



The Strategic Instruction Model

Searching, Solving, Succeeding, Soaring...

Overview

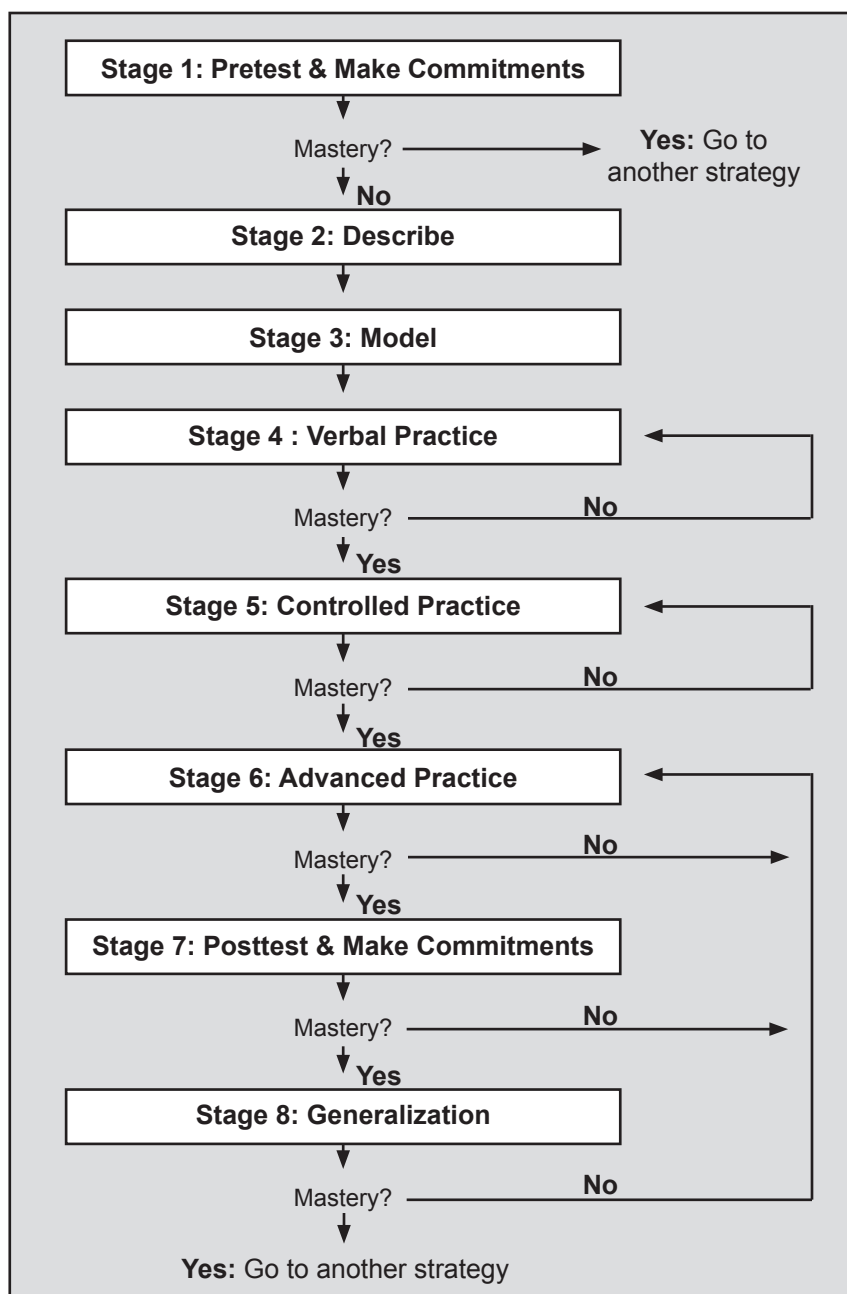
Eight-Stage Instructional Process

What is a strategy?

An individual's approach to a task is called a strategy. It includes how a person thinks and acts when planning, executing, and evaluating performance on a task and its outcomes.

The instructional process

For a strategy to serve a student well, it must be learned to an automatic level. Just as we use repetition to teach the beginning reader to master basic sound-symbol relationships, we teach the student to master task-specific learning strategies through much structured practice. Research has shown that 98 percent of all the low-achieving students who have been taught learning strategies have mastered them if the eight-stage instructional process is followed carefully.



Stage 1: Pretest and Make Commitments

In this stage, students take a test to determine the strengths and weaknesses in their approach to a specific learning task.

