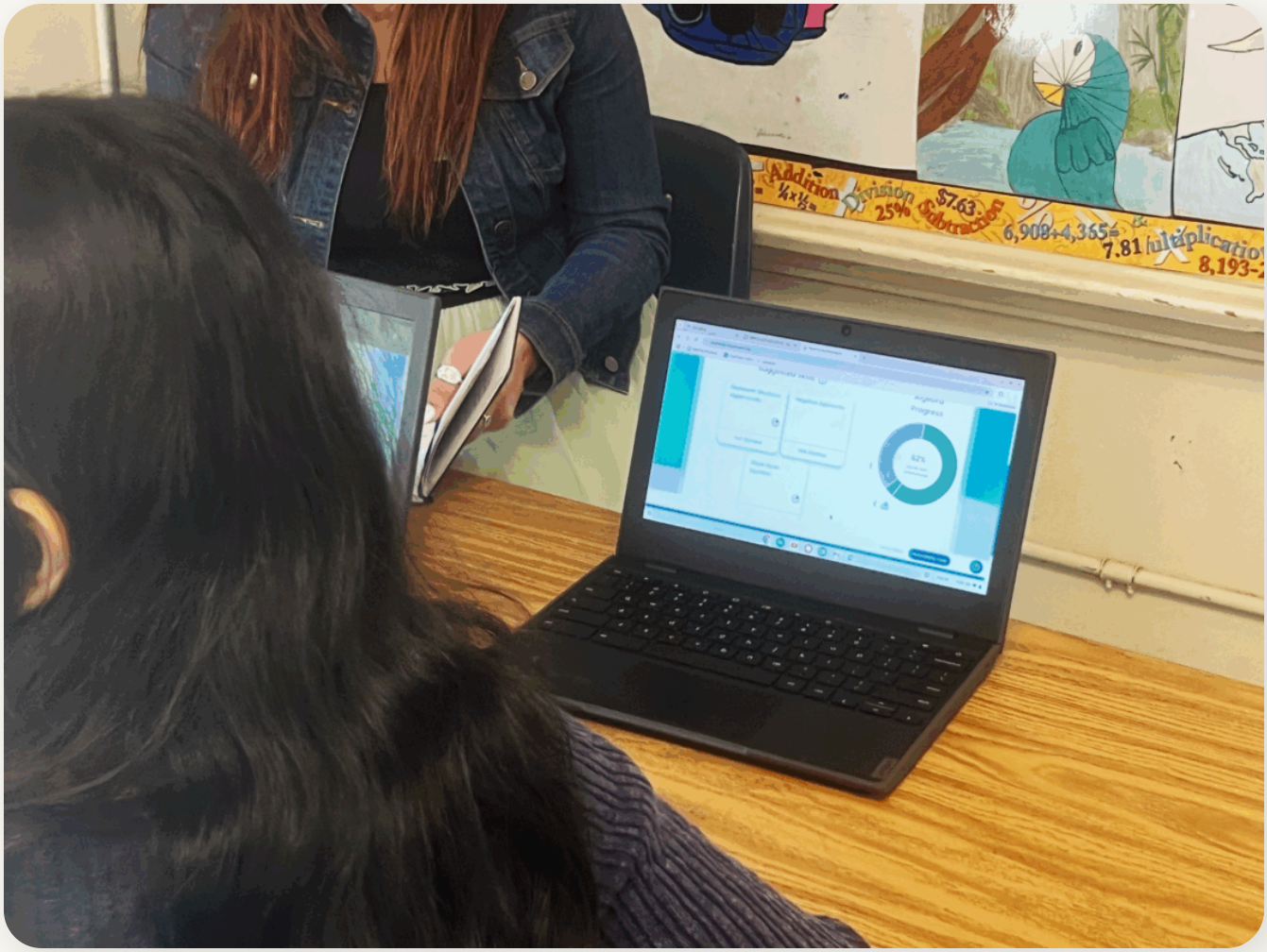
By Teach to One



Why We Recommend Two Skills Per Week in *Teach to One Roadmaps*

We've all heard that Three is the Magic Number, but for *Teach to One Roadmaps*, the magic number is two. Two skills per week is the optimal e for helping students make meaningful, sustained progress in th.

Here's why.

