

M3-S7: Explicit Instruction: Recipes for Learning

GK	<p>Hello Christina, and welcome listeners! This is Session 7 in Module 3 of your TALE Academy learning experience, Explicit Instruction: Recipes for Learning.</p> <p>Before you get started, if you have not completed Module 3 - Session 4, we recommend that you do so before engaging in this session. In that session, we explain the origins and value of high-leverage practices, referred to as HLPs, in special education. Explicit instruction is one of 22 HLPs.</p>
CLH	<p>Hi Gina. We're starting this session by thinking about cooking, and how we feel about it. So, in 2013, a research and marketing firm surveyed 1,087 people across the United States about their cooking habits. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents said they didn't know how to cook. That's 1 in 4 adults! A decade later, after the internet had blown up with recipes and cooking tutorials, a new survey found that 56% of Americans mess up "easy-to-make" dishes and, of those, 59% feel embarrassed about not being able to cook certain foods the right way.</p>
GK	<p>Something is getting lost in translation, right? What is the first step in learning to cook? Reading a recipe.</p> <p>But as we learned during the pandemic, reading a recipe gets you only so far. A quick Google search of "Cooking fails during COVID" yields more than 47 million hits, including pages upon pages of Pinterest posts comparing the expected outcome of a cooking or baking project with the typically very sad reality, including breads that refused to rise and muffins that looked like "coral you'd find at the bottom of the ocean."</p> <p>Learning to cook or bake may begin with reading a recipe, but if you don't know what "fold in the cheese" means or how to preheat an oven, you are likely going to end up with a less-than-stellar result. Learning how to cook isn't as simple as having a great recipe. You have to practice. Students who attend culinary arts schools spend hundreds of hours immersed in kitchens where teachers and mentors provide hands-on instruction. It can take years to replicate a complicated dish perfectly, and even longer for a chef to make the dish their own through customization.</p>
CLH	<p>Learning to do something completely independent of any support from experts and peers is a nearly impossible task. When we teach a student to read, we don't put a book in front of them and say, "Good luck!" And yet, approximately 32 million adults – or 50% – in the United States can't read a book at an eighth-grade level. What would it take to help those readers move to advanced levels? The answer we explore in this session is explicit instruction, one of the 22 HLPs for teaching students with disabilities.</p>

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CLH	<p>While explicit instruction begins with well-developed instructions, or recipes, this is only the beginning. Let's continue the cooking analogy and move through the steps necessary to bake explicit instruction into your instructional plan.</p>
GK	<p>I see what you did there.</p> <p>Let's start the definition provided by the CEEDAR Center in their list of high-leverage practices for special education. When we use explicit instruction effectively:</p> <p>Teachers make content, skills, and concepts explicit by showing and telling students what to do or think while solving problems, enacting strategies, completing tasks, and classifying concepts. Teachers use explicit instruction when students are learning new material and complex concepts and skills. They strategically choose examples and non-examples and language to facilitate student understanding, anticipate common misconceptions, highlight essential content, and remove distracting information. They model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently.</p>
CLH	<p>Anita L. Archer and Charles A. Hughes have broken down that definition of explicit instruction into 16 elements, or what we will call the ingredients for explicit instruction. If you don't recognize any of these ingredients, please return to the READ option for this session and click on the link to access information about it!</p> <p>The 16 Elements of Explicit Instruction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A focus on critical content• Logically sequenced skills• Complex skills and strategies broken into smaller units, or chunks• Organized and focused lessons• Opening statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations• Review of prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction• Step-by-step demonstrations or modeling• Clear and concise language• Examples and non-examples• Guided and supported practice• Frequent opportunities to respond• Progress monitoring

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Immediate, affirmative, and corrective feedback● Briskly paced lessons● Techniques to help students organize knowledge● Distributed and cumulative practice
GK	Okay, that was a lot, but it was also a pretty reasonable list of common teaching practices. We just have to have all of these “ingredients” in the “cupboard” when we are planning and teaching.
CLH	<p>I see what you did there, too. But ya know, there’s more than one cookbook in the world, right?</p> <p>The folks at Understood.org break down the explicit instructional method into six fundamental steps that teachers can take in order to deliver explicit instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify a clear, specific objective. “Name what you expect students to learn by the end of the lesson. Make sure that this objective builds on prior learning.”● Break the information into chunks. “Take the skill, concept, or information and break it down into manageable, sequential chunks.”● Model with clear explanations. “Explain or demonstrate the skill in the same way students will practice it. Use language that is clear, concise, and consistent. Focus on the most critical parts of the content you are teaching.”● Verbalize the thinking process. “As you are modeling, do a think-aloud of what’s going on in your mind.”● Provide practice opportunities. “During guided practice, you might work through several problems as a class and...correct errors as they occur...Once students are successful..., move on to independent practice...After independent practice, do a cumulative review of both old and newly learned skills and knowledge.”● Give feedback. “As your students engage in guided and independent practice, give them immediate and actionable feedback.” <p>If you use all of the ingredients and follow the step-by-step directions above, you will be on the path to producing explicit instruction in your classroom!</p>
GK	Remember, if your version of explicit instruction isn’t an immediate masterpiece, don’t worry. It doesn’t mean that you “can’t cook.” All it means is that you need more practice and, likely, access to some new resources. Explicit instruction is more than anything else, systemic and engaging teaching. Modeling, think-alouds, guided practice, chunking, feedback, and all the other ingredients require a teacher trained

