Explicit Teaching Guidelines

1. Pencils down.
2. Watch carefully.
3. Listen closely.
4. Respond as required.

Respond to questions.
Participate.
We do means we all do.

Work quietly.
Practise on my own.
Achieve success.
The Explicit Teaching Guidelines have been designed to assist teachers to embed Explicit Teaching into their practice.

DEFINITION OF EXPLICIT TEACHING

Explicit Teaching is a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching concepts and skills. The FNQ Explicit Teaching Model is characterised by a series of distinct phases:

Opening the Lesson

- Learning Intention
- Success Criteria
- Lesson Importance
- Activation of Prior Knowledge

The Body of the Lesson

- I DO – Teach: Explain, Model and Demonstrate
- WE DO – Guided Practice
- YOU DO – Independent Practice

Closing the Lesson

- Revisit
- Review
- Reflect
- Project

OPENING THE LESSON

Opening the Lesson

- Gain 100% of student attention
- Establish the learning intention
- Explain success criteria
- Discuss the relevance of the target skill
- Review critical prerequisite skills/activate prior knowledge

LEARNING INTENTION

A learning Intention is a statement that describes what students will learn and is the focus of your instruction. It provides clarity for students and teachers by focusing attention on the teaching of concepts and skills. They should be

- Measurable
- Observable
- Short-term
- Specific
Learning Intentions should use action verbs such as define, identify, predict, analyse, evaluate, select, write, recognise, explain, classify. Do not use verbs that are unclear or not measurable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Skill (verb)</th>
<th>Content (noun)</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Non-Example**

| Today you will | learn about | characters | in stories |

**Example**

| The students will | identify | how one character is depicted | in text and pictures. |

*FNQ Explicit Teaching Project – Module 2*

**SUCCESS CRITERIA**

The Success Criteria is the statement of what students will do to demonstrate successful achievement of the Learning Intention. Success Criteria allow teachers to measure if students have achieved the desired outcome of the lesson. They should

- Directly mirror the Learning Intention
- Be measurable and observable

**Non-Example:**

| I will be successful if I can | fill out | my template | with words. |

**Example:**

| I will be successful if I can | record on my retrieval chart | how one character from ‘Emily and the Dragon’ has been depicted in words and pictures. |

**LESSON IMPORTANCE**

Lesson Importance is explicitly stating why learning the new content is important. This provides motivation for students and increases student engagement in the lesson. If the concept is readily understood, the importance can come early in the lesson. If the concept is more difficult, then you may need to wait until further into the lesson so that students know what the concept is. The lesson Importance can be provided by thinking about the following three areas:

- **Personal importance** – link to students personal interests
- **Academic importance** – link to tests, achievement, future learning
- **Real-life importance** – link to occupations or how it is important to society
You can choose more than one type of *Lesson Importance* as students may relate to one more than another. However, having one authentic reason for learning is more motivating and effective than including one from each area for the sake of it.

**EXAMPLE:**

**Lesson Intention** – Students will write a persuasive essay.

**Lesson Importance:**
- **Personal reason:** If you are good at persuasive writing you may be able to convince people to allow you to do something that normally you wouldn’t be allowed to do.
- **Real-Life reason:** Advertisers write ads to persuade people to buy things from them.
- **Academic reason:** The writing of a persuasive essay is what you need to do at the end of this term as your assessment piece.

**CFU:** Why is this lesson important for you? Give me an example of a time when you may need to persuade someone?

**ACTIVATION OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

Activating Prior Knowledge (APK) is used to provide a connection between something students already know and the new content they are going to learn. When students’ prior knowledge is explicitly activated, it’s easier for them to learn new content. Students will not always be able to make the connection between existing knowledge and new content so the teacher needs to make the link for them during this phase. When you APK, make sure you are prompting students’ existing knowledge. It is not to test students to see what they know before you have taught it or to brainstorm ideas.

To determine the knowledge to activate, look carefully at the Learning Intention. Activating students’ prior knowledge relates to either the concept or skill that is being taught. For example, if the Learning Intention is... *Today you will compare and contrast characters from two stories.* You can activate students’ prior knowledge of characters or comparing and contrasting.

