SPECIAL EDUCATION

in Today's Diverse Classrooms

Meeting the Needs of Students With Exceptionalities

Shantel M. Farnan, EdD
Ruby L. Owiny, PhD

Plural Publishing Inc.

PLURAL PUBLISHING
INC.

9177 Aero Drive, Suite B
San Diego, CA 92123

email: information@pluralpublishing.comm
website: https://www.pluralpublishing.com

Copyright © 2027 by Plural Publishing, Inc.

Typeset in 10.5/13 Minion Pro by Achorn International.
Printed in Canada by Friesens Inc.

All rights, including that of translation, reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, including photocopying, recording, taping, web distribution, or information storage and retrieval systems without the prior written consent of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this text, contact us by
Telephone: (866) 758-7251
Fax: (888) 758-7255
email: permissions@pluralpublishing.com

Every attempt has been made to contact the copyright holders for material originally printed in another source. If any have been inadvertently overlooked, the publisher will gladly make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Names: Farnan, Shantel, editor. | Owiny, Ruby L., editor.
Title: Special education in today's diverse classrooms: meeting the needs of students with exceptionalities / [edited by] Shantel M. Farnan, EdD, Ruby L. Owiny, PhD.
Description: San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing, [2027] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2025019107 (print) | LCCN 2025019108 (ebook) | ISBN 9781635507508 (paperback) | ISBN 9781635504781 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Special education--United States. | Inclusive education--United States.
Classification: LCC LC3981.S595 2027 (print) | LCC LC3981 (ebook) | DDC 371.90973--dc23/eng/20250605
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025019107
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025019108

Brief Table of Contents

Introduction *xvii*
About the Authors *xxiii*
Acknowledgments *xxv*
Contributors *xxvii*
Reviewers *xxix*

Chapter 1. Inclusive Education: Students With Exceptionalities, the Law, and the Individualized Education Program 1
Shantel M. Farnan

Chapter 2. Foundations of Inclusion 19
Ruby L. Owiny

Chapter 3. Collaborating With School Professionals for Student Success 45
Shantel M. Farnan and Tamara G. Lynn

Chapter 4. Fostering Effective Home-School Partnerships to Support Student Learning 67
Shantel M. Farnan and Sarah Jin Wong

Chapter 5. Understanding Students' Strengths and Needs Through Multiple Sources and Assessment 91
Shantel M. Farnan and Adam M. Moore

Chapter 6. Involving Collaborators in Assessment 109
Shantel M. Farnan

Chapter 7. Data-Driven Planning 125
Shantel M. Farnan and Adam M. Moore

Chapter 8. Establishing Safe, Positive, and Culturally Sustaining Classroom Environments 145
Ruby L. Owiny and Jennifer D. Walker

Chapter 9. Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments to Increase Positive Behaviors 171
Ruby L. Owiny and Kathleen A. Boothe

Chapter 10. Designing Instruction Toward Specific Learning Goals 195
Ruby L. Owiny and Jody R. Siker

Chapter 11. Adaptations and Using Technology to Meet Student Needs 219
Shantel M. Farnan and Mindy S. Ely

Chapter 12. Implementing Strategies to Support Learning 241
Ruby L. Owiny and Shantel M. Farnan

Chapter 13. Scaffolding Toward Independence, Maintenance, and Generalization 265
Shantel M. Farnan

Chapter 14. Making Instructional Decisions for Student Success 279
Ruby L. Owiny

Chapter 15. Engaging Students in Active Learning 297
Ruby L. Owiny

Glossary 313
References 319
Index 335

Detailed Table of Contents

Introduction *xvii*
About the Authors *xxiii*
Acknowledgments *xxv*
Contributors *xxvii*
Reviewers *xxix*

Chapter 1. Inclusive Education: Students With Exceptionalities, the Law, and the Individualized Education Program 1
Shantel M. Farnan
Learning Outcomes 2
Chapter Glossary 2
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 3
Introduction 3
History of Special Education 3
Key People Shaping Special Education 4
Evolution of Special Education 5
What Is Special Education? 6
Key Legislation and Litigation 7
Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) 8
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 8
Section 504 10
Litigation 10
Students With Exceptionalities 12
Special Education Process 13
Individualized Education Program 14
Services and Continuum of Placements 15
Inclusive Language and Education 16
Chapter Summary 16
Application to the Classroom 17

Chapter 2. Foundations of Inclusion 19
Ruby L. Owiny
Learning Outcomes 20
Chapter Glossary 20
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 21
Introduction 21

Individualized Education Program 22
What Are the Student's Unique Academic and Functional Needs That Must Be Addressed in the Individualized Education Program? 22
What Annual Goals Must Be Included in the Individualized Education Program to Address the Student's Needs? 22
How Will the Progress Toward the Individualized Education Program Goals Be Monitored? 22
What Services Will Be Provided to the Student to Reach the Identified Goals? 23
Providing a Free Appropriate Public Education 23
Frameworks to Promote Quality Inclusion 24
Evidence-Based Tiered Frameworks 25
Response to Intervention 25
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports 26
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support 26
Universal Design for Learning 28
Universally Designed Curriculum 30
Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning 32
Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy and Practice 34
High-Leverage Practices 36
Addressing Individualized Education Program Needs 38
Chapter Summary 43
Application to the Classroom 43

