

Madeline Hunter Lesson Plan Model

Or Drill That Skill - A model of repetition and direct instruction

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Background:

These are highly structured plans devised using the classic, repetitive lesson model developed by the late school principal and long-time educator Dr. Madeline Hunter. The traditional steps of the Hunter Model were designed for the explicit purpose of having students get it right the first time through. Erroneously some school administrators have used the model to analyze teaching performances. Please note that during her lifetime, Dr. Hunter was emphatic that it was never the intention that her model should be used as a teacher evaluation tool. Indeed, as a seasoned educator I am sure Hunter was aware that there are many great models of teaching other than her own, and that teaching is both an art and a science and therefore cannot be relegated to a simple formulaic 7 step checklist.

Principal Hunter developed her model using the science and knowledge of her time. I would classify this model as a standard behavioral technique of direct instruction, and modified operant conditioning, plus it has just the beginnings of information processing for recall. Hunter knew that the human brain lays down pathways as it learns. She wanted to assure that teachers gave learners little or no opportunity to “get it wrong” or lay down a neural pathways that were incorrect. Madeline Hunter did this because the research at the time indicated that relearning materials or skills took much more time than learning it right the first time.



Learning is increased by repetition, and as indicated earlier, learning new things lays down neural pathways so every time a skill is practiced the pathway is strengthened. Thus, if something is learned incorrectly or mislearned, the learner must first eradicate that which was wrong or wrongly done by relearning the material or skill correctly. Hunter’s model is designed to minimize mislearning events in the first place. A good example of the process of the tedium of unlearning would be a golf swing or stance that is incorrect, or a tennis swing that is ineffective. It takes twice as long to substitute good form for bad as ingrained physical responses tend to be deeply embedded due to frequent practice. Another common example might be when the

position of frequently used objects in our environments are changed. How often do we go back to the original spot in the drawer or cabinet where something used to be stored before we remember the objects' new position? Often it takes a long time for us to remember the new locations of common objects in their new places.

The Pros and Cons:

The Hunter Model has a number of advantages, and an equal number of disadvantages. For instance, it is a great drill and practice model. The model is an excellent one for content or processes that benefit from lots of repetition. In that regard it is more readily suited for lessons which emphasize the lower tier of Bloom's revised taxonomy – remembering (knowledge), understanding (comprehension), and applying (application).

However, without considerable thought, revision, and artful manipulation, the model's repetitive structure it is not appropriate for open-ended learning experiences, discovery learning sessions, or exploratory educational experiences, especially ones requiring divergent thinking skills, creative problem solving, or higher level thinking skills.

Too, **this model is also not particularly well suited for use with gifted students.** This population becomes easily bored with repetitious applications and steps, especially if they are not very challenging. Gifted students may also resent tightly, teacher-controlled learning settings where learning patterns are readily apparent from the very beginning. Instructors attempting to meet the learning needs of gifted/creative learners may wish to explore one of the many models better suited to this population - see [Models of teaching](#) for additional suggestions.

The 7 Classic Steps:

Within the main portions of the model – ***getting students ready to learn, instruction and checking for understanding, and independent practice*** - there are basically 7 steps and these are listed below. The steps in the beginning and ending portions can be varied and changed in sequence, the portion in the middle should not be changed.

Ordering the beginning portions really depends on what you are doing as an *anticipatory set* as to whether you state your objectives and standards first, or if you start out with the *anticipatory set* and then make a *statement of objectives and standards*. Some variations include a *review* as the first step or as something

incorporated into the anticipatory set. But users can also review, state objectives, and then have an anticipatory set as separate portions in the “**getting students ready**” portion.

The ending segment of the lesson also can be altered and depending on how controlling the instructor wants to be. Some folks believe that *independent practice* portion should be carefully monitored and then followed up with a closure activity or summary. Other educators like to offer *closure* for the formal lesson with an activity or ending discussion and then give *independent practice* as seat work or as homework.

Here are the different steps:

Getting students set to learn – The first two elements are interchangeable. As stated earlier a distinctive review is optional. However, typically at the beginning of the lesson the teacher may briefly review previous material if it is related to the current lesson.

1) Stated Objectives – Letting students know where they are going. Giving them a sense of where they are headed belays the feeling of being a hostage in a learning experience. This step gives students direction and lets know what they are supposed to accomplish by the end of the lesson.

2) Anticipatory Set – Getting students ready and/or excited to accept instruction. **(Please note that giving directions may be part of the procedural dialog of a lesson, but in and of themselves directions are NOT an Anticipatory Set !!!!!** The key word here is “**anticipatory**” and that means doing something that creates a sense of anticipation and expectancy in the students -- an activity, a game, a focused discussion, viewing a film or video clip, a field trip, or reflective exercise, etc.). This step prepares the learner to receive instruction much like operant conditioning.

Direct instruction and checking for understanding – This part involves quickly assessing whether students understand what has just been demonstrated or presented.

3) Input Modeling/Modeled Practice – Making sure students get it right the first time depends on the knowledge, or processes to be shown or demonstrated by an expert, or by someone who has mastered what is to be demonstrated or shown. In addition to

the instructor, prepared students can certainly model the focused skill, process or concept for peers. Instructors could also use a video for this portion.

4) Checking Understanding – Teachers watch students' body language, ask questions, observe responses and interactions in order to determine whether or not students are making sense of the material as it is being presented. This portion takes place as instruction is being given. This is a whole class exercise, one in which the instructor carefully monitors the actions of the learners to make sure they are duplicating the skill, process, procedure, or exercise correctly.

5) Guided Practice – Takes place after instruction has been modeled and then checked for understanding to make sure students have it right! The question here is can they replicate what you want them to do correctly? Students are given the opportunity to apply or practice what they have just learned and receive immediate feedback at individual levels.

Independent practice – These last two components can be interchanged.

6) Independent Practice - After students appear to understand the new material they are given the opportunity to further apply or practice using the new information. This may occur in class or as homework, but there should be a short period of time between instruction and practice and between practice and feedback. Essentially they are doing a learning task by themselves.

7) Closure - Bringing it all to a close - one more time. What did they accomplish? What did they learn? Go over it again. As you can see this model is highly repetitive -- it is really a drill model and as I indicated earlier not conducive to support a number of high level thinking or feeling functions without some serious alteration or modifications.

Other sites with valuable information or sample plans:

- ***Sample lesson plans using the Hunter Model** - You can find a [number of examples from my students' work](#)
- [One Ohio](#) – valuable information about the model – its development and uses.
- There are many, many other models of teaching other than the simple Hunter pattern, and you [can investigate them](#) here