Explaining and Modeling Content, Practices, and Strategies

What is it?

Explaining and modeling are practices for making a wide variety of content, academic practices, and strategies explicit to students. Depending on the topic and the instructional purpose, teachers might rely on simple verbal explanations, sometimes with accompanying examples or representations. In teaching more complex academic practices and strategies, such as an algorithm for carrying out a mathematical operation or the use of metacognition to improve reading comprehension, teachers might choose a more elaborate kind of explanation that we are calling "modeling." Modeling includes verbal explanation, but also thinking aloud and demonstrating. (teachingworks.org)

What about for struggling students or students with disabilities?

CEC HLP #16: Teachers make content, skills, and concepts explicit by showing and telling students what to do or think while solving problems, enacting strategies, completing tasks, and classifying concepts. Teachers use explicit instruction when students are learning new material and complex concepts and skills. They strategically choose examples and nonexamples and language to facilitate student understanding, anticipate common misconceptions, highlight essential content, and remove distracting information. They model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently. (highleveragepractices.org)

CEC HLP #14: Teachers explicitly teach cognitive and metacognitive processing strategies to support memory, attention, and self-regulation of learning. Learning involves not only understanding content but also using cognitive processes to solve problems, regulate attention, organize thoughts and materials, and monitor one's own thinking. Self-regulation and metacognitive strategy instruction is integrated into lessons on academic content through modeling and explicit instruction. Students learn to monitor and evaluate their performance in relation to explicit goals and make necessary adjustments to improve learning.

Other names or terms?

Explicit instruction, strategy instruction

Evidence

Connor, C., Jakobsons, L., Crowe, E., & Meadows, J. (2009). Instruction, student engagement, and reading skill growth in Reading First classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal, 109*(3), 221–250. doi:10.1086/592305

Coyne, M. D., Kame'enui, E. J., & Simmons, D. C. (2001). Improving beginning reading instruction and intervention for students with LD: Reconciling "all" with "each." *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 37*(3), 231–239. doi:10.1177/002221940 40370030801

Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (1996). *Making the writing process work: Strategies for composition and self-regulation.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning.* New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Pullen, P. C., Tuckwiller, E. D., Konold, T., Maynard, K., & Coyne, M. (2010). A response to intervention model for vocabulary instruction: The effects of tiered instruction for students at risk for reading disability. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 25*(3), 110–123. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2010.00309

Content Examples

1. Science: https://library.teachingworks.org/curriculum-resources/materials/science-explaining-and-modeling-content/
2. Social Studies: https://library.teachingworks.org/curriculum-resources/materials/social-studies-explaining-and-modeling-content/
3. English Language Arts: https://library.teachingworks.org/curriculum-resources/materials/english-language-arts-explaining-and-modeling-content/
4. Mathematics
   a. General Instruction: https://library.teachingworks.org/curriculum-resources/materials/mathematics-explaining-and-modeling-content/
   b. Intensive Instruction: https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention-math-course
5. Behavior Support for Intensive Intervention (National Center on Intensive Intervention [NCII]): https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention-behavior-course

Resources for Preparing Preservice and Inservice Educators

- Teaching Works Resource Library: Videos, Content-Specific Resources (https://library.teachingworks.org/curriculum-resources/teaching-practices/explaining-and-modeling-content/)
- Video: Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) High-Leverage Practice (HLP) 16: Use Explicit Instruction for Struggling Students and Students with Disabilities (https://highleveragepractices.org/701-2/)
- National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) Course and Professional Learning Modules: Features of Explicit Instruction (https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention-features-explicit-instruction)
- CEEDAR Center Course Enhancement Module: Evidence-Based Practices for Students with Disabilities (http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/severe-disabilities/)