



Specially Designed Instruction and High-Leverage Practices

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

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PRESENTED BY

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Intended Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Identify foundational resources provided by the Maryland State Department of Education to support students with disabilities attending nonpublic schools.
- Define specially designed instruction and identify the student population for which it is used.
- Name and define the three phases of designing specially designed instruction for students.
- Describe how to utilize high-leverage practices in my classroom/school.
- Review and analyze multiple sources of student data to plan specially designed instruction.



Presentation Outline

1. MSDE Foundational Resources
2. Introduction to Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
3. Co-Development, Co-Implementation, and Co-Evaluation
4. High-Leverage Practices
5. Case Studies

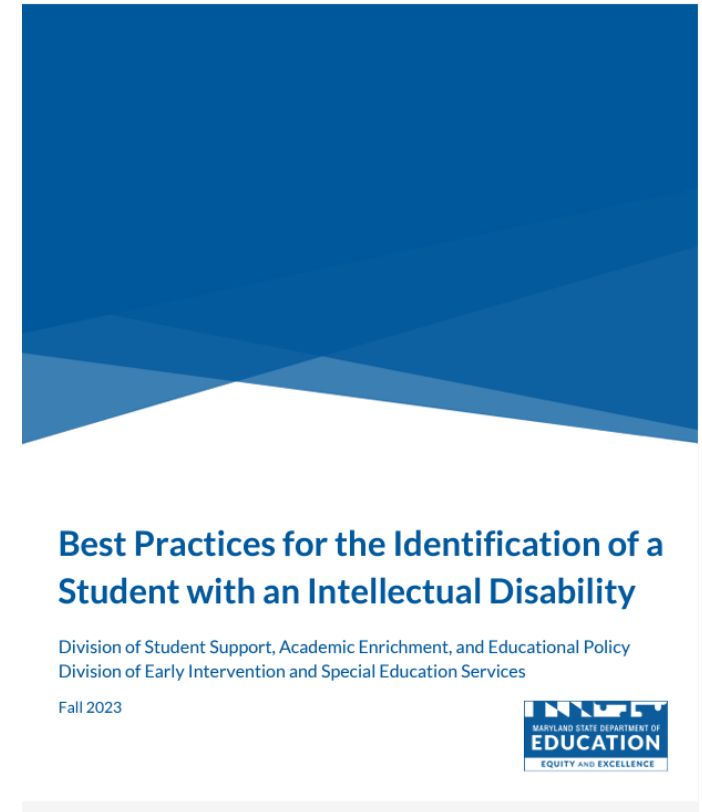


MSDE Foundational Resources

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MSDE Intellectual Disability Guidance

- Guidance released in Fall 2023
- Includes an Intellectual Disability Checklist to be used at all eligibility meetings considering an eligibility category of Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Provides guidance on processes and procedures for assessment and eligibility for students with Intellectual Disabilities
- [ID checklist](#) available in a variety of languages



MSDE Alternate Framework Guidance

- Guidance and tool released in Fall 2023
- Includes an updated Appendix A tool for teams to use when considering a student for participation in the Alternate Framework
- Provides considerations for multilingual learners (ML) and communicative competence
- Includes an emphasis on Adaptive skills
- [Appendix A](#) available in a variety of languages
- Canvas training can be accessed at: <https://msde.instructure.com/courses/995>



Guidance for IEP Teams Working with Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Assessment and Eligibility for the Alternate Framework

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

Fall 2023



Dynamic Learning Maps – Essential Elements

- [Essential Elements for ELA](#): Maryland’s alternate achievement standards for English Language Arts for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- [Essential Elements for Math](#): Maryland’s alternate achievement standards for Math for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- [Essential Elements for Science](#): Maryland’s alternate achievement standards for science for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



