IMPROVING THE WRITING OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES: AN EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK

March 29, 2017
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Agenda

- Introduction
- Goals
- Research base
- Before: Instructional Design
- During: Instructional Delivery
- After: Instruction, Practice, and Assessment
- Closing
Introduction

- Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Iowa
- Previously, special education teacher, director of special education, and academic director
- Graduated with a doctorate in special education from Pennsylvania State University in 2011
- Research focuses on writing interventions for students with disabilities, explicit instruction, and data-based decision making
  - Dr. Charles Hughes at Penn State
Goals

- Describe each component of explicit instruction
- Apply the components of explicit instruction to lesson plans
- Discuss ways of using explicit instruction across multiple writing skills
Goals: Clear – Concise – Consistent Road Maps

Research Base

What does the evidence suggest about explicit instruction?
Research Base

- Effective and efficient components of instruction for students with academic difficulties and disabilities (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Datchuk & Kubina, 2013; Gersten & Baker, 2001; Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Kaldenberg, Ganzeveld, Hosp, & Rodgers, 2016)

- Successfully used across grade levels and disability types (Cook & Bennett, 2014; Joseph & Konrad, 2009; Pennington & Delano, 2012)

Research Base cont.

- Also referred to as (a) systematic and explicit instruction, (b) direct instruction, and (c) combined explicit and strategy instruction

- Many components overlap/complimentary of strategy instruction (Swanson, 1999)

- Strategy Instruction
  - Strategic Instruction Model (SIM)
    - More info: www.sim.kucrl.org
  - Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)
    - More info: Powerful Writing Strategies for All Students (Harris, Graham, Mason, & Friedlander, 2007)
**Before: Instructional Design**

How to prepare explicit lesson

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**Instructional Design**

- Before delivery of instruction, **critical design components** of explicit instruction
  - Analyze skills/strategies and segment into smaller units
  - Design organized and focused lessons
  - Create an adequate range of examples and non-examples
Analyze and segment into smaller units

■ Why?
  ▪ Controls for task difficulty
  ▪ Makes instruction more manageable
  ▪ Higher rates of student success

■ How?
  ▪ Analyze standards or content for individual skills
  ▪ Refer to research based curriculum and look at their scope and sequence

Example – Common Core Standard

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1.D
Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., sat, hid, told).

Common regular verbs
• walked ← walk
• jumped ← jump
• talked ← talk

Common irregular verbs
• was ← is
• were ← are
• said ← say
• went ← go
• got ← get
• had ← has
• held ← hold
• stood ← stand
• ran ← run
• drew ← draw
• stood ← stand
• told ← tell
• sat ← sit
Analyze and segment into smaller units

- Handwriting (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000)
  - l, i, t, o, e, a, n, s, r, p, h, f
  - c, d, g, b, u, m, v, w, y, x, k, z, j, q
- CASL Handwriting Program (Graham & Harris, 1999)

- Simple sentences
  - Reading sentences & identifying parts
  - Writing to pictures

- More complex sentence types
  - Reading sentences/phrases with cues
  - Combining sentences/phrases into one

Scope and Sequence of Writing Skills
(Kammenui & Simmons, 1990)

Smaller units within (a) mechanics, (b) simple sentence construction, (c) composing paragraphs, and (d) editing

**Mechanics**
1. Copying sentences accurately
2. Capitalizing the first word in a sentence
3. Ending a telling sentence with a period
4. Ending an asking sentence with a question mark
5. Indenting the first word of a paragraph
Scope and Sequence of Writing Skills  
(Kammenui & Simmons, 1990)

**Simple Sentence Construction**
1. Identifying a sentence as containing 2 parts: (a) name someone/something and (2) tell more  
2. Selecting sentences that have both parts depicted in a picture  
3. Completing sentences so each has a part that names and a part that tells more (corresponds to a picture)  
4. Constructing sentences that tell the main thing depicted in a series of pictures  
5. Constructing sentences without pictures  
6. Combining sentences into more complex sentences

Scope and Sequence of Writing Skills  
(Kammenui & Simmons, 1990)

