

Teaching & learning Policy – Appendix 2

10 Principles of Instruction Helping Teachers Develop Effective Lessons

In 2012, Prof Barak Rosenshine from the University of Illinois wrote a very influential article. Based on cognitive sciences and school research, he created 10 principles of instruction to help teachers develop effective lessons. Here is a summary of these very useful principles.

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning

Reviewing previously learned material strengthen the connections between pieces of knowledge. That is, it enhances understanding. Rosenshine suggests a five to eight-minute review of the previously covered material, including peer marking, asking questions, checking for misconceptions, correcting homework, and others.

2. Present new material in small steps followed by student practice

There is only so much novel information we can process at one time. If you ask students to do too much at the same time, they will probably fail.

3. Ask questions and check answers

To learn something, students need to practice it. Every time students answer a question or solve a problem, they retrieve that information, memory for that information becomes stronger and more last-longing. The more variety of question types, the better.

4. Use models

Concrete examples and models are a good strategy to introduce a new concept. Explicit and detailed explanations and instructions are also recommended.

5. Guide practice

Rosenshine recommends that teachers stimulate students to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material. According to him, successful teachers spend more time asking questions, checking for understanding, correcting errors and guiding students when working out problems.

6. Check for understanding

Constant checking is important to catch misconceptions before they harm learning. It also helps teachers notice if parts of the content need re-teaching. Rosenshine suggests that teachers ask direct questions, instead of asking students if they have questions and assuming that silence means a full understanding of the topic.

7. Obtain a high success rate

This principle relates to making sure all students have mastered the current set of lessons before moving on to the next one. It involves checking for misconceptions and asking questions.

8. Provide scaffolds in difficult tasks

When students are completing a hard task, it is important that teachers provide temporary instructional support. These scaffolds can be gradually removed as pupils advance in their understanding and fluency on a particular topic. Rosenshine suggests using cue cards, checklists, worked examples and models as scaffolding. Teachers can also anticipate students' errors and warn them about them beforehand.

9. Stimulate and monitor independent practice

Independent practice should be used after guided practice. That is, when students are already very competent in a topic, they can practice independently in order to become fluent and retrieve information automatically. Rosenshine calls this process "overlearning". Independent practice should cover the same topic covered in guided practice as students need to be fully prepared for it.

10. Conduct weekly and monthly reviews

Similar to Principle 1, Rosenshine advocates for a frequent review of previously learned material in order to help students reconsolidate information and create stronger connections.