



## Provide Models

### PROVIDING MODELS IS SIMPLE, AND IMPORTANT.

Throughout our lives we depend upon observation of models to help us learn efficiently and effectively. Any adult who has attempted to master a new skill – knitting, pottery, boat-building or scuba diving, for example – knows the importance of having a patient and encouraging teacher as a guide. They provide step-by-step models and guide us as we fumble to master each challenge along the way. Great teachers and coaches are not only knowledgeable and skilled, they are also very good at chunking complex processes into doable tasks that help their students succeed.

So, how can we get better at using models in our classrooms? **Try the following 7 steps**, and pay attention to the differences in students’ attitudes and performance.

### PART ONE: PLANNING

#### STEP 1: **IDENTIFY A SKILL YOU EXPECT STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE.**

Example Skill: Summarize the main ideas of an expository reading selection.

#### STEP 2: **ANALYZE THE COMPONENTS OR STEPS OF THE SKILL, LIST THEM IN SEQUENCE FOR YOURSELF, AND PLAN A WAY TO MODEL EACH STEP.**

Note that once you begin this process, you’ll often identify pre-requisite subskills that will impact a student’s ability to be successful. For instance, in the example below, the ability to identify main ideas is essential to successful summary-writing. Often it’s necessary to backpedal and teach each subskill thoroughly prior to teaching a more complex skill such as summary writing.

Example Steps and Strategies:

Preview the reading selection	Examine the selection’s length, structure, related illustrations, images, callout boxes, highlighted vocabulary, etc.
Identify the topic	Look at the title and subtitles, and read a sentence or two at the beginning and end of the selection.
Access prior knowledge about the topic	Identify any information about the topic or how it connects with other things learned in or outside of class.
Make predictions about the content	Consider the context for the selection and predict its purpose – e.g., a newspaper selection has a different purpose depending upon what section of the paper it’s in; a textbook selection has a different purpose than a blog post.



Landmark Teaching Principle™ #5

Set a purpose for reading	For this activity, the purpose is to identify the main ideas in order to summarize the selection.
Read the selection	Decode each word and sentence of the selection in order, from beginning to end. Read aloud or listen to it being read. (Students often skip the actual reading of the material, forging ahead instead to answer questions or complete the assignment.)
Identify the main ideas and their supporting evidence/examples	Generally, each paragraph or section of a text has a main idea that is explained or supported further with specific examples, facts, or other evidence. Underline or highlight each main idea.
Write a topic sentence for the summary.	Write a sentence that gives the title, author, and topic of the selection.
Write a sentence about each main idea in the selection.	In the sequence in which they appear in the selection, paraphrase each main idea and write it in a sentence.

**STEP 3: FIND OR CREATE MODELS OF EACH OF THE COMPONENTS IDENTIFIED IN STEP 2 AND A MODEL OF WHAT THE END-PRODUCT SHOULD LOOK LIKE.**

In the example above, each step should have a model. For the “preview the reading selection” step, students might first look at and discuss a completed questionnaire about a given selection, then complete one of their own about a different selection.

Additionally, there should be a model of the end-product, such as a written summary.

**PART TWO: TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**STEP 4: INTRODUCE THE SKILL AND THE MODEL OF THE END-PRODUCT TO STUDENTS, LETTING THEM KNOW THEY WILL BE LEARNING THE STEPS TO MASTER THE SKILL.**

**STEP 5: INTRODUCE THE MODEL OF THE FIRST STEP, SHOW STUDENTS HOW TO DO IT, AND WORK WITH THEM AS THEY PRACTICE. FOLLOW THIS PROCESS FOR EACH SUCCEEDING STEP (ADDING ADDITIONAL PRACTICE IN EACH AS NEEDED) UNTIL ALL OF THE STEPS ARE COMPLETE.**

**STEP 6: DISCUSS WITH STUDENTS THE DIFFICULTIES AND SUCCESSES THEY EXPERIENCED ALONG THE WAY, AND WORK WITH THEM TO SET GOALS FOR THE NEXT ACTIVITY IN WHICH THEY’LL USE THE SKILL.**

**STEP 7: REPEAT STEPS 1-6 FOR THE NEXT ACTIVITY, AND NOTE THAT STUDENTS GAIN SKILL AS THEY PRACTICE.**