Activating Prior Knowledge can be done in two ways: *universal experience* or a *sub-skill review*. 

**Universal experience** is when you activate something from your students’ prior life experiences that is related to the new learning. **Sub-skill review** is when you briefly reteach a sub-skill that is needed in a lesson. Sometimes, explicit teaching lessons flow better if you start with Activating Prior Knowledge and then slide into the Learning Intention.

It is important that the body of the lesson aligns. To ensure that each explicit lesson aligns correctly, follow these steps:

- Select the critical content
- Write the Learning Intention and Success Criteria
- Decide and plan the task that you want the students to demonstrate (YOU DO)
- Plan the I DO and WE DO to align with the YOU DO in content, complexity and process

**I DO**

This is the part of the lesson where the teacher explicitly teaches the new skill or concept. It is focused teaching time and students generally do not ask questions. Their role is to watch and listen while the teacher clearly and concisely explains models and demonstrates step-by-step what they are required to do. Questioning within this phase is initiated by the teacher and must be purposeful-for example to CFU or to ensure student engagement. It is a critical stage of the lesson and student success is dependent on how well this stage is executed by the teacher. It is taught at a brisk pace and addresses common errors or misconceptions that students may have. While there is no specific time allocation, the I DO should not be lengthy.

**Explaining:** is telling students information or telling them how to do something.
For example: **Students, this is how you add two-digit numbers. First, you line the numbers up vertically. Next, you add the ones column...**

**Modelling:** is thinking aloud in first person and revealing strategic thinking processes to your students. It is not ‘working out a problem on the board’. The teacher is only modelling when revealing step-by-step the exact thinking processes to use. Students get inside knowledge by getting to hear and see how an expert, who already knows how to do it, thinks while solving a problem or completing a task.
For example: **When I have finished my writing, it helps me to read it aloud using a quiet voice. I always pick up mistakes that I never pick up when I read it in my head.**

**Demonstrating:** is using a physical object to advance students understanding of the concept. If the physical activity does not advance the academic purpose it should not be used.
For example: **Using MAB blocks to demonstrate addition and regrouping of two digit numbers. These physical objects are chosen because they help students better understand the concept of place value.**
**Concept development** during the ‘I DO’ phase is teaching students the big idea; the generalisation. the definition, the **what it is**.

Concept development is important so students can generalise and apply concepts to new situations in school and real life. Many of the test questions in NAPLAN require students to have a clear understanding of concepts. For students to do well on concept-driven questions, they need to be able to instantly recall the concept’s definition from their long term memory and then be able to apply the definition to the test question.

Here is a common example:

**What is the perimeter of a rectangular basketball court in metres?**

- a) 30 metres
- b) 50 metres
- c) 60 metres
- d) 200 metres

The correct answer is C. If you look at the other answers, you can see that answer D multiplied the sides together as if to calculate area. Answer A is the sum of two of the four sides. These are called distractors and are included on purpose by test publishers. They are answers that students might mistakenly select **if they don’t have a solid understanding of the concept**.

To provide concept development:

1. Identify the concept in the Learning Intention.
2. Provide a written bulletproof definition or rule.
3. Provide examples and non-examples that clarify the concept.
4. Teach concepts by explaining, modelling and demonstrating.
5. Have students interact with the concept.
6. Provide CFU questions of the concept. Use recall and higher order questions such as RAJ.

**Skill development** is a critical part of every explicit teaching lesson. During skill development you are teaching students how to apply a skill to a specific concept. E.g. analyse similes. In concept development you would first need to teach students what similes are and then during skill development you teach and repeat the steps or processes students need to analyse similes.

**Having steps or a process for students to follow is essential to an explicit teaching lesson.**


**WE DO**

The purpose of the ‘WE DO’ is to guide and monitor students as they practise the same steps, facts and processes in multiple examples. A brisk pace should be maintained.

‘WE DO’ starts with working through multiple examples step by step with students. Guide them through each step, stopping to verify that they are correct. **As the ‘WE DO’ proceeds**, gradually release responsibility to students so that they are working with increasing independence on each example. **At the end of ‘WE DO’**, students will be working successfully on their own.