Why Two Skills Works

When students move too slowly, with, for example, one skill a week, they risk ending the year still far from grade level. Two skills per week works because it's achievable.

Our classroom observations and research show that two skills per week strikes the right balance:

1.  **It's achievable.** A skill includes procedural, conceptual, and applied understanding, and is something students can typically learn in 1–3 sessions of 30–40 minutes each, then show mastery on a short, formative assessment (we call it a Skill Challenge).

2.  **It adds up.** If a student begins the year having mastered 42 of the 119 skills they need, one skill a week would get them to about 72 skills—below the mastery threshold. Two skills a week gets them to roughly 102 skills, or mastery of 82% of the skills they need for grade level. Research shows students who reach mastery of 70%+ of their grade level skills are far more likely to test at or above grade level on state tests.

3.  **It delivers results**. It's a tangible target that keeps students motivated and, more importantly, it aligns with the level of progress that past *Roadmaps* students have needed to reach proficiency on their state assessments.

Recent research confirms just how powerful a personalized, skills-based roadmap can be:

- Research—including *Unlocking Algebra: What the Data Tells Us About Helping Students Catch Up* from TNTP—shows that this pace significantly increases their chances of being proficient. For example, TNTP found that students who completed just 30–40% of their roadmap were unlikely to pass their state exam. By contrast, students who reached 70–80% completion—a typical outcome for those averaging two skills per week—moves them from a place where nearly every student fails the state exam into a range where 75% of students reach proficiency.

- Readiness is determined by how many of the key predecessor skills a student has mastered for a target skill. In its report *Unlocking Algebra*, TNTP found that in math instruction "[w]hen an individualized approach responded to students' existing mastery of key predecessors … students learned nearly twice as much over the course of a year" as compared to a start-at-the-bottom or grade-level only approach.

Figure 5 | Simulated Student Success with Different Tier 2 Approaches

We used data from real Algebra I students with unfinished learning and simulated their success with different instructional approaches over a school year. This assumes 50 attempts on algebra-related concepts and skills, either from Algebra I or prior grades. From those attempts:

Approach	Success Rate on Attempts	Total Concepts & Skills Gained
Start at the Bottom **Students work only at the grade level where they're missing most prior concepts and skills.** They work straight through all concepts and skills in that grade and repeat some content they've already covered.	45%	12
Grade Level Only **Students work only on concepts and skills introduced in Algebra I.** They work straight through the Algebra I curriculum. Whether or not they master a concept or skill, they move on to the next. Nearly all content is new to them.	28%	14
Individualized **Students work on the most advanced concept and skill that they're ready to learn.** First, the simulation identifies the concepts and skills where students had mastered the most key predecessors, then it assigns problems	50%	25

Teach to One Roadmaps is highly correlated with state assessment

scores, and strongly predicts performance across different grade levels and skill domains. Critically, every study participant who mastered all their assigned skills scored proficient or above on their state test.

- This case study shows that students using *Teach to One Roadmaps* grew an extra 5.6 RIT points on MAP assessments, equivalent to one and a half semesters of learning, compared to matched peers

These findings demonstrate that a well-paced, readiness-based approach (like two skills per week) isn't just convenient, it measurably boosts proficiency.

How *Teach to One Roadmaps* Makes It Possible

Traditional pacing often follows a grade-level calendar, which can leave some students lost and others bored. *Teach to One Roadmaps* redefines the model as students move forward based on readiness, not the date on the calendar.

Every student starts with a diagnostic that pinpoints exactly which skills they have (and haven't) mastered. *Teach to One Roadmaps* then recommends the next best skill each student is ready to learn, so time is spent where it counts most.

Strategies to Hit Two Skills Per Week

Once teachers know exactly which skills each student is ready for—based on actual data rather than assumptions—they have the "right insight" to guide instruction. The next step is putting it into action. That's where simple, practical, teacher-tested routines can make this realistic for any classroom:

Keep motivation high

- Use incentives like a Skill-o-Meter, leaderboard, or our weekly “2 Skills Tuesday” celebration.
- Have students set personal skill goals and track their own progress.
- Use *Teach to One Roadmaps* Skill Challenges as exit tickets to reinforce learning.
- Assign personalized homework to keep momentum going when class time is short.

