

Survey Question

4. This teacher models different ways to learn new concepts

Australian Professional Standard

Professional Knowledge Domain

Standard 1: Know students and how they learn

Focus areas:

- 1.2 Understand how students learn
- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the content area
- 3.3 Use teaching strategies

What does this sound like in the classroom?

"My teacher always shows us a whole lot of different ways to reach the answer. Then I get to choose the way that I like best."

Why is this important?

Teachers today need to know how to combine "guided discovery" with "direct instruction" methods, depending upon the individual students, the context of instruction and the aims of the teaching. The OECD review (2012, p.45) concludes that innovative learning environments are characterised by a good balance between discovery and personal exploration on the one hand, and systematic instruction and guidance on the other, all the while bearing in mind individual differences in students' abilities, needs and motivation.

Where systematic instruction is concerned it is important that a teacher is able to unpack or explain the focus of the lesson from a variety of angles. Using a range of examples to elucidate a concept, practice or idea will maximise understanding among students.

Rosenshine (2010, 2012) summarised almost 40 years of research on effective instruction with the establishment of 10 guiding principles to maximise impact in the classroom. Rosenshine drew on evidence-based research to determine the observed teacher behaviours that correlated with improved student outcomes, including (number 4) providing various models for problem solving and worked examples.

Creemers and Kyriakides' (2006) dynamic model of teaching effectiveness also identifies a process of 'Teaching Modelling' as integral to a successful learning environment. This includes: encouraging students to use problem-solving strategies provided by the teacher or other classmates, inviting students to develop strategies, and promoting the idea of modelling.

What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?

For discovery-based learning involving problem solving or research tasks, highlighting different methods to reach the same outcome can inspire students. Students are appreciative of their teacher's recognition and attempt to reach a range of students in any given classroom. As teachers, we must develop instructional styles that work well in diverse classrooms. There is often more than one way to skin a cat!

Collaboration between students is an excellent method to employ in order to generate ideas. Different interpretations of issues often emerge along with differing methods to reach a desired outcome. This strategy sharing can be enhanced further as students examine each others' proposals to decide on the most appropriate to use.

Examining different perspectives either in discussion or research can also bring an issue, event or idea into sharper relief. This can be done quite methodically so that such investigation becomes habitual. By ensuring that you are consistently promoting the idea of modelling and always inviting students to develop strategies, the practice will become commonplace in your classroom. (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2006)

What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?

1. Did you try a few different ways of explaining the same concept in your class today? Get your students to vote on which method worked for them (use an online survey tool, or ask them to place a counter in one of three jars, or similar). Use this feedback to shape how you deliver curriculum for this class.
2. Even though you may prefer one teaching method over another, you must find the style that works best for your students. Try different strategies to meet different objectives, and always challenge yourself to find new ways to reach each student.
3. Two words: The Internet. Youtube and The Teaching Channel have numerous videos demonstrating a particular concept in an engaging way (designed specifically for students).

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Ongoing conversations reflecting on teaching practice are commonplace, and the evaluation of various strategies adopted in individual classrooms is an important component. Are approaches mandated within your curriculum, or are teachers given autonomy in how they choose to teach concepts? If it is the latter, sharing successful (and not so successful) stories could be invaluable, particularly for beginning teachers or those new to your school. You can also collaborate with colleagues beyond the school fence, by engaging in new approaches shared online through Twitter (try #edchat, #AussieEd or #ozedchat) or joining a **TeachMeet**.

Where can I find out more?

Video

- One problem, many approaches
- I do, we do, you do

Referenced articles, books and other great reads

- Creemers, B. P. M., & Kyriakides, L. (2006). Critical analysis of the current approaches to modelling educational effectiveness: The importance of establishing a dynamic model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17, 347–366. Accessed July 2015
- Rosenshine, B. (2010) *Principles of Instruction*. International Academy of Education, UNESCO. Geneva: International Bureau of Education. Accessed July 2015.
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- Schleicher, A. (2012) Ed., *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the World*, OECD Publishing. Accessed April 2015