# Instructional Strategies for Students with Significant Disabilities

PUBLIC CONSULTING GROUP

BREAKING BARRIERS 2023 MEGA CONFERENCE BUILDING CONNECTIONS

ALABAMA Achieves
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Agenda

1. Overview and Objectives
2. Implementing Explicit Instruction
3. Making Adjustments that Align to Student Need
4. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

# Session Objectives

1. Identify key elements in implementing the evidence-based practice of explicit instruction.
2. Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
3. Consider levels of prompting and support to determine how to provide appropriate levels of assistance while still encouraging independence.

Session objectives are derived from CEC's *High-Leverage Practices for Students with Extensive Support Needs* (HLP-ESN) 16, 13, and 15, respectively.

# Engagement Tools

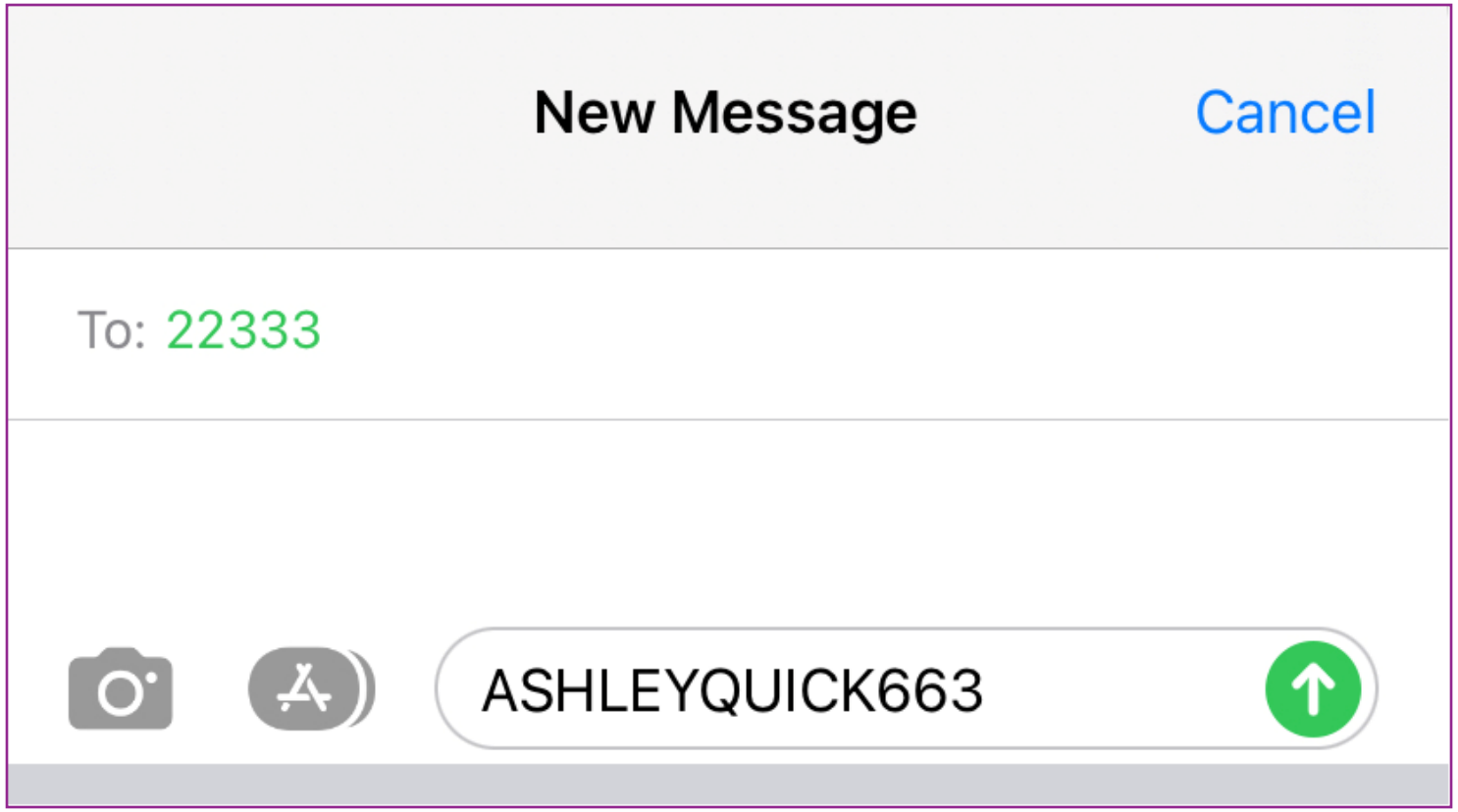
**Engagement Guide**

**Discussion**

**Resource**

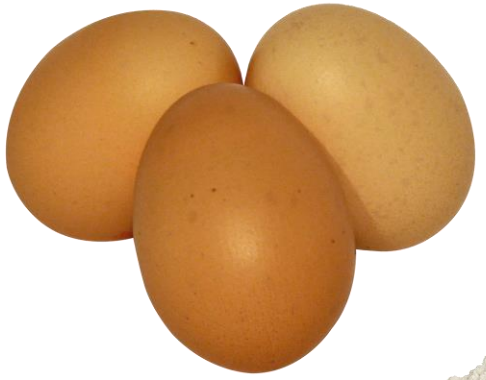
**Poll**

Text **ASHLEYQUICK663** to **22333** once to join




https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/GebI1w0l4QXsaaa7q88hb

# Cake




Recipe
SERVINGS
PREP TIME
COOK TIME
INGREDIENTS
DIRECTIONS
FROM THE KITCHEN OF

# Instruction

Alternate Achievement Standards

Lesson Plans & IEP Goals

Instructional Strategies

Curriculum

Adaptations & Scaffolding

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Alternate Achievement Standards

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# Setting the Stage: Best Practices for Instruction

# Best Practices for Instruction

Instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities should not be limited only to content that is addressed by IEP goals.

