**High Leverage Practices for General Educators (from Teaching Works** [**http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices**](http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices) **)**

1. Leading a group discussion

The purposes of a discussion are to build collective knowledge and capability in relation to specific instructional goals and to allow students to practice listening, speaking, and interpreting. The teacher and students contribute orally, listen actively, and respond to and learn from others’ contributions.

2. Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies

Explaining and modeling are practices for making a wide variety of content, academic practices, and strategies explicit to students. Teachers might rely on simple verbal explanations, sometimes with accompanying examples or representations. In teaching more complex academic practices and strategies, such as an algorithm for carrying out a mathematical operation or the use of metacognition to improve reading comprehension, teachers might choose a more elaborate kind of explanation that we are calling “modeling.” Modeling includes verbal explanation, but also thinking aloud and demonstrating.

3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students’ thinking

Teachers pose questions or tasks that provoke or allow students to share their thinking about specific academic content in order to evaluate student understanding, guide instructional decisions, and surface ideas that will benefit other students. To do this effectively, a teacher draws out a student’s thinking through carefully-chosen questions and tasks and considers and checks alternative interpretations of the student’s ideas and methods.

4. Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject-matter domain

Although there are important individual and cultural differences among students, there are also common patterns in the ways in which students think about and develop understanding and skill in relation to particular topics and problems. Teachers who are familiar with common patterns of student thinking and development and who are fluent in anticipating or identifying them are able to work more effectively and efficiently as they plan and implement instruction and evaluate student learning.

5. Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work

Each discipline has norms and routines that reflect the ways in which people in the field construct and share knowledge. These norms and routines vary across subjects but often include establishing hypotheses, providing evidence for claims, and showing one’s thinking in detail. Teaching students what they are, why they are important, and how to use them is crucial to building understanding and capability in a given subject. Teachers may use explicit explanation, modeling, and repeated practice to do this.

6. Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson

Teachers must take care to coordinate and adjust instruction during a lesson. This includes explicitly connecting parts of the lesson, managing transitions carefully, and making changes to the plan in response to student progress.

7. Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior

Clear expectations for student behavior and careful work on the teacher’s part to teach productive behavior to students, reward it, and strategically redirect off-task behavior help create classrooms that are productive learning environments for all.

8. Implementing organizational routines

Teachers organize time, space, materials, and students strategically and deliberately teach students how to complete tasks such as lining up at the door, passing out papers, and asking to participate in class discussion. This can include demonstrating and rehearsing routines and maintaining them consistently.

9. Setting up and managing small group work

To use groups effectively, teachers choose tasks that require and foster collaborative work, issue clear directions that permit groups to work semi-independently, and implement mechanisms for holding students accountable for both collective and individual learning.

10. Building respectful relationships with students

Techniques for doing this include greeting students positively every day, having frequent, brief, “check in” conversations with students to demonstrate care and interest, and following up with students who are experiencing difficult or special personal situations.

11. Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers

Regular communication between teachers and parents/guardians supports student learning. Teachers communicate with parents to provide information about students’ academic progress, behavior, or development; to seek information and help; and to request parental involvement in school.

12. Learning about students’ cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction

This includes being deliberate about trying to understand the cultural norms for communicating and collaborating that prevail in particular communities, how certain cultural and religious views affect what is considered appropriate in school, and the topics and issues that interest individual students and groups of students. It also means keeping track of what is happening in students’ personal lives so as to be able to respond appropriately when an out-of-school experience affects what is happening in school.

13. Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students

Explicit goals help teachers to maintain coherent, purposeful, and equitable instruction over time. Setting effective goals involves analysis of student knowledge and skills in relation to established standards and careful efforts to establish and sequence interim benchmarks that will help ensure steady progress toward larger goals.

14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons

Teachers design and sequence lessons with an eye toward providing opportunities for student inquiry and discovery and include opportunities for students to practice and master foundational concepts and skills before moving on to more advanced ones.

15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons

Teachers use a variety of informal but deliberate methods to assess what students are learning during and between lessons. They may include, for example, simple questioning, short performance tasks, or journal or notebook entries.

16. Selecting and designing formal assessments of student learning

Effective summative assessments provide teachers with rich information about what students have learned and where they are struggling in relation to specific learning goals. In composing and selecting assessments, teachers consider validity, fairness, and efficiency.

17. Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments

Teachers must analyze student productions, including assessments of all kinds, looking for patterns that will guide their efforts to assist specific students and the class as a whole and inform future instruction.

18. Providing oral and written feedback to students

Effective feedback helps focus students’ attention on specific qualities of their work; it highlights areas needing improvement; and delineates ways to improve. Good feedback is specific, not overwhelming in scope, and focused on the academic task, and supports students’ perceptions of their own capability.

19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

Analyzing instruction may take place individually or collectively and involves identifying salient features of the instruction and making reasoned hypotheses for how to improve.

**High Leverage Practices suggested for Special Educators (CEC/CEEDAR, 2016 *draft document*)**

* + - 1. Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.

Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem-solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning.

