**Domain Three: Instruction in Behavior and Academics**

**[Pillar HLPs](https://highleveragepractices.org/structure-4-domains-22-hlps)**

**HLP 7: Establish a consistent, organized, and responsive learning environment.**

To build and foster positive relationships with students, educators should establish age appropriate and culturally aware expectations, routines, and procedures within their classrooms that are positively stated and explicitly taught and practiced across the school year. When students demonstrate mastery and follow established rules and routines, educators should provide age-appropriate positive specific feedback in meaningful and caring ways. By establishing, following, and reinforcing expectations for all students within the classroom, educators will reduce the potential for challenging behavior and increase student engagement. When establishing responsive learning environments, educators should build mutually respectful relationships with students by demonstrating respect, cultural awareness, and accepting and valuing diverse learners.

**HLP 16: Use explicit instruction.**

Educators use explicit instruction to make learning new content, skills, and strategies accessible to students. When using explicit instruction, educators explain concepts by highlighting essential content, anticipating common misconceptions, and strategically choosing examples, non-examples, and language to facilitate understanding. They model and scaffold processes to enhance student understanding, readiness to apply skills, and completion of tasks. Educators provide students opportunities for supported and independent practice with feedback to learn, maintain, and generalize newly learned knowledge and skills to other relevant settings and situations. They choose when to model and scaffold steps or processes so that students can understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks.

**[Embedded HLP - What to Teach](https://highleveragepractices.org/structure-4-domains-22-hlps)**

**HLP 9: Teach social behaviors.**

Teachers should explicitly teach appropriate social (how to interact with others), emotional (how to regulate and express thoughts and emotions), and behavioral (how to manage myself) skills and behaviors. Skills should ideally be aligned with classroom and school-wide expectations. Similar to explicit instruction in academic skills, social, emotional, and behavior skills are taught through a tell (when to use the skills), show (provide examples and non-examples of the skill under specific social contexts), and practice (students engage in role plays) format. As highlighted throughout the HLPs, cultural inclusive pedagogies and practices (CIPP) is especially key when teaching social, emotional, and behavioral skills as students often learn these skills under different contexts. Students who master key social behaviors are ready to function within organized, consistent, and responsive learning environments.

**HLP 14: Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.**

Teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies promotes learner self-regulation and independence. Explicit instruction in cognitive and metacognitive strategies begins with the recognition of challenging learning tasks that require a strategic approach and moves to systematic instruction, multiple opportunities for student practice with feedback, and guidance related to using the strategy effectively in multiple settings and situations. Teaching and learning cognitive and metacognitive strategies involve not only understanding content but also using cognitive processes to solve problems, regulate attention, organize thoughts and materials, and monitor one’s own thinking. Cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction is delivered in stand-alone lessons or integrated into lessons on academic content through modeling and explicit instruction. Students learn to monitor and evaluate their performance in relation to specific goals and make necessary adjustments to improve learning.

**HLP 21: Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.**

When students with disabilities learn new information or skills but are unable to apply them to novel situations or settings, the utility of that instruction must be called into question. Educators and IEP teams carefully consider the various times, places, and situations in which students’ skills and knowledge might be needed and providing explicit instruction and other opportunities to practice in those situations. Educators use feedback within authentic learning settings to help students develop capacity to generalize their learning and skills.

**[Embedded HLPs - How to Teach](https://highleveragepractices.org/structure-4-domains-22-hlps)**

**HLP 13: Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.**

Adaptations are changes, which can take many forms, including accommodations and modifications. To adapt tasks and materials, educators may prioritize content coverage, simplify task directions, alter the difficulty level of material, reduce the amount of material provided, highlight relevant information, or present information using multiple and different examples. Educators make decisions about adapting tasks and materials based on the stated learning goals, the student’s individual needs, and the criteria for student success. Educators should identify areas within their explicit instruction to design and incorporate adaptations. In addition, there are opportunities for educators to incorporate culturally inclusive pedagogies and practices into their teaching.

