

MENTOR HANDBOOK

18 | INSTRUCTION: EXPLICIT TEACHING

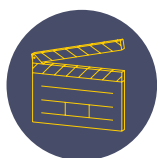
STUDY

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THIS MODULE

Your teacher can be more confident their instruction is effective if they understand that:

- > Explicit teaching of knowledge and skills can help form effective mental models.
- > Effective instruction is underpinned by what we know about how pupils learn and checking this through effective assessment.
- > Effective instruction often uses the I-We-You (Lemov, 2015) model to introduce new material in steps, using concrete examples and worked examples, gradually withdrawing support and promoting independent practice with a high success rate, both within lessons and over time.

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SUMMARY BELOW:**

TEACHING CHALLENGE

Ms Sims understands that several strategies contribute to effective instruction. But sometimes, when considering how to use these strategies in combination, she notices that she is unsure how they fit together. When does pupil misunderstanding mean she should use more teacher talk? When do pupils need more practice? Is there an overall model of instruction which can help her review her lessons to decide if her instruction is supporting pupils to learn as effectively as they can?

KEY IDEA

Teachers should deploy instructional strategies that provide most teacher support early in the instructional sequence and gradually withdraw this support to ensure pupils successfully gain knowledge and skills.

EXPLICIT TEACHING OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IS TEACHER-LED

Explicit teaching means teachers provide fully guided instruction to pupils when introducing new knowledge and skills (Sweller, 2016). Ms Sims chooses to pursue explicit teaching because it is the most efficient way to develop her pupils' mental models – the collection of concepts, knowledge, skills and principles which comprise their understanding of a topic or a subject. To build these mental models, Ms Sims can combine a variety of techniques.

One model which can be helpful when thinking about how to sequence these techniques is the 'I-We-You' approach (Lemov, 2015). When pupils begin learning a topic or skill, they benefit from first receiving guided instruction from the teacher, as opposed to discovering key ideas for themselves (Coe et al., 2014).

One reason this approach is effective is because working memory is limited. If pupils have to discover the key ideas themselves, or complete a complicated process with limited guidance, they will find it difficult to do and to remember. However, teachers can make this process easier through an effective 'I do', for example linking to pupil prior knowledge, addressing common misconceptions and introducing material in steps through explanations and models. As pupils acquire knowledge and skills, their expertise increases, and Ms Sims can encourage them to work increasingly independently, first with teacher support ('We do') and then practising alone ('You do') to gain mastery (Lemov, 2015). Such a sequence makes it more likely pupils will be successful (Rosenshine, 2012).

'I DO' - EFFECTIVE TEACHER EXPOSITION

So how can Ms Sims provide adequate guidance to pupils when introducing new material? During the 'I do' section of the lesson, Ms Sims can help her pupils grasp new ideas by introducing new material in steps and crafting careful explanations (Lemov, 2015; Wittwer & Renkl, 2010) using worked and partially worked examples or models (Pashler et al., 2007; Rosenshine, 2012).

However, it would be a mistake for Ms Sims to believe teacher guided instruction means no thinking or input from pupils. During the 'I do', reviewing previous learning both helps pupils recall useful prior knowledge and helps her to decide how much guidance pupils need and in which areas (Rosenshine, 2012). She should allow pupils to practise after each new step has been introduced and ask questions to help students process new material from her exposition. This will ensure pupils are thinking hard about new knowledge and skills and connecting them to previous learning (Rosenshine, 2012). For practice to be effective, teachers need to ensure pupils achieve a high success rate, ideally of around 80% (Rosenshine, 2012). Mr Andrews needs to ensure that where pupils are not regularly successful in their practice, he intervenes with feedback which pupils can act on. He can also acknowledge and praise pupil effort and emphasise progress made toward eventual success. High levels of success also improve pupils' motivation (Coe et al., 2014).

ASSESSING BEFORE MOVING ON

Explaining, modelling and questioning pupils – developing their mental models – before individual practice, tends to be most effective (Rosenshine, 2012). However, if Ms Sims wants

her pupils to learn efficiently, she must balance the risks of falling into two opposite traps: spending too long explaining ideas to pupils ('I do') or moving too quickly to practice ('We do' or 'You do') without first assessing whether pupils need further guidance (Lemov, 2015).

This can be tricky because we cannot see mental models developing. Just because a pupil looks busy or writes lots, it does not necessarily mean that they have learnt something (Coe, 2013). Learning something can also take time, with pupils typically benefiting more from experiencing multiple exposures to information, ideally spaced out over time (Pashler et al., 2007).

Ms Sims can use diagnostic assessments to inform her decisions about teaching. She can do this by thinking carefully about the specific knowledge and skills she wants her pupils to acquire and using questions to which all or most pupils to respond. This will enable her to get an impression of whether pupils have acquired the intended knowledge and skills (Christodoulou, 2017), and what to do next with them.