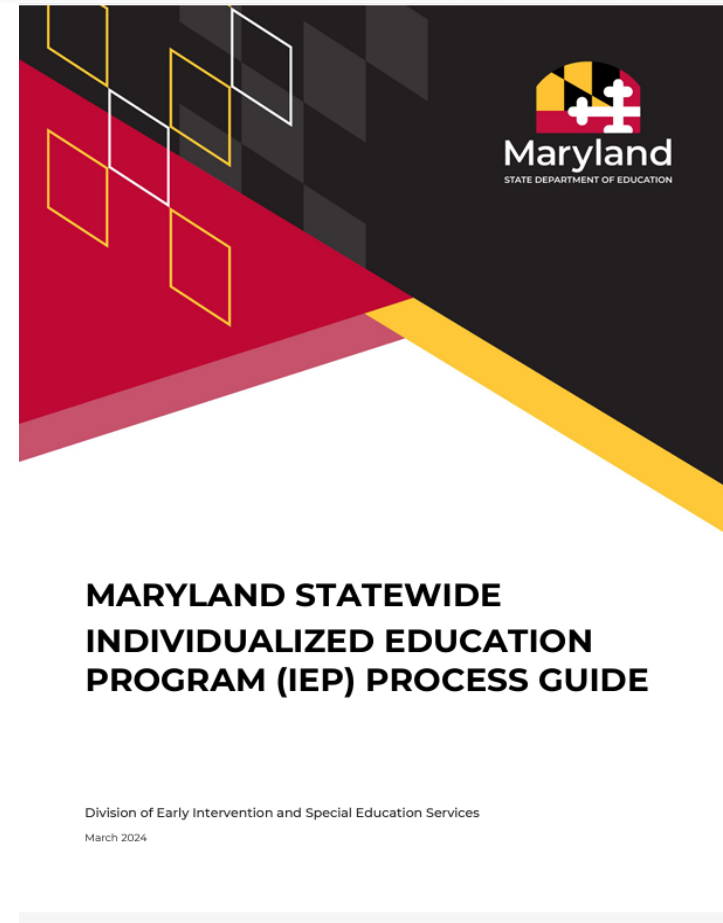
DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR Mathematics

Version 4¹
Published 2013. Revision Date: May 1, 2014
2013. Copyright University of Kansas Center for Research. All rights reserved.

¹ Version 4 improves the formatting and readability. No changes to content have been made.

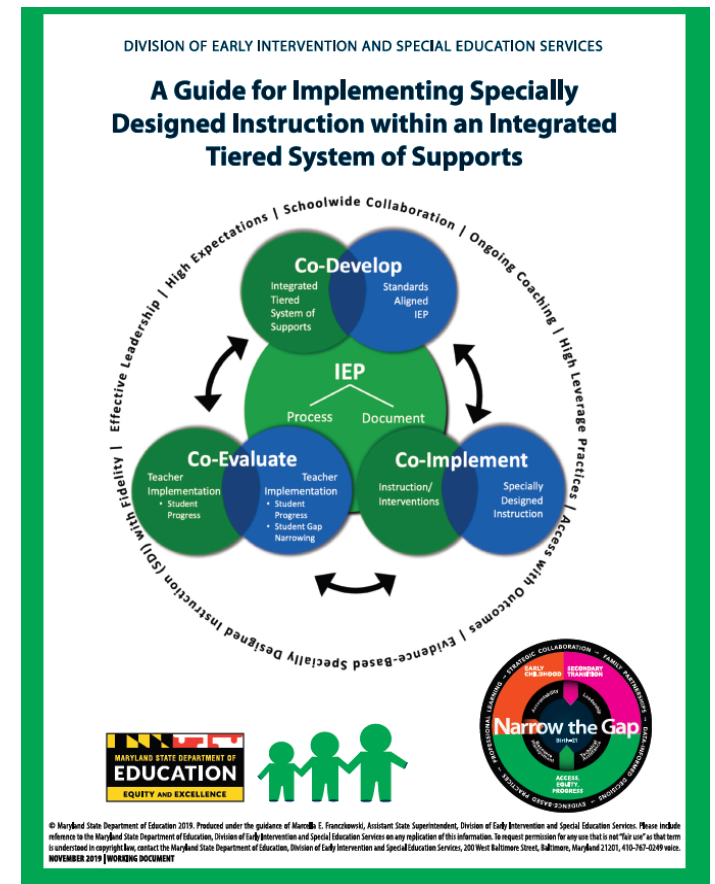
MSDE IEP Process Guide

- Released in March 2024
- Provides guidance on the proper process and procedure for writing an IEP
- Includes all sections of the IEP
- Provides information on alignment to federal and state regulations



