



# High-Leverage Practices

## for Students with Disabilities

### HLP 16: Use Explicit Instruction

As noted for HLP 8/22, (Provide effective feedback), certain HLPs are so essential they are critical, repetitive components across many other HLPs. HLP 16, Use explicit instruction, is one of these practices. Explicit instruction is used to support student learning across academic, social, and behavioral tasks in all grade levels and content areas. In other words, one or more principles of explicit instruction are used in some capacity to implement every HLP from the social/behavioral and instruction domains. It is therefore a terrific starting place for the new professional seeking to learn about the HLPs and their role in supporting the needs of students with disabilities.

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 Charles A. Hughes, Paul J. Riccomini, and Jared R. Morris 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 Use Explicit Instruction

- Design carefully sequenced and organized lessons focused on critical content.
- Begin lessons with a clear statement of the lesson goals and their expectations of students.
- Review prior skills and knowledge before providing instruction in new content.
- Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units.
- Provide step-by-step demonstrations, as applicable, to explain a concept.
- Use clear and concise language throughout all lesson components and communicative interactions with students.
- Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples, as applicable.
- Provide guided practice with scaffolded supports, incorporating distributed and cumulative practice opportunities as well.
- Provide frequent and varied opportunities for student response, monitor student performance closely, and provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback.
- Maintain a brisk pace during lesson delivery and are attune to students' shifting needs regarding pace throughout the lesson.
- Help students organize new knowledge with a range of scaffolded supports.

#### Tips for School Leaders to Support Teachers

- Provide educators with instruction, professional development, and/or coaching in effectively planning for and delivering lessons that incorporate the key elements of explicit instruction.
- Observe educators to document the extent to which they are using the elements of explicit instruction and provide coaching and/or feedback on areas that require improvement.
- Provide support to teachers/teams around chunking complex skills/concepts and designing these lessons in a logical sequence.

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

- How does the language used impact students' understanding of concepts? How can a teacher be mindful of this?
- Why is it important to provide students with a clear goal and statement of expectations for each lesson?
- How can examples and non-examples support student understanding? Are there any barriers or special considerations that you can think of regarding use of examples/non-examples?
- Why is keeping a brisk pace considered a key element of explicit instruction?
- Why are frequent opportunities for student response so critical to an explicit lesson? What strategies can be used to elicit student responses?

## References & Additional Resources

### Online Resources

#### [ExplicitInstruction.org](#)

This companion site to the Archer and Hughes (2011) book features videos of Dr. Archer using explicit instruction with elementary and secondary students across various subject areas.

#### [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.

### Books

Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. Guilford Press.

### Journal Articles

Hughes, C. A. (2011). Effective instructional design and delivery for teaching task-specific learning strategies to students with learning disabilities. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 44(2). <https://doi.org/10.17161/fec.v44i2.6689>

Hughes, C. A., Morris, J. R., Therrien, W. J., & Benson, S. K. (2017). Explicit instruction: Historical and contemporary contexts. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 32(3), 140–148. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12142>

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>

Smith, J. L. M., Sáez, L., & Doabler, C. T. (2016). Using explicit and systematic instruction to support working memory. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 48(6), 275–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059916650633>

