PART I

Planning Instruction

Effective teachers carefully plan their instruction. They decide *what to teach* and *how to teach* it. They also *communicate their expectations* for learning to their students. In this part of our resource, we describe evidenced-based strategies for each principle of planning instruction.

Component	*Principle*	*Strategy*
Planning Instruction (Part I)	Decide What to Teach (Chapter 1)	Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance Establish Logical Sequences of Instruction Consider Contextual Variables
	Decide How to Teach (Chapter 2)	Set Instructional Goals Establish Performance Standards Choose Instructional Methods and Materials Establish Grouping Structures Pace Instruction Appropriately Monitor Performance and Replan Instruction
	Communicate Realistic Expectations (Chapter 3)	Teach Goals, Objectives, and Standards Teach Students to Be Active, Involved Learners Teach Students Consequences of Performance

Planning Instruction Works: A Case Study

I've always considered myself an excellent planner, regardless of the fact that my principal reviews my plan book every Friday. I really want to be organized and prepared; you know, you have to be with 27 fifth graders in one room. So I've been very careful in deciding what and how to teach; I also know exactly what the instructional goals and objectives are each day. I have collaborated with our special education staff to ensure that each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) includes appropriate instructional goals and objectives that specify exactly how each objective will be taught and measured. The IEPs use the ABCC format: Actor (the student), Behavior (observable/measureable student action), Content (materials/methods used), and Criterion (how student performance will be measured). For example: "Given ten flashcards, John will be able to name ten CVC [consonant-vowel-consonant; e.g., h-a-t] words with 90 percent accuracy."

So this year, it has been so helpful to have Mr. Laird, my special education coteacher, in my classroom for most of the day. Between the two of us, we are able to circulate around the classroom and really monitor and record student learning, as well as respond to any questions or problems students might be having. When we compare our notes, we are able to make accurate decisions about what and how to teach the next day. It's really great because not only are we able to make immediate modifications for any of our students, we can be really smart about planning next steps and ensure that we're adhering to IEPs. We are also really able to "close the loop" between evaluating and planning instruction. (Related tactic is located in Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach under Strategy: Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance.)

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Decide What to Teach

Component	*Principle*	*Strategy*
Planning Instruction	Decide What to Teach	Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance Establish Logical Sequences of Instruction Consider Contextual Variables

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy:	**Assess to Identify Gaps in Performance**
Focus:	Basic Skills; Content Skills
Area:	Reading; Mathematics/Problem Solving/Calculating; Writing; Social Studies; Science; Arts; Fitness
Learning Difference:	Attention; Cognition High; Cognition Low; Cognition Mixed; Health; Study Skills; Social Knowledge; Receptive Language/Decoding (listening, reading); Expressive Language/Encoding (speaking, writing, spelling); Fine Motor (handwriting, articulation, etc.); Processing Verbal Information; Processing Visual Information
Disability Category:	Specific Learning Disabilities; Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Visual Impairments; Deafness/Blindness; Gifted and Talented; Hearing Impairments; Mental Retardation; Multiple Disabilities; Traumatic Brain Injury; Second Language Learning Needs; Serious Emotional Disturbance; Speech or Language Impairments; Orthopedic Impairments; Other Health Impairments; Autism

Tactic Title:	**Observing Students**
Problem:	There are times when teachers of students with disabilities evaluate the students and design modifications for their instruction based on the students' assessment test scores. But what do these scores mean? Do these scores allow the teacher to meet the students' needs appropriately?
Tactic:	Direct observation can be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the students. While the students are working, walk around the classroom to monitor and record student progress. Ask students questions regarding the lesson and the assignment. Use a checklist to assess desired objectives (see Student Observation Sheet). Write anecdotal records of students' learning, including notes of inappropriate behaviors, underdeveloped thinking skills, on-task behaviors, the understanding of content instruction, or any other noticeable behavior that needs to be documented.
Example:	Observing students as they are working provides a wonderful way for me to monitor their understanding. In fact, I use an Observational Journal to organize my notes during observation. I monitor not only my students' learning, but also their health.The number of days absent or their physical appearance can be a beneficial way of studying their work habits and social skills. (These areas are important to set the framework for the academic learning.) Gathering data through close observation also helps me when collaborating with parents and special education teachers. Parents

and teachers can study my anecdotal records of students showing daily occurrences of behaviors and progress. In this way, decisions concerning the students' education can be made appropriately.

Rosemary T., teacher

Benefits: Measuring learning progress informally can

- confirm other people's observations of the students, the students' test scores, or the students' behaviors;
- help identify and address individual student needs;
- lead to appropriate decisions for students' individualized programs; and
- meet the objectives of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Literature: Burns, M. S., Delclos, V. R., & Kulewicz, S. J. (1987). Effects of dynamic assessment on teachers' expectations of handicapped children. *American Educational Research Journal, 24,* 325–336.