Instruction on IEP goal content should be integrated within classroom routines and lesson activities that align with the general curriculum via alternate achievement standards.

**This may involve:**

- Preteaching or reteaching content.
- Embedding extra practice with prerequisite foundational skills.

# Best Practices for Instruction: Example

Ethan, a third-grader, has a limited conceptual understanding of numerical concepts. He can identify most digits (0–9) and can count with one-to-one correspondence up to five.

To address his IEP goals related to basic numeracy **within the context of the third-grade curriculum via the alternate achievement standards**, Ethan's teacher plans to have him:

- Identify the numbers in multiplication and division word problems.
- Count out physical objects to represent the quantities in the problems.

# Implementing Explicit Instruction

# Fist-to-Five

Use the Fist-to-Five strategy to show how familiar you are with the evidence-based strategy of **explicit instruction**.

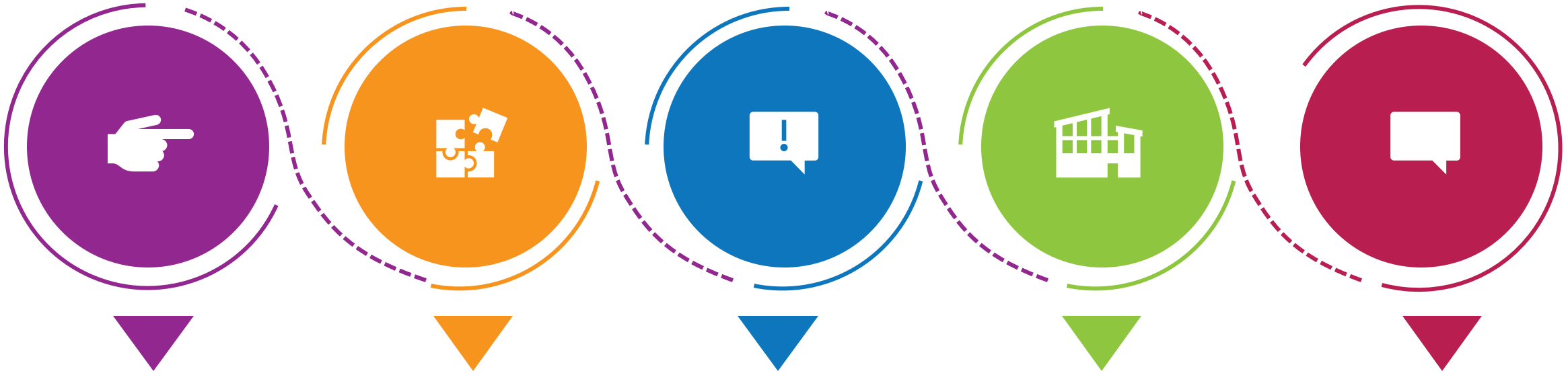
# High-Leverage Practices for Students with Extensive Support Needs

## HLP 16: Provide Intensive Instruction and Use Explicit Instruction

- **Direct, Explicit,** and **Systematic Instruction** are very similar terms that all include the following elements:
  - A logical sequence within lessons.
  - Clear models and explanations of content.
  - Multiple opportunities to respond and receive feedback.
  - A range of examples and non-examples to highlight content being taught.
- In contrast, **Intensive Instruction** refers to instruction "at a dosage strong enough for learners to reach criterion in a timely fashion."