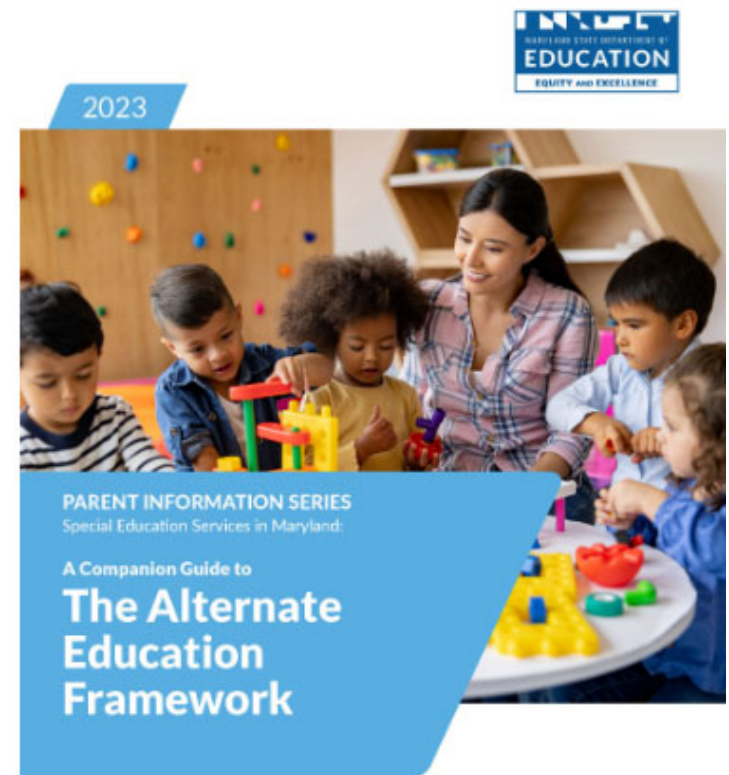
MSDE Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Guide

- Released in 2019, update coming Winter 2025
- The purpose of ***A Guide for Implementing Specially Designed Instruction within an Integrated Tiered System of Supports*** is to support local school system and public agency staff in the process of collaboratively developing, implementing, and evaluating Individualized Education Programs to accelerate the progress of students with disabilities.



MSDE Parent Information Series

- A Series of Five Booklets for Families to enable them to fully participate and understand their child's education.
- Provides information in parent friendly language about:
 - The IEP Process
 - Understanding the IEP
 - Procedural Safeguards
 - Secondary Transition
 - The Alternate Education Framework
- Available in 25 languages.



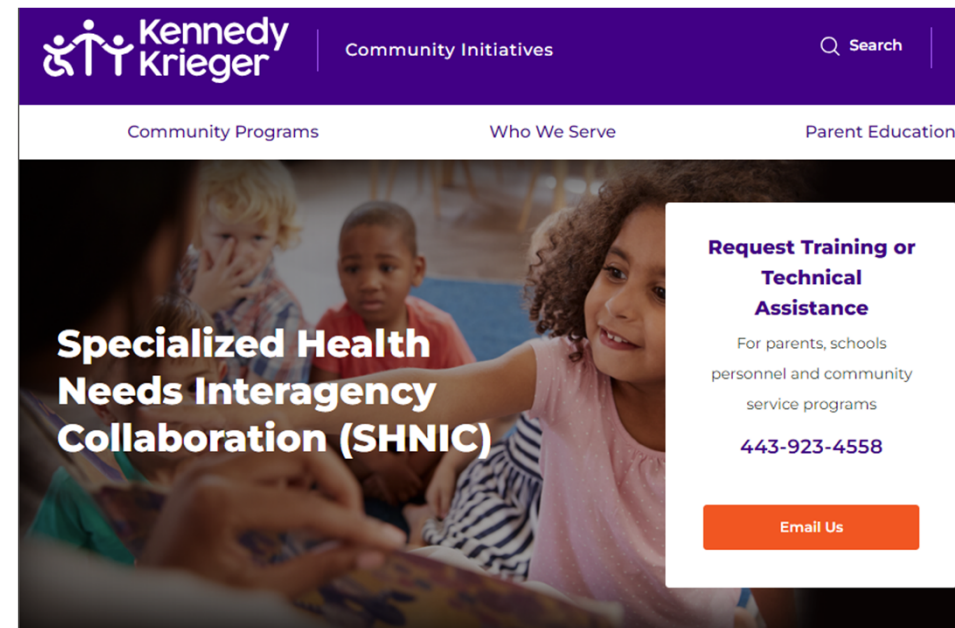
Connections Beyond Sight and Sound (CBSS- Maryland/DC DeafBlind Project)

- Serve children birth-21 with hearing and vision challenges, including those at risk for having dual sensory loss due to etiology or atypical responses to auditory/visual stimuli.
- A collaborative partner supporting school systems and families across MD and DC free of charge.
- Able to support educational teams through transition periods: can transfer information from early childhood to school team for consistency of interventions
- Assist with assessments of students with the most challenging needs: functional vision, O&M, Communication Matrix, etc.
- Provide in-service training, coaching, and modeling around best practices for supporting communication development and access to the general ed curriculum for students who are deafblind.
- Not an additional service on the IFSP or IEP but rather a support to the educational team.



