


Worked Examples Effects

Theory

The worked examples effect was first introduced in 1985¹⁾ suggesting positive effects of providing a learner with an example of the problem solution before requiring him to solve one on his own.

This suggestion is contrary to many [constructivist discovery learning](#) methods which suggest a learner should try to solve the problem by himself. [Cognitive load theory](#) on the other hand suggests that searching for the problem solution places unnecessary load on the learner's mind preventing him from learning. A worked example will remove the load of searching for a solution and enable easier acquisition of basic steps leading to the solution.

Practice

A worked example of the quadratic equation formula. Image borrowed and edited from: <http://www.purplemath.com/modules/solvquad6.htm>. Click on the picture to follow the link.

Learners should be presented with a worked example of the procedure they're expected to learn prior to trying to solving a problem which requires that procedure. For example, when teaching learners the formula for calculating roots of a quadratic formula, learners should first be provided with a worked example of using the formula, and then try to solve a problem on their own.

Research status

1)

[Sweller, John, and Graham Cooper. The Use of Worked Examples as a Substitute for Problem Solving in Learning Algebra. Cognition and Instruction 2: 59-89, 1985.](#)

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