Explicit Instruction Course Module 6: Intro Video

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So now, we're moving to supporting practices and today, we're going to talk about using effective methods to elicit frequent responses. This is Module Six so here we go.

The first piece I want to talk about is how you support students by maximizing engagement. That defined for you what it means to maximize engagement. In this module, you're going to learn about what it means to use supporting practices to maximize engagement and then specific to this module, we're going to focus on eliciting responses as one supporting practice that does maximize engagement and then we're going to talk about using different ways to elicit responses that meet the goals of maintaining or checking accuracy of processing, matching the learning outcome you have for students, matching student ability to do that, doing it in a way – using a variety of response formats to do that as appropriate and then maximizing student involvement. I will say more about what each of those things is. The goal here is to give you a framework for everything we're going to talk about.

So that brings us back to what we've been talking about in other parts of this course which is the explicit instruction model which I hope at this point you have a memory for what it looks like. So in your mind for a moment, think about what does the explicit instruction model look like? There are three parts to it. Pause the video for just a second and see if you can remember or maybe you're just like, "I remember" so I'm just going to keep moving. Either way, here we get – well, anyway – okay, here we go. So first, we have modeling which involves, as we know, a clear explanation and plan examples to elaborate on the clear explanation. Then we have of course two kinds of practice. We have both guided and independent practice and you select one or both of those depending on the kind of skill you're teaching students.

Now, we move into the thing we're going to focus on Module Six and after Module Six then Module Seven, the supporting practices and these are effective methods to elicit frequent responses, providing immediate specific feedback and maintaining brisk pace. So these are supporting practice we use, not just a modeling or practice but as you can see, this goes across, meaning, we do these things throughout. So here are the supporting practices again and for this module, we're going to focus on, one, we're going to focus on using effective methods to elicit responses.

Before we get specifically to that, I want to address that first objective we have which is to understand what engagement is. Engagement in this example here has some, say with me, bells and say with me, whistles. Okay, so apologize for the bad pun or whatever but the point here is that this is not what engagement is. So engagement is not just about shiny things that are fun and exciting, right? It's not a

diamond ring. It's not a bell. It's not a whistle. It's different. So what do we mean then by engagement? Engagement is when student's cognitive effort is focused on processing lesson content.

So let me break that down for you just for a second so cognitive effort, meaning, students are thinking about what you want them to think about and what they're thinking about is processing the lesson content. So engagement is when students are basically involved in the learning very specifically. If students are engaged, that means that they're doing something that is really relevant to what you're teaching and this is where we talk a lot about of the problems teachers have where they do fun activities. So they're engaging but that's not engagement unless they immediately support students in processing the lesson content and it's an important distinction we want to make.

The supporting practices in this framework are ways that you maximize engagement so students will actually learn what it is you want them to learn. If you don't use these supporting practices effectively, students guarantee you will not be as engaged. Even though you have a great model and you have a clear explanation and you have good plan examples, you set up guided practice and independent practice, if you don't support it in the ways we're talking about here in this module, it won't work. It will fall apart. Okay and I'll say more about that a little bit later.

So let's give a definition of what it means to elicit a response. So to elicit response is a method to get students to say with me, provide a response, exactly so that was a choral response I was asking you for there. So the method involved thinking about what it is you want students to do and then executing that. So here's an example of how this might work. In a context where we're in the middle of a lesson, here's what the teacher is thinking. I could stand over here like a stock bubble. So I want all students to quickly show me their processing content and I'm going to hear – elicit a choral response because I think that's the best way to show me the students are processing content and to do it quickly and to do it for all students.

We'll come back to thinking about those pieces but for now, I want you to pay attention to is that this is the method. I'm thinking of which method I want students to use. So then I execute them. It begins with a question or some kind of instruction to tell students what to do. In this case, I say the word is exhibit and I say the question is, "What's the word?" To make that happen so the students actually give me the choral response, I say, "Everyone," I pause, I gesture like this and then it actually happens. You saw a video of Dr. Anita Archer doing that earlier on. So my method here is to use these words to elicit the choral response. My method is the choral response. Here's how I execute that method and then what I get is my response which is my entire group of students saying all at the same time, "Exhibit." So this is my method to elicit a choral response or well, this is a method to elicit response, in this case, it is a choral response.

