

## **Focused teaching**

Rules and behaviours need to be explicitly taught, noting that students take time to learn routines. Therefore, it is crucial that routines are established and maintained. Having effective routines reduces students' cognitive load, leaving their working memory free to concentrate on learning. This allows teachers to focus on the critical content of the lesson and increase pace. Using predictable and repeatable cues, teachers can gain students' attention prior to commencement of learning and sustain students' engagement throughout the lesson.

Teaching at Darling Point Special School also uses a range of approaches with the '**I do** – teacher: explain, model, demonstrate, **We do** – guided practice, **You do** – independent or supported practice sequence' embedded in practice.

The school follows agreed sequences of explicit teaching of the school's values and rules paired with a range of whole-school activities such as awards, student of the week, reading sessions that focus on values and behaviours, and the use of icons including Kimochis and super-hero characters, to assist students to know and follow the rules and required behaviours.

The following points serve as reminders for teaching teams to achieve positive outcomes through explicit teaching.

- Open the lesson
  - Gain 100% student attention
  - Establish the learning intention
  - Explain success criteria
  - Discuss why the target knowledge or skill is relevant for each student
  - Review prerequisite skills or knowledge.
- The lesson – start with the end in mind, designing the activities to teach how to successfully complete the independent task.
  - I do – teach, explain, model, demonstrate
    - Modelling is like thinking aloud and sharing thinking processes, it revealing step-by-step the exact thinking processes for the students to use
  - We do – guided practice
    - Guiding and monitoring students as they practice the steps, facts and processes in multiple examples, stopping to verify the students are doing the task correctly, and gradually releasing responsibility to the students so they are working with increasing independence on each example; remember that a student needs to be successful at 80% of trials before independent practice begins. This is so students do not become frustrated or end up learning incorrect information or skills.
  - You do – independent, or as independent as possible, practice.
    - Make sure that the knowledge or skill taught in the 'I do' and 'We do' sections is the same as in the 'You do' section; provide constructive and developmental feedback while the students are practicing the knowledge or skill; remember to differentiate the tasks to match each student's level and capability, providing AAC, seating, sensory and behavioural supports as needed for success;.
- Closing the lesson
  - Revisit what has been learnt
  - Summarise the main points, steps
  - Reflect on successes achieved and celebrate with each student
  - Explain and share how the new knowledge, concept or skill can be used by the students.