Stage 2: Describe

In this stage, the teacher “paints a picture” of the nature of the strategy and the advantages of using it, describes the strategy’s steps, and helps students set goals for how fast they want to learn.

Stage 3: Model

In this stage, teachers demonstrate all the steps of the strategy while “thinking aloud” so the students can witness all the cognitive processes and overt behaviors involved in performing the strategy.

Stage 4: Verbal Practice

In this stage, students learn to explain and name the strategy steps, verbally elaborate on the cognitive processes and definitions, and verbally rehearse the steps.

Stage 5: Controlled Practice and Feedback

In this stage, students practice using the new strategy in materials that are, in large measure, devoid of the high-level vocabulary, complex concepts, or other stringent demands of regular course materials. After each practice attempt, students receive individual feedback—perhaps the most important instructional element of the entire process.

Stage 6: Advanced Practice and Feedback

In this stage, students practice applying the strategy to the types of assignments they receive in general education classrooms. At the same time, the instructional prompts and cues given liberally in earlier stages fade during this stage, and students are encouraged to analyze their own performances.

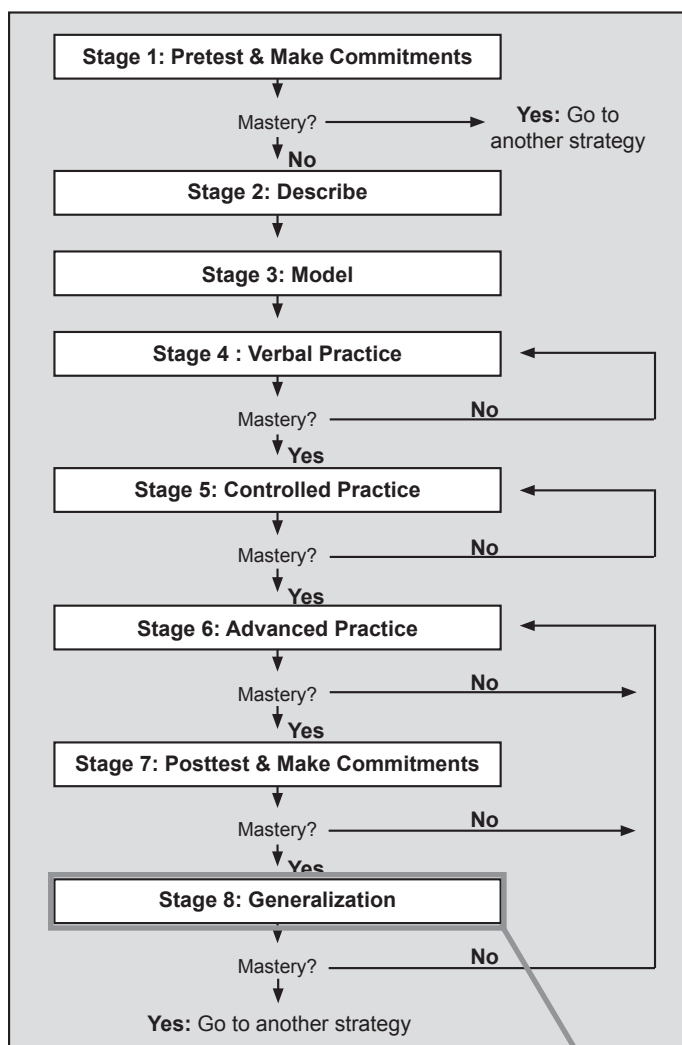
Stage 7: Posttest and Make Commitments

In this stage, students’ progress in learning the strategy is assessed using materials and procedures similar to those used in Stage 1. Additionally, students are

encouraged to analyze their progress and to make a commitment to use the new strategy in a variety of settings.

Stage 8: Generalization

The real measure of the effect of strategic instruction is the degree to which students can generalize the acquired strategy to the “real” world and maintain their use of it over time. Research has shown that generalization instruction must be specifically programmed for low-achieving students if they are to be successful with a given strategy in a variety of situations. Four distinct phases are addressed in generalization instruction, from making students aware of situations in which the strategy is applicable to checking to ensure continued strategy use.



Phases of Generalization

Orientation

The teacher makes students aware of appropriate times to use the new strategy.

Activation

The teacher gives specific assignments so students can practice using the strategy in an array of settings

Adaptation

Students learn how to adapt the strategy to other types of tasks.

Maintenance

The teacher periodically checks to see whether students are continuing to use the strategy appropriately.