Chapter 3. Collaborating With School Professionals for Student Success 45
Shantel M. Farnan and Tamara G. Lynn
Learning Outcomes 46
Chapter Glossary 46
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 47
Alyce's Story 48
Introduction 50
High-Leverage Practice 1 Defined 50
High-Leverage Practice 1 in the School System 51
Collaborative Culture 52
Collaborative Roles 53
Role Perceptions 53
Types of Collaborative Teams 54
General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, and Paraprofessionals 54
Purposes of Collaborative Teams 55
Performing as an Effective Collaborator 56
The Benefits of Collaboration 56
Application to Alyce 56
Consultation and Teams 58
The Consultation Process 58
Co-teaching 59
Teaching Approaches 60
A Deeper Understanding of Giftedness and Twice Exceptional 61
Definition of Gifted and Talented 61
Definition of Twice Exceptional 62
Causes 62

Characteristics 63
Process for Identification of Giftedness and Twice Exceptional 64
Chapter Summary 65
Application to the Classroom 66

Chapter 4. Fostering Effective Home-School Partnerships to Support Student Learning 67
Shantel M. Farnan and Sarah Jin Wong
Learning Outcomes 68
Chapter Glossary 68
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 69
Oliver and His Family's Journey 70
Introduction 72
High-Leverage Practices 2 and 3 Defined 73
High-Leverage Practices 2 and 3 in Practice 74
Family as a System 75
Impact of Disability 75
Fostering Trust With Families 76
Communicating With Families 76
Facilitating Meetings 77
Asset-Based Approach 78
Application to Oliver 78
Valuing Family and Building Trust 79
Respectful and Meaningful Communication 80
Facilitating Effective Meetings 81
Championing Self-Determination and Advocacy 83
A Deeper Understanding of Intellectual Disability 85
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 85
Causes 86
Characteristics 86
Intellectual Functioning 87
Adaptive Behavior 87
Conceptual 87
Practical 88
Social 88
Communication 88
Process for Identification of Intellectual Disability 88
Chapter Summary 90
Application to the Classroom 90

Chapter 5. Understanding Students' Strengths and Needs Through Multiple Sources and Assessment 91
Shantel M. Farnan and Adam M. Moore
Learning Outcomes 92
Chapter Glossary 92
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 93
Hazel's Story 93
Introduction 96

High-Leverage Practice 4 Defined 96
High-Leverage Practice 4 in the Classroom 97
Assessment Provisions Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) 97
Child Find 97
Evaluation Timeline 97
Data Sources Used to Determine Student Progress 98
Review of Existing Data 99
Eligibility Within Special Education 100
Role of General Education Teacher 102
Role of Special Education Teacher 103
Application to Hazel 103
A Deeper Understanding of Developmental Delays 104
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 104
Causes 104
Characteristics 105
Process for Identification of Developmental Delay 105
Chapter Summary 106
Application to the Classroom 107

Chapter 6. Involving Collaborators in Assessment 109
Shantel M. Farnan
Learning Outcomes 110
Chapter Glossary 110
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 111
Scott's Story 111
Introduction 113
High-Leverage Practice 5 Defined 114
High-Leverage Practice 5 in the School System 114
Involvement of Partners in the Assessment Process 115
Purposes of Assessment 115
Interpretation of Assessment Results 115
Assessment Results for Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 116
Importance of Communication and Collaboration 117
Development of Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy and Practices and Transition Plans 117
Application to Scott 118
A Deeper Understanding of Traumatic Brain Injury 119
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 119
Causes 120
Characteristics 120
Process for Identification of Traumatic Brain Injury 121
Chapter Summary 122
Application to the Classroom 123

Chapter 7. Data-Driven Planning 125
Shantel M. Farnan and Adam M. Moore
Learning Outcomes 126
Chapter Glossary 126

Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 127
Grace's Story 127
Introduction 130
High-Leverage Practice 6 Defined 130
High-Leverage Practice 6 in the Classroom 131
Selecting Appropriate Interventions, Instruction, and Support Through Multi-Tiered System of Support Data 131
Ongoing Data Collection and Assessment 132
Curriculum-Based Measures 133
Progress Monitoring 133
Data-Driven Planning and Adjustments 133
Formative Assessments 134
Collecting Behavioral and Functional Data 135
Universal Design for Learning, High-Leverage Practice 6, and Data Collection 136
Application to Grace 136
A Deeper Understanding of Multiple Disabilities 138
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 138
Causes 138
Characteristics 139
Process for Identification of Multiple Disabilities 140
Alternate Assessments 141
Chapter Summary 141
Application to the Classroom 143

Chapter 8. Establishing Safe, Positive, and Culturally Sustaining Classroom Environments 145
Ruby L. Owiny and Jennifer D. Walker
Learning Outcomes 146
Chapter Glossary 146
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 147
Sophia's Story 148
Introduction 150
High-Leverage Practices 7, 8/22, and 9 Defined 150
High-Leverage Practice 7 in the Classroom 151
High-Leverage Practice 8/22 in the Classroom 152
High-Leverage Practice 9 in the Classroom 152
Trauma 154
Application to Sophia 155
Expectations, Routines, and Procedure Development 155
Behavior-Specific Praise 156
Correction Procedures 158
Opportunities to Respond 160
Climate of Respect 162
Social Skills Instruction 162
A Deeper Understanding of Other Health Impairment 163
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 163
Characteristics 164

Early Signs and Symptoms 164
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 164
Epilepsy 165
Asthma 166
Causes 166
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 166
Epilepsy 166
Asthma 166
Process for Identification of Other Health Impairment 167
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 167
Epilepsy 167
Asthma 168
Chapter Summary 168
Application to the Classroom 169

