

Interactive Modeling

Interactive Modeling is a straightforward, quickly paced, seven-step process that's effective for teaching children any academic or social skill, routine, or procedure that you want them to do in a specific way (whether for safety, efficiency, or other reasons). Interactive Modeling can be used by any adult anywhere at any time of year.

How does Interactive Modeling differ from traditional modeling?

In traditional modeling, the adult shows children how to do a skill, routine, or procedure, tells them what to notice, and expects that they will learn it immediately. Interactive Modeling also shows children how to do skills, routines, or procedures, but it goes well beyond that basic step. Children also:

- Learn exactly why the skill, routine, or procedure is important to their learning and the respectful, smooth functioning of the classroom.
- Are asked what they noticed about the adult's modeling (rather than told what to notice).
- Practice the routine or procedure right away.
- Receive immediate feedback and coaching from the adult while they practice.

Why is Interactive Modeling more effective than traditional modeling?

The distinctive steps of Interactive Modeling incorporate key elements of effective teaching: modeling positive behaviors, engaging students in active learning, and immediately assessing their understanding. Research shows that when we teach in this way, children achieve greater, faster, and longer-lasting success in meeting expectations and mastering skills.

With Interactive Modeling, children create clear, positive mental images of what is expected of them. They do the noticing themselves, which builds up their powers of observation and their analysis and communication skills. In addition, because they get immediate practice, they gain quicker expertise and stronger mastery of the procedure or skill being taught.

What are the seven steps of Interactive Modeling?

1. Briefly state what you will model, and why.
2. Model the behavior exactly as you expect the child to do it (the right way, not the wrong way, and without describing what you're doing unless you need to "show" a thinking process).
3. Ask the child what he/she notices.
4. Have the child model the same way you did.
5. Again, ask the child what he/she noticed they were doing.
6. If you have other children, have them model while you observe and coach them.
7. Provide feedback, naming specific, positive actions you notice and redirecting respectfully but clearly when the child(ren) go off track.

Interactive Modeling Planning Sheet

1. Say what you will model and why. (One or two sentences)
2. Demonstrate the behavior. (What will you do?)
3. Ask the child what he/she notices about the behavior demonstrated? (What do you want to be sure the child understands?)
4. Ask the child to demonstrate the same behavior. (How will you set this up? What will you say?)
5. Repeat step three. (What questions will you ask? What behavior do you want to highlight?)
6. Have the child practice. (What will help prepare him/her to use this behavior when he/she should?)
7. Provide specific feedback. (What will you reinforce? How will the child know your expectations?)