CHAPTER 13: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Well-designed individualized instruction is at the heart of special education. The IDEA definition of special education is, "Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability" (IDEA, 2017). Typically, the IEP will not specify particular interventions or curriculum that must be used; however, IDEA does emphasize the importance of having high expectations for students with disabilities and using scientifically based instructional strategies and positive behavioral supports (IDEA, 2019).

SCIENTIFICALLY BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Scientifically based strategies are practices that are supported by research and by the teacher's professional judgement. While educators should use evidence-based practices as much as possible, it is also important for teachers to collect their own data to assess the effectiveness of strategies used both within the group context and with individual learners. The following terms are often used interchangeably to talk about scientifically based instructional strategies, although they do have subtle differences:

- **Best practices:** These are practices that are considered good by experts in the field, but which may or may not have research support. They are also called recommended practices.

- **Research-based practices**: These are best practices that have at least some research evidence to support their use. They are also called data-based and empirically validated practices.

- **Evidence-based practices:** These are practices which have been demonstrated to be effective through high-quality, methodologically sound research. This is the best option when available.

IDEA requires instructional interventions to be grounded in "scientifically based research, to the extent practicable" ([IDEA, 2019](#)). This means that the curriculum and instructional practices used with students receiving special education services should be evidenced-based as much as possible while also taking into consideration the individual student's needs and preferences. ([PACER Center, 2010](#); [McLeskey et al., 2017](#); [What Works Clearinghouse, 2024](#)).

PREPARATION FOR TEACHING - RULES, ROUTINES, AND PROCEDURES

The use of positive behavior supports is an evidenced based practice with strong research support ([Santiago-Rosario et al., 2023](#)). Defining, teaching, and reinforcing classroom norms and expectations are all key components of the foundation on which a positive behavior support system is built. These classroom norms are based on three to six class rules which promote safety

and create a positive learning environment. The rules should be short and written using positive language that indicates what students should do rather than what they should not do. Generally, when these rule statements begin with a verb, it is easier to keep the rule short and simple (e.g., Use kind words; Work hard; Arrive on time). Routines and procedures are then aligned with the rules. Instruction is always provided on the rules, routines, and procedures and should include examples and nonexamples. These classroom expectations should be practiced and reviewed regularly. Visuals can be an effective support for helping students follow the schedule as well as the routines and expectations. Transitions from one area, group or activity to another are typically a major source of off-task behavior, so special attention should be given to teaching, practicing, and reinforcing appropriate transition behavior (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Santiago-Rosario et al., 2023).

The physical arrangement of the classroom should also create a positive learning environment for all learners and support high-quality instruction. Depending on the resources available and the ages and needs of the learners, a classroom might have separate areas for whole group, small group, and individual instruction. The classroom might also have other use-specific areas such as a designated independent work area for each student, a play or free-choice area, and a quiet reading area. It is important that the room be arranged in such a way that the teacher can see all parts of the room and all students at all times. If different areas in the classroom will be used for different tasks, visuals can be used to designate which areas are for which tasks. The boundaries of each separate area can be indicated using classroom furniture, partition walls, and even pieces of colored tape on the floor. The materials needed in each area should be clearly organized and easily accessible for students and the students should be taught the routines

for acquiring these materials and for completing the activities and assignments (IDEA, 2019; Archer & Hughes, 2011).

In teacher-directed instructional areas, it is best for the teacher to be in close physical proximity with the students. This helps the students feel connected to the teacher and helps the teacher maintain attention and student engagement. Teachers should use professional judgement to choose strategies and supports based on both the research evidence available and their knowledge of each students' individual needs. Instructional decisions should also take into account the influence of each student's cultural history and language background on their learning. During instruction, students should face the teacher while also being near enough to each other to be able to share answers with a partner. When planning for instruction, teachers should predetermine the partners their students will work with during the lesson, taking into consideration each student's current instructional level, behavior, and social abilities. Visuals that are placed on the walls, such as an assignment calendar, word wall, and posters of learning strategies, should be given careful consideration as they can be important instructional supports. It can also be valuable to have a place to display completed student work (Archer & Hughes, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2017).

