INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

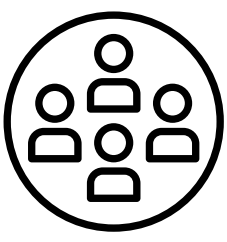
CONCEPT ATTAINMENT

Teaching central concepts that serve as bedrocks for future learning.

STEP 1: Analyze YES/NO Examples

PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLE EXAMPLES

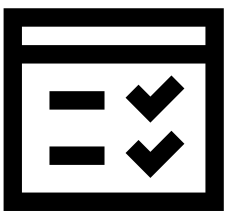
The instructor presents examples that represent the concept (YES) and examples that do not represent the concept (NO). When presented with multiple and varied examples, students can define with increasing certainty the essential attributes of a concept.



STEP 2: Group the Examples into Conceptual Categories

PRINCIPLE OF CONCEPT CLARITY

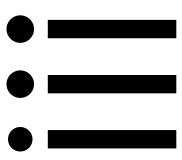
Students group the examples into initial categories by analyzing what the examples have in common and how the examples differ. To learn the essential attributes of a concept, students need to distinguish between examples and non-examples.



STEP 3: Test the Categories Against Further Examples

PRINCIPLE OF CONCEPT CLARITY

Students use their initial categories to test additional examples. This step helps students refine the attributes associated with the hypothesized concept.



STEP 4: Generate a Set of Critical Attributes

PRINCIPLE OF CONCEPT COMPETENCE

As a class, a final list of critical attributes is established that defines the concept they are learning. A concept is learned when students can list essential attributes of the concept and then use those attributes to distinguish between examples and non-examples.

STEP 5: Apply the Concept

PRINCIPLE OF EXERCISE & ELABORATION

Students apply their understanding of a concept by creating a project or completing a task. Giving students opportunities to practice new information keeps working memory active and its experiences varied, thereby facilitating permanent memories.

SILVER, H. F., STRONG, R. W., & PERINI, M. J. (2007). THE STRATEGIC TEACHER: SELECTING THE RIGHT RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGY FOR EVERY LESSON. THOUGHTFUL EDUCATION PRESS.