Build structure and consistency

- Hold small-group meetings twice a month for targeted support to help students catch up or push ahead.
- Monthly one-on-one check-ins let teachers celebrate progress and troubleshoot readiness barriers.
- Make *Teach to One Roadmaps* time a predictable part of your weekly rhythm.
- Use visual progress boards to keep goals front and center.

Overcome common challenges

- Time constraints: Look for spots where *Teach to One Roadmaps* can replace existing activities like exit tickets or certain homework blocks.
- Grade-level mandates: Show leaders how *Teach to One Roadmaps* connects directly to core and intervention work.
- Readiness concerns: Remember, *Teach to One Roadmaps* only recommends skills students are ready for.
- Engagement dips: Lean on your classroom culture, incentives, and visible progress tracking.

For more suggestions and resources, see the article Motivation, Goals, and Pace on the Roadmaps Resource Center.

The Bottom Line

Two skills per week isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a readiness-informed pace that builds both confidence and competence. With the right routines, students can hit that target, stay motivated, and make the kind of progress that truly changes their math story.

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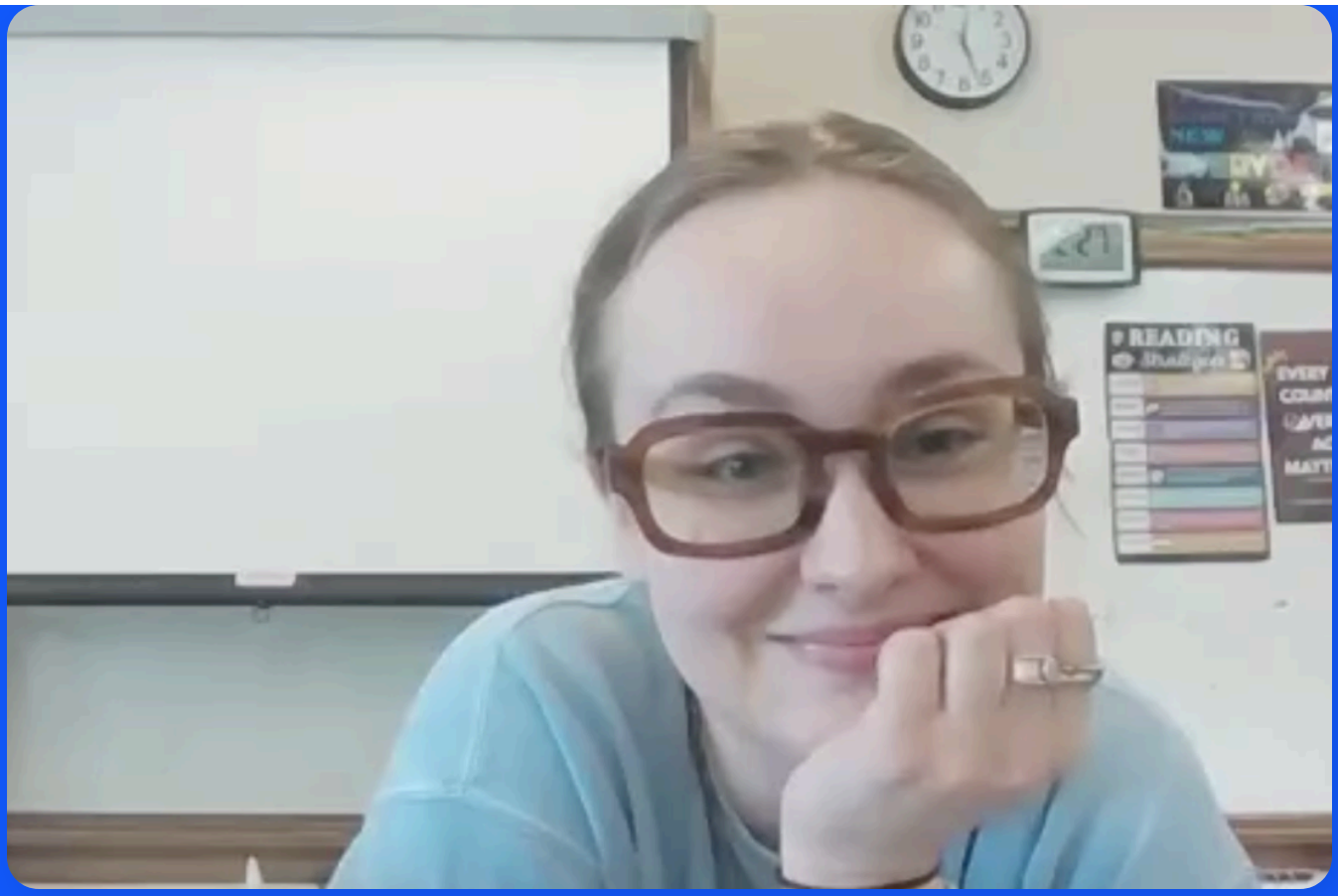

