

TEACHER TAKEAWAY

..Stories &
ToolBox



DIRECTOR TRAINING- ENE AMEH

Here's what we've been and will be up to!

Welcome to our maiden issue of the Teacher Takeaway! We are thrilled to share with you our learning from EduResearch, stories from the everyday classroom and promising practices as we seek to fulfil our mission of teacher improvement.

Itsy Books Intervention and Training [itsyBITS] was established to cater to teacher needs, revamping education one teacher, one classroom at a time. Over the years our work has led us to classrooms, policy tables, conference podiums, training fora and teacher meets. And each time, the goal was to inspire, affirm and challenge teachers in their roles as educators.

Our pursuit is hinged on our cherished Dylan Wiliam's quote that says, "Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better." Good teachers pursue improvement even when it is hard. We hope that each Teacher Takeaway issue, will offer you that springboard to leap from good to better!

Collaboration is a core value at itsyBITS. We believe in championing the cause of teachers and narrowing the knowledge gap through collaboration.



In the weeks ahead, join us on a journey as we mark Black History Month! Through the month on our social media pages, we will be highlighting the historic contributions of Black people, specifically West Africans. Enjoy the read!

Ene Ameh

Treasures

IG: @sinippetsbysarah

X: @dylanwiliam

Podcast:
The Cult of Pedagogy

Worthy Read:
Teach Like a Champion
by *Doug Lemov*

OUR IG: @itsybits_

Affirm!
Inspire!
Challenge!



Stories of learning: Research and Practice!

Explicit Instruction is not just another buzz word. although it sounds novel given the current attention it is getting. Interestingly [even known by other labels], it has been around for decades, been shoved to the back seat for many years, and now with growing research on how students learn, has come back to current education discourse tables.

My recent digging into improving my practice and hitting the goal of helping students make maximum academic gains has led me to learning more about Explicit Instruction. I have found helpful insight from books, research papers, educator platforms including X(twitter) follows and podcasts.

Explicit Instruction suggests a direct unambiguous approach to teaching, where a teacher tells it as it is. This includes scaffolding, step by step procedures, clear explanations, rationale for skills and learning target, demonstrations and opportunities for practice and feedback until mastery. It leans more on direct instruction and not student discovery.

My learning about Explicit Instructions has led me to two conclusions; make no assumptions and avoid being superfluous or flowery. The latter includes avoiding strategies and activities that inundate learners with unnecessary baggage surrounding the concept/content which ends up overloading working memory, consequently affecting retention and retrieval.

This means that even fancy, purportedly 'engaging' activities may be more detrimental than beneficial for students grasp and retention of concepts.

Explicit Instruction does not assume students will get a skill or understanding by chance. Teachers need to spell it out. Does this lead to boring classes and lower participation? Not at all. It just demands that you, the teacher, model, sequence in small steps, and give loads of practice opportunity for students and feedback. With Explicit Instruction, teacher talk is directed and student participation is expected with checks for understanding and feedback loop. Don't just take my word for it, design your lessons with scaffolds, step by step explanations and student practice with feedback, and observe the effect. Better still, read more about **Explicit Instruction**.

As an early adaptor it is easy for me to see a strategy and want to add it to my tool belt. But I am learning to sieve it through the lense of research especially how students learn versus what is the current rave. It is from this new habit that I have doubled back on my definition and adoption of student-led learning moving to more teacher-directed, student-facing learning (convo for another issue). So what have you been learning that's been shaping your practice lately? What strategies are you willing to adopt or adapt or discard thanks to learning, relearning and unlearning?

Send us a message about your learning journey and the impact, if any, on your classroom. We would love to hear from you! #CognitiveLoad #ScienceOfLearning #CognitiveScience #EduResearch

Teacher Takeaway

From the myriad of teaching styles/strategies available, how are you providing explicit instruction to your students?



Stories from the classroom: Teacher Tell

Today my favourite students wanted to do nothing! If the song, "today I don't feel like doing anything" was written for a purpose, it will be a reflection of how they felt and all they wanted to busy themselves with-Nothing. But it was class time and in ELA we were exploring poetry so I walk to the board remarking, "okay guys, we will do exactly what you want, nothing." Saying those words of course had them stunned and unsure whether to be ecstatic cos they had their way. Or had they?

Before the confusion left their faces, I had "NOTHING" written boldly on the board. So let's talk about how you feel, we could make our expressions rhyme or not, we could point out what rhyming scheme we want to use. And just like that the words kept coming at me, first one kid, then another, yet another this time modifying the last speaker's contribution. The students felt heard, were given a voice-agency, I got to use class time to deliver content, review elements of poetry, assess their grasp of rhyming schemes. It was a win-win, the students very impressed with their product and I thrilled at their proficiency.

It was "Nothing" after all.

Have you ever wondered what student-facing instructional time looks like? Student-facing learning does not take away the direction and influence of the teacher or learning facilitator. From our **Teacher Tell**, we can observe that a teacher who is familiar with the content and learning target can operate with a flexibility that allows for student choice and voice while directing learners towards learning and goals. How adaptive are you to your student needs, expressions and realities? Are you fluid enough to take a detour from your lesson plans and still implement teacher-directed instruction driving learning in your classroom? Do you provide your students a classroom like our **Teacher Tell** that creates a safe space where children are free to express how they feel without fear of being shut down?

So what is your Teacher Takeaway from our Teacher Tell read? Send us a message to tell.

Teacher Tell

Teacher Tell is based on true accounts from classrooms. Want to share chronicles from your class? Reach out to us via DM or email. We would love to read & share your stories and consequently takeaways, one classroom to another.

Thank you for reading!

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