**HLP 15: Provide scaffolded supports.**

Scaffolded supports provide assistance to students so they can complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently and with a high rate of success. Educators select powerful visual, verbal, and written supports; carefully calibrate them to students’ performance and understanding of learning tasks; use them flexibly; evaluate their effectiveness; and gradually remove them once they are no longer needed. As a critical partner to explicit instruction, providing scaffolded supports requires understanding student characteristics, breaking down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units, and identifying ways to provide scaffolds during supported practice. Some supports are planned before lessons, while some are provided responsively during instruction. Scaffolds can be technology-based. Educators should work with the IEP team to identify which scaffolds are needed, use data to evaluate impact, and decide when they are no longer needed.

**HLP 17: Use flexible grouping.**

The use of student groupings of various sizes and for a range of purposes is part of every educator’s repertoire. Educators deploy student groups to provide a setting for new instruction, group work, review activities, and everything in between. As some students require intensive instruction to support their needs, they can expect to be placed into targeted instructional groups. The use of flexible groupings offers educators options for designing and delivering instruction or promoting student active learning/ demonstrations to suit specific goals. However, it is not merely the size of the group that makes the difference in learning or other performance. In addition to the reduced number of students, educators must provide evidence-based or other effective teaching practices (such as explicit instruction) for meaningful outcomes to occur. Group configurations and sizes should be the result of deliberative educator collaboration, informed by data and student goals, to ensure a tight match between demands of the curriculum and student learning or other needs.

**HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement.**

Educators must have specific strategies and practices ready to deploy when teaching to ensure student engagement, and thus, learning. Student engagement is core to the development of knowledge and skills in academic and behavioral domains to ensure increased opportunities for learning and practice. In addition, educators who develop positive relationships with students based on mutual respect, trust, and consistent expectations are in a position to succeed. Successful teachers seeking to engage students forge connections between content and students’ lives, and use a range of culturally inclusive pedagogies and practices (CIPP) including teacher-led, peer-assisted, and student-regulated options throughout lessons. Student engagement is carefully monitored, and educators deliver positive and constructive feedback to sustain performance. Educators who use explicit instruction have a leg up for fostering student engagement thanks to the regular opportunities to respond, provide feedback, and engage in a student-centered teaching process inherent to that pillar HLP.

**HLP 19: Use assistive and instructional technologies.**

Assistive and instructional technology are everywhere in our world – especially within the field of education. Every IEP is required to have a statement of needed assistive technology supports and these can also be included amongst the list of formal accommodations or modifications. Instructional technology can also be useful for supporting student learning. Guided by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) instructional design framework and equity lens, educators select and implement assistive (AT) and instructional technologies (IT) to support the needs of students with disabilities. The process of AT selection and evaluation should follow the Student-Environment-Task-Tool (SETT; Zabala, 2005) approach. Educators, in collaboration with AT specialists, select and use augmentative and alternative communication devices and assistive and instructional technology products to promote student learning and independence. They evaluate new technology options given student needs; make informed instructional decisions grounded in evidence, professional wisdom and experience, and students’ IEP goals; and advocate for administrative support in technology implementation.

**HLP 8/22: Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students’ learning (HLP 22) and behavior (HLP 8).**

The effective provision of feedback is one of the most important instructional practices for teachers. Feedback is used to guide student learning and behavior and increase motivation, engagement, and independence. Effective feedback must be strategically delivered and focused on tasks, processes, or self-regulatory actions. Feedback should be goal directed and is most effective when the learner has a goal, and the feedback informs the learner how to improve performance toward reaching that goal. Feedback may be verbal, nonverbal, or written, and should be timely, contingent, genuine, meaningful, age appropriate, and at rates commensurate with task and phase of learning (i.e., acquisition, fluency, maintenance). In equitable and inclusive classrooms, educators take care to provide meaningful feedback to all students and recognize the potential for unconscious bias that may prompt lowered expectations or deficit thinking toward historically marginalized students. Educators must consider age, cultural background, learning preferences, and classroom dynamics when providing public or private feedback.