Specialized Health Needs Interagency Collaboration (SHNIC)

- The Specialized Health Needs Interagency Collaboration Project (SHNIC) is a community-based program that provides on-site training and technical assistance to parents and personnel from schools and community service programs throughout Maryland at no cost.
- Collaborative partnership between the Kennedy Krieger Institute and the Maryland State Department of Education.
- The goal of SHNIC is to provide community education that facilitates the inclusion of children ages 0-21 with specialized health needs.
- Through free, on-site training and technical assistance, we teach the skills to safely and effectively manage the needs of students which help them integrate into their schools and communities.
- Professionals and parents from the local school systems, health departments, and related community services agencies can access SHNIC services.



<https://www.kennedykrieger.org/community/initiatives/specialized-health-needs-interagency-collaboration>



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4. High-Leverage Practices

5. Case Studies

Introduction to Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Specially Designed Instruction

- FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education): Required by federal law for children with disabilities.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP): A legal document where the local school system (through a local school team) develops a program tailored to that student's needs based on data. The program includes special education instruction, supports, and services that the student requires to make progress in the general education curriculum.
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): The adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a student with a disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum and can achieve the educational standards that apply to all students.

SDI is NOT

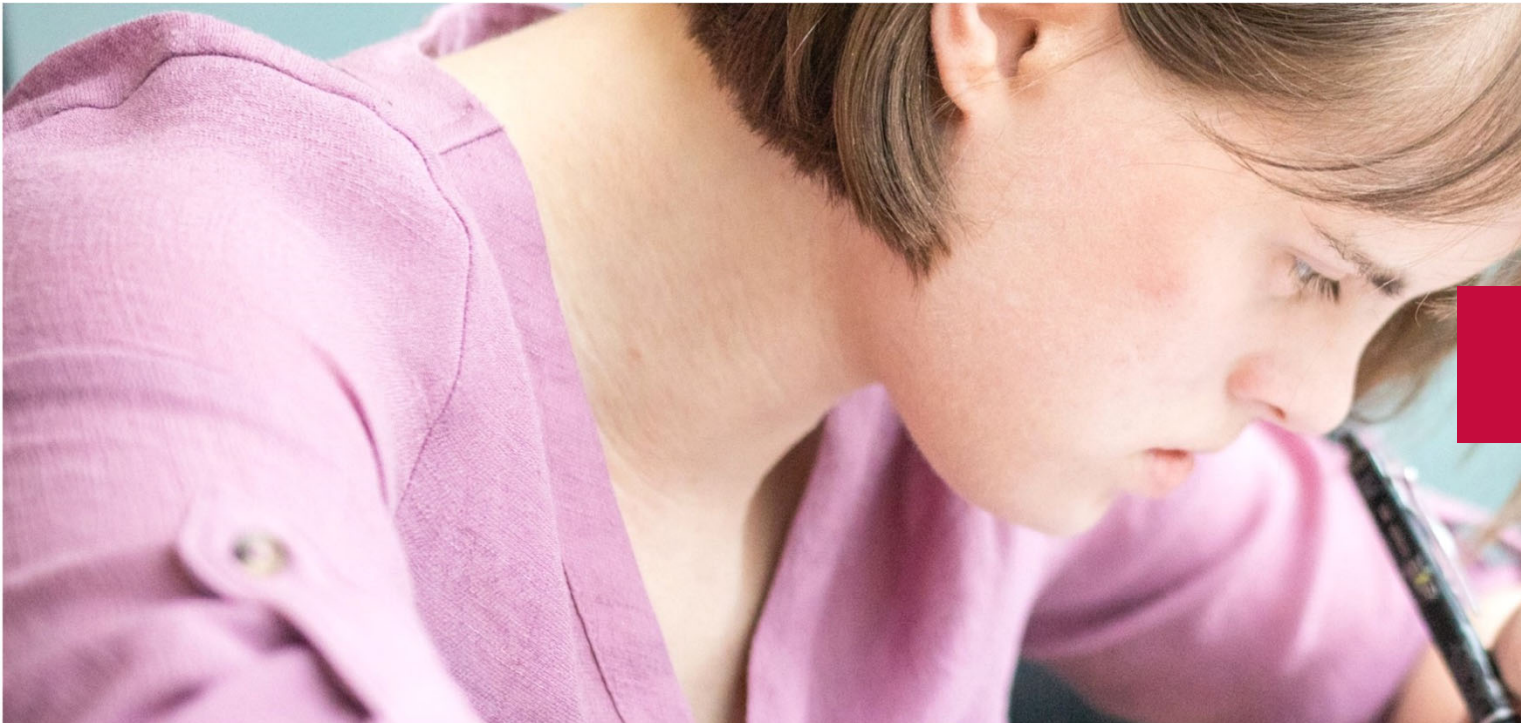
- Differentiated Instruction (DI)
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Accommodations
- Having a service provider or paraprofessional present in a room
- Learning in a different location
- Just good teaching available to all students