Chapter 9. Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments to Increase Positive Behaviors 171
Ruby L. Owiny and Kathleen A. Boothe
Learning Outcomes 172
Chapter Glossary 172
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 173
Eligrace's Story 174
Introduction 175
High-Leverage Practice 10 Defined 176
High-Leverage Practice 10 in the Classroom 177
Role of the General Educator 179
Role of the Special Educator 179
Application to Eligrace: Conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment 180
Define the Target Behavior 180
Collect Data 181
Indirect Data Collection Methods 181
Direct Data Collection Methods 181
Develop a Hypothesis Statement 183
Writing a Behavior Support Plan 185
Identify an Appropriate Replacement or Desired Behavior 185
Identify Appropriate Interventions 185
Create Observable and Measurable Goals 187
Teach the Plan to the Student 188
A Deeper Understanding of Emotional Disturbance 188
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 188
Causes 189
Characteristics 190
Behavioral 191
Academic 191
Process for Identification of Emotional Disturbance 192
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports 192
Chapter Summary 193
Application to the Classroom 193

Chapter 10. Designing Instruction Toward Specific Learning Goals 195
Ruby L. Owiny and Jody R. Siker
Learning Outcomes 196
Chapter Glossary 196
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 197
Starry and Maisie's Story 198
Introduction 200
High-Leverage Practices 11 and 12 Defined 201
High-Leverage Practices 11 and 12 in the Classroom 202
Disability Identity and Inclusion 202
Perception of Competence 203
Welcome Into the School Community 204
Access to Grade-Level Curriculum 205
Appropriate Accommodations and Services 206
Specially Designed Instruction 208
Designing Instruction Around Goals 208
Assessing Instruction 208
Executive Functioning Instruction 209
Culturally Inclusive Pedagogies and Practices 209
A Deeper Understanding of Deafness and Hearing Impairment 210
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 210
Causes 210
Characteristics 211
Early Signs and Symptoms 211
Infants and Toddlers 211
Preschool Through School Age 211
Process for Identification of Deafness and Hearing Impairment 211
Transition 212
Required Components 213
Chapter Summary 214
Application to the Classroom 216

Chapter 11. Adaptations and Using Technology to Meet Student Needs 219
Shantel M. Farnan and Mindy S. Ely
Learning Outcomes 220
Chapter Glossary 220
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 221
The Story of Ethan and Elissa 222
Introduction 225
High-Leverage Practices 13 and 19 Defined 225
High-Leverage Practices 13 and 19 in the Classroom 226
Adaptations for the Classroom: Instruction, Materials, and Environment 227
Using Clear and Concise Vocabulary in Instruction 227
Making Images Accessible 228
Making Materials Accessible 230
Assistive and Instructional Technology 230
Lighting and Contrast 230
Specialized Instructional Needs in Reading Media 231

Reading Using Print Media 231
Reading Using Braille Media 231
Reading Using Auditory Media 233
The Role of Access Technology 233
Application to Ethan and Elissa 234
Benefits to All Students 235
A Deeper Understanding of Visual Impairment, Including Blindness and Deaf/Blindness 236
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 236
Causes 236
Characteristics 237
Process for Identification of Visual Impairment and Blindness 238
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition of Deaf-Blindness 238
Chapter Summary 238
Application to the Classroom 239

Chapter 12. Implementing Strategies to Support Learning 241
Ruby L. Owiny and Shantel M. Farnan
Learning Outcomes 242
Chapter Glossary 242
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 243
Quinten's Story 244
Introduction 246
High-Leverage Practice 14 Defined 246
High-Leverage Practice 14 in the Classroom 249
Application to Quinten 250
Self-Regulated Strategy Development 251
Comprehension Strategies 252
Vocabulary 253
Keyword Strategy 253
Graphic Organizers 253
Content Enhancement Routines 254
Memory Strategies 255
Mnemonics 255
Cue Cards 256
Task Analysis 256
A Deeper Understanding of Specific Learning Disabilities 257
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 257
Causes 258
Characteristics 259
Reading 259
Mathematics 260
Written Expression 260
Process for Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities 260
Discrepancy Model 260
Response to Intervention for Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities 261
Chapter Summary 262
Application to the Classroom 263

Chapter 13. Scaffolding Toward Independence, Maintenance, and Generalization 265
Shantel M. Farnan
Learning Outcomes 266
Chapter Glossary 266
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 267
Ben's Story 267
Introduction 271
High-Leverage Practices 15 and 21 Defined 271
High-Leverage Practices 15 and 21 in the Classroom 272
Scaffolded Supports 272
Generalization 273
Maintenance 274
Application to Ben 274
A Deeper Understanding of Autism 275
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 275
Causes 275
Characteristics 276
Process for Identification of Autism 277
Chapter Summary 278
Application to the Classroom 278

Chapter 14. Making Instructional Decisions for Student Success 279
Ruby L. Owiny
Learning Outcomes 280
Chapter Glossary 280
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 281
Kylee's Story 281
Introduction 283
High-Leverage Practice 16 Defined 283
High-Leverage Practice 17 Defined 284
High-Leverage Practice 20 Defined 285
High-Leverage Practices 16, 17, and 20 in the Classroom 285
Application to Kylee 288
Collaboration Between General Education and Special Education Staff 289
Universal Design for Learning and Differentiation 289
Other High-Leverage Practices at Work 290
Accommodations 291
A Deeper Understanding of Speech or Language Impairment 292
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 292
Causes 293
Characteristics 293
Early Signs and Symptoms 293
Educational Impact 294
Process for Identification of Speech-Language Impairment 294
Chapter Summary 295
Application to the Classroom 296