'WE DO, YOU DO' - GUIDED PRACTICE, INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When Ms Sims transitions to the 'We do' (Lemov, 2015) section, she should avoid removing all support immediately. Her key consideration should be that pupils obtain a high success rate, ideally of around 80%: initially, she can provide scaffolds to achieve this and check for understanding (Rosenshine, 2012). For example, Ms Sims could invite students to rehearse new material by rephrasing, elaborating or summarising (Rosenshine, 2012). She can also provide guides and scaffolds for trickier tasks to ensure pupils do not become overwhelmed by trying to practise too much complex material too soon (Rosenshine, 2012).

But the 'You do' stage of independent practice is also important for pupil learning. Ms. Sims should continue to check for understanding and, when appropriate, remove scaffolds and guidance so that pupils can practise independently (Lemov, 2015; Pashler et al., 2007). A key goal of independent practice is for pupils to gain automaticity so they can effortlessly use their knowledge and skills (Rosenshine, 2012). Ms Sims may tell pupils that they need to 'practise beyond the point when they get it right, to the point where they can't get it wrong'.

NUANCES AND CAVEATS

I-We-You offers valuable guidance for sequencing learning, but it is not a rule: it is not equally appropriate across all subjects and phases. An I-We-You structure (Lemov, 2015) supports learning across individual lessons but can also be used in shorter cycles within a lesson, or over several lessons.

The expertise reversal effect (Kalyuga, 2007) means that as pupils gain knowledge and skills, too much support can stop them using what they already know. As a result, it is important that teachers check for understanding to ensure they are not 'over-scaffolding' learning, withdrawing support as appropriate.

SELECT

Before you observe, first select a **DEVELOPMENT AREA** to focus on. Next, familiarise yourself with the **FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREAS**, as you will zoom in on one of these during your observation. Finally, craft a **PRECISE TARGET** when you observe your teacher (examples are provided below).

DEVELOPMENT AREA	FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA	EXAMPLE PRECISE TARGETS
I do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Teacher introduces new content by linking new learning to pupils' prior knowledge. > Teacher uses concrete examples in order to explain new concepts. > Teacher models the steps pupils need to take to achieve success in a process. 	<p>If your teacher is...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Not doing it at all: As you are modelling or explaining, pause at key points, e.g. after each step or chunk of explanation, and ask a question to check whether pupils understand. > Doing it but needs some improvement: As you are modelling or explaining, ask questions that target pupils' understanding of important and challenging aspects of the process or explanation. > Doing it well, but needs some stretch: As you are modelling or explaining, ask questions to check pupils' understanding and, for crucial aspects of the explanation or process, get a whole-class response, e.g. by using a multiple-choice question where pupils vote on their fingers or write their answers on whiteboards.
We do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Teacher regularly checks for pupils' understanding when they are modelling processes or explaining concepts, especially of important and challenging aspects pupils need to have secured. > Teacher checks for understanding of the whole class at key points in the lesson. > Teacher efficiently adapts teaching in response to pupils' gaps in understanding to enable them to be ready to apply their learning. 	
You do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Teacher designs an independent practice task that enables pupils to apply the knowledge and skills that have been taught in the lesson ensuring pupils are stretched and supported. > Teacher designs independent practice so that pupils can be successful and develop fluency. > Teacher identifies pupils who require extra support during the practice task and responds to that need. 	

RECORD YOUR THINKING HERE

DEVELOPMENT AREA	FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA	EXAMPLE PRECISE TARGETS
(select before observing)	(select whilst observing)	(select/write whilst observing)

OBSERVE

Consider the following questions based on a short (approximately 15 minute) observation of your teacher.

What was your teacher's **previous** target? Are they meeting it? How do you know?

For the **DEVELOPMENT AREA** you are focussing on for this observation, what is your teacher already doing well?

Next, go to the previous page and select a **FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA** to further zoom in on. Then select (from the examples) or write one **PRECISE TARGET** (bite-sized action) to coach your teacher on. You can choose to stick with the previous target if your teacher have not made enough progress yet.

How will you model the target to your teacher to show them what good looks like? What questions will you ask to check your teacher understands the model? For example, 'How it is different from your current practice?', 'What impact might it have on your practice and pupils?', 'What links can you see between the model and the module principles (below)?'

Reminder: Your model should help your teacher develop their ability in some of the following:

- > Use the I, We, You process to support pupils to understand and apply what is being taught independently.
- > Link what pupils already know to what is being taught.
- > Encourage pupils to share emerging understanding and points of confusion so that misconceptions can be addressed.
- > Use concrete representation of abstract ideas.
- > Make the steps in a process memorable and ensure pupils can recall them.
- > Use questioning to check pupils' understanding of knowledge, skills and concepts to ensure these are secure before they practise independently.

Next, meet with your teacher to work through the 'Feedback' stage of instructional coaching. See the guidance on the feedback stage in the appendices of the Mentor Handbook for support.

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