So now, let's talk about this whole sentence using effective methods to elicit frequent response because that's the supporting practice as we defined it in the explicit instruction model. I want to talk about four parts of this: effective and methods and frequent and responses. I'm going to do this briefly and the reason is that we're going to come back to each of these things later.

To be effective, you have to choose different methods for different situations but they also should elicit responses that meet these criteria and these are important because these are the criteria on the checklist for doing a good job at eliciting responses. So one thing is that you need to either maintain processing or check the accuracy of it. The second is that it needs to match the learning outcome just like an objective needs to match learning outcome. It also, just like an objective, needs to match student ability so the students are able to follow your directions when you elicit the response.

Also the case you should use a variety of response formats and you choose one based on the context. You might choose a written one. You might choose a physical prompt. You might choose a verbal prompt and so on. Finally, the responses need to maximize student involvement and this is going to be a really important one. How do we maximize student involvement that's going to involve, well, doing something off and getting each student to participate frequently and not just listening to somebody else but participating themselves. We're going to spend a lot of time talking about each of these because these are the criteria we're hoping you'll learn how to follow. In fact, we're expecting it because otherwise, you wouldn't be doing all of this.

So we talked about what it means to be effective in the checklist for that. Here, we're going to talk about the methods, the different ways you could possibly elicit responses. I'm going to talk briefly about this. We're going to return to these later and give you examples of ways to elicit responses. Remember that the method always involves you're asking a question or giving instructions to students. So I'm going to give you some examples of the kind of things that you would do, some of the method you could use. You could use a choral response by saying something like, "Everyone, what sound does the letter K make?" You could use a turn-and-talk by saying, "Turn and talk to your partner, what is the sum of four and one?" You could call an individual student, although later we'll talk about some cautions about individual students so keep that in mind. Tim has a shape with five sides is called a what? We'll get Tim to respond.

We could also give an instruction that doesn't explicitly involve any question but gets at the same idea of a method for eliciting response. You could say, "Write the letter that makes the 'k' sound in your notebook or on a piece of paper or on a whiteboard. Show me on your fingers the sum of four and one" as their response involves a gesture. Make a pentagon with your geoboard. That's an example of one

where we're using object that's given to you for a math lesson and finally point to the word that has a silent E, another one that involves pointing other gesture response. So these are just a variety or responses. We're going to talk about these and more later but this gives you a sense of the different methods.

For frequent, frequent is a really critical word here. You have to maximize those opportunities to respond. Have lots of them that's on that checklist, the maximizing part for a reason and the reason is that we have to get students to do this all of the time. Students won't be engaged if you don't give them many opportunities to be engaged and that also means that you're not just, as I already said, giving students a chance to talk about it or to answer questions one at a time and have all the rest of the students in your group listening. You need to make sure that every student gets their own opportunity to practice, otherwise, it doesn't work.

Let's turn to the responses themselves. There are a variety of different types of responses that students might give. They might be verbal. They might be written. They might be physical and you saw these already when we talked about how you're getting students to do it, the method will involve the response. So the method is what you're planning for the students to do. The response is what in fact they do and they could do those things in a variety of ways. They'll link directly to the question you asked or the instruction you gave that constituted the method, right? So that's all of those pieces.

So now, thinking about eliciting responses using effective methods, in terms of engagement, let's look at an example. So this is Miss M and so Miss M is working on engaging her students using a method to elicit responses. You're going to see moment. So let's watch Miss M. Let's look at how she's eliciting responses and let's look to see if students are engaged. So here's the video, watch with me.