Chapter 15. Engaging Students in Active Learning 297
Ruby L. Owiny
Learning Outcomes 298
Chapter Glossary 298
Questions to Prompt Your Thinking 299
Willow's Story 299
Introduction 301
High-Leverage Practice 18 Defined 301
High-Leverage Practice 18 in the Classroom 302
Opportunities to Respond to Increase Engagement 303
Turn-and-Talk 303
Think-Pair-Share 303
Guided Notes 303
Response Cards 304
Choral Responding 305
Application to Willow 306
A Deeper Understanding of Orthopedic Impairment 308
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Definition 308
Characteristics 308
Cerebral Palsy 308
Spina Bifida 309
Muscular Dystrophy 309
Causes 309
Cerebral Palsy 309
Spina Bifida 310
Muscular Dystrophy 310
Process for Identification of Orthopedic Impairment 310
Chapter Summary 311
Application to the Classroom 311

Glossary *313*
References *319*
Index *335*

Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

Welcome to *Special Education in Today's Diverse Classrooms: Meeting the Needs of Students With Exceptionalities*. This book is not your typical introduction to special education. Rather than focusing heavily on clinical perspectives, this text places children and families at the center, emphasizing humanity and diversity within the special education landscape. As Maya Angelou eloquently stated in her conversation with Oprah Winfrey, "Human beings are more alike than we are unalike." This principle is woven throughout the pages of this book that aims to connect readers to the lives of real people with disabilities, their families, and the support systems within schools.

The primary goal of this book is to provide all educators with high-leverage practices (HLPs) and evidence-based strategies that are both practical and inclusive. Through the lens of HLPs, this text puts the primary focus on universal design for learning (UDL), tiered supports, culturally inclusive practices and pedagogy, and evidence-based practices (EBPs). This book serves as a comprehensive resource for creating positive learning environments for all students. This text addresses the history and legal aspects of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the disability categories set forth by the act. The characteristics and experiences of students are interwoven throughout the text, while offering insights into how students with these disabilities can be supported in inclusive classroom environments.

HLPs are a way to narrow down the long list of initiatives, professional development topics, and research on EBPs to provide effective education to students. These are practices for educators to use for students with disabilities regardless of their classroom environment or type of teacher. This textbook focuses on this smaller set of practices and aims to provide knowledge to educators of all types. But keep in mind that for general educators and special class educators, the course in which this text is used may be the only one specifically aimed at the use of evidence-based, practical, and inclusive strategies. This book is an introduction to special education with the premise that if someone is becoming a special education teacher, they will dive deeper into much of this content in additional methods courses.

Structure

The structure of this textbook is carefully designed to guide readers through key concepts and practices in special education. Each chapter offers an overlap of inclusionary practices, making this book a valuable resource not just for understanding theory but also for applying it in diverse classroom settings. The chapters include vignettes—true accounts from individuals with disabilities, their families, and educators—offering authentic perspectives that go beyond case studies. Due to the authenticity of these vignettes that serve as case studies often requested by educator preparation programs, readers will see many positive educational experiences but sometimes be exposed to negative interactions students or families have experienced as well. Each vignette gives context to one student and family, but throughout the chapter, the applications to that student are intended to