Importance of SDI in Supporting Students with Disabilities

- All students are general education students – some also receive services.
- All students, including students with disabilities, need to be held to rigorous academic standards and high expectations.
- SDI ensures a student's access to the general education curriculum and grade level standards.
- SDI is a shared responsibility.
- SDI is a service, not a place. SDI can be provided in any location, as long as it is consistent with the student's IEP and least restrictive environment.

IEP Development for SDI

- The IEP is co-developed, co-implemented, and co-evaluated.
- An IEP must consider:
 - A student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
 - How specially designed instruction tailored for the student's disability influences their participation and progress in the general education curriculum.
 - How the specific disability impacts the student's ability to attain their annual goals.
- Special education teachers along with service providers, collaborate so the student can learn and demonstrate reasonably calculated progress within their service delivery environment.
- The design and delivery of SDI is dependent on an evidence-based practice that uses individual progress monitoring data to make decisions about adaptations to instructional delivery, content, and methodology.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be instructed and assessed according to alternate standards that are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity but are still aligned to the State's curriculum for all students.



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Co-Development, Co-Implementation, and Co-Evaluation

Co-Development Process

- During the co-development process, the student's IEP team defines the specially designed instruction that the student requires.
- The purpose of these supports and services is to enable the student to access and make progress in the grade level curriculum by addressing the learning and support needs.
- These supports and services are clearly documented on the IEP and are translated into action by the instructional team.
- It is critical that instructional teams and collaborating teachers have time to use the information found in the IEP to effectively deliver SDI in daily class lessons and routines.

Co-Development of Specially Designed Instruction (1 of 2)

- For a student with a disability to access and make progress in the general education curriculum for the grade level in which he or she is enrolled, the Individualized Education Program must be written in a way that is ambitious, yet achievable.
- Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) serves as the foundation upon which the team develops, implements, and evaluates specially designed instruction.
- Assessments and multiple sources of data are used by IEP teams to identify the areas affected by the student's disabilities and to develop IEP goals, objectives, and specially designed instruction.
- IEP team members should begin with the grade level standards and essential knowledge and skills required to demonstrate performance on the student's enrolled grade level.
- With knowledge of grade level standards and age-appropriate expectations, the team can set goals and design supports and services that narrow the gap between the student's current performance and appropriate targets.

Co-Development of Specially Designed Instruction (2 of 2)

- Students with disabilities receive specially designed instruction on the specific skills needed to approach or achieve grade level performance.
- The IEP team will select a combination of evidence-based instructional practices, accommodations, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for personnel to appropriately adapt the content, methodology, and/or delivery of instruction.
- Academic goals aligned to one of more early learning or grade level standards are required for all students for each academic area of need.
- Functional skill goals are identified for any student whose disability affects non-academic skills such as social-emotional behavior, self-management, communication, etc.
- Remember IEP goals targeted do not represent everything the student would learn but are the representative skills most important for the student to make progress.

IEP Goals and Objectives

All IEP goals and objectives should include the following five components:

- Condition – A description of the circumstances in which the skill will be measured, including factors such as materials, assistance provided, directions given, etc.
- Behavior – An observable, measurable action that the student will perform.
- Criteria - Expected level of performance (mastery) and how many times the student must demonstrate that level of performance for the goal/objective to be considered achieved (retention).
- Method of Measurement – A reliable and valid tool or other means of objectively determining whether the specified criterion has been met. (Examples: frequency count, teacher-created rubrics, teacher data collection sheets, classroom-based assessments when applicable, etc.)
- Timeframe – The date by which the goal/objective will be accomplished.