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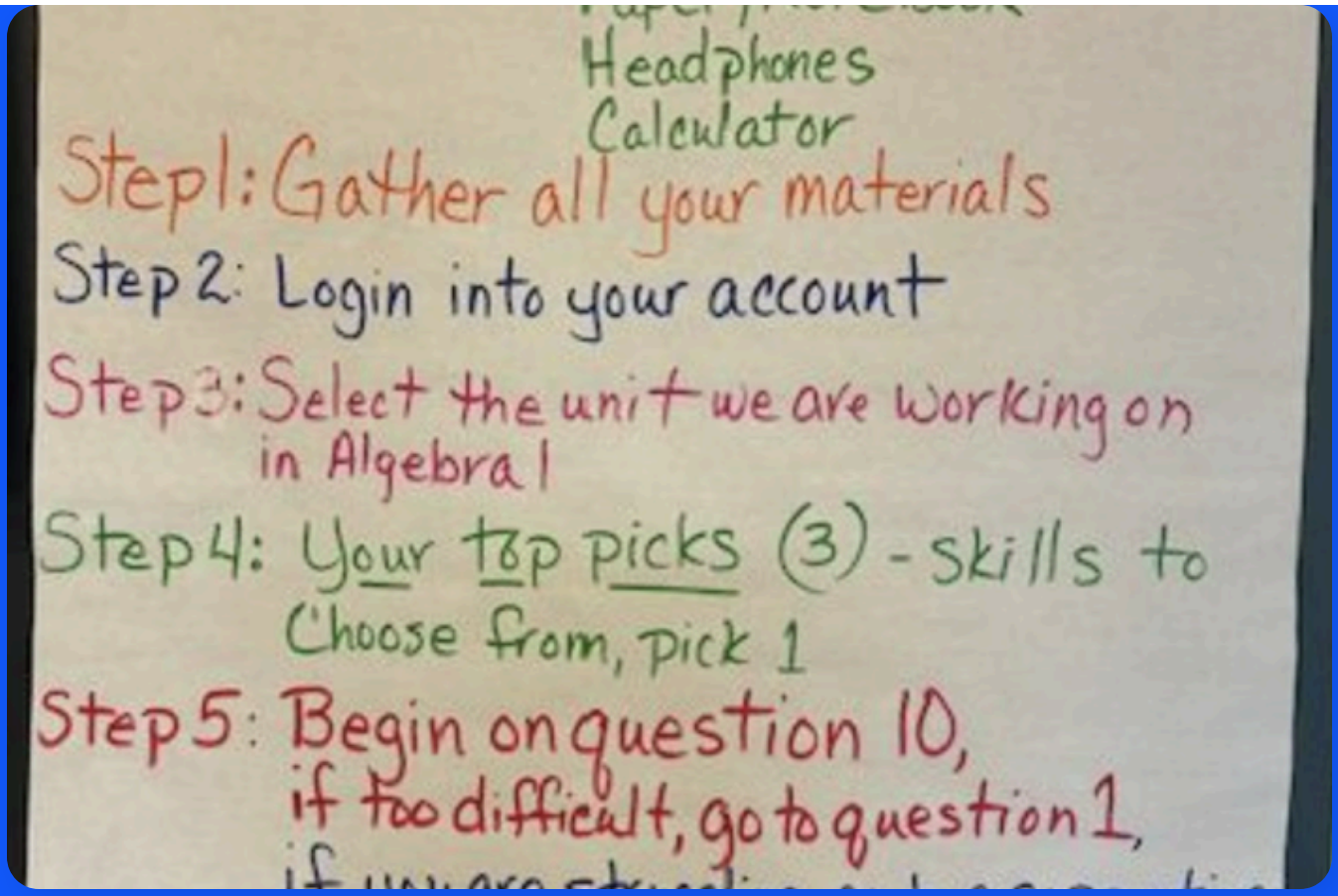