[Video Presentation – Miss M]
"Okay, so just a quick review, in equilateral triangles, Blair, what's the measure of all angles in an equilateral triangle?" "Sixty." "Sixty degrees and how did we figure that out?" "Mira?" "How do we figure out?" "How do we figure out all the angles in an equilateral triangle are 60 degrees?" "Because you did the measurement, I mean yes." "Did the measurement?" "I mean you divide 180 by one-third so that's 60." "And where did that 180 come from?" "The angle [unintelligible]" "Exactly, in a triangle, the measurements always add up to 180. Okay? So now I know all three of these angles are 60 degrees then we know what about our sides? Chelsea?" "That they're equilateral." "That they're all equal so it's equilateral triangle. Chris, do you have a question?" [Unintelligible] "Okay. So looking at our second property, it's just the opposite. If our angles are equal so we know all of our angles are 60 degrees then our sides are the same. It's equilateral. Okay? So Michael? Yes. Okay. So we're going to take a look at

some examples just using these same triangles that we have and figure out what kind of information you can use these properties for."

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Okay. So you've had a chance now to look at Miss M and think about how she elicits responses and how that affected students' engagement. So let's look at an example of this here. So what I've done is to draw for you a graph showing what I think was a trajectory of engagement here and again, we define engagement in terms of maximizing cognitive processing of the content. So if students are engaged, they're actually processing the content.

So Miss M starts off great and the first thing she does is ask Blair a question. She asked Blair - I can't remember what question but she asked Blair a question. Blair answers the question and what you see here is that Blair's engagement increases quite a lot because Blair answered the question and she was forced to process the content. She didn't ask Blair for very long so student engagement across the class is maintained and maybe even slightly increased because she's calling on Blair one at a time. With Mira, she started off Mira just great. Mira is strongly engaged in the content but Mira has a more difficult time answering the question and as a result, Miss M spends a lot of time helping Mira through the question. You can tell that this class gets restless. You can tell that the cognitive engagement, the processing the content, even trying to understand what it is that she's talking with Mira about is not working for the entire class and it doesn't even seem to be working for Mira who doesn't seem to be catching on very easily to the content.

So she's starting to sort of lose the class. They're not maximizing that cognitive processing the content. So then she asked Chelsea a question and Chelsea's question, Chelsea is now a little bit more engaged and now the students are probably tuning in a little bit more and then that doesn't result in a lot of engagement either and so the class tapers off into the end. Of course then right toward the end, you see Michael and Michael who we assume is tracking the class in general, staying with the entire class according to this sort of black line here in the middle. Well then, Michael asked for a pencil and goes to sharpen at which point he is not engaged at all. So we can look at now Miss M's example in terms of these things.

So this is the checklist and now let's think about how Miss M did in terms of meeting the criteria on the checklist. We're going to turn to this multiple times so I won't spend a lot of time on this but I do want us to think about how well she was able to do this to start. So first thing is to maintain or check accuracy processing. The goal here is to make sure students are processing content. Does she do that? Well, I'm going to give her sort of a - I want to give her a yes question mark on that. The reason I can give her a check on that is that she's attempting to maintain processing by asking the students multiple questions

one after another, doing something sort of like a cold call that doesn't [unintelligible] with rapid responses. It doesn't work that well so we'll give her a question mark.

We don't know if it matches the learning outcome. This is her warm-up activity so we could assume that perhaps it's prerequisite knowledge that their students are going to need for this lesson. We still don't know. Did the questions match the student ability? I'm going to go with no here and the reason is that students seem to be struggling with these questions and if these are matched to student ability they shouldn't really be struggling with those questions. Did they match the desired response format? I think the answer here is – that's not quite right – is yes. She wants students to give her verbal response and so she's actually doing that. She could for example have students write things on a whiteboard for example and hold them up. She could've had students give her thumbs up and thumbs down but it's clear here, she wanted to have students write or speak out loud and she did that.

Did she maximize student involvement? I'm going to go here with no and the reason is that she only engages one student at a time and as a result, not all the students get the content that well. That's a big point we're going to come back to multiple times is that we want to make sure every student has multiple opportunities to practice and in this situation, only four or five students – really four students and Michael who is we're talking about the lesson have opportunities to practice and that is a concern. So we can see here the ways in which Miss M can improve and we're going to talk about some ways that specifically that we can do that so let's do it.

