

## Assignment 4 – Teaching I

Mark Rash

[markrash@vt.edu](mailto:markrash@vt.edu)

June 23, 2009

### Linking Exercises

#### ***How does this model of teaching presume that learning takes place?***

This method of teaching seems to presume that learning takes place by studying a teacher's example, understanding the example through in-class work, and modeling the example independently in homework. This seems to imply that learning is somewhat linear, in that an idea or concept is introduced and explained and that rehearsal causes the idea or concept to be absorbed; then the next idea or concept is introduced and the process continues. In other words, direct instruction seems to presume that learning takes place by receiving an explanation or definition of a topic from an expert (the teacher), reviewing examples of the topic, and practicing through homework activities.

### Fun and Learning I

Country	Capital
Algeria	Algiers
Angola	Luanda
Benin	Porto-Novo
Botswana	Gaborone
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou
Burundi	Bujumbura
Cameroon	Yaounde
Cape Verde	Praia
Central African Rep	Bangui
Chad	N'Djamena
Comoros	Moroni
Congo	Brazzaville
Congo (Dem Rep)	Kinshasa
Cote d'Ivoire	Yamoussoukr
Djibouti	Djibouti
Egypt	Cairo
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo
Eritrea	Asmara
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa
Gabon	Libreville
Gambia	Banjul

Country	Capital
Ghana	Accra
Guinea Bissau	Bissau
Guinea	Conakry
Kenya	Nairobi
Lesotho	Maseru
Liberia	Monrovia
Libya	Tripoli
Madagascar	Antananarivo
Malawi	Lilongwe
Mali	Bamko
Mauritania	Nouakchott
Mauritius	Port Louis
Morocco	Rabat
Mozambique	Maputo
Namibia	Windhoek
Niger	Niamey
Nigeria	Abuja
Rwanda	Kigali
Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome
Senegal	Dakar
Seychelles	Victoria
Sierra Leone	Freetown
Somalia	Mogadishu
South Africa	Cape Town & Pretoria
Sudan	Khartoum
Swaziland	Mbabana
Tanzania	Dodoma
Togo	Lome
Tunisia	Tunis
Uganda	Kampala
Western Sahara	El-Aaiun
Zambia	Lusaka
Zimbabwe	Harare

***Use one of the techniques described in your book on pages 186-189 to help you memorize this list for about 15 minutes. Choose a technique other than the "paired associate" strategy. Describe what you did in a few sentences.***

None of the methods described on pages 186-189 seem to be applicable when memorizing a list of information, so I attempted to organize the information in a logical way to hopefully make it a bit more meaningful and easier to remember (Slavin, 2009, p.190), which is reflected in the alphabetical order of the list. This did not help with connecting the list to information I already know, however, because the variance in word structures and spellings as opposed to English words made it difficult to remember the names, as they did not fit into an established schema. Furthermore, there were far too many items to use an initial-letter strategy.

***How well did the technique work? If your goal was more meaningful instead of rote learning about these countries, how would you approach teaching this material? Name one approach you might have used to make this task more meaningful.***

Memorizing these countries and capitals seems to be a form of free-recall learning in which the order of the names is irrelevant (Slavin, 2009, p.179). Neither looking at the countries and capitals directly on the map, nor alphabetizing them on paper made the list any easier to remember, as it did not fit into any established schema of names and spelling conventions. Logically organizing the names did not help with memorization because, other than the few countries and capitals I already knew, there was no meaningful connection to prior knowledge.

If my goal was more meaningful, I would include interesting connections about the different characteristics of each country, wherever possible. Or, perhaps to make the lesson a bit more interesting, I would try to connect the list with current or past events in some of the areas, explaining that the learners would then be able to understand what part of the world is being discussed in such events or news stories. This would move beyond memorization of a list and make connections that the learners could apply when they hear about events in this area. Certainly this would not be possible for every single country in Africa, but it would provide an opportunity to convert some of them from inert knowledge, which has limited meaning or application (Slavin, 2009, p.181), to a somewhat more meaningful context that could allow the learners to speak intelligently about this part of the world.