Co-Implementation Phase

- SDI is intentional, structured, and customized for the individual student.
- Educators, support staff, and related service providers work together using information from the IEP, to adapt daily instruction and intervention so students with disabilities can access and make progress on grade level standards as well as achieve IEP goals and objectives.
- SDI is implemented to support ongoing participation in daily instruction and assessment.

Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, High-Leverage Practices

UDL, DI, and HLPs are tools for effective teaching. These practices benefit all students. UDL and DI are not SDI!

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

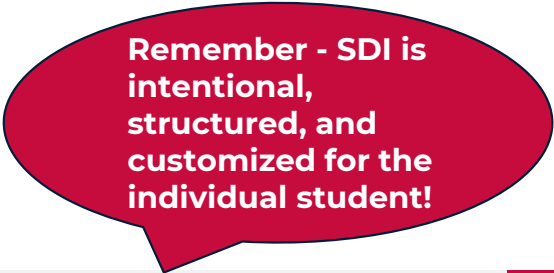
- UDL is a research-based set of principles to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and effective for all.
- Examples may include presenting content and information in multiple forms, providing more than one way for students to express what they know, creating multiple motivation strategies to engage learning.

Differentiated Instruction (DI)

- Tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of students in a class.
- Reactive adjustments teachers make to meet the needs of various learners, including those with disabilities.
- Using on-going assessment and flexible grouping makes it a successful approach to instruction.

High-Leverage Practices (HLPs)

- Evidence-based practices that are essential to effective teaching and fundamental to supporting student learning.
- 4 HLP Domains – Collaboration, Data-Driven Planning, Instruction in Behavior and Academics, and Intensify and Intervene as Needed.



Remember - SDI is intentional, structured, and customized for the individual student!

Delivering Specially Designed Instruction

- SDI is characterized as instruction that is “explicit” addressing learner needs; inclusive of academic, executive functioning, and/or behavioral challenges.
- The term “explicit instruction” is defined as a meaningful combination of modeling and practice with embedded supports.
- When delivering specially designed instruction for students with disabilities, educators should consider the following three-phase cycle for individual, small group, or whole-group instruction.

Think of a Three Phase Cycle

For individual, small group, or whole-group instruction.

Co-Development

- Analyze data
- Set a meaningful learning target
- Determine the sequence of instruction
- Set clear objectives and benchmarks for each lesson

Co-Implementation

- Provide explicit instruction, modeling, and think-alouds
- Provide intentional response opportunities
- Incorporate multiple practice opportunities for student engagement
- Provide affirmative and/or corrective feedback

Co-Evaluation

- Review data and outcomes
- Adapt instruction as necessary, consider changes to content or methodology based on individual needs of students
- Adjust frequency and/or intensity
- Plan for transfer of learning

Collaborative Teaching

- Educators, support staff, related service providers, and other service providers effectively collaborate.
- Once the IEP is developed, teachers will work together to adapt instruction and/or interventions so the student will meet their goals and progress on grade-aligned standards.
- The team will then identify opportunities to address IEP goals and objectives that exist within instruction and routines of the student's day to teach and practice.
- Curricular adaptations and modifications are necessary to address the student's unique learning needs based on the standards being taught throughout the instructional units.
- On a day-to-day basis, these decisions can and will be adjusted based on the individual student and material presented.
- Planning time for staff to co-plan to adapt and modify the curriculum for each student's needs is crucial.

Co-Evaluation Phase

- Assessing student performance and using the results to make instructional decisions is a core instructional practice for all teachers.
- Educators and service providers collaborate to measure student performance through objective data, interpret the data, and then use the data to make changes to the SDI.
- For students with disabilities, the evaluation process includes additional questions:
 - Is the student progressing at an accelerated rate to narrow the gap between the student's current performance and grade level academic standards and functional expectations?
 - Is the student making adequate progress on IEP objectives and goals?
- The team should also consider the extent to which the SDI was implemented with fidelity.

Using Data to Assess Student Progress

- To analyze student progress and make appropriate instructional decisions, the right measurement tools need to be used.
- After the annual review of a student's IEP and at the beginning of the school year, the team should create a progress monitoring schedule for recording student progress on IEP goals that indicates the following:
 - What will be measured (behavior).
 - How it will be measured (monitoring tool).
 - How frequently it will be measured (number of times per week or per event).
 - Where or when it will be measured (what subject or time of day and location).
 - By whom (special education teacher, related service provider, or trained support staff member).
- By collecting data with those measures, educators can keep track of growth in student performance and can report objectively on IEP goal progress quarterly as required.