Pennington, R., Ault, M. J., Courtade, G., Jameson, J. M., & Ruppar, A. (Eds.). (2023). *High-Leverage Practices and Students with Extensive Support Needs.* Council for Exceptional Children.

# Explicit Instruction Practices



Identify critical content for instruction.

Break down complex skills.

Emphasize critical features within the content.

Scaffold instruction by providing temporary supports and systematically fading prompts.

Provide frequent opportunities to respond and receive feedback.

When poll is active, respond at **PollEv.com/ashleyquick663**

# In which practice(s) do you feel most comfortable?

Identify critical content for instruction

Break down complex skills

Scaffold instruction with temporary supports

Provide opportunities to respond and receive feedback

https://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/hpNIXKhVoI4t15PMKfAbj

Powered by Poll Everywhere

# Identify Critical Content for Instruction

1. Align with grade-level Alternate Achievement Standards. (Consider unpacking to identify access skills.)
2. Emphasize important and relevant information.
3. Minimize irrelevant information.

**High-priority content should (1) build on prior knowledge and (2) be necessary for mastering the content.**

Emphasis should be placed on:

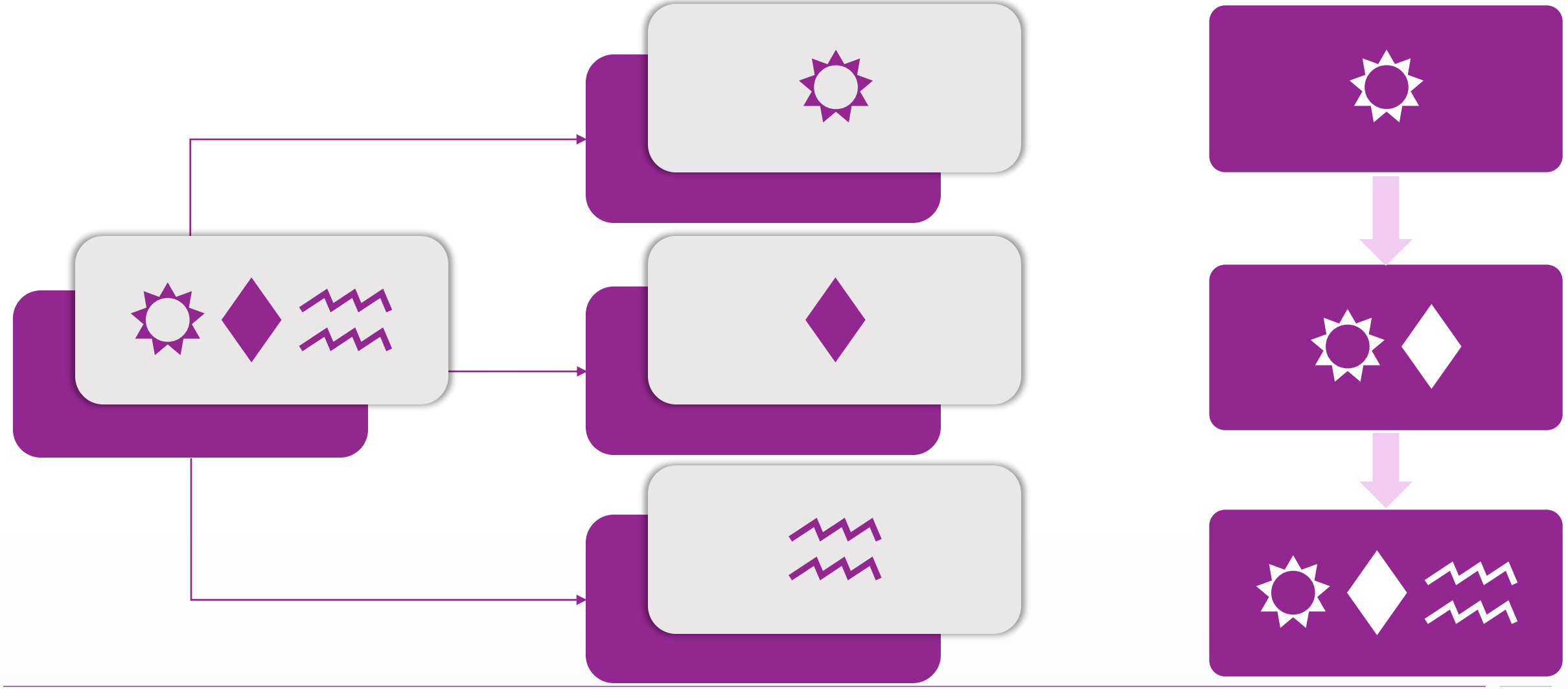
- New vocabulary
- Main ideas
- Common misconceptions (e.g., examples and nonexamples).