**Composing Paragraphs**
1. Identify paragraphs that name a topic and tell more about the topic  
2. Identify the topic of a paragraph as the main thing depicted in a series of pictures  
3. Complete paragraphs that refer to pictures  
4. Compose paragraphs corresponding to pictures/an individual in a picture  
5. Compose paragraphs that describe actions in a series of pictures  
6. Compose paragraphs to pictures and infer actions missing in the picture  
7. Compose paragraphs without pictures
Scope and Sequence of Writing Skills
(Kammenui & Simmons, 1990)

**Editing**
1. Identify irrelevant sentences (do not correspond to picture)
2. Correct errors in capitalization and punctuation
3. Identify irrelevant sentences within a paragraph (do not correspond to picture)
4. Correct run-on sentences
5. Correct sentences by changing all to past tense verb
6. Correct subject-verb agreement and pronouns

Design organized and focused lessons

- Focus on the smaller instructional unit and **stick with it**
- Avoid digressions
Design organized and focused lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Close</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Design is sequential: open, body, and close
- **But** can be flexible (step back/forward) depending on student responses
- **Microsoft word template**

Create an appropriate range of examples and non-examples

- **Why and When?**
  - Provides multiple opportunities for students to learn
  - Helps promote generalization
  - Examples – for all skills
  - Non-examples - especially useful for concepts, rules, and strategies

- **How?**
  - Determine critical attributes of targeted skill
  - Create enough to use during model-prompt-check *(hope for best, plan for worst)*
Create an appropriate range of examples and non-examples

- Need enough for each section of Model-Prompt-Check
- Critical attributes: essential and critical
  - Essential attributes
    - The targeted skill absolutely have this
  - Variable attributes
    - The targeted skill may have this

Create an appropriate range - EXAMPLES

- Identifying past tense verbs
  - Examples: walked, talked, was, were, said
  - Non-examples: ball, seat, town
- Handwriting alphabetic letters
  - Examples: handwriting l, i, t
- Writing compound sentences
  - Example combinations (combine with and)
    - Roger threw the stick. The dog ran and caught it.
  - Non example combinations (combine with and)
    - The dog jumped. The dog caught the stick.
Instructional Design

- Before delivery of instruction, **critical design components** of explicit instruction
  - Analyze skills/strategies and segment into smaller units
  - Design organized and focused lessons
  - Create an adequate range of examples and non-examples

During: Instructional Delivery

How to deliver an explicit lesson
Instructional Delivery

- During instruction, **critical delivery techniques** of explicit instruction
  - **Open**
    - Begin lessons with a clear statement of goals, expectations, and rationale
    - Review prior skills
  - **Body**
    - **Model**
      - Provide step-by-step demonstrations
      - Use clear and concise language
    - **Prompt and Check**
      - Provide guided and supported practice
      - Require frequent responses
      - Monitor student performance
      - Provide affirmative and corrective feedback
      - Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace

Begin lessons w/ goals, expectations, & rationale

- **Why?**
  - Helps student anticipate and understand when, where, and why this skill would be important
  - Communicates with student what to do to be successful
- **How?**
  - Student friendly language
  - Vocal description, pictures, videos, etc.
Begin lessons w/ goals, expectations, & rationale - EXAMPLES

- “Today we’re going to work on writing simple sentences and using those simple sentences to make more complicated types of sentences.”
- "Why do you think it would help to know how to write all different types of sentences (call on individual students)?”
- “You will need to respond on my signal today. I’ll ask a question, raise my hand, and when I snap, you’ll need to say the answer.”

It was raining, and the dogs were running inside. My mother was working on her computer, and I read a book.

Review prior skills

- Why?
  - Activates prior knowledge
  - Helps teachers determine if students have preskills
- How?
  - Range of examples/non-examples of preskills
  - Students complete independently
Review prior skills - EXAMPLE

- Directions: Write 'was' or 'were' below.
  1. My friend ________ waiting at the store.
  2. The marbles ________ all over the house.
  3. Betty and Yancy ________ walking to the store.
  4. Von Miller ________ not at school today.
  5. The birds ________ eating in the yard.

