

Quick Guide to the Deliberate Acts of Teaching¹

Modeling. Nearly everything a teacher does during the course of a lesson can be seen as modeling, but deliberate, purposeful modeling is a powerful instructional strategy. For example, teachers can make intended student learning “visible” by verbalizing their reasoning out loud, explicitly narrating their thinking during a problem-solving process, or demonstrating a specific skill.

Prompting. Prompting is an instructional strategy that teachers use to help students access and apply prior learning as a bridge to new learning. In order to prompt effectively, a teacher needs a detailed knowledge of the student’s current level of understanding. Prompting may take the form of a reminder, a strong hint, a clue, or a question, and should always be followed by adequate wait time.

Questioning. Asking questions is an ideal way to generate thoughtful discussions and explorations of issues that are important to developing students' understanding. In addition, attending to the answers that students give and probing these answers with follow-up questions yield important information that teachers can use to evaluate current levels of understanding and identify appropriate instructional responses for next steps.

Giving Feedback. The primary use of feedback is not to indicate whether students are right or wrong but to enable them to reflect on their use of strategies and on their learning. An important message for teachers to convey when giving feedback is that the source of student success is their own learning strategies. Providing feedback that gives hints, cues, or suggestions rather than total solutions will assist students to build a repertoire of learning strategies.

Telling. Telling means supplying what students need in the moment (e.g., an unknown word or the steps to complete a task) to enable them to maintain momentum in the learning process. A teacher makes a professional judgment to use this instructional strategy so that student learning is not short-circuited, but rather temporary obstacles are removed on the way to deeper learning.

Explanations. Explanations are verbally explicit, tailored to individual student needs, and intended to help students develop their own understandings. Teachers may use explanations to introduce an unfamiliar concept, clear up misconceptions, explain a process (e.g., how to give peer feedback), or clarify the steps of a specific learning strategy (e.g., notetaking).

Directing. Directing is simply giving a specific instruction to let the learner know what he or she is supposed to do. Examples of directing include: “find the sentence in the text that suggests ...,” “write the letter for the sound ...,” or “turn to your partner and share ...”

Resources

¹New Zealand Ministry of Education. 2006. *Deliberate acts of teaching*.
<http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Effective-Literacy-Practice-Years-1-4/Deliberate-acts-of-teaching>