A lesson involving memorization of these countries and capitals in and of itself would be ineffective. Perhaps a prerequisite of information about Africa that leads into this lesson would be more helpful and would create a better framework for memorizing the countries and capitals. Or, combining the goal of memorizing the countries and capitals with the goal of learning where they are on the map would add a bit more meaning to this task.

***Activating students' memories so you can hook new information to old is the underlying idea behind advance organizers, analogies, and elaboration. Is that an appropriate technique to use for the rote memory task assigned to you? Why or why not?***

Advance organizers are used to orient learners to new material before class activities or

studying begins (Slavin, 2009, p.188). Analogies are images, narratives, or concepts that help connect new information to something students already understand, and elaboration is the process by which this connection is made (Slavin, 2009, p.189). These are very effective methods of helping students learn new information; however, they are not applicable to this particular task of rote memorization, as no prior lesson has been taught to establish a framework to which this new information can be tied. Additionally, analogies and elaboration generally apply to concepts or processes, whereas this task concentrated on rote memorization without application.

## Fun and Learning II

I observed a corporate training class made up of adult learners and a business trainer. The session was part of a course on providing customer service to small market customers.

The following table illustrates the findings of my observation:

Observation Interval	Classroom Events	Instructor Behaviors
1	H, M	Pv, Pr
2	T	V, Pr
3	E	N
4	E	V
5	E	V
6	E	Pr
7	E	Pv
8	E	N
9	E	V
10	E	Pr, Pv
11	E	Pr
12	E	Pv
13	T	Pv, N, Pr
14	T, M	N
15	E	Pv, V
16	E	N
17	E	Pr
18	M	Pr
19	E	N
20	M, T	N
21	E	V, Pr
22	E	Pv
23	E	N
24	E	N
25	E	Pr
26	E	Pr
27	M	N
28	T	Pv

Observation Interval	Classroom Events	Instructor Behaviors
29	E	Pr
30	H	V
31	T	Pv
32	E	Pr
33	E	Pv, Pr
34	M, E	N
35	E	N
36	E	Pr
37	E	Pr
38	E	Pr
39	E	Pv, N
40	M, E	N
41	M	Pv, Pr
42	T	N
43	E	Pv, Pr
44	M	N
45	T	V

**1. When you look at your data, would you say that the teacher maximized the students' engaged time?**

Out of the 45 minute observation period, 31 minutes were devoted to engaged time. I would say the trainer maximized the students' engaged time, since this reflects about 69% of the allocated time, or the time during which learners are provided the opportunity to learn (Slavin, 2009, p.331). This is quite a bit better than the average engaged time of 60% in the schools studied in Maryland, especially considering the time in Maryland was likely an overestimate (Slavin, 2009, pp. 330-331). Perhaps better managing transitions would have driven the engaged time even higher.

**2. When you look at your data, would you say that the teacher used the principle of least intervention to handle routine misbehavior in children (or loss of attentiveness in adults)? Do you think this type of instrument is a good evaluation tool for your setting?**

Loss of attentiveness was not a big problem during the observation period; however the instructor did seem to apply the principle of least intervention by focusing on praise and prevention. Praise, which accounted for about 42% of the total instructor behaviors, is actually fourth in the steps of least prevention, but because this observation session included a review of previous materials, a great deal of the time involved praising for answers and participation. Outside of this, however, the instructor focused 35% of her behaviors on non-verbal cues and 29% on prevention, both of which are priority areas for applying the principle of least intervention (Slavin, 2009, p.342). Some of the areas of prevention included varying the activity types, maintaining enthusiasm and humor,

and keeping the topic interesting. Examples of nonverbal cues included moving about the room to ensure everyone was engaged and understanding the topic at hand.

I think that this is a good instrument for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom time in a corporate setting because it brings to light exactly what happens during training sessions. It raises an awareness of how quickly engaged time is affected when even just a few moments are spent on other activities from time to time. When using this in a business setting, it would be important to take into account the limitations discussed in the answer to question 4 of this section.