HIGH LEVERAGE PRACTICES

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international organization committed to providing information and resources for special educators. Founded one hundred years ago by a group of educators, the vision of the CEC is "High-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities." The CEC sets professional standards for special educators, advocates for special education professionals and individuals with disabilities, and conducts scholarly research aimed at improving professional practice in the field of special education. The CEC recently partnered with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) to identify the high level practices that have been shown to improve student outcomes when implemented successfully (McLeskey et al., 2017; High-Leverage Practices, 2023).

Special educators must be fluent with strategies that are highly effective when teaching learners with disabilities. They must also be flexible problem solvers, monitoring the effectiveness of those strategies for their individual students, and making the indicated changes when needed. In their research, McLeskey and colleagues (2017) sought to identify the types of high leverage practices that promote improved outcomes for all students with disabilities. High leverage practices are not disability specific, but rather are broadly applicable across content areas, grade levels, and student abilities. These practices are research-based and foster student engagement and learning. High leverage practices are critical for the implementation of evidence-based instruction (McLeskey et al., 2017). "This instruction, when delivered with fidelity, is designed to maximize academic learning time, actively engage learners in meaningful activities, and emphasize proactive

and positive approaches across tiers of instructional intensity" ([McLeskey et al., 2017, p. 69)](#).

PRIORITIZE LEARNING GOALS

Time is an important resource. Our learners have a limited amount of educational time and teachers need to make choices that use that time to the best advantage for each learner. Prioritizing the long and short-term learning goals for each student is a high leverage practice which reflects the importance of using time wisely. When determining the most important goals for each learner, consider the following:

- The grade level standards
- The scope and sequence of the curriculum and any key prerequisites
- The student's current level of knowledge
- The student's IEP goals

When teaching students with more significant intellectual disabilities, research shows that it is effective to combine instruction in core content

areas with instruction in functional skills rather than choosing one over the other. For example, math, reading, and science standards can all be embedded in lessons on the functional skills involved in food preparation (Collins et al., 2010; McLeskey et al., 2017).

Once the learning goal is identified, instructional activities can be designed to support that outcome. Good instructional design includes activating prior knowledge, making the content connections explicit within and across lessons, and sequencing lessons so that there is a logical progression toward the learning goal. Teachers must be cognizant of student progress and use that information to dictate the pace of learning and the content of the lessons. Curriculum tasks and materials should be selected and adapted to the learning goal based on the student's abilities. Adaptations such as highlighting the relevant information, adjusting the depth or amount of content, simplifying the material, or simply changing the directions, can be made so that grade level content will better support the learning goals for a specific student. Alternate formats such as audio recordings of the readings or large print versions should be provided when appropriate. Content enhancements and scaffolded supports such as graphic organizers and guided notes can also be provided to support student access, understanding and retention of the information (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017).

SCAFFOLDED SUPPORTS

Students can become overly dependent on adult assistance, resulting in a type of learned helplessness. Teachers can unintentionally contribute to this by providing more help than the student needs. On the other hand, learned helplessness can also result from a loss of motivation due to prolonged periods of academic failure and frustration. Scaffolded supports and instruction in cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which support both learning and independence, can target that "just right" level of support and prevent learned helplessness while also fostering realistic optimism (Archer & Hughes, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2017; National Association of Special Education Teachers, 2002).

Learning involves the use of cognitive processes for regulating attention, organizing ideas and materials, problem solving, memorizing, and self-monitoring. Strategies provide a systematic plan for students to use when engaged in these activities. Strategies generally involve a series of sequential steps for solving the problem or completing the task and are learned best when they are integrated into content instruction. Explicit

instruction and modeling are effective methods for teaching learners to use these strategies. Examples of strategies that are often taught include:

- Cognitive strategies
  - o Making predictions
  - o Summarizing
  - o Applying grammar rules
  - o Making meaning from context
- Metacognitive strategies
  - o Self-management
  - o Self-regulation
  - o Planning
  - o Monitoring progress towards one's goals
  - o Evaluating performance on one's goals
    (Guiang-Myers, 2021; Archer & Hughes, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002)

