

## HLP 12: Systematically Design Instruction Toward Learning Goals



# High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities

The systematic design of instruction towards a learning goal is an important high-leverage practice because it helps guide teachers and other professionals to think about the nuance of instruction needed to serve students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are more likely to achieve meaningful learning gains when the order, structure, and specificity of instruction is determined and adapted according to student needs. Before systematic instruction can be designed and delivered, effective professionals work in collaboration with colleagues (HLP 1) and families (HLP 3) and use data to make important decisions in teams (HLPs 2, 4, 6). In addition, core elements of this HLP (see guide below) are closely aligned with those presented in HLP 16 (Use explicit instruction), and HLP 11 (Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals).

This resource is intended to support school leaders looking to embed the HLPs in professional development, implementation, teacher observation and feedback efforts at their school site.

The major source for content within this resource is the chapter by Moira Konrad, Terri Hessler, Sheila Alber-Morgan, Carrie A. Davenport, and Maria R. Helton in *High-Leverage Practices in the Inclusive Classroom*; the book *High-Leverage Practices in Special Education: The Final Report of the HLP Writing Team*, and content on [www.highleveragepractices.org](http://www.highleveragepractices.org).

### Teachers Who Effectively Systematically Design Instruction Toward Learning Goals

- Translate the identified and prioritized long- and short-term learning goals into individual lesson learning targets that are clear, measurable, ambitious, attainable, and actionable.
- Use the ACCOMPLISH Model to develop specific learning targets and help students reach and exceed goals:
  - **Antecedent Condition:** Teachers should be clear about exactly where and how skills and knowledge will be measured within broad settings and individual lessons. *“When given a 2nd grade reading passage within language-arts block students will read orally...”*
  - **Conspicuous Behavior:** Teachers should develop goals that clearly define what the student will do to demonstrate learning. *“Students will read aloud with errors and correct pronunciations recorded ... and then answer literal comprehension questions...”*
  - **Clear Criteria:** Teachers should have clear criteria to determine the extent to which the student has achieved the goal. *“Students will read 87 words per minute with less than 5 errors... and answer 8/10 questions with accuracy.”*
  - **Observable:** Goals and objectives set by teachers should be clearly observable. *“The student will read aloud at the rate of 90 words per minute with less than 5 errors, and answer questions with 80% accuracy.”*
  - **Measurable:** Goals and objectives set by teachers should be clearly measurable. *“You read 87 words in a minute with only 3 errors, and answered 8/10 of the questions!”*
  - **Positive:** Goals and objectives should be positively stated. *“Given a specific task during cooperative learning group time students will take turns speaking and giving answers.”*
  - **Linked to the General Curriculum:** Goals should be linked to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. *“Given two attempts reading an expository third grade passage each session, students will improve their first read fluency by 100% over five weeks.”*
  - **Individualized:** Goals and objectives should be derived from students’ IEPs and be in service of their individualized needs. *“Given feedback on performance on a spelling pretest, students will write the weekly words they spelled incorrectly three times each.”*
  - **Socially Valid:** There should be a clear need for the goals and objectives that are set. *“When presented with a reading passage*
- *with 10 highlighted science terms, students will refer to a list of defined morphemes and write the definitions of the terms with 80% accuracy.”*
- **High-Reaching:** To the extent possible, goals and objectives should be ambitious for the student, again mediated by their individualized needs. *“Given 20 multiplication facts, students will write the products within 60 seconds with 90% accuracy.”*
- Work with students toward accomplishing set goals by systematically sequencing instruction:
  - Teach big ideas and main ideas before detail;
  - Teach according to a logical hierarchy: less complex skills before more complex ones; prerequisites before requisites; and concrete information before abstract information;
  - Separately teach skills and concepts that are similar before requiring discrimination; and
  - Teach commonly encountered content before lower-frequency content.
- Strategically design instruction in a way that helps students make connections within the appropriate sequencing of content and skills, and follow these six principles of effective instruction:
  - Relate new information to the big ideas for that content area/course;
  - Incorporate conspicuous strategies that are explicit and unambiguous to help students make connections back to big ideas;
  - Provide mediated scaffolding by using a model-lead-test sequence (e.g., my turn, our turn, your turn) until the student can do the skill independently;
  - Prime student background knowledge by guiding students to identify information they already know through probing questions and discussion;
  - Combine new information with what the student already knows to produce a higher-order skill by strategically integrating new content; and
  - Use judicious review, carefully designing instruction to help students maintain skills and knowledge they have learned so they can continue building upon it and enhance future learning.
- Provide students with tools to help them organize content with visual displays (e.g., graphic organizers).
- Use ongoing data collection to monitor students’ progress and determine changes to instruction that might yield better outcomes, as needed.

## Tips for School Leaders to Support Teachers

- Ensure educators have a strong repertoire of explicit and other instructional strategies needed to systematically design instruction.
- Evaluate the extent to which educators have needed practices and skills in their repertoire, and provide instruction, professional development, and/or coaching on areas of need.
- Provide instruction, professional development and/or coaching to teach educators about writing high quality learning targets for students, using the ACCOMPLISH model as a guide.
- Evaluate goals to ensure they meet appropriate benchmarks for quality and are tied to standards and IEP needs.
- Provide feedback to teachers on the quality, specificity, and accountability of established goals and support revisions as needed.
- Ensure educators have a strong plan for evaluating the extent to which students are meeting various goals, providing them with additional supports for data collection/management as needed.

## Questions to Prompt Discussion, Self-Reflection, and Observer Feedback

- How does the **ACCOMPLISH** model support the development of clear and specific learning goals?
- What does it mean to “systematically” design instruction? Why is it critical to do this?
- In what other ways can you support students in reaching specific learning targets?
- Why is it helpful to consistently link new content back to “big ideas” of a content area/course?

## References & Additional Resources

### Online Resources

#### [High-Leverage Practices: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders](#)

A downloadable online guide providing school leaders, including administrators, principals, mentors and coaches, with practical tools for engaging staff members in learning about how high-leverage practices can enhance student learning in the school and district.

### Journal Articles

Riccomini, P. J., Morano, S., & Hughes, C. A. (2017). Big ideas in special education: Specially designed instruction, high-leverage practices, explicit instruction, and intensive instruction. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 50(1), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059917724412>