

Steps in the Direct Instruction Model

1. Review previously learned material

Making connections between what is already known and what is to be learned is a critical success factor for learning. Review previously learned material that:

- Is prerequisite knowledge for the new material.
- Has important connections with the new material.
- Learning strategies that are useful for learning the new material.

Here are some examples of teachers reviewing:

- Ms. Barrett is preparing to teach a lesson on transversals of parallel lines. She begins with a review of properties of lines: "Tony, would you please give us definition of a line. Patricia, be ready to tell us what parallel lines and intersecting lines mean when Tony is done."
- Mr. Sorenson is teaching his P.E. class basketball skills: "Yesterday we learned how to throw free throws. Please line up. Each person will shoot five free throws. After that, we will talk about lay-ups."
- Mr. Brown is teaching the letter 'P'. He tells his class: "Yesterday, we wrote the letter 'O'. Who remembers how to write the letter 'O'? Darra, would you come up and write the letter 'O' on the blackboard for us? Now we are going to learn the letter 'P'."

2. State objectives

Lesson objectives should be stated and written on the board. Use language that the students can understand. The purpose of stating the objectives is to set the student's expectations of what they will learn.

3. Present new material

Clear and detailed instructions will give the students the opportunity to begin absorbing new material. The material should be organized step by step with each step building on the last. Here are two methods for presenting the content:

- **Lecture Method**

A lecture can often be the best way to introduce new material. Here are five essential steps to the lecture model:

1. State the main points of the lecture.
2. Introduce a main organizing idea or theme.
3. Use examples to illustrate each idea.
4. Use repetition to reinforce the main points.
5. Summarize and refer back to the main organizing idea.

- **Demonstrations**

Here, the teacher demonstrates the skill or principle involved in small segments. After each segment, check for understanding. Visual demonstrations will engage a greater number of students than simple auditory lecture.

4. Guided practice

Guided practice involves the student attempting the skill with the assistance of the teacher and possibly other students. Typically, the teacher will take the students through the skill step by step.

Questions can be used both to verify understanding and allow the students to verbalize what they are learning. This verbalization is important, in that it moves the ideas being learned from short term memory to long term memory. Also, repetition and review are important parts of learning

More than enough questions should be prepared in advance. A question such as "Are there any questions?" are not effective. Instead, a strategy such as, "In a minute I will ask someone to do a problem on the board, so be prepared." Another effective strategy is to provide the students with a worksheet that they fill out during the lecture.

Rosenshine¹ identified four types of student responses to questions and a suggested teacher action:

1. Correct, quick, and firm: Ask a new question to keep up the pace of the lesson.
2. Correct, but hesitant: Provide encouragement.
3. Incorrect, but careless: Simply correct and move on.
4. Incorrect and lacking knowledge: Provide hints, ask a simpler question, or re-teach.

Independent practice

The teacher should closely monitor any independent practice to correct misconceptions and verify that the students have acquired the skill or knowledge. If any student has not acquired the skill, they could be practicing error. Two forms of independent practice are:

0. Worksheets

If you use worksheets for independent practice, make sure you introduce them during guided practice. Again, circulate and check for correctness to avoid the students practicing error.

1. Utilization and Automaticity

These are the two stages students pass through while learning a skill. Utilization

refers to ability to use a skill with some focus and concentration. Automaticity refers to the student using the skill automatically. The more the students use the skill correctly, the more they form through utilization to automaticity.

Review periodically

For a concept or skill to be learned to master takes time and practice. This is why review is an essential part of direct instruction.

Verifying Success

Teachers should expect a high success rate. If there is significant evidence that students are not learning the material, the teacher can ask:

- Have the students already acquire the prerequisite knowledge?
- Were the steps used to teach the skill or concept broken into small enough steps?
- Was each step learned before the next was taught?
- Were the objectives and directions given clearly?
- Were the examples and demonstrations effective?
- Were effective questions asked to verify learning?
- Was there enough guided practice?
- Was guided practice monitored enough to prevent students from practicing error?
- Was the independent practice and review sufficient in kind and quantity?

Credits

Adapted from Gunter, Estes, Schwab, *Instruction, a Models Approach*, 4th Edition, 2003, Allyn and Bacon

Other Resources

1: B. Rosenshine, "Teaching Functions in Instructional Programs", *Elementary School Journal* 83,1983, 335-350

2: Gunter, Estes, Schwab, [*Instruction, a Models Approach*](#)