Strategies to Teach Explicitly

Planning

Understanding your discipline

Examine your own discipline to understand the cultural context in which that knowledge exists:

- What is the cultural context of your discipline area?
  You may need to explain the societal rules and customs in which your discipline has been represented historically and in which it currently operates.
- How do other worldviews frame your discipline?
- How do your students view the discipline?
- How does your discipline connect to real world experiences, industry trends and particular jobs?

Setting your learning objectives

Have a clear idea of the objective(s) for each session/activity:

- The purpose of this session and why it is important – how it aligns with the course learning outcomes, assessment tasks and industry requirements.
- The knowledge and/or understanding you want students to have reached by the end of the session.
- The skills you want students to develop eg oral presentations, teamwork, problem-solving or critical thinking.
- How you want students to apply this knowledge and/or understanding.

‘(Scaffolding) is not just any assistance which helps a learner accomplish a task. It is help which will enable a learner to accomplish a task they would not have been quite able to manage on their own...and eventually to complete such a task on their own.’

Maybin, Mercer & Steirer (1992)
- What possible gaps in knowledge and skills may prevent students from achieving the objectives of the session.
- An understanding of the student cohort via the student list.

**Structuring your lesson plan**

Design learning activities in a sequence that is logical, organised and focussed:

- Use a well-structured lesson plan:
  - Access the Lesson Plan templates on the [Teach Explicitly](https://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/inclusive) teacher resource page to ensure your delivery is well-structured and explicit.
  - Introduce easier skills or concepts before more complex ones.
  - Provide content in small ‘chunks’ and summarise after each chunk.
  - Keep lessons on topic and only digress if relevant.

When planning activities consider the following:

- Use an activity which will stimulate student interest and ‘hook’ students in at the beginning of the session or before the session.
- Use a range of activities to review the previous session before teaching, for example, ask for a volunteer to summarise the previous session; use a quiz, pair students up to share three statements, reflections, questions from the previous session.
- Model required skills and clarify the decision making process needed to complete an activity by ‘thinking aloud’ as you perform it.
- Provide real world, authentic, concrete examples and case studies to support the theory.
- Provide lecture slides as handouts for student to take notes.
- Allocate an appropriate timeframe for each of your activities.

- Design activities to obtain feedback from your students and provide feedback to your students during the session.
- Provide activities so that students can relate theory to real life and/or work.
- Check that the room allocated and equipment provided will support you to deliver your planned activities.

**Support the development of identified skills in your session, eg academic writing, English language, graduate attributes:**

- Explain to students the relevance of particular skills being taught in relation to learning activities, assessment requirements and professional expectations eg critical thinking skills.
- Allow time in class to discuss the structure, language and referencing required for different genres in different contexts eg essay writing, oral presentations or reports.
- Provide models to demonstrate particular genres.
- Provide information to students on academic support services in course guides and on BlackBoard, including:
  - The Study and Learning Centre (SLC) [www.rmit.edu.au/studyandlearningcentre](https://www.rmit.edu.au/studyandlearningcentre)
The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD):
“... the ‘zone’ within which new learning will occur. If the instruction is too difficult, or pitched too high, the learner is likely either to be frustrated or to tune out. If it is too low, the learner is presented with no challenge and simply does not learn anything.”

Hammond, J (Ed) 2001, Scaffolding: teaching and learning in language and literacy education, PETA, Newtown, Australia pp.9-10

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Delivery

Begin each lesson and activity with a clear statement of the goals and your expectations:

- Provide students with the session plan from the course guide and on BlackBoard.
- Give a broad overview of the entire session before teaching: tell students what they will have learned by the end of the session, why it is important, and how it relates to assessment.
- Break down the content into smaller ‘chunks’ of learning and give regular overviews of each segment or ‘chunk’ of the session to keep students ‘tuned in’ throughout.

Review prior knowledge and/or understanding of learners at the beginning of each session:

- Ask a group question and/or use a Personal Response device eg clickers or Smartphones) to gauge understanding. This will enable you to ‘pitch’ your teaching at an appropriate level and to identify any gaps and respond accordingly.
- Ask for volunteers to summarise what has been learned or a particular concept. In this way those who do not know will be brought into a common understanding.

Use clear and concise language in your delivery:

- Ensure the complexity of your speech eg vocabulary, sentence structure, takes into account the students’ receptive vocabulary.
- Use plain English— if using idioms, colloquialisms or humour which may alienate students, explain their meaning or avoid using them.
• Use stress, repetition and pauses to identify key areas and separate concepts and topics.
• Ensure your speech is audible to all students.
• Unpack the purpose, structure and meaning of university terminology eg lecture, tutorial, practical, reflective, analytical, critical, APA and Harvard.
• Ask a colleague from another discipline to critically review your course guide and other materials to ensure terminology is accessible to all students.

Access a range of methodologies to deliver activities that support different learning needs and styles:
There are many theories, pedagogies and principles that support an inclusive teaching practice; help us to understand more clearly how and why students learn; and assist us to design effective learning experiences, tasks and assessments.

The following provide an insight into some of these theories, pedagogies and principles. They can be found on the Teach Explicitly page under Teaching Strategies.

• Theories, pedagogies and principles that support an inclusive teaching practice: An overview and summaries of some of the main theories, pedagogies and principles, together with explanations of their application into teaching.
• Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences (MIs) Everyone has his/her own special and unique pattern of abilities and preferred ways of learning. Gardner identified eight main ways in which people prefer to make sense of the world, which he called ‘Multiple Intelligences’.
• Blooms Taxonomy: Benjamin Bloom created his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives - a description of six qualitatively different forms of thinking which continues to be a popular instrument for evaluating cognitive processes, curriculum development and various aspects of teaching and learning.

Use a range of delivery formats to ensure all students have equal access:
• Use a range of interactive learning practices and technology to give students access to lectures eg Lecture Capture, Google Apps, BlackBoard Teaching with Technology
• Familiarise yourself with RMIT’s Disability Discrimination Action Plan which commits the University to the goal of ensuring that its information technology (IT) systems are accessible and appropriate support is provided to students with disabilities.
• The Disability Liaison Unit (DLU) provides a range of services to students with disabilities studying at RMIT, including assistive technology.
• Access Library information for information on working with people with disabilities.
• Access the IT Helpdesk for general information in technology support.

‘Unpack’ assessment tasks for students:
• Analyse and discuss the genre, e.g. essay, report, oral, presentation and the marking criteria and instructional wording of assignments to ensure students understand what is required of them.
• Break down large assessments into smaller tasks to ensure students understand individual components.
• Relate assessment to learning activities.
• Provide examples of previous student assessments to model expectations.