In this phase, teacher judgement is used to make instructional decisions on whether students require practise on further examples in order to demonstrate success. For this reason, include a few extra examples when planning.

**At least 80% of students should be successful BEFORE independent practice is assigned. If not, reteach.**
CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING (CFU)

Checking for understanding to verify that students are learning during a lesson is the backbone of Explicit Teaching. CFU in an explicit lesson differs from other teaching models as it must include the use of TAPPLE and RAJ frequently throughout the lesson.

TAPPLE is used as the guideline to HOW questions should be asked in your classroom. RAJ is used to frame the TYPE of question you will ask. To ensure students are engaging in higher order thinking they must be able to apply the content knowledge or skill and justify their answer.

- T – Teach First
- A – Ask a Question
- P – Pause (3-5 sec)
- P – Pick a Non-Volunteer
- L – Listen to the Response
- E – Effective Feedback – echo, elaborate, explain

RAJ

Lessons should include RAJ to assist students in understanding the concept being taught.

- R – Restate: asking students definitions, formulas or general knowledge
- A – Apply: asking students to apply the concept to examples: Which one of these is a noun?
- J – Justify: asking students to justify their answer using the definition: Why is it a noun? Use the definition to help you explain.


YOU DO

This is the part of the lesson where students are provided with an opportunity to independently practice what has been taught. The purpose of independent practice is to provide students with additional repetitions of the lesson’s concepts and skills in order to demonstrate competence.

Keep these important facts in mind during the You Do phase:

- It is important that the skill, concept and process required in the You Do matches the skill, concept and process taught in the I Do and We Do phases.
- While students are working, walk around, look around and talk around, providing feedback directly related to the skills and processes.
- While differentiation is planned prior to the lesson, it is also informed by what individual students demonstrate in the ‘WE DO’ phase.

*When planning your lesson, start with the end in mind. Your entire lesson is designed to teach the students how to successfully complete the independent task, therefore it is vital that you start your planning with the You Do phase first and work backwards.
CLOSING THE LESSON

REVISIT, REVIEW, REFLECT, PROJECT

In this phase of the lesson:

- **Revisit** - link what they have just learned back to the Learning Intentions
- **Review** - summarise the lesson’s main points, steps and/or bulletproof definitions
- **Reflect** - on whether or not they have been successful and why
- **Project** - to where their learning is heading and where they will use the new skill or concept in the future

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

When delivering an explicit teaching lesson teachers need to be aware of the following:

ESTABLISHING ROUTINES

Classroom routines are an essential part of ensuring that lessons run smoothly. Classroom routines need to be explicitly taught. It takes time for students to learn routines therefore it is crucial that once the routines are established they are maintained. Having effective routines reduces the students’ cognitive load, leaving their working memory free to concentrate on the task, this allows teachers to focus on the critical content of the lesson and increase pace. Through the use of predictable and repeatable cues, teachers can gain 100% of students’ attention prior to commencement of learning and sustain engagement.

TEACHER PACE

Lessons should be delivered at a pace that is brisk enough to hold student attention, yet not so unrelenting that students do not have time to think or take in what they are learning. A brisk pace creates a sense that the lesson is always moving quickly. By regularly monitoring student understanding and engagement the pace can be varied according to student need. Limit instruction to no more than is needed for effective learning.

MAKING THE MODEL YOUR OWN

The FNQ Regional Explicit Teaching Model provides a common starting point. It is recommended that those new to explicit teaching begin with the base structure as outlined in regional documents. The model has potential for increased sophistication in the hands of experienced, proficient practitioners; consequently as teachers engage in coaching interactions, they will develop proficiency in refining the model to match their classroom context.
The Explicit Teaching Guidelines have been designed to assist teachers to embed Explicit Teaching into their practice. Its principles have been drawn from a range of resources including:

Archer, A.L. and Hughes, 2011 Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching The Guilford Press, New York: USA


FNQ Explicit Teaching Project Team, Cairns Regional Office

John Fleming, FNQ Educational Consultant