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	and practiced in the techniques so that they know how much, when, and how to include them in the mix for real-life classes.
CLH	<p>In this session, you will have an opportunity to explore and try out explicit instruction, but not just your ordinary explicit instruction. We encourage you to use the new tools, resources, and opportunities provided by multiple teaching environments and modalities to cook up your own recipe for explicit instruction. Here are a few tips to get you started.</p> <p>Use a blended learning platform or learning management system to organize learning pathways.</p> <p>Some school districts provide teachers with access to a single learning management system, referred to as an LMS, such as Canvas, Edmodo, Blackboard, Kahoot!, or Moodle, to name just a few. Whether using an LMS provided by your school or district or using a lighter blended learning platform such as Google Classroom, organizing your lessons digitally is essential to implement explicit instruction across learning environments. Consider using a learning pathway model in which you can chunk and sequence learning, as well as provide for learner variability and choice. You are experiencing this approach currently, as the TALE Academy curriculum is organized around learning pathways.</p>
GK	<p>Give lessons a name that includes the learning objective. When you create a learning pathway on your LMS or blended learning platform, you will typically be prompted to give every element a unique name. When adding a new lesson, consider using the learning objective within the name. For example, “classifying numbers up to 20 as even or odd” might be the name of a lesson for second-grade math students. When adding a chunk within a lesson, consider using a name that can help a student understand and remember the content knowledge and skills covered. For example, “The End is the Answer!” may be the name of a guided practice chunk in which students learn that odd numbers are 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, whereas even numbers are 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. This strategy of intentional naming is common in textbooks; adapt it to help students follow your unique curriculum!</p>
CLH	<p>Provide a learning map that students can access easily at any point in a lesson to check where they are in their learning pathway. This helps students link the current lesson to prior learning and see the bigger picture. You can use interactive graphic organizers to create the learning map. These tools support visual and spatial thinking; when linked to audio files, they also support auditory learning.</p>
GK	<p>Use specific digital tools, but organize them for access through the learning pathway. There are tens of thousands of apps and resources online that can help you provide learning choices for students, but moving students to those apps can cause challenges. If you use hyperlinks within a learning pathway, students can simply click for access. Note, consider setting your hyperlinks so that they open a new tab/window. That way, if your students get lost – for example, if they wander off</p>

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	from the assigned YouTube link to watch music videos – all they have to do is close the new window to return to their learning pathway. Another solution is to use embed codes that draw the content into the learning platform.
CLH	Record modeling videos for students to stream through the learning pathway. You can set up a smartphone on a tripod to record yourself modeling a tactile task or skill, turn a PowerPoint into a video presentation, use screen capture to record yourself modeling a learning process, such as addition and subtraction, and much more. There are plenty of free online tools teachers can use to be innovative when creating modeling videos.
GK	Include the think-aloud protocol when creating modeling videos. Not only does this provide a second modality for learning, visual and auditory, it also allows your students to learn thought processing. And if you do that in conjunction with Including closed captions when creating modeling videos. Closed captions increase accessibility for learners by providing another modality within videos. There are plenty of free online tools to assist you in generating closed captions. Just be sure to proofread and use software that allows you to edit, as the artificial intelligence that generates subtitles and closed captions isn't perfect yet!
CLH	Use digital collaboration tools for group practice. Even if groups are meeting in person, consider linking them to digital collaboration tools, as well. This allows for continuity of learning outside instructional time and builds in portability if you choose or need to shift across learning environments. It also allows for learner variability, as some students may collaborate more effectively with digital tools than with face-to-face strategies. Use the HLP flexible grouping to guide the formation of groups, whether they are working together face-to-face, remote, or hybrid. See Session 5 in this module for more on flexible grouping.
GK	Embed links to instructions in breakout rooms, discussion boards, and other apps. When students engage in group or independent practice, we know that it is the easiest time to lose them. During your planning work, write explicit instructions for the practice activity that you can provide as a link within the learning spaces being utilized, such as in the chat section of a Zoom room. When possible, provide the instructions in multiple modalities to allow for learner variability.
CLH	Lastly, select digital tools that support feedback loops. When selecting apps and resources, consider how they support you in giving live/immediate and actionable feedback to your students. Tools such as Nearpod, Quizlet, and Peardeck can be integrated into the learning pathway at critical junctures to check for understanding, guide self-assessment, and help you know which students need additional feedback and support.

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GK	<p>Now that you have these tools, let's get cooking!</p> <p>We've given you a few ideas to get started. As you explore how to use explicit learning in your classrooms, try to keep in mind the concept of portability so that you will be able to use this HLP across learning environments. The choice board and activities in this session will help you refine your explicit instruction practice across in-person, remote, and hybrid settings.</p> <p>Enjoy your learning. And bon appétit!</p> <p>The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone – students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities – all have the opportunity to succeed. You've just added another tool to your toolbox when you use explicit instruction to support all students, including students with disabilities.</p> <p>Thanks for listening!</p> <p>BYE.</p>
CLH	BYE.