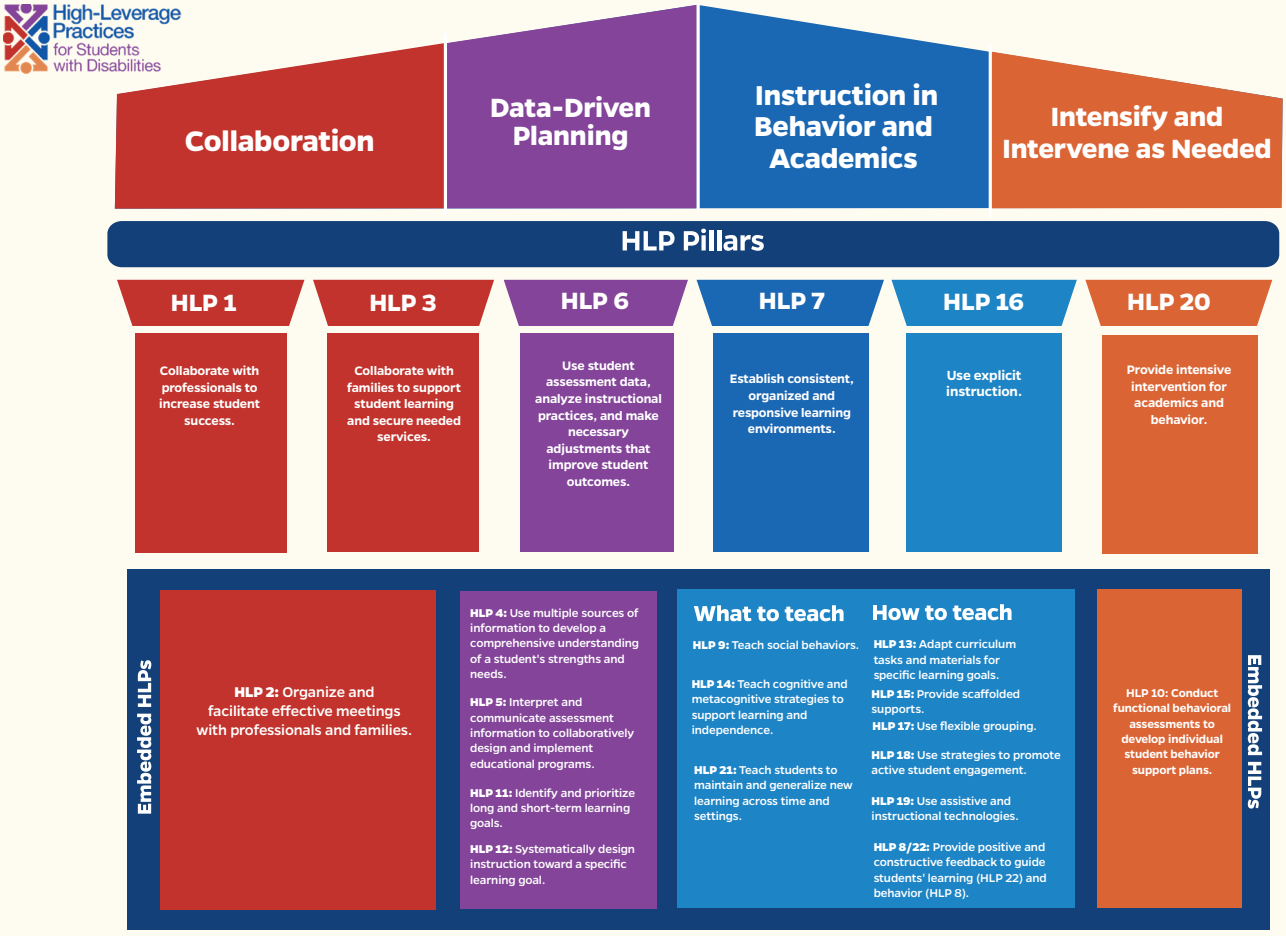

Figure I–1. High-leverage practices pillars. *Source*: © CEEDAR Center, The Council for Exceptional Children. Used with permission.

bring real-world authenticity to the fact that all children are different even if they have the same disability. It also allows for bridging theory to practice with the realization HLPs and evidence-based strategies can be used with a variety of children with and without disabilities.

Learning outcomes are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators and the High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Students With Disabilities. These HLPs, originally introduced by McLeskey and colleagues (2017) and revised and updated by the CEC and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center (Aceves & Kennedy, 2024), are not merely mentioned but are the focal point of the book, offering tomorrow's educators strategies to support all learners effectively. HLPs 2.0 are driven by collaboration, data-driven planning, instruction in both behavior and academics, and intensifying and intervening as needed, which are referred to as *domains*. There are six HLP pillars practiced under these domains that are described as "the most essential HLPs for educators to master and implement" (Aceves & Kennedy, 2024, p. 10). The embedded HLPs under the pillars are key to implementation of the pillar practices and are all covered in practical approaches within this textbook, as shown in Figure I–1 and Table I–1.

TABLE I–1. Chapters in the Text and the High-Leverage Practices Covered

Chapter and Title[a]	HLP	HLP Summary
3. Collaborating With School Professionals for Student Success	1	Collaborate with professionals to increase student success (HLP Pillar).
4. Fostering Effective Home-School Partnerships to Support Student Learning	2	Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families (Embedded HLP).
	3	Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services (HLP Pillar).
5. Understanding Students' Strengths and Needs Through Multiple Sources and Assessment	4	Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs (Embedded HLP).
6. Involving Collaborators in Assessment	5	Interpret and communicate assessment information to collaboratively design and implement educational programs (Embedded HLP).
7. Data-Driven Planning	6	Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes (HLP Pillar).
8. Establishing Safe, Positive, and Culturally Sustaining Classroom Environments	7	Establish a consistent, organized, and responsive learning environment (HLP Pillar).
	8/22	Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide student learning (HLP 22) and behavior (HLP 8) (Embedded HLPs).
	9	Teach social behaviors (Embedded HLP).
9. Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments to Increase Positive Behaviors	10	Conduct functional, behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans (Embedded HLP).
10. Designing Instruction Toward Specific Learning Goals	11	Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals (Embedded HLP).
	12	Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal (Embedded HLP).
11. Adapting Curriculum and Identifying Assistive Technology to Meet Student Needs	13	Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals (Embedded HLP).
	19	Use assistive and instructional technologies (Embedded HLP).
12. Implementing Strategies to Support Learning	14	Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence (Embedded HLP).
13. Scaffolding Toward Independence, Maintenance, and Generalization	15	Provide scaffolded supports (Embedded HLP).
	21	Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings (Embedded HLP).

(*continues*)

TABLE I–1. (*continued*)

Chapter and Title[a]	HLP	HLP Summary
14. Making Instructional Decisions for Student Success	16	Use explicit instruction (HLP Pillar).
	17	Use flexible grouping (Embedded HLP).
	20	Provide intensive instruction for academics and behavior (HLP Pillar).
15. Engaging Students in Active Learning	18	Use strategies to promote active student engagement (Embedded HLP).

Note. HLP = high-leverage practice. Adapted from *High-Leverage Practices for Students With Disabilities* (2nd ed.), by T. C. Aceves & M. J. Kennedy (Eds.), 2024, Council for Exceptional Children and CEEDAR Center.
[a]Chapters 1 and 2 cover foundational aspects of the text and therefore do not include specific HLPs.

Professional Organizations and Resources

This textbook aligns with the standards set by prominent organizations in the field of special education. The CEC, the largest professional organization dedicated to the success of individuals with disabilities, provides the foundational standards upon which this book is built. Additionally, CEEDAR focuses on preparing educators to support students with disabilities in achieving college and career readiness.

Embedded throughout the chapters are QR codes that provide links to resources to increase exposure and knowledge about specific topics. These resources, alongside chapter glossaries, learning outcomes, and questions to prompt thinking, are designed to enrich the reader's understanding and application of inclusive practices.

Embedded Concepts, Language, and Features

By focusing on both people-first and identity-first language and embedding UDL, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSSs), inclusive education, and culturally inclusive pedagogies and practices (CIPP) within each chapter, this textbook strives to prepare educators to meet the needs of all students, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for everyone. Specific examples of UDL and MTSS are found throughout the text to lean into these general education concepts for all students. It is known that MTSS is the preferred and current framework that uses research-based strategies to support a student's holistic needs. The authors also acknowledge that not all schools have transitioned from response to intervention and positive behavioral interventions and supports separately to MTSS so there will be nods to those specific frameworks as well.