The idea of scaffolded supports is based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the gap between what a learner can do independently and what the learner can't quite do independently but could achieve with a little help. By providing targeted supports, that gap can be bridged in a way that aids learning. Scaffolding allows us to challenge our students while also ensuring that the students will be successful with the challenge. Achieving this balance can be very motivating for the learner. These scaffolded supports are a temporary form of assistance that is gradually removed as the student's performance improves. Ideally, these supports are preplanned, but skilled teachers are also capable of providing these types of supports when the need arises during a lesson. Scaffolding can be used to address learning struggles caused by attention problems, working memory challenges, and difficulty organizing new information. Instructional strategies such as modeling, asking questions, completing the
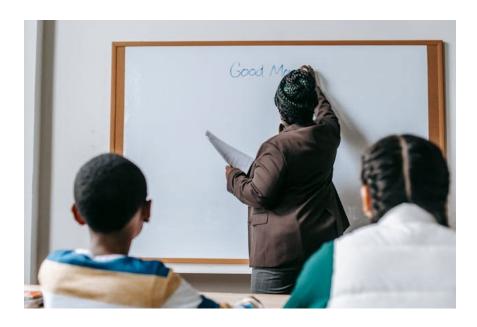
task together, prompting, and providing feedback can also function as scaffolded supports that can be faded over time. In addition, scaffolding can be provided to help students learn the metacognitive skill of evaluating their own performance (Archer & Hughes, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Scaffolded instructional supports can take a variety of forms. Archer and Hughes (2011) provide these examples of scaffolding:

- Breaking a complex skill down into steps or chunks
- Sequencing skills so they build on each other
- Selecting examples and problems that progress in complexity
- Providing demonstrations and completed models of problems
- Providing hints and prompts as students begin to practice a new skill
- Providing aids such as anchor charts, cue cards or checklists to help students remember the steps or process needed to complete a task or solve a problem
  (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 11)

Teachers should incorporate scaffolding into their instructional design in a way that helps students to achieve ideal rates of correct responding. During initial instruction research suggests that for optimal learning, students should be able to give the correct answer during response activities at least 80% of the time and during independent practice, students should be able to give the correct response about 90-95% of the time. Thus, scaffolding is an effective way to support learning, ensure student success, and build student confidence (Archer & Hughes, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

Explicit direct instruction is a structured, systematic method for teaching that uses scaffolding to support the learning process. With explicit direct instruction, students are provided with the purpose for learning the new content and skills, clear explanations and demonstrations of the target content or skill, and supported practice with feedback in order to achieve independent mastery. Explicit instruction is systematic, proceeds in small steps with frequent checks for understanding, and incorporates active and successful participation by all students. Explicit direct instruction is not, however, traditional "lecture only" teaching (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Archer and Hughes (2011) identify 16 instructional elements that characterize an explicit approach to teaching:

1. **Focus instruction on critical content**: teach skills, strategies, vocabulary, concepts, rules that matches students' current instructional needs and prepares them for needs in the future.

2. **Sequence skills logically:** Easy skills before harder skills, high-frequency skills before those used less frequently, ensure students have the prerequisites needed before teaching the skill.

3. **Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units:** Teach in small steps. As steps are mastered, practice as whole.

4. **Design organized and focused lessons:** Make optimal use of instructional time.

5. **Begin each lesson with a statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations:** Students achieve more if they understand the goals and outcomes expected and how the information or skill will help them.

6. **Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction:** Verify students have the prerequisite skills and knowledge; link the new skill to other related skills.

7. **Provide step-by-step demonstrations:** Clearly demonstrate the skill and "think" aloud as you perform the skill.

8. **Use clear and concise language:** Use consistent, unambiguous wording that matches the complexity of your learners' abilities.

9. **Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples:**
Establish when and when not to apply a skill, strategy, concept or rule.
Anticipate common misconceptions.

10. **Provide guided and supported practice:** Regulate the difficulty of
practice opportunities to promote initial success and build confidence,
gradually increasing task difficulty and decreasing the level of guidance.

11. **Require frequent responses:** Having students respond frequently
(e.g., oral, written, or action responses) helps students stay focused and
helps you check for understanding.

12. **Monitor student performance:** Close monitoring allows you to
provide feedback and make timely adjustments in instruction as needed

13. **Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback:** This
helps ensure high rates of success and reduces repeated incorrect
practice

14. **Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace:** It is tricky to balance a brisk
pace with reasonable time for students to process. On-task behavior is a
good indicator of an optimal pace.