* + - 1. Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professional and families. Teachers lead and participate in a range of meetings. They develop a meeting agenda, allocate time to meet goals of the agenda and lead in ways the encourage consensus building, encouraging the sharing of multiple perspectives, active listening, and soliciting feedback.
      2. Collaborate with families to support student learning and needed services. Teachers should respectfully and effectively communicate considering the background, socioeconomic status, language, culture, and priorities of the family. Teachers advocate for resources to help students meet instructional, behavioral, social, and transition goals. In building positive relationships with students, teachers encourage students to self- advocate, with the goal of fostering self-determination over time. They also work with families to self-advocate and support their child’s learning.
      3. Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student’s strengths and needs. Teachers should collect, aggregate, and interpret data from multiple sources (informal and formal observations, work samples, curriculum based measures, FBA, school file, analysis of curriculum, information from families, and other data sources). This information is used to create an individualized profile of the student’s strengths and needs.
      4. Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs. Special educators must understand each assessment’s purpose, help key stakeholders understand how culture and language influence interpretation of data generated, and be able to use data to collaboratively develop and implement an individualized education and transition plan that includes: goals that are standards based, appropriate accommodations and modifications, fair grading practices, and transition goals that are aligned with student needs.
      5. Use student assessment, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes. Special education teachers have the skill to manage and engage in ongoing data collection using curriculum-based measures, informal classroom assessments, observations of student performance and behavior, self-assessment of classroom instruction, and discussions with key stakeholders (students, families, and other professionals).
      6. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.

Teachers should establish age-appropriate and culturally responsive expectations, routines and procedures within their classrooms that are positively stated and explicitly taught and practiced across the school year to build and foster positive relationships.

* + - 1. Teachers provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students’ learning and behavior. Effective feedback must be strategically delivered and goal directed, i.e., feedback is most effective when the learner has a goal and the feedback informs the learner regarding areas needing improvement and ways to improve performance. Feedback\* may be verbal, non-verbal, 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).

9. Teach social behaviors. Teachers should explicitly teach appropriate interpersonal skills, including communication, and self-management, aligning lessons with classroom and school-wide expectations for student behavior.

10. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans. A comprehensive FBA results in a hypothesis about the function of the student’s problem behavior. Once the function is determined, a behavior intervention plan is developed that a) teaches the student a pro-social replacement behavior that will serve the same or similar function, b) alters the environment to make the replacement behavior more efficient and effective than the problem behavior, c) alters the environment to no longer allow the problem behavior to access the previous outcome, and d) includes on-going data collection to monitor progress.

11. Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals. Teachers use grade level standards, assessment data and learning progressions, students’ prior knowledge, IEP goals and benchmarks to make decisions about what is most critical to emphasize, and develop long- and short-term goals accordingly.

12. Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal. Teachers sequence lessons that build off each other and make connections explicit in both planning and delivery. They activate students’ prior knowledge and show how each lesson “fits” with previous ones. Planning involves careful consideration of learning goals, what is involved in reaching the goals, and allocating time accordingly.

13. Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals. Teachers select materials and tasks based on student needs, use relevant technology, and/or make modifications by highlighting relevant information, changing task directions, and decreasing amounts of material. Teachers make strategic decisions on content coverage (essential curriculum elements), meaningfulness of tasks to meet stated goals, and criteria for student success.

14. Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence. Learning involves not only understanding content but using cognitive processes to solve problems, regulate attention, organize thoughts and materials and monitor one’s own thinking. Self-regulation and metacognitive strategy instruction is integrated into lessons on academic content through modeling and explicit instruction.

15. Scaffold instruction. Teachers select powerful physical, visual, verbal and/or written scaffolds, carefully calibrate them to students’ needs in relation to learning tasks, use them flexibly, evaluate their effectiveness, and gradually remove them once students gain increased independence and understanding.

16. Use explicit instruction. Teachers strategically choose examples and non-examples and language to facilitate student understanding, anticipate common misconceptions, highlight essential content and remove distracting information. They model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently.

17. Use flexible grouping. Teachers use small learning groups to accommodate learning differences, promote in-depth academic-related interactions, and teach students to work collaboratively. They choose tasks that require collaboration, issue directives that promote productive and autonomous group interactions, and embed strategies that maximize learning opportunities and equalize participation.

18. Use strategies to promote active student engagement. Teachers promote engagement by connecting learning to students’ lives (e. g., knowing students’ academic and cultural backgrounds) and using a variety of teacher-led (e.g., choral responding and response cards), peer-assisted (e. g., cooperative learning and peer tutoring), student-regulated (e.g., self- management), and technology-supported strategies shown empirically to increase student engagement.

19. Use assistive and instructional technologies. Teachers select and use augmentative and alternative communication devices and assistive and instructional technology products to promote student learning and independence within a UDL framework. They evaluate new technology options given student needs, make informed instructional decisions grounded in evidence, professional wisdom, and students’ IEP goals and advocate for administrative support in technology implementation.

20. Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings. They promote maintenance by systematically using schedules of reinforcement, providing frequent material reviews and teaching skills that are reinforced by the natural environment beyond the classroom.

21. Provide intensive instruction. Teachers match the intensity of instruction to the intensity of the student’s learning and behavioral challenges. Intensive instruction involves working with students with similar needs on a small number of high priority, clearly defined skills and/or concepts critical to academic success. Teachers group students based on common learning needs, clearly define learning goals and use systematic, explicit, and well-paced instruction. They frequently monitor students’ progress and adjust their instruction accordingly. Within intensive instruction, students have many opportunities to respond and receive immediate, corrective feedback with teachers and peers to practice what they are learning.