After this, the lessons focuses on new past tense verbs (went, saw, stood) and review (was, were)

Model: step-by-step and 3 C’s

- Model (I Do): teacher shows behaviors and tells steps, show and tell
- Why
  - Unambiguous display of how to succeed
  - Provides most support up front
- How?
  - Show: step-by-step
  - Tell: use language that is clear, consistent, & concise
  - Across multiple examples and non-examples
  - Involve students in someway
Model: step-by-step and 3 C’s - EXAMPLE

- Handwriting
  - Visual cues
    - Arrows and numbers showing sequence and direction

1. Find the first number.
2. What direction? Make it.
(repeat)

Provide guided and supported practice

- Prompt (We Do) and Check (You Do): students complete more items with decreasing teacher support
- Why?
  - Students practice in supportive environment
  - Teacher assistance decreases and student independence increases
- How?
  - Range of examples/non-examples (hope for best, plan for worst)
  - Same type as those modeled
  - Plan for types of prompts and how to fade
Provide guided and supported practice cont.

- Types of prompts
  - Spoken
  - Visual: written, pictures, videos, charts, etc.
  - Action
- Fading away prompts
  - Tell
    - Teacher tells steps – students repeat
  - Ask
    - Teacher asks steps – students answer
  - Remind
    - Teacher reminds – students answer

Provide guided and supported practice - EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Tell Prompts from Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. My shirt.</td>
<td><em>Pick up your pen. We’ll both write together, but I’ll tell you the steps.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My shirt smelled clean.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Played basketball.</td>
<td><em>Read number 6. (students read aloud) A sentence has two parts, a part that names and a part that tells more. This is not a simple sentence. What part is there? The part that names. Don’t circle it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The girls sat in chairs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Looked at the TV.</td>
<td><em>Steps repeat.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uses both spoken and visual prompts (teacher writes with students)
Provide guided and supported practice - EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Ask Prompts from Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. The king counted coins.</td>
<td>Now only you’ll write and I’ll ask you some questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The big yellow bird.</td>
<td>• Read number 11. (students read aloud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Her daughter.</td>
<td>• Is 11 a simple sentence, yes or no? (students answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Her daughter put a hot dog on the grill.</td>
<td>• Good, circle it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Stood up.</td>
<td>• Read number 12. (students read aloud). Is 12 a simple sentences, yes or no? (students answer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Correct – what part is there, the part that names or tells more? (students answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Steps repeat.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide guided and supported practice - EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Remind Prompts from Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Our computer.</td>
<td>Let’s see how well you remember the steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. We ran home.</td>
<td>• Read number 16 to yourself (think time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Grabbed the candle.</td>
<td>• Get ready to tell me, is 16 a simple sentences, yes or no (think time) – students answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Hot day.</td>
<td><strong>Steps repeat.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The swimmer dove in the pool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steps repeat.
Require frequent responses & monitor performance

- **Why?**
  - Gives student practice with the targeted skill
  - Helps teacher make within-lesson assessments and adjustments

- **How**
  - Goal: hear from the most amount of students the most amount of times
  - Determine types of responses
  - Match with way to monitor performance

- **Types of responses**
  - Written
  - Spoken
    - Student say response, then write
  - Action

- **Way for everyone to respond / teacher to monitor**
  - Unison
  - Individual
  - Pairs
Unison Responding

- Unison responding: everyone in group responds at the same time
  - Best: short answers or expect same answers
  - Types:
    - Spoken (choral)
    - Written: paper, computer, dry erase board
    - Action: body movements, cards, response cards

Unison Responding

- Use a signal
  - Basics: Ask question – think time – signal
  - Practice signal with students (preview of lesson)
  - Focus: clear/crisp signal
    - Prevents copying among students
Unison Responding

- Non-auditory signal example (student looking at teacher)
  - Teacher asks question
  - Raise hand
  - Give think time
  - Drop hand

- Auditory signal example (student not looking at teacher)
  - Teacher asks question
  - Give think time
  - Snap

How much think time is enough?

Unison Responding -EXAMPLE

Directions: Change each verb to the past tense.

1. ________
   Tom goes to the store to buy chips.

2. ________
   The big tiger sees a small bird to eat.

3. ________
   Carol gets a new phone every year.

4. ________
   The zoo keeper holds a panda bear.

5. ________
   The boys dance at the party.