15. **Help students organize knowledge:** Make connections apparent.
This helps with retrieval of skills and integration of knowledge.

16. **Provide distributed and cumulative practice:** Provide multiple
opportunities to practice the skill over time, including previously and
newly acquired skills to promote retention and automaticity.

(Archer & Hughes, 2011, pp. 2-3)

When teachers incorporate these principles into their teaching, they are better able to actively engage their students in instructional activities and increase both time on-task and accuracy, resulting in increased learning. Because time is being used more efficiently, teachers are able to cover more content which also results in an increased potential for student learning. Modeling and scaffolding are used to promote understanding and application of learning and then systematically faded to encourage independence (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).
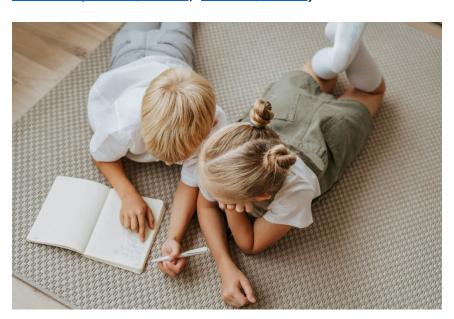

GROUPING

Research shows that small group learning is often more effective than large group or one-to-one instruction for students with special learning needs. This is because small group learning provides more opportunities for targeted instruction while also providing students opportunities to interact with their peers and to practice skills such as turn taking, listening to others, and making contributions. Group learning activities work best when teachers choose tasks that require collaboration and use procedures that hold all

students accountable for both individual learning and the collective learning of the group. Even within the small group instructional framework, teachers can embed explicit instruction strategies to maximize learning opportunities and promote equal participation. Monitoring individual and group performance during these activities is important for ensuring optimal student learning (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Grouping patterns should be flexible and change often, depending on the goals and objectives of the lesson. Same-ability groupings of two or three students who have similar instructional strengths and needs are used for focused, intensive instruction. This type of grouping allows students to learn the skills most appropriate for them at a level and rate that ensures success. Mixed ability groups tend to be larger, with six to eight students being an effective size. Mixed ability groups also help facilitate student thinking, communication skills, and interpersonal relationships among students with and without disabilities. Most classrooms will use a combination of both grouping types (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

STUDENT RESPONDING

Teachers should use instructional strategies that promote active student engagement. Lessons should be delivered at a brisk pace while still requiring students to respond frequently to the instruction. Ideally, students should be providing some type of response to the learning every 2 minutes. By regularly soliciting active student responding, teachers are able to monitor student performance, provide feedback, and keep students engaged (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Strategies for student responding include:

- **Choral responding**: All students respond by saying the answer together or by holding up a response card with a written answer. This works best for short responses and when reviewing factual information. This method provides scaffolding for struggling leaners as they are provided immediate corrective or affirmative feedback. Choral responding also gives teachers instant feedback on student knowledge and understanding. When using this method, it is helpful to establish a signal that lets students know when it is time to give the answer.
- **Partner responses:** Students turn to their partner and share answers. This works well when answers are longer or more varied. Students can benefit from hearing their partner's ideas and getting feedback on their own ideas. This method also supports development of language proficiency, social skills, and cooperation. One way to scaffold partner responding is to supply a sentence starter (e.g., "The main idea of the paragraph is…."). Providing a sentence starter helps with cognitive retrieval and formulation of an answer. Students are also more likely to use full sentences to express their answer and to stay on topic when this type of scaffolding is in place.

- **Action response**: There are many ways teachers can incorporate action responses and replies, using both large motor activities as well as smaller gestures and even facial expressions. Students can act out the meaning of vocabulary words. Hand motions can be used to indicate student responses. The teacher can even ask a question and have the students simply point to the answer in their own book or on their own paper, and then partners can check each other's responses for correctness.