Examples of Measures

- **Rubrics** – Based on a set of guidelines for expected behavior or task accomplishment with ratings.
- **Level of Independence** – Recoding indicates level of support needed, often ranging from high support (physical assistance) to medium support (modeling or gesturing), to low support (verbal reminder).
- **Task Analysis** – Based on what skill or task involves the measure of mastery of steps within a task. The actual measure may be a “level of independence” or a yes/no frequency.
- **Latency Recording** – How long it takes for a student to begin a task or behavior. It measures the time that elapses between a prompt or cue to “start” the task.
- **Duration Recording** – Length of time that a student exhibits a behavior.
- **Frequency Recoding** – Recording of events (e.g., number of correct responses on an assignment, number of questions answered on topic, number of times leaving class) or time intervals (e.g., number of class periods attended, number of days turned in homework, number of adapted assessments scored 80% or greater).

Measuring Student Progress

- Types and direction for student assessment will vary from system to system and school to school.
- The following sources of data allows teams to form and plan their instructional decisions and plan to collect that information:
 - **Formative Assessments** – Methods teachers use to gather information about student understanding during the learning process to make instructional decisions. These methods may include quizzes, written exit tickets, as well as a variety of teacher-made available tools.
 - **Curriculum-Based Assessments** – Often used as universal screening tool and can be used within a multi-tiered system of supports to identify and rate the level of student growth over the school year.
 - **Performance Assessments** – Measures how well students apply their knowledge and skills to authentic problems by producing something such as a project, report, or performance that is scored against a specific criteria.

Analyzing Data and Adjusting Instruction

- The purpose of collecting data on student progress is to determine if progress is enough to accelerate the student's rate of learning to achieve IEP goals and objectives.
- It is important to consistently track data so that the team may see trends of student progress.
- Teams should not wait until the end of the marking period to adjust instruction.
- By planning and collecting data, the team ensures that the information needed to make instructional decisions is readily available.
- If student progress is not adequate, the team should make changes to one or more elements of the SDI after examining multiple factors.
- Remember it takes multiple data points to show a trend and data collection needs to occur frequently enough to show progress over each quarter of the school year.



High-Leverage Practices

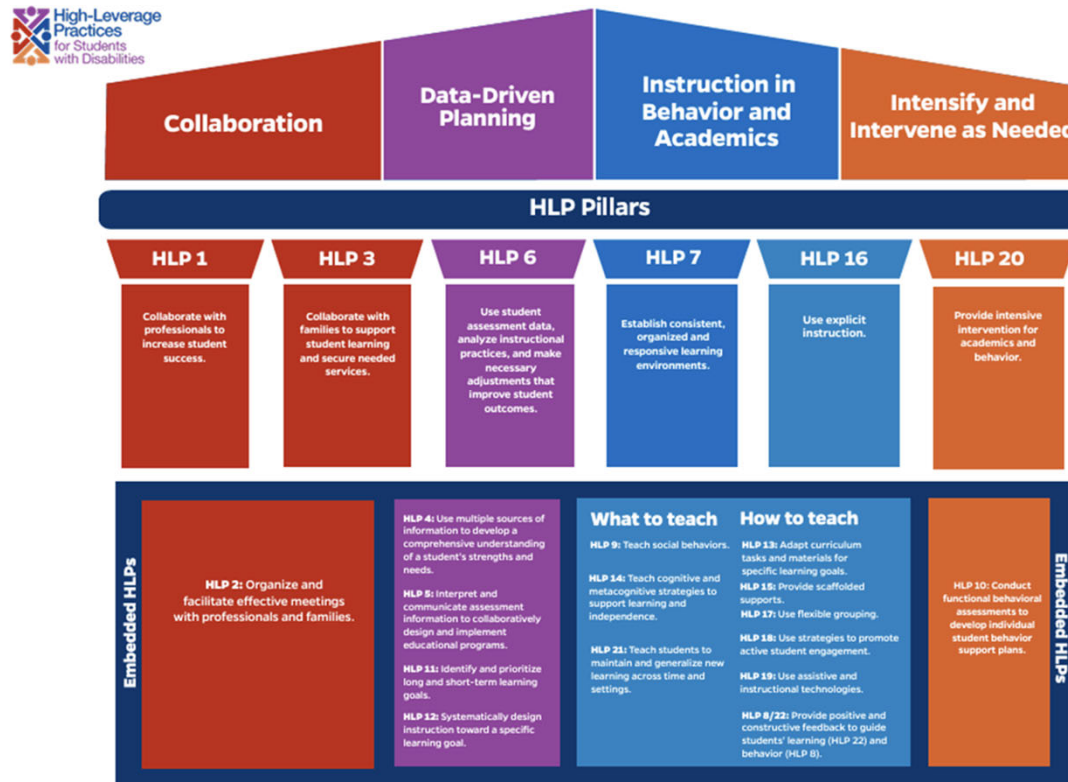
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What is a high-leverage practice?

