

# Making Learning Visible

## ***Strategic Teaching and Active Engagement***

Strategic Teaching involves the following stages:

- **Purposeful Planning**- Before, during, and after learning connections are made by choosing strategies depending on the purpose of the lesson, student data, and the nature of the material being studied.
- **Multiple Strategies**- Strategies which support various learning styles and modality preferences are incorporated
- **Connected Strategies**- All strategies used in a lesson connect to the learning outcome(s).
- **Explicit Instruction**- Direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, and independent application (I do, We do, Ya'll do, You do) maximize understanding and retention of content material.
- **Collaborative Learning**- Collaborative learning is often used in strategic teaching to allow students to work together. This is not to be confused with small group instruction. However, collaborative learning is a strategy that helps teachers provide and manage small group instruction.

**Strategic teaching is not the random use of strategies. The purpose of strategic teaching is to make learning visible. Every lesson should include the following:**

1. One overall outcome- student learning made possible by daily outcome based on state standards written in student- friendly language.
2. Two instructional practices- chunking (breaking texts, lectures, videos, etc. into manageable segments to aid comprehension) and student discussion of concepts.
3. Three parts to a strategic lesson- includes before, during, and after strategies
4. Four steps to explicit instruction- I Do, We Do, Ya'll Do, You Do (combination varies daily as needed)
5. Five components of active literacy- reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating (these components make student engagement visible)

One best practice promoted is the ***Before, During, After*** framework. This framework describes the routine of using instructional strategies at each of the following three phases of instruction:

1. Prior - to prepare for learning
2. During - to monitor comprehension
3. After - to consolidate learning

1) **Before learning instructional strategies to guide content learning-** Preparing learners to be ready for content learning involves a variety of actions:

- *Activating prior knowledge* by considering what is already known about a content topic and linking new information to it in the brain.
- *Setting purpose* and *generating questions* for learning, such as to gain information; read for pleasure; learn a step-by-step process; or understand the historical relevance.
- *Previewing* to ascertain how text features, graphs and charts, appendices, and other text structures can contribute to the reader’s understanding.
- Making *predictions* about what might happen; adjusting these predictions as new information is presented, and discarding them when faced with contradictory information.

<i>Before Learning</i>	
Teacher Instructional Practices	Sample Activities for Students
<p>Teachers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students activate their background knowledge.</li> <li>• Help students establish purposes for reading.</li> <li>• Encourage students to generate questions.</li> <li>• Ask students to make predictions about text.</li> <li>• Help students construct graphic organizers.</li> <li>• Connect reading and writing.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm concepts, key words, and ideas.</li> <li>• Establish reading goals based upon purpose for reading.</li> <li>• Turn headings into questions.</li> <li>• Predict and verify based on scan or preview of content.</li> <li>• Construct a graphic organizer based on text structure to use during reading.</li> <li>• Write in a journal, vocabulary notebook, or other forms to connect with the text to be read.</li> </ul>

2) **During learning literacy instructional strategies to guide content learning -**Helping learners comprehend content information and construct concepts and relationships involves a variety of actions:

- *Questioning* to clarify and deepen understanding
- *Monitoring* understanding and using fix-up strategies when they do not understand, such as rereading, reading on, or examining a word more closely.
- *Making connections* when they use information from personal experiences, other texts, and knowledge of world issues to make sense of text.

- *Inferring* by using prior knowledge to get a deeper understanding of text and making valuable connections with the author’s intent when the answer may not be explicitly stated.
- *Drawing conclusions* and refining them as needed in light of additional information.
- *Summarizing* what they have read by stopping and reflecting during and after reading.
- *Creating mental images* or *visualizing* by “seeing” people, events, and relationships between concepts, but also using other senses (hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling) as they experience the meanings they build from text.
- *Analyzing* story structure and informational text structures and using these structures as supports for building meaning.
- *Synthesizing* by combining ideas and information within and across texts.

<i>During Learning</i>	
<b>Teacher Instructional Practices</b>	<b>Activities for Students</b>
Teachers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model metacognitive and cognitive processes.</li> <li>• Verify and/or formulate predictions.</li> <li>• Help students integrate new data with prior knowledge.</li> <li>• Get students to think about what they are reading.</li> <li>• Help students construct graphic organizers.</li> <li>• Summarize text.</li> <li>• Read aloud.</li> <li>• Think aloud.</li> </ul>	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find answers to self-initiated questions.</li> <li>• Read silently.</li> <li>• Read with a partner.</li> <li>• Predict and verify.</li> <li>• Re-read if necessary.</li> <li>• Take notes.</li> <li>• Construct and use graphic organizers.</li> </ul>

3) **After reading/learning instructional strategies to guide content learning-** Helping learners reflect about the content involves a variety of actions:

- *Reflecting* about what was read on personal, emotional, and cognitive levels.
- *Reviewing* information, ideas, relationships, and applications to real life by re-reading, summarizing, and deep discussion with others.
- *Presenting* understanding of concepts learned through the informal and formal written and spoken word, including small group classroom venues and authentic audiences.

<i>After Learning</i>	
<b>Teacher Instructional Practices</b>	<b>Sample Activities for Students</b>

<p>Teachers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to reflect on what they read.</li> <li>• Prompt students to evaluate predictions.</li> <li>• Examine questions that guided reading.</li> <li>• Require students to respond to text through discussion.</li> <li>• Require students to respond to text through writing.</li> <li>• Encourage retelling or summarizing.</li> <li>• Connect writing to reading.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss.</li> <li>• Debate.</li> <li>• Respond to questions.</li> <li>• Verify predictions.</li> <li>• Construct a graphic organizer.</li> <li>• Write in a journal.</li> <li>• Retell.</li> <li>• Summarize.</li> <li>• Role play.</li> <li>• Research.</li> <li>• Read related materials</li> </ul>
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Another best practice is the ***Gradual Release (I do, We do, Ya'll do, You do)*** model. This is a pattern where teachers provide a great deal of scaffolding or support when students are introduced to new material. As a lesson or unit progresses, scaffolding is gradually released until students have independently mastered the concepts or skills. The gradual release model often includes the following:

1. Direct instruction and/or modeling at the outset (I do and We do)
2. Some type of collaborative or small group work (Ya'll do)
3. Independent practice or demonstration (You do)

It is important to note that the gradual release process does not always occur within one lesson. The teacher may need to model the process several times before the students actually take ownership of the strategy. Becoming proficient and selecting the strategy as a support for material may take longer for some students than others. The teacher's continued support through explicit modeling and differentiation is key for students at all levels.

When trying to learn the strategies in isolation, it is not unusual for teachers to feel somewhat overwhelmed by the number of strategies to choose from or how to implement those strategies into daily instruction. If this is true for you, begin with planning and practicing the use of one strategy with your students and, as you become proficient with this strategy, you can add other strategies to your bag of instructional best practices. Of course, it is always less threatening and more productive if you are working with a peer or team of professionals to discuss the use of support strategies and how to best integrate them into daily practice. Develop opportunities for shared teaching with a peer to observe and provide, as well as receive, feedback about becoming a *strategic teacher*.