1st: say sentence aloud
2nd: say underlined word as past tense
3rd: write past tense verb
Individual Responding

- Individual spoken responses
  - Best: longer/different answers
- Volunteers or non-volunteers
  - Volunteers: personal experience or different answers
  - Non-volunteers: only few typically respond, need to hear from cross section
    - Do not use as punishment

Individual Responding

- Ordered or random
  - Ordered: student know when they will be called
    - Ensure everyone is heard from, but can promote inattention
    - Good for small group
  - Random: students do not know when they will be called
    - Increases student attention
    - Potential anxiety
- Best practice: ask question first, then call student
Individual Responding

- Additional considerations
  - Can use peers
  - Think-Pair-Share
    - Classroom management
    - Partner behaviors

Individual Responding - EXAMPLE

1st (unison): say words given

2nd: individual or pairs: say sentence

3rd: all individuals write sentence
Provide affirmative & corrective feedback

- Recognize correct responses and immediately correct errors
  - Why recognize corrects?
    - Lets students know they are improving
    - Reinforces high accuracy
  - Why immediately correct errors?
    - Clears up misconceptions immediately
    - Prevents students from practicing errors

- How to recognize corrects?
  - Brief
  - Precise praise (specific behavior)

- How to immediately correct errors?
  - Partly correct answers
    - Acknowledge correct part, prompt through error, have **student repeat correct**
  - Incorrect answer
    - Model correct answer or prompt, have **student repeat correct**
Provide affirmative & corrective feedback

- Additional considerations
  - Calm, businesslike manner
  - Group corrections
  - Tell students that errors are a part of learning
  - Don’t be embarrassed about your own errors

Provide affirmative & corrective feedback - EXAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Student responses and teacher action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tom and Frank</td>
<td>Teacher: Read the sentence (signal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________ going</td>
<td>Students (unison): Tom and Frank –blank– going to the gym.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the gym.</td>
<td>Teachers: is it was or were?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My friends</td>
<td>Students (unison): was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________ staying</td>
<td>Teachers: Whoops! Were. Tom and Frank were. Is it was or were?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the hotel.</td>
<td>Students: were.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When possible, check spoken before written
Deliver lesson at a brisk pace

- **Why?**
  - Promotes student attention
  - More content covered
- **How?**
  - Know your lesson
    - Practice the clear-concise-consistent language
  - Have consistent behavior management systems
  - Have a solid introduction (with practice of signal)

After: Instruction, Practice, & Assessment

What happens after instruction
Instructional Delivery

- After instruction, **critical design & delivery** techniques
- Close
  - Review important points of the day's lesson
  - Preview the next lesson
  - Practice
    - Specific to the lesson
    - Cumulative and distributed
      - Previously learned, related skills
      - Helps students discriminate between new v. previously learned content
  - Assessments
    - Independently completed
      - That day's lesson
      - Cumulative

Review and Preview

- Review by recapping important points
- Preview where instruction is going next
- Why?
  - Helps students organize knowledge
  - Anticipate schedule
- How?
  - Quick, short statements
  - Show next lesson
Review and Preview - EXAMPLES

- "Today we learned the two parts of a simple sentence: a part that names and a part that tells more. Tomorrow, we will pick this up and start writing our own sentences with two parts to pictures."
- "Today we worked on handwriting the letters l, i, and t. We will practice this some more tomorrow."

Practice and Assessments

- Independent practice
  - Cumulative and distributed
  - New content and previously learned
- Assessment
  - New content and previously learned
- Why practice?
  - Promotes maintenance of skills
  - Helps students discriminate between potentially confusing/similar skills
- Why assessment?
  - Data-based decision making
    - Step back
    - Stay
    - Step forward

Key: align lesson with assessment
Practice and Assessments - EXAMPLES

Directions: Combine each of the phrases below into one sentence.

1. The pencil was on the floor. The pencil was yellow.

2. The house was missing a door. The house was brand new.

3. The ship crashed into the island. The ship was wobbly.
Closing

- Important points:
  - Plan for the worst, hope for the best
  - Think of student vocabulary knowledge in your 3 C’s
  - Use assessment data to determine next steps

- Thank you!
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  - www.shawndatchuk.com
  - Twitter: @ShawnDatchuk

References


Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1999). *CASL Handwriting Program (Grade 1).*