So you know the frameworks. I'm not highlighting the whole thing but as you recall in our process, at a certain point, we had to think about the adaptations we're going to make for students if they aren't responding adequately to the instruction. So remember the adaptation is something we're going to do after we notice that response hasn't been adequate by looking at student progress monitoring data and deciding we need to do something different. When we make an adaptation, we look at the taxonomy here of the different options that we have. As we've already said when we first introduced the taxonomy, one important element of taxonomy is to increase the use of explicit instruction principles because sometimes one of the challenges is in lesson that explicit instruction hasn't been used adequately to support students in mastering the content and so we might select in that case that as a way to improve instruction.

We can do this even if we are already working with students in a secondary prevention program which we should be when we have one which hopefully is most of the time. Sometimes programs don't always do a great job of providing those explicit instruction principles and we need to improve that. One thing that often happens in programs is they're not particularly explicit about the effective methods you might use to elicit responses. They'll just say, "Ask students this question" or "Give students this activity."

They don't say exactly how you should do it. What we're doing here is giving you ideas for how to use that part of explicit instruction, once you identify that that's going to be a high-power strategy from the taxonomy, it's going to be an adaptation that will increase student understanding within the secondary prevention program.

So let's stop here. Good. We've talked a lot. So let's stop here and let's do a quick stop and jot so you can think about this more deeply. So I'll ask a question and I want you to go ahead and well, guess what, stop and jot in your activity book. So why are the supporting practices that increase student engagement and high quality instructional interactions so important? I said a lot about that. I think you can be able to reflect on that nicely so go ahead and do that now in your workbook. I'll pause here. You pause the video and we'll come back and talk about it.

So let's come back and I'll give my answer to this question. Why are supporting practices so important? They're because very simply, they maximize what? Cognitive processing of the lesson content. If we use these supporting practices, we will engage students because they are going to stay with us and they are going to have opportunities to show us they understand the content. If we don't use these supporting practices adequately then we won't end up with engagement and we won't end up with maximum cognitive processing of the content. So maybe you said something like that and maybe you said something more elaborate and more clear and clever than I did but either way, I think hopefully you've had a chance to think about that content.

So let's now move to thinking about someone else's response to this question and this is from Dr. Anita Archer who, as I mentioned, you've already seen in the previous module show us how she does some of this work. I'm going to read to you the quotation she gives us about why she thinks supporting practices are so important. So she writes, "Even when you have crafted an exquisite well-structured lesson" and here what we mean is a lesson that has good modeling and practice. "Even when you have crafted an exquisite well-structured lesson or adopted a curriculum material with explicit lessons of high quality, it is still possible that some students may not be totally riveted to your every word or deeply processing the lesson content." Clearly and succinctly said here, "You've got to rivet those students because despite the fact that you put in lots of really clear examples and you put in lots of plan ex - that you had a correct explanation, you came up with very good plan examples and you designed great practice, if you don't use these practices, there won't be sufficient cognitive processing and students won't master the skills you were hoping that they will learn." So that's a nice summary for you of the reason that this work on supporting practices is so critical and helps you think about why we're going to start with these ways to elicit responses because they're going to be one way to keep students riveted on your every word.

So here are the kinds of things that you're going to experience in Module Six. There will be some quizzes. There will be some discussion boards. There will be some module reading, some journal entries, some partner work and of course the classroom application. I want to turn to that now to give you a picture of what that will be like. So let's go and look at this classroom application here. So it'll start with a journal entry for you to get your head around what you're going to do in an actual lesson. First, you want to look at the method of eliciting responses and choose two you'd like to use more often and then in the context of a recent lesson, think about lessons where you wish you had used these two ways to elicit responses rather than the ones that you did.

Then the exciting part is describing an upcoming lesson and how you're going to use these response formats, those two to change the lesson that you're going to teach. Then the application activity, big lightning bolt here for, "Let's do it" or explosion on the field. No, that's really about "Let's do it." Implement the lesson described that you did and you decide to describe down here and then with your coach, talk about the lesson as it went and decide how effective you were in eliciting responses and use the checklist to guide you in sort of determining whether or not that worked. So that's classroom application. I think this would be really exciting. I'm excited for you to do it.