Throughout the book, you will see the use of CIPP, which is an inclusive term that encompasses other similar concepts such as culturally responsive, culturally sustaining, and culturally relevant practices. To be more inclusive and acknowledge the diverse structures of today's families, the term *family* is used in most of the text's content. Family could potentially include guardians, grandparents, siblings, or other caregivers who actively participate in a student's education.

Supplementary Materials to Aid Teaching and Learning

To support the learning journey, this textbook offers a range of supplementary materials. On the companion site, readers and instructors will find presentation slides, test banks, quizzes, and further activities designed to deepen their understanding and application of the material. The book aims to create an interactive experience, linking online content with the text to encourage a broad perspective on the information presented.

Key components essential for all educators, such as positive classroom environments, assistive technology, data-driven planning, and timely interventions, are integrated throughout the chapters. Throughout this text and in future editions, the authors will provide information on current research, trends, and topics related to special education. This edition presents concepts such as trauma, neurodiversity, social and emotional learning, assistive technology, and new instructional technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI). With the increase in the use of AI to provide ways to support educators, the authors utilized it to generate the Application to the Classroom questions section of each chapter.

The supplementary materials further provide educators with the tools and strategies needed to effectively implement these practices in their classrooms. Title II requires teacher preparation programs to identify the activities that prepare general education teachers to teach students with disabilities effectively, participate as members of Individualized Education Program teams as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and effectively teach students who are limited English proficient. It also requires documentation that the program prepares special education teachers to do the same. This textbook and its supplementary materials will assist educator preparation programs in effectively meeting that requirement.

Summary

This textbook serves as a bridge between research and definitions of disabilities and the practical approach to educating students, offering an inclusive and comprehensive framework for educators navigating the diverse needs of students with exceptionalities. By placing a strong emphasis on culturally inclusive pedagogy and EBPs, it equips readers with tools to create meaningful and equitable learning experiences. The unique structure, enriched by authentic vignettes and aligned with professional standards, ensures practical application of frameworks for HLPs, UDL, and MTSSs. Additionally, the book underscores the importance of family engagement, making it a vital resource for fostering collaboration in education. Through its innovative approach, this text inspires educators to not only meet students' needs but also celebrate their individuality, preparing them to succeed in dynamic, inclusive classroom environments.

Shantel M. Farnan, EdD
Ruby L. Owiny, PhD

About the Authors

Shantel M. Farnan, EdD, is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Special Education programs at Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, Missouri. She is beginning her 30th year in education, including experience in special education (preschool through postsecondary) as a teacher, special education director, and now professor. She has been the recipient of several awards connected to education, including the Dean's Award for Teaching, Award for Excellence for Community Leadership as CEC Student Group Advisor, Excellence in Agility and Innovation as Graduate Education Coordinator, and the Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Award.

Farnan has been active in state and national special education organizations, serving on the boards of the Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education (MO-CASE), Missouri Council for Exceptional Children (MO-CEC), Teacher Education Division (TED), and Small Special Education Programs Caucus (SSEPC). Of particular honor to Farnan was being elected TED's first Special Interest Group and Caucus Liaison. She was honored to receive the Nasim Dil Service Award for Outstanding Service to Teacher Education in Small Special Education Programs in 2023.

The courses Farnan teaches are in the areas of introduction to special education, methods of special education, leadership in special education, and special education practicum. Her research and scholarly interests are focused on collaboration, high-leverage practices, profession-based learning, collaborative scholarship, and diverse field experiences. She has enjoyed teaching on these important topics and publishing many manuscripts focused on them as well.

In her free time, Farnan enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, reading, hiking, and being involved in community activities and organizations, including as a "Big" in the Big Sisters, Big Brothers organization with her husband Darren. She is proud to have her son, Brady, recently graduated from her alma mater and her daughter, Maggie, pursuing a degree in special education.

Ruby L. Owiny, PhD, is Associate Professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She has nearly 30 years of experience in education, including elementary education (K–5), special education (K–12), educational consultant, and parent advocate. Prior to her current position, Owiny was Associate Professor and Director of the Division of Education at Trinity International University. She is the founder and CEO of Pamoja Special Education Advocacy, which partners with schools and families to ensure high-quality special education services are provided to eligible students. Owiny also serves as an educational consultant for 2Teach Global, a position in which she has presented professional development around the United States. Additionally, she presents internationally, supporting schools in Bolivia, Guatemala, and Tanzania. She has been the recipient of awards and nominations related to her teaching, scholarship, and service, including a nomination from students for the Dr. Duane Orr Teacher of the Year Award, the Regent's Prize for Excellence in Scholarship, and the Nasim Dil Service Award for Outstanding Service to Teacher Education in Small Special Education Programs.

Owiny has been active in state, national, and international organizations serving students with disabilities. She served on the Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education (UDL-HE) steering committee for the inaugural UDL-HE Digicon in 2019. She has served in several roles in the Small Special Education Programs Caucus (SSEPC) of the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), including chair of the caucus. Owiny also served on the TED board in a number of capacities with her most

recent position being president of the organization in 2021. Owiny currently serves on the board for CEC as a member-at-large and as president of the board for Alakira Maasai Economic Support Initiative, which serves the Maasai in Tanzania to improve educational outcomes for children, supports economic empowerment, and works toward improved medical care, with an emphasis on prenatal and postpartum care for mothers and infants.