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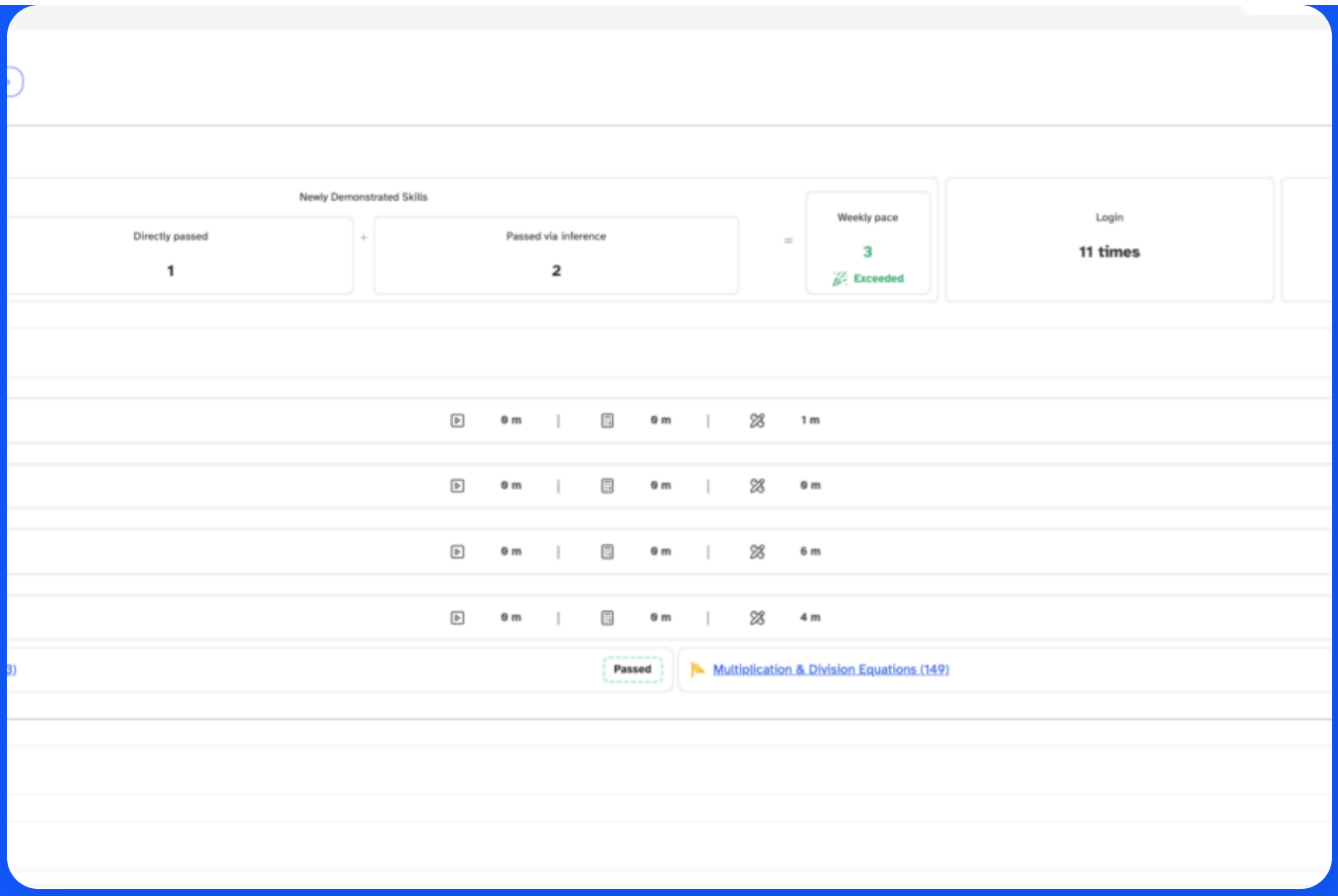

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