- **Reading response:** With choral reading, the teacher and students read the material aloud together at a moderate rate with appropriate expression. This can be scaffolded by having the students preview the text silently before chorally reading it. Teachers can also provide scaffolding by prereading any difficult words in the text before having the class read it chorally. Another way teachers can scaffold choral reading is by using echo reading, where the teacher reads a short segment of the text and students echo read the same segment. This is particularly valuable when supporting lower ability readers. Choral reading and echo reading provide a model for fluency and prosody and allow all students to gain reading practice.

- **Partner reading**: Partners for partner reading should be intentionally set up by the teacher (see "Selecting Partners" for one suggestion on how to do this). The partners alternate reading, with the higher performing partner reading a short section of the assignment followed by the second learner echo reading the same section. The students continue this pattern for the entire reading selection. One way to scaffold this is to provide a "Me or We" option. When it is the second or lower performing partner's turn to read, they can say "Me," indicating they will echo read the material, or "We," inviting the other

partner to read chorally with them ([Archer & Hughes, 2011](#); [Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017](#); [McLeskey et al., 2017](#); [NASET, 2002](#)).

SELECTING PARTNERS

Make a list rank ordering the students in the class based on proficiency level. Identify the middle of the list and divide the list in half at that point. Line up the two halves, matching up the highest student from the top half with the highest student from the bottom half and continuing down the list until the lowest student on the top half is matched to the lowest student on the bottom half of the list. Adjust the pairings as needed to ensure that student pairs will work well together. If there is an odd number of students, leave the middle student from the ranking unpartnered. This student can then be matched with any another student whose partner is not present. If all students are present, this student can make up a third member of any group. Within partners, designate one person to be a "one" and the other a "two." It is useful to give the higher-performing student in each partnership

the "one" designation so they can be a model for their partner. Change partners every 3-6 weeks (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

TEACHING A LESSON

It is important to gain your students' attention before beginning the lesson and when resuming the lesson after directing students to engage in response activities. There is no one right way to do this, but it is important to develop some sort of signal as you will need to frequently redirect the students' attention back to you throughout the lesson. Set the stage for the lesson by introducing your students to the topic for the lesson or unit and helping them understand why they should learn this content or skill as well as where and when they will use it. You will also want to activate prior knowledge and verify that students have the necessary prerequisite skills for the objectives you want to teach. Reviewing the prerequisite skills is not the same as reteaching them and should be brief; however, teaching or reteaching will be necessary for any students who have not mastered the prerequisites. Ideally, you will have a short task that all students can do to

demonstrate they have the prerequisite knowledge. Simply asking students if they remember the information or even having one or two students demonstrate the skill does not verify that all the students in the group have mastered the prerequisite skills. One way to do this is to assign homework that uses the prerequisite skill and then start the lesson with a review of the homework followed by an introduction of the day's lesson topic (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

The body of the lesson can vary greatly depending on the content, skills, and strategies being taught. However, this generally will include a step-by-step demonstration of the learning target using clear language and visuals. The teacher will model the learning task while "thinking aloud" to describe the steps and the teacher's thought process during the completion of each step. The teacher will also include examples and non-examples as appropriate. The modeling portion of the lesson should include several demonstrations of the learning target. Depending on the complexity of the skill or content, teachers will typically do one to three demonstrations. As the teacher demonstrates the task, students should be actively involved in responding to questions about the content. This allows the student to rehearse the content and provides the teacher with feedback on student understanding and level of competence with the material. Teachers should maintain a good pace during the lesson, providing just enough think time for students to respond but not enough that they get distracted or off topic. By carefully observing the students, teachers will be able to determine how much time they need to respond. Often 3-5 seconds works well (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

The next step is to provide guided practice for the students. During practice, teachers guide students step-by-step to apply the strategy together before directing students to try additional practice activities on their own.