Owiny teaches courses in the areas of introduction to special education, methods of teaching students with disabilities, and classroom and behavior management, and supervises student teachers during their special education placement. Her research and scholarly interests focus on inclusion, including high-leverage and evidence-based practices, Universal Design for Learning, co-teaching and collaboration, and embedding specially designed instruction in the inclusive general education classroom.

In her free time, Owiny enjoys spending time with her family and her dog, Nova. She loves to travel, read, snowshoe, hike, bike, kayak, and camp. She also enjoys Hallmark movies and binge-watching Netflix movies and series. She especially enjoys being a basketball, winter guard, lacrosse, and band mom for her three children. Her title of chauffeur gives her lots of car time to hear her children and their friends laughing and talking about things important to them. Finally, Owiny and her husband enjoy being involved in their local faith community, hosting teens frequently and leading a community group of adults.

12

Implementing Strategies to Support Learning

Ruby L. Owiny and Shantel M. Farnan

iStock.com/kali9

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Define high-leverage practice 14—teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence. (CEC 3.2; HLP 13, 14, 19, 20)
2. Identify specific learning needs based on a student's learning profile. (CEC 5.6; HLP 17, 20)
3. Design instruction and implement adaptations to meet individual needs. (CEC 2.1, 5.3, 5.6; HLP 1, 3, 4, 6, 12, 16, 17, 20)
4. Brainstorm key factors for consideration when designing the learning environment for students. (CEC 2.2, 5.6; HLP 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 17, 20, 22)
5. Determine appropriate cognitive and metacognitive strategies to meet a student's individual learning needs. (CEC 5.3; HLP 12, 16)
6. Interpret the definition of specific learning disabilities. (CEC 2.1; HLP 1, 3, 4, 6)
7. Describe how the characteristics of specific learning disabilities may manifest in a school or classroom setting. (CEC 3.2; HLP 13, 15, 19, 20)
8. Analyze the differences between the models of identification of specific learning disabilities. (CEC 3.2; HLP 13, 15, 19, 20)

CHAPTER GLOSSARY

Basic Psychological Processes: mental processes that provide the capacity to learn, adapt, remember, retrieve information, and apply it.

Cognitive Processing: ability to take input, remember it, retrieve it, and use it correctly; involves the speed at which this occurs.

Discrepancy Model: means by which a student can be eligible for a specific learning disability when there is a distinctive gap between IQ and academic achievement.

Dyscalculia: specific learning disability impacting one's ability to understand mathematics concepts and apply them.

Dyslexia: specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

Metacognitive Processing: ability to "think about one's thinking"; to reflect on the mental processes used to complete a task and assess performance on that task.

Self-Regulation: one's ability to recognize feelings, interpret what is happening in the environment, and react appropriately.

Specific Learning Disabilities: difficulty learning at a rate similar to peers due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors that alter brain functioning in a manner that affects one or more cognitive processes related to learning.

Strategy: specific plan to complete a task or accomplish a goal.

QUESTIONS TO PROMPT YOUR THINKING

1. How do the characteristics of a specific learning disability overlap with other disabilities or other learning needs not necessarily associated with a disability?
2. Why are metacognitive and cognitive strategies important for a student with a specific learning disability or those who exhibit similar characteristics of learning needs?
3. How can metacognitive and cognitive strategies be embedded in the general education classroom to meet all students' needs?
4. What important information will an educator need to provide to analyze and evaluate student needs for identification for special education supports and services if a learning disability is suspected?
5. What models of identification are used for eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability, and what information is needed?

Quinten's Story

Quinten enjoyed kindergarten, and his teacher mentioned he was bright and enthusiastic. Throughout first grade, his teacher noted he enjoyed school and was social but exhibited limited phonemic awareness and lacked fluency in high-frequency words (those words that are commonly found in written text and should be read instantly; University of Florida Literacy Institute, n.d.). As his parents, we attended every parent-teacher conference, regularly communicated with the educators, and attended the school functions that fit into our family's schedule. During the fall conference, his general educator shared that the student assistance team (SAT) recommended Quinten begin Tier 2 interventions, which meant more evidence-based, intensive phonemic awareness and phonics instruction for him. He was not making the progress they hoped for in Tier 1 instruction, which, they explained, is the curriculum and instructional activities that his whole class followed. However, with intensive instruction using explicit instruction, they were hopeful he would more quickly learn the skills he needed to be a proficient reader. Thankfully, he developed the skills he needed for reading fluently and was near grade level by the end of first grade. The school wanted to keep him in Tier 2 instruction for the beginning of second grade to ensure any summer regression would be remediated. By midway through second grade, he was no longer receiving Tier 2 instruction.

However, as he moved into third grade, while he was reading at grade level with appropriate fluency, reading comprehension and written expression seemed to be areas of continued struggle for him. As the year progressed, data indicated that he was learning differently when it came to his reading comprehension and written expression. Placement in response to intervention (RtI) Tier 2 was initiated again, and interventions to address reading comprehension and written expression started during the second quarter. We knew he had the ability to learn these skills, he was just learning them differently and at a slower pace, making interventions necessary. These increased in intensity, frequency, and duration in Tier 3 over 12 weeks, and there was some progress, but with this intensive instruction needed and a slower rate of progress than expected, the SAT suspected a specific learning disability (SLD) and contacted us for a meeting. At that meeting, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which included his classroom teacher, an interventionist, a special educator, the school counselor, and us, made the decision to refer him for special education.