**3. *If you were a principal of a school or an evaluator, in what ways could this type of observation protocol help you know how your teachers were performing?***

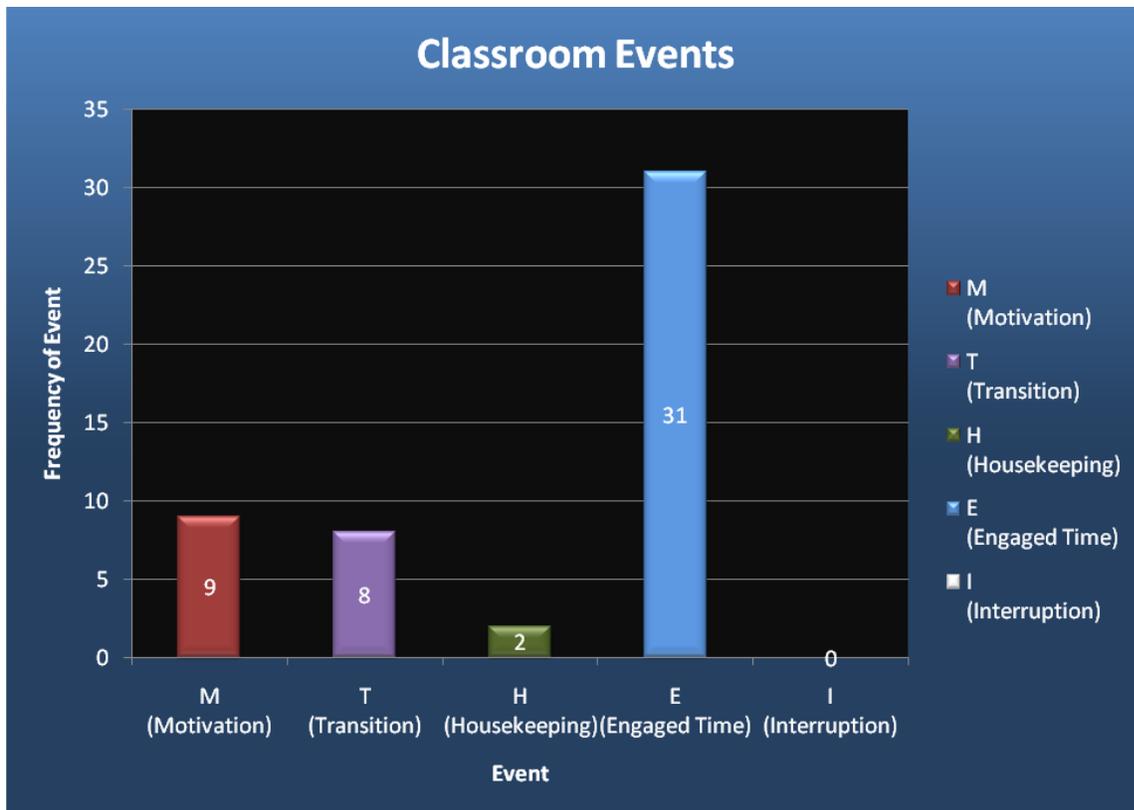
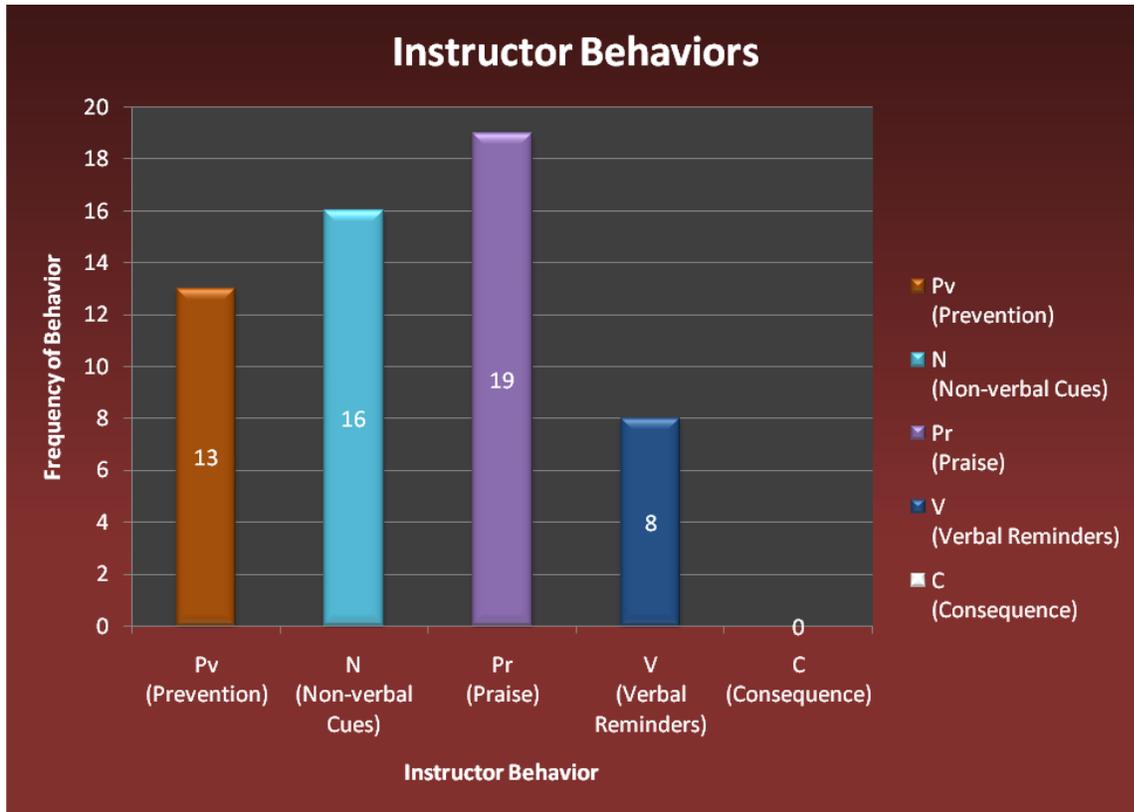
This type of observation could be helpful in seeing how effectively teachers are using allocated time. It could be a helpful tool in determining if teachers are following the principle of least intervention so that instructional time is not lost and instructional value is not diminished due to dealing with behavior problems or other classroom issues in such a manner that all students are impacted. As a principal or evaluator, I must also have an understanding of the key concepts of classroom management so that I know what should be happening during class time and practical ways of using that time to deliver effective instruction.

