

Protocol Toolkit:

Examples and Non-Examples

The strategies below are useful tips for novice teachers who are looking for assistance in developing models and unpacking deep structures that underpin to-be-remembered content.



Google It

This may seem basic, but Google is a great place to start! No teacher knows every concept they teach deeply at first, so even if novices feel confident, encourage them to take the time to do internet research from credible sites.

Prompts for novice teachers: What examples or non-examples do you see the articles using that you might use? What core features in the definition are most essential to the concept?



Compare Curricula

If novices have access to multiple curricula for their grade level, ask them to compare how each teaches about the concept.

Prompts for novice teachers: What definition do they use? What examples and non-examples do they use to explain? Do they use prompts about examples that you might use in your lesson?



Consult Colleagues

If a fellow teacher, coach, or mentor has taught the concept before, encourage novices to ask them about their definition and the sources they used for the concept. Talking with a colleague is especially helpful for identifying surface features that distract students.

Questions novices can ask colleagues: What misconceptions did their students grapple with that it could be helpful to know about? What examples or non-examples would help them see why their misconception is incorrect?



Do Your Students' Work

If novices ask students to complete a task or answer a question, ask novices to do that work themselves first.

Benefits for novice teachers: Completing the same instructional tasks asked of students helps novices to anticipate potential misconceptions and, alongside scripting exemplar responses, helps them to know exactly the answers to which they will guide their students. It also helps novices solidify their own understanding of the concept they're teaching.

Key Takeaway

These strategies for determining the deep structure of a new concept will impact a novice teacher's ability to design strong examples and non-examples.

