

Explicit *modeling* is provided

A common practice among teachers is to describe a new skill, and then have students engage in tasks designed to practice the new skill. Then, if students seem to be struggling with the task as they are attempting to perform it, the teacher models it for them and provides prompts and cues as needed.

Generally, this is a very *ineffective* approach to developing new skills in students. Because they have not experienced what effective application of the skill looks like, students' first attempts at performing a skill tend to be error-laden, so they are practicing incorrect behaviors. A considerably more effective approach is to describe the skill, model it, and then have students attempt to perform it.

INEFFECTIVE APPROACH

Describe the skill → Have students attempt to perform the skill → Model the skill if students are struggling

MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH

Describe the skill → Model the skill To demonstrate effective application → Prompt students correct application of the skill

While good teachers provide modeling, they tend to model only the overt behaviors associated with performing the skill. That is, they perform each element of the skill, often labeling each as they perform it. While these elements of modeling are very important to include as the skill is demonstrated, this approach inadvertently omits some critical elements. That is, this approach does not reveal to students the thinking processes that occur as a skill is effectively applied.

Effective Alternative

Model the **covert** (behaviors that are readily observable) *and* **overt** (thinking processes) processes **before** students attempt to perform the skill.

Specific tips

Modeling should be approached as a two-phase process.

Phase 1: Demonstrate, while thinking out loud, the overt and covert processes.

Plan on modeling use of the skill several times. As you model the overt processes, include in your think-alouds, statements that demonstrate use of *self-*

PLAN strategy example

instruction (i.e., telling yourself what to do next), *self-monitoring* (paying attention to whether the skill you are performing worked as it should), *problem solving* (thinking through the process of what to do when something does not go right) and the use of *self-evaluation* and *self-reinforcement*.

Phase 2: Enlist student assistance as you model these processes.

As you model use of the skill again, encourage students to help you decide what to do next. Critical elements include (a) prompting student involvement, (b) prompting students to think aloud, (c) checking for student understanding, (d) shaping, expanding, and correcting student responses, and (e) engineering student success.

PLAN strategy example

HOME – Tactics for use during the strategy lesson

SKILLS HOME