**4. *In what ways is it not helpful? What limitations does observation like this have? (Think about what arguments you would use to defend yourself if you were the teacher and you didn't think the data accurately represented what you do in class.)***

It is possible that an observation system like this could cause the instructor and/or students to act differently during the observation than they would otherwise, based on Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which states that studying something could change what is being studied (Slavin, 2009, p.21). The fact that the instructor is being observed and the learners are being studied could possibly have an impact on the behavior of either or both (Slavin, 2009, p.21). The observer could also develop fatigue during the observation process, which could negatively impact the results.

Additionally, a short observation such as this one may not be a true representation of the teacher's complete work. Atypical problems or situations could arise during the session and give a different impression than could be seen if it were possible to observe the teacher's work as a whole. The instructor or students themselves could be having a bad day. Additionally, the observer could interpret behaviors and classroom events differently, especially if he or she does not have a full understanding of the protocol or the codes used to classify events and behaviors.

## Art Room



## Journaling and Discussion

***Which one or ones do you like the most (or use the most if you are already a classroom teacher)?***

Since I work with adults in a business setting, I never need to focus on behavior management but rather on motivational strategies. One of my favorite motivational strategies is attempting to increase the intrinsic incentive, or an activity or other component of the lesson that people enjoy and, thus, find motivating (Slavin, 2009, p.312). As an instructional designer, this is a fun time to try to be creative in designing solutions that will meet the learning and business objectives while engaging and motivating the learners. I also like to try to build a strong case for the importance of the material being covered in the lesson and how the concepts can benefit the learners personally, which help to arouse interest and enhance intrinsic motivation (Slavin, 2009, p.314). Finally, wherever possible, I like to use a variety of presentation modes and activities to keep training sessions interesting and to motivate learners to succeed by learning the information and applying it on the job (Slavin, 2009, p.315).