The initial review of existing data revealed he sometimes still struggled with decoding and reading fluency, but the biggest concern was with his ability to comprehend written text. In reading comprehension, specifically, he struggled with understanding the main idea of a text and identifying important details, which affects his ability to summarize and respond to reading prompts. He had difficulty organizing his thoughts, which were disjointed, with details frequently out of sequence or missing entirely, making it challenging for him to produce coherent written work. He had great ideas for stories with a plethora of details to enhance them but struggled to organize his thoughts, thus planning a well-organized writing piece was an area for growth.

His struggle to organize thoughts also manifested itself in daily tasks. His desk and backpack were frequently messy, making it difficult for him to find materials. Throughout the special education process, the IEP team shared the same concerns related to his disorganization and difficulty in planning and prioritizing. The team explained those skills are related to executive functioning. As we continued to share what we saw at home, the team assisted us in understanding those aspects aligned with the mental processes of planning, organizing, focusing, remembering, and completing tasks—all executive functioning tasks.

Throughout the IEP process, the team continually reminded us of Quinten's strengths. He

is intelligent and excited to learn. His working memory is strong, and thus, memorization of information is easy for him. They also recognized his strengths in nonacademic areas such as his athleticism and compassion for others. He was quick to see a need and to help fulfill that need. Also, he was frequently seen engaging with other students who do not have many friends. This was important for us to hear as the team also focused on the areas in which he was having difficulties and where his progress appeared to plateau. Despite these concerns, he was determined, hardworking, and socially adept. We encourage Quinten to be well-rounded in his abilities, and because he continues to enjoy running, he continues to participate in a morning running club that the physical education teachers lead 15 min prior to school starting.

After Quinten was found eligible as a student with SLD in reading comprehension and written expression, he began to receive specialized instruction to work on goals in reading comprehension, written expression, and executive functioning for organization, including planning and prioritizing tasks. He received specially designed instruction in the general education classroom with co-teaching as a service delivery model to reach his goals, along with two and half hours per week of resource room support. The specialized instruction that helped him continue to improve his reading comprehension skills included direct, explicit instruction using graphic organizers and strategy instruction like note-taking and summarizing that helped him process, remember, and express the information he was learning. The explicit instruction has focused on specific reading comprehension strategies, such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and synthesizing. This has also been used to teach him the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. On the other hand, he did not do well with large group work time as he often needs a quiet space and does not begin tasks. He benefits from accommodations such as noise-canceling headphones, a study carrel, or being in a separate area of the room with less noise and traffic.

stockfour / Shutterstock

Setting goals and prioritizing tasks have helped Quinten to be successful in planning and completing tasks. He does well when breaking down tasks into smaller, manageable parts and prioritizing them based on importance and due date. He is learning to set specific goals for completing each part of the task and to track his progress. He still sometimes has difficulty with task initiation in reading and writing, but this has lessened over time. With writing, assistive technology like text-to-speech and word prediction software has helped him immensely. He has learned to analyze the writing task and was taught some metacognition strategies, such as questioning. He now asks himself questions prior to beginning a writing task, such as the following: What is the writing prompt asking me to do? What prewriting strategy might I use? Other accommodations and modifications that have been utilized in the classroom and have been helpful in Quinten's academic success include extended time on tests and assignments, small group instruction, sentence starters, word banks, breaks as needed to support attention and focus, cue cards with options for strategies to use and specific cards with the steps to use for the strategy chosen, extended time for reading and writing assignments and assessments, preteaching vocabulary and concepts, and building/assessing background knowledge.

As we reflect back on this journey, I want to share this, "Encourage families to be involved in the process; they know their child best. Build trust by listening, asking questions and respectfully sharing your expertise. Each team member is a vital member of the IEP team for the perspective they bring to decision-making. Because the IEP teams have worked together so well over the years, I am thrilled that Quinten desires to go to college and major in accounting after high school and has developed the skills to be successful."

Introduction

Quinten's story provides information for understanding how a specific learning disability (SLD) may manifest in a learning environment. There are infinite ways a SLD impacts daily life. In Quinten's case, reading comprehension and written expression were greatly impacted along with executive functioning, particularly in the area of organization. Quinten is not unlike many students who struggle with an aspect of reading or learning, and therefore, the high-leverage practices (HLPs) and evidence-based practices (EBPs) described in this chapter should be generalized to use with any student based on their learning needs.

Students with SLD have a learning profile conducive to teaching metacognitive and cognitive strategies. SLD manifests itself differently among those with it; however, there are generally some overlapping characteristics between individuals. In fact, some of the characteristics of SLD can be exhibited in students who are not determined eligible as a student with SLD. The difference between one found eligible with an SLD and one not is the intensity and level in which the characteristics of the disability impacts learning and behavior. A student without a SLD may exhibit a characteristic of SLD, but the intensity or level at which it impacts learning and behavior is lower, and fewer characteristics are manifested. For example, some characteristics of SLD are challenges with attention, memory, perception, limited vocabulary, processing, organizing, ordering events, social skills, feeling lonely, and being rejected by peers within one or more of the content areas in reading, written expression, and mathematics (Cassidy & Sande, 2022). A student with SLD may exhibit challenges in most of those characteristics, whereas a student without SLD may exhibit only one or a few of those characteristics. The disability will significantly impact the student's achievement, whereas a student without SLD may only experience some slight frustration. Given the struggles any student might experience with memory, organization, comprehension, and so forth, the metacognitive and cognitive strategies addressed in this chapter can benefit many students.

High-Leverage Practice 14 Defined

In the Instruction in Behavior and Academics and Intensify and Intervene as Needed domains are the pillar practices of HLP 7 (establish a consistent, organized and responsive learning environment) and HLP 16 (use explicit instruction). The embedded practices are split into two categories including What to Teach and How to Teach (Aceves & Kennedy, 2024).