Scaffolding is often supplied by having the student complete the practice activities with a partner before moving on to individual guided practice. During this time, the teacher can provide prompts as needed to ensure high rates of success. Guided practice should include many opportunities for student responding so that the teacher can monitor progress and so that correction and feedback can be provided to the students. Errors should always be corrected in a way that leads to the right answer. If a student makes repeated errors, that error pattern becomes learned and harder to change, so the teacher will want to set up the learning task in such a way that learners will be unlikely to make errors. When corrective feedback is needed, it should contain enough information that the student will know what to do in the future. All correction should be done in a positive, encouraging, and respective way. When providing corrective feedback, always end with the student giving the correct response in order to strengthen the learning and supply an opportunity to provide positive reinforcement (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

As student proficiency increases, the scaffolding can gradually be removed, and students can move on to independent practice. The purpose of independent practice is to determine if the student can perform the skill without prompts. Don't simply ask students for their opinion on whether they have learned or understood the content. Instead, ask a specific question that requires students to demonstrate understanding. For independent practice, it works well to have students do one item at a time, receiving the necessary corrective and affirmative feedback before completing the next item. When possible, teachers should continue this pattern until the students are consistently performing the skill accurately. This prevents students from practicing errors. (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Quality feedback increases learner motivation, engagement, and independence. It is most effective when it is provided in a timely manner, is clear and specific, and provides the learner with information about how to improve performance. Feedback can take many forms. It is often spoken or written, but it can also be nonverbal such as a gesture, a smile, or a nod. It can also be part of the scaffolding used to guide learning. It can even be computer-generated. However, it should always be age-appropriate and proportionate to the task or activity. When a student is struggling with the content, the teacher might need to provide additional explicit instruction in place of feedback. It is important to remember that while quality feedback is important, it is not more important than good instruction. Feedback can only build on the good foundation that has been laid through high quality instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

To close the lesson, teachers should review the critical content from the lesson, check for understanding, and preview the next lesson. If students have demonstrated competency with the skill being taught, additional practice can be assigned for homework. If the students are not ready for independent work on the new skill, then it is not appropriate to assign it for homework although students may be given homework to review prerequisites and other previously taught skills. The purpose of homework is not for students to teach themselves the content. The purpose is to provide the repetition needed to transfer new information from working memory into long-term memory and to develop fluency and automaticity with that information. Research shows that homework for students with disabilities is most effective if is short, focused on building fluency and skill maintenance, and if feedback on the homework is provided in a timely manner (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

REVIEW OFTEN

Set aside regular time to review previously taught material. This can be once a week, once every two weeks, or even once a month. Regular review provides the repetition that helps with long-term retention of facts, skills, strategies, rules, and concepts. For many learners with disabilities, retention of learning is a challenge, so distributed, cumulative practice is essential. It is important to remember that these practice activities should not be presented as a test, but rather as an opportunity for review and repetition. The teacher should provide a demonstration or example to remind students of the concept or skill and then give students a chance to practice. High quality practice builds accuracy and fluency. In turn, fluency with component skills decreases the load on working memory when students are using these concepts and skills for comprehension and problem-solving activities. Practice can also be enhanced by adding in discrimination components so that students need to think about which skill, strategy, concept, or rule to use for each practice item. For example, when practicing subtraction with regrouping, a discrimination component can be added by also including

some problems that do not require regrouping (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

Review also provides opportunities for students to generalize learning to other applications and situations. Generalization means the student can perform the behavior in environments that are different from the teaching environment. Instructional planning should take into account the need to provide instruction to address generalization. Students need opportunities to use skills across a variety of settings and with a variety of people. Teaching for generalization includes providing numerous examples and programming for common stimuli between the teaching setting and the natural environment. Skills and strategies that are reinforced by the natural environment are more easily maintained (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017; McLeskey et al., 2017; NASET, 2002).

SUMMARY

In summary, the structure of a lesson or unit should follow this general format:

1. Review of any homework, previous learning related to the learning target, and instructional prerequisites

2. Presentation of new content:

   - State the lesson goals and maintain a brisk pace

   - Present material in small steps using clear language

   - Model the procedures and provide both examples and non-examples

3. Provide guided practice, supplying clues and prompts as needed. Ensure a high frequency of student responses and high rates of student success. Begin to work on developing fluency.

4. Provide corrections and affirmative feedback and reteach when necessary.

5. Independent practice should continue until the target skills are automatic.

6. Learning targets should be reviewed regularly.

"Never forget that you are the one who enhances the climate in your classroom every day—through your smile, your body language, your polite words, your kind acts, your enthusiasm for teaching, and your dedication to your students. In all these ways, you make your classroom climate both orderly and positive" ([Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 130](#)).

CHAPTER 13: SOURCES

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