***What model of learning (behaviorist or constructivist) do your favorite behavior management strategies align with? Describe the links.***

My favorite strategies of increasing the intrinsic incentive and enhancing intrinsic motivation seem to align with behavioral models of learning, since these strategies provide the opportunity to include intrinsic reinforcers, or behaviors that people tend to enjoy for their own sake without any other kind of reward (Slavin, 2009, p.134). My other favorite strategy involving varying the presentation modes and activities also seems to align with the behaviorist model of learning in that it seeks to vary behaviors and expectations with the intent of capturing and maintaining learner interests and motivating them to learn in such a way that they can apply the information after training has ended. Additionally, nearly all of the learning objectives in our corporate training environment either directly or indirectly deal with behavior (e.g. the proper procedure for handling customer service inquiries, including how to interact with customers) and therefore, behavioral approaches to increasing motivation fit nicely into the culture and learning environment.

***Name three aspects of motivation that your favorite behavior management strategies affect. Are the motivational effects of this management style all positive?***

Again, my focus is on motivational strategies rather than behavior management since I deal solely with adult learners; however, it is still important to understand behavior management strategies and their motivational implications (and I find they have intrinsic incentive value for me!). Prevention is a behavior management strategy that also relates to the motivational strategies I have listed above. Prevention is the ideal solution when students are bored, frustrated, or tired and misbehave as a result, or when adults lack motivation to learn for the same reasons (Slavin, 2009, p.347). One way of using prevention is to make the information

meaningful and interesting in and of itself (Slavin, 200, p.342), which affects the **intrinsic, or inward, aspect of motivation** by capturing the learner's attention (Slavin, 2009, p.314). Prevention also involves establishing clear class rules and expectations (Slavin, 2009, p.343), which affect the **extrinsic, or outward, aspect of motivation** by helping students know what they must do, how their learning will be evaluated, and the consequences of their success or failure (Slavin, 2009, p.316). Prevention can also involve preparing learners to work independently (Slavin, 2009, p.343), which could eventually be a source of **motivation for self-regulated learning** (Slavin, 2009, p.303), or knowing and applying effective learning strategies (Slavin, 2009, p.236). The motivational effects of prevention are all positive because the purpose is to prevent negative behaviors from occurring in the first place, which helps maintain a positive learning environment.

***Make at least one contribution to the threaded discussion.***

*I added my thread to the discussion board and will post responses to other students once other posts are made.*

## Review

***Why are behavior management, learning theories, and motivation together?***

The intentional teacher must understand how individuals and groups are motivated and how they learn and behave in order to create a positive learning environment consisting of positive social interactions, self-motivation, and active learning engagement (Slavin, 2009, p.22). Motivation is critical because all students are motivated to do something, although the direction and result of that motivation can vary greatly (Slavin, 2009, p.297). Understanding the various ways people are motivated can help the intentional teacher use strategies to increase that motivation. Learning theories help uncover the connection between how learners are motivated and how they learn so that the intentional teacher can use approaches that positively influence both. Finally, behavior management helps the intentional teacher make decisions that help students behave in ways that are conducive to an effective, positive learning environment for all students.

In other words, these three components are integral. Without learning theories, we would lack an understanding of how students learn. Without an understanding of motivation, we would be unable to determine what motivates people to learn and, more specifically, what the intentional teacher can do to increase the level of motivation. Finally, without an understanding of proper behavior management, we could make decisions or take actions that aggravate a behavior problem or create a negative learning environment where motivation and learning decrease.

***Is direct instruction the best or only way to teach a lesson?***

Direct instruction is not necessarily the best - and is certainly not the only - way to teach a lesson, as social learning and discovery approaches can also be used to enable learners to independently or collectively discover conceptual changes or open-ended objectives (Slavin, 2009, p.199). Direct instruction seems to be most effective when used to teach a well-defined set of information or skills that must be mastered by all learners (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 2003, as cited in Slavin, 2009, p.199). Direct instruction is likely one of the most commonly used methods of delivering instruction and it allows for a well-structured, engaging lesson that makes effective use of class time. Direct instruction has even been found effective in situations where discovery methods may be assumed to have a greater impact (Slavin, 2009, p.199). Fortunately, direct instruction can be made up of much more than a lecture from an instructor, providing the opportunity for a great deal of variation in activities and materials that engage the learner while retaining a direct approach.

References

Slavin, R. E. (2009). In J. W. Johnston (Ed.), *Educational psychology: theory and practice*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.