



## How To Be A Great Teacher Through Detailed Modeling

For classroom management-related instruction, the most effective teachers rely on modeling more than any other strategy.

Because *showing* students what you expect is infinitely more powerful, more meaningful, and more memorable than voice instruction will ever be – by a long shot.

Do it well and the results can be stunning, like having a whole new class.

But modeling is also fraught with danger. Done incorrectly, it can result in confusion, poor execution of routines and procedures, and bundles of lost time.

Follow the guidelines below, however, and you'll have your students doing whatever you ask of them with skill and confidence.

Making you a great teacher.

### **Model every routine.**

Anything and everything your students do repeatedly – lining up for lunch, **turning in homework**, working in small groups – should be modeled and standardized into a routine. Routines are key to effective

classroom management. They save gobs of time, improve behavior dramatically, and keep your students focused on learning.

### **Know what you want.**

For modeling to be effective, you must know exactly what you want from your students. Before starting any modeling session, create in your mind's eye the perfect scenario for collecting science materials, for example, or using learning centers. You may even want to do a walk through by yourself before school. A clear picture translates to successful modeling.

### **Be one of them.**

When you model, don't stand in the front of your classroom trying to mimic what you want your students to do. Instead, show them what you expect by actually doing it – as if you're one of them. Borrow a desk or sit in a table group and go through the precise steps you want your students to take. Be sure to include proper behaviors, attitudes, and conduct along the way.

### **Make it highly detailed.**

Most teachers don't break down their modeling enough. They leave gaps in their instruction that lead to confusion and indecisiveness. Effective modeling must be highly detailed. Every bridge and transition from one small step to the next must be expressly, richly, modeled. Think in terms of creating a visual map for your students, one that winds seamlessly from start to finish.

### **Add insignificant details.**

Not only do you need to be highly detailed, but to be most effective you must add *extra* details. These extra details, which can be as simple and insignificant as tapping a poster on the way into the classroom or as silly as dancing a jig after turning in work, act as anchors along the memory map you're constructing for your students. With a little creativity, these details can also be a lot of fun.

### **Speak sparingly.**

Although it's smart to accompany your modeling with verbal instruction, it's best **not to be overly explanatory**. Your physical movements and actions should do most of the talking for you. Instructions only support your modeling. Your students will indeed hear your words, but it's their imaginations – picturing themselves in your shoes – that will give them perfect recall.

### **Make it longer.**

Most teachers model only one thing at a time – like how to line up before school – but students remember best when you include several segments, linking them together into one long routine – how to line up before school, how to walk into class, how to put away backpacks, and how to turn in homework. The *more* you ask them to do, within reason, the better they'll do.

### **Have them follow you.**

When you model in this highly detailed, ultra-realistic way, you'll find yourself sitting at a student's desk, wearing a backpack, choosing a library book, **sitting in time-out**, and even reading silently. Have your students follow you as you model these activities and procedures. In other words, they must be gathered around and moving with you as you show them how to do this or perform that.

### **Utilize helpers.**

You may have to choose students to model or role-play alongside you. For example, if you're showing your students how to work in literature circle groups, you'll want to model it at a table with several students acting as group members. Another common modeling situation may find you sitting at a student's desk while another student plays the role of the teacher.

### **Let them practice.**

After finishing your modeling session, and after taking questions, give **your "Go" signal** and let your students practice whatever it is you modeled. You can have just one student or one group of students do it first if you wish, but before performing "live," your whole class must prove they can do it correctly. Remember, **repetition isn't a bad word**.

### **Observe and verify.**

Good teachers do a lot of observing — because whenever you ask something of your students, you must verify they do it correctly. Watch closely as they go through the steps, the procedures, the routines — everything you've

taught and modeled for them. And if ever they fail to give you what you want, stop them in their tracks and send them back to do it again.

### **Ask A Lot To Get A Lot**

Asking your students for the moon and then modeling for them exactly – precisely – how to get it, is a recipe for not only **excellent classroom management**, but for great teaching as well.

*Show* them.

Model for them what you want. Give them the tools they need to be successful, and then walk them step-by-step through how to use them.

Be the great teacher your students want to follow.

And follow you they will.