# Break Down Complex Skills

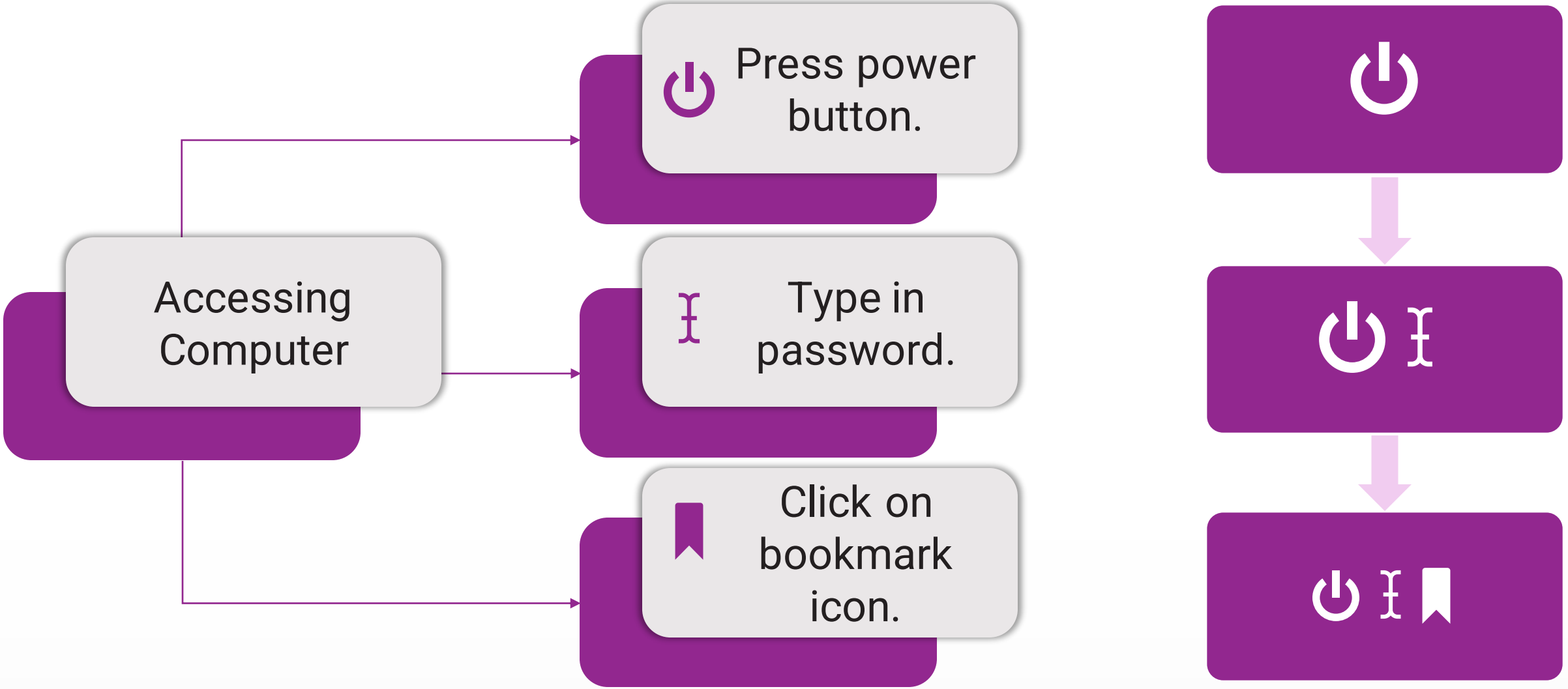
**Divide skills and strategies into smaller instructional units.**

- Teach each smaller instructional unit one by one using a logical sequence.
- Provide opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate mastery of each smaller instructional unit.
- Support students in linking the smaller instructional units together (e.g., task chaining).

# Break Down Complex Skills: Diagram



# Break Down Complex Skills: Example



# Activity: Unpack a Standard

**Step 1**

Identify what the standard is asking students to DO and what concepts they should KNOW.