- High-leverage practices (HLPs) are evidence-based practices “that are essential to effective teaching and fundamental to supporting student learning” and have been shown through research to have significant impact for students with disabilities (McLeskey, et al., 2019).
- The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) have identified 4 domains broken down into 6 pillars with embedded high leverage practices in special education.

<https://highleveragepractices.org/>

High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities



<https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/HLP-Pillars-.pdf>

Collaboration

- Effective special education teachers collaborate with a wide range of service providers and team members, including administrators, related service providers, counselors, family members, and other teachers.
- The two pillars and two embedded high leverage practices for collaboration are:
 - Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.
 - Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.
 - Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals.

Data-Driven Planning

- Effective educators continuously assess and analyze data from various assessment sources to understand student progress and adjust instructional methods accordingly.
- Utilize both formative and summative assessments to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, are mastering the material.
- Skilled in interpreting data from formal assessments, which are crucial for identifying students for special education services and developing IEPs .
- The one pillar and four embedded high leverage practices for data-driven planning are:
 - Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.
 - Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs.
 - Interpret and communicate assessment information to collaboratively design and implement educational programs.
 - Identify and prioritize long and short-term learning goals.
 - Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal.

Instruction in Behavior and Academics (1 of 2)

- All teachers strive for success, which ultimately means ensuring their students are successful.
- Well-versed in the curriculum and employ research-based teaching strategies, continually making instructional decisions based on student performance and their own analysis of the effects of their instruction.
- Allows educators to adapt to address the unique needs of students with disabilities, fostering a consistent, organized, and responsive learning environment that supports success for all students.

Instruction in Behavior and Academics (2 of 2)

- The two pillars and nine high leverage practices are:
 - Establish a consistent, organized, and responsive learning environment.
 - Use explicit instruction.
 - Teach social behavior
 - Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
 - Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.
 - Provide scaffolded supports.
 - Use flexible grouping.
 - Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
 - Use assistive and instructional technologies.
 - Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.
 - Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning (HLP 22) and behavior (HLP 8).

Intensify and Intervene as Needed

- HLP Framework now includes the Intensify and Intervene as Needed domain, recognizing that some students with disabilities require additional support beyond effective core instruction in order to make progress towards their academic and behavioral goals.
- This domain highlights that effective teachers require specialized skills to provide intensive, targeted support, building on practices from the previous domains.
- The one pillar and one high leverage practice are:
 - Provide intensive intervention for academics and behavior.
 - Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans.

Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies

- Self-monitoring
- Goal setting
- Planning
- Reflective journals
- Think aloud
- Error analysis
- Flexibility

Examples of Scaffolded Supports

- Graphic organizers
- Checklists and rubrics
- Step by step instructions
- Sentence starters
- Modeling and demonstrations
- Interactive tools and technology
- Peer collaboration and support (work in pairs or small groups)
- Prompting and questioning
- Visual aids and cues
- Chunking information

Examples of Explicit Instruction

- Modeling using visual and verbal supports
- Guided practice
- Frequent checks for understanding
- Teach in small steps
- Use of examples and non-examples
- Clear and specific instructions
- Use clear and concise language
- Scaffolded practice (gradually releasing responsibility to students i.e., working through problems together, students working in pairs, independent practice)
- Positive and constructive feedback



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Case Study

Case Study

Review the case study for a student participating in the alternate framework. You may work with a partner, in a group, or individually. Once everyone has completed the review, we will reconvene to discuss what SDI could be implemented.

Meet Alex

Alex is a seventh-grade student with a significant cognitive disability that affects her performance across all academic and functional areas. Alex participates in assessments and instruction aligned to the Alternate Academic Achievement Standards.

Consider the following questions while planning for SDI for Alex:

1. Is it unique? Something different from the typical general education practices of UDL or DI?
2. Does it address the child's individual needs to access and progress in the grade level curriculum, which includes grade level standards, and progress on IEP goals/objectives?

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Session Evaluation



Please scan the QR code to complete the evaluation for today's session.

References

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- Beninghof, A. (2022). *Specially designed instruction: Increasing success for students with disabilities*. Routledge, New York, NY.
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