

High-Leverage Practices:

An Introduction



What are High-Leverage Practices

High-leverage practices are frequently occurring, educational practices that all educators should know how to do. These practices are evidence based, meaning that they reflect effective methods that when successfully implemented can improve results for each learner.



There are many high-leverage practices—covering the areas of collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction—designed to serve as a road map for guiding teacher preparation, professional development, and/or current self-assessment. In Utah, **five** of the most foundational high-leverage practices have been identified as statewide focal areas.

Utah's 5 High-Leverage Practices

1. Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments in collaboration with professionals to improve student outcomes.
2. Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
3. Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal including the use of explicit instruction and scaffolded supports.
4. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.
5. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.



Why would I want to use High-Leverage Practices?

Teachers who learn and master these practices are better prepared to engage in the types of instructional practices and professional collaborations that are necessary for effectively educating students. Teachers who implement high-leverage practices improve instruction that results in better learning for students.

BETTER PREPARATION → **EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION**

References:

<http://Highleveragepractices.org>

<http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices>



1. Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments in collaboration with professionals to improve student outcomes.

Collaboration with teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings. Teachers collect, aggregate, and interpret data from multiple sources (e.g., informal and formal observations, student work samples from teacher-created materials, curriculum-based measures, information from families, other data sources) to inform instructional decisions. 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.

2. Use strategies to promote active student engagement.

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies that result in active student responding. Active student engagement is critical to academic success. Teachers must initially build positive student–teacher relationships to foster engagement and motivate reluctant learners. They 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. They monitor student engagement and provide positive and constructive feedback to sustain performance.

3. Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal including the use of explicit instruction and scaffolded supports.

Teachers help students to develop important concepts and skills that provide the foundation for more complex learning. Teachers sequence lessons that build on 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. Scaffolded supports (e.g., visual, verbal and written supports) are provided as temporary assistance to students so they can successfully complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently and with a high rate of success. Teachers model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently. Ongoing changes (e.g., pacing, examples) occur throughout the sequence based on student performance.



4. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

The purpose of feedback is to guide student learning and behavior and increase student motivation, engagement, and independence, leading to improved student learning and behavior. Effective feedback must be strategically delivered and goal directed; feedback is most effective when the student has a goal and the feedback informs the learner regarding areas needing improvement and ways to improve performance. 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). Teachers should provide ongoing feedback until learners reach their established learning goals.

5. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.

When establishing learning environments, teachers build mutually respectful relationships with students and engage them in setting the classroom climate. Teachers explicitly teach and practice expectations, procedures, and routines that value ethnic, cultural, contextual, and linguistic diversity to foster student engagement across learning environments. Teachers provide age-appropriate specific performance feedback in meaningful and caring ways. By establishing, following, and reinforcing expectations of all students within the classroom, teachers will reduce the potential for challenging behavior and increase student engagement.