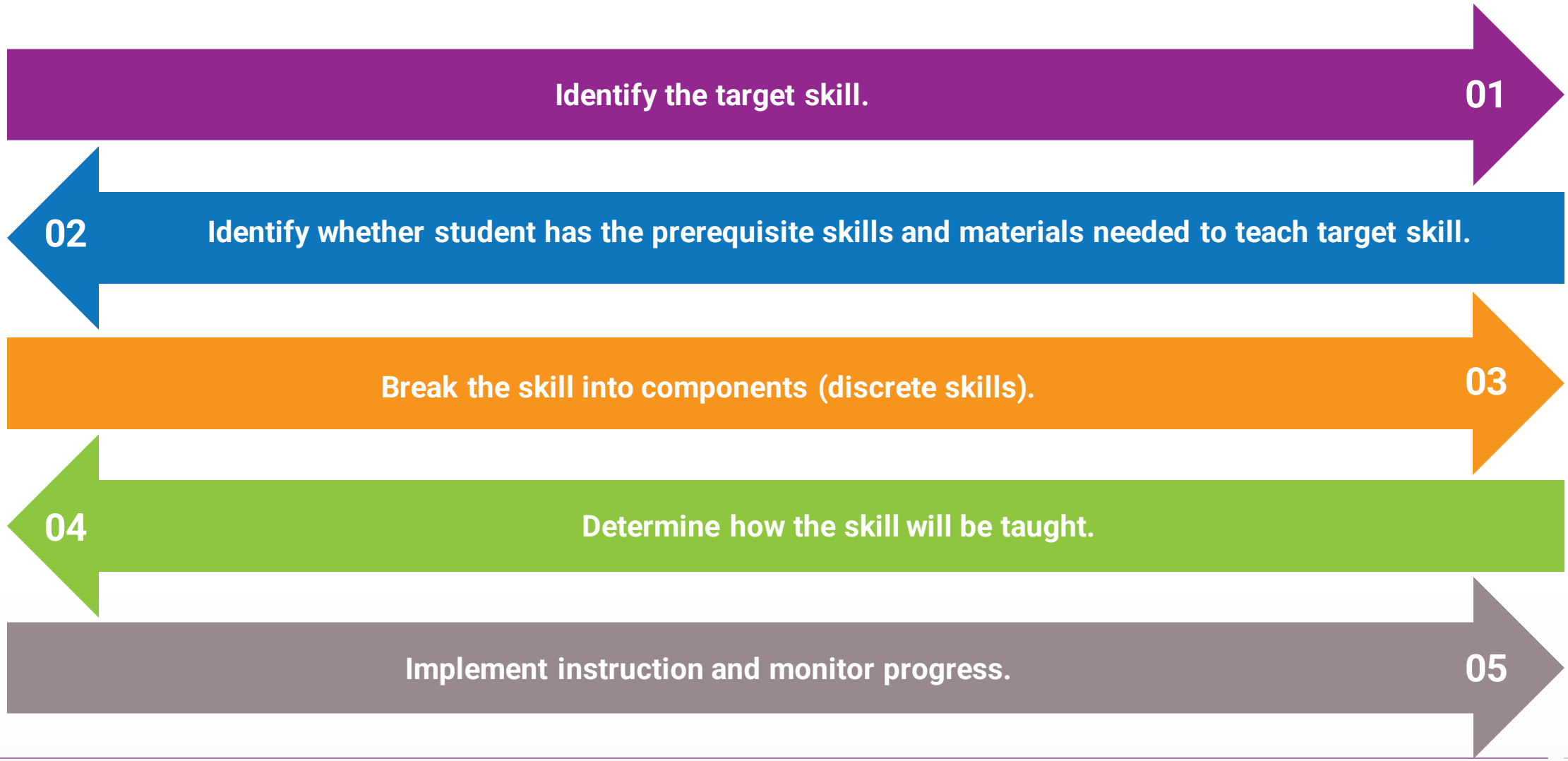
**Step 2**

Identify the access skills that play a part in being able to master the standard.

**Step 3**

Consider which access skills present specific barriers for your students.

# Steps for Task Analysis



# Task Analysis Comparison

| Too Simple | Just Right | Too Complex |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pushing the On button on the computer (discrete skill). | Logging onto the computer and starting a familiar program. | Logging onto the computer and creating a personal web page (multiple variables and multiple outcomes). |

# Task Analysis Example

## Task: Adding two-digit numbers

**Add the digits in the ones column.**

a) If the sum is *less than 10*, write the number under the ones column.

b) If the sum is *10 or greater*, write the ones digit from the sum under the ones column, and write the tens digit from the sum on top of the tens column.

01

**Add the digits in the tens column (including any carried numbers if applicable).**

a) Write the sum of the numbers under the tens column.

02

**Check your work by using a calculator to solve the problem.**

03

# Task Analysis: Practice

Select a task or skill that you work on frequently with your students.

Use the graphic organizer on page 5 of your Engagement Guide to begin developing a task analysis of your selected task or skill.

How can the task or skill be broken down even further to ensure students are able to master each part?

What challenges did you encounter as you identified each step of your task analysis?

