

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR THE FIVE KEY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

WHAT EVIDENCE CAN I LOOK FOR?

The Teacher...

MODELING

- Uses clear and concise language
- Names, labels, and breaks down procedural and/or conceptual skills and strategies
- Uses think alouds to externalize educator's inner dialogue
- Uses examples and non-examples to highlight what is critical for students to understand and to correct common misconceptions

ELICITING STUDENT RESPONSES

- Uses strategies (such as response cards, think-pair-share, choral responses) that elicit thinking from more than one student at a time
- Draws out student thinking through the use of visual, verbal, or gestural prompts
- Uses many closed-ended questions to build to more cognitively-demanding questions
- Encourages students to explain, justify, or elaborate on responses

PROVIDING FREQUENT AND TARGETED PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES

- Explicitly states how the practice opportunities are related to the instructional target
- Adjusts the complexity of practice opportunities based on student responses
- Leads students through a skill or strategy using prompts and cues, such as mini-reminders
- Encourages students to self-prompt
- Allows students to complete independent practice and then provides specific feedback

USING AFFIRMATIVE AND CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

- Provides corrective feedback to address specific errors and misconceptions (e.g., "OK, yes, 7×3 is 21 but 7×4 is 28, not 25. Let's try it again...")
- Prompts students to re-apply a skill or strategy successfully following corrective feedback
- Provides affirmative feedback that highlights what a student did well (e.g., "Yes, you are correct that 7×4 is 28 because you knew that four groups of 7 equals 28 total. Good job!")
- Offers feedback in a timely and direct manner

RESTRUCTURING TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

- Makes a task more or less complex based on student responses
- Remodels a skill or strategy when students do not demonstrate mastery

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HOW DO I KNOW IF THESE PRACTICES ARE BEING USED APPROPRIATELY AND EFFECTIVELY?

When is the practice appropriate?

Modeling may be used to show students at the novice level of learning what expert practice looks like so that they can understand what they're aiming for.

Eliciting student responses through different question rates and types is a way to scaffold students' understanding and keep them engaged in thinking about the lesson objective.

Frequent and targeted practice opportunities help students retrieve information from long term memory more quickly and fluently. These practice opportunities are an important part of building fluency and automaticity.

Affirmative and corrective feedback helps students understand what they are doing well and where they have misconceptions early on before they expend limited working memory repeating errors.

Restructuring tasks and activities provides an alternative way to communicate information in response to students' needs as they are observed during the lesson.

Is the practice being used effectively?

- Is the lesson objective targeting a skill or strategy that is new to these students or is in their area of need?
- Are students struggling to accurately use the skill or strategy?

- Do the questions help reinforce skills or concepts the students have just learned?
- Do the questions show a clear progression toward the learning target, increasing in their complexity as students show greater mastery?
- Is the educator asking different types of questions based on students' level of understanding?

- Are the practice opportunities connected to the broader purpose of the lesson?
- Is the educator explicit about these connections?
- Will this type of practice help put students on the path toward understanding the important concepts underlying this lesson?

- Does the feedback help students correct misconceptions at early stages of skill or strategy development?
- Does the feedback help students understand aspects of the skills and strategies being taught?

- Does a different instructional strategy help students access the material?
- Has the educator used formative assessment or in-the-moment observations to make the decision to restructure?