Student Observation Sheet

Student	*Objective(s)*	*Understanding*	*Learning Style*	*Behavior*	*Comments/Notes*

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy:	**Establish Logical Sequences of Instruction**
Focus:	Basic Skills
Area:	Reading; Mathematics/Problem Solving/Calculating; Writing; Social Studies; Science; Arts; Fitness
Learning Difference:	Attention; Cognition High; Cognition Low; Cognition Mixed; Mobility; Hearing; Health; Memory Short-Term; Memory Long-Term; Seeing; Speaking/Talking; Study Skills; Fine Motor (handwriting, articulation, etc.); Gross Motor (running, walking, etc.); Processing Visual Information; Processing Verbal Information; Receptive Language/Decoding (listening, reading); Expressive Language/Encoding (speaking, writing, spelling); Social Knowledge; Self-Control; Social Behaviors
Disability Category:	Mental Retardation; Specific Learning Disabilities; Multiple Disabilities; Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Visual Impairments; Deafness/Blindness; Gifted and Talented; Traumatic Brain Injury; Hearing Impairments; Second Language Learning Needs; Serious Emotional Disturbance; Speech or Language Impairments; Orthopedic Impairments; Other Health Impairments; Autism
Tactic Title:	**Tailoring Curriculum to Individual Student Needs**
Problem:	Many teachers have difficulty creating a curriculum plan that encompasses the needs of all the students in a classroom. Often, they make changes to accommodate the needs of one student when a broader approach is equally effective.
Tactic:	Design the curriculum in the form of a grid, running objectives vertically and Bloom's taxonomy horizontally (see Curriculum Planner). Place activities in each box. Bloom's taxonomy organizes cognitive learning into six hierarchical (from lowest to highest) categories: Level I **Remembering:** recalling facts, basic concepts, and answers Level II **Understanding:** paraphrasing, describing, comparing, interpreting Level III **Applying:** solving problems using acquired knowledge in different ways Level IV **Analyzing:** breaking information into parts, making inferences, supporting generalizations

Level V **Evaluating:** making judgments about information, ideas, or quality of work

Level VI **Creating:** combining elements of information into new patterns or alternatives

Example: I've been a teacher for nine years. I know that, as a general education teacher, I am supposed to include students with disabilities. However, sometimes it is just so hard. I have 23 students and 5 with different types of disabilities: autism, learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, gifted and talented, and hearing impairments. Each one has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with specific goals and objectives, not to mention the range of abilities among all my other students. I've been working closely with Manuel, my special education coteacher, to develop our grids. We've been using the grids for several months now, and it really has simplified our planning. We also know that we are covering the IEPs.

Kay N., teacher

Benefits: Grid planning is efficient because it

- provides a great way to follow Bloom's taxonomy in everyday practice;
- helps teachers make conscious decisions about the level of thinking they expect from their students by choosing the appropriate level of Bloom's taxonomy;
- incorporates individualized differences;
- allows for higher-order thinking; and
- lays a foundation for knowledge and comprehension.

Literature:

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives* (abridged). New York: Longman.

Roberson, T. (1984). Determining curriculum content for the gifted. *Roeper Review, 6*, 137–139.

Curriculum Planner

Instructional Objectives	*Bloom's Taxonomy*					
	Remembering	*Understanding*	*Applying*	*Analyzing*	*Evaluating*	*Creating*
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

Chapter 1: Decide What to Teach

Strategy:	**Consider Contextual Variables**
Focus:	Basic Skills
Area:	Mathematics/Problem Solving/Calculating
Learning Difference:	Attention; Expressive Language/Encoding (speaking, writing, spelling); Cognition Mixed; Processing Visual Information
Disability Category:	Specific Learning Disabilities

Tactic Title:	**Mathematics in Daily Life**
Problem:	Students have difficulties in math because of their inability to read or simply because they do not enjoy it. In other words, variables (differences) in the context (room arrangement, student interest/motivation, instructional arrangements, learning demands, etc.) can have a direct effect on a student's ability to be successful.
Tactic:	First, decide on an activity that you know the student will eventually need to use in the future. One example might be an activity in which students are "paid" for the number of hours they are in school. They can then pay their bills with the money they earn. Individuals who plan to work and live independently need to learn this skill. Students can learn to balance their checkbooks every month. If they have extra money, they can use it to "buy" things. This activity continues through the whole year but expands every couple of months. For example, students might have to calculate the tax that is taken out of their checks or decide which kind of car insurance to buy.
Example:	I've used this tactic in my classroom; however I "pay" my students with corn kernels. My local camera shop donates empty film containers that my students use to store their kernels. I ask my parents to donate items that we store in a classroom cabinet with glass doors, so the goodies are always visible. Every now and then, we have an "auction" in which students can bid on desired items using their kernels. As the year progresses, the auctions are spaced further apart, and items become more costly. Nevertheless, they are using their mathematical thinking all the time. *Cindy K., teacher*
Benefits	Developing a student payment system • keeps students busy with math and helps them understand its importance; • helps students see how math is useful in the real world; • keeps students interested in math; and • provides a structure for students to build upon prior knowledge as the year goes on.
Literature:	Saarimaki, P. (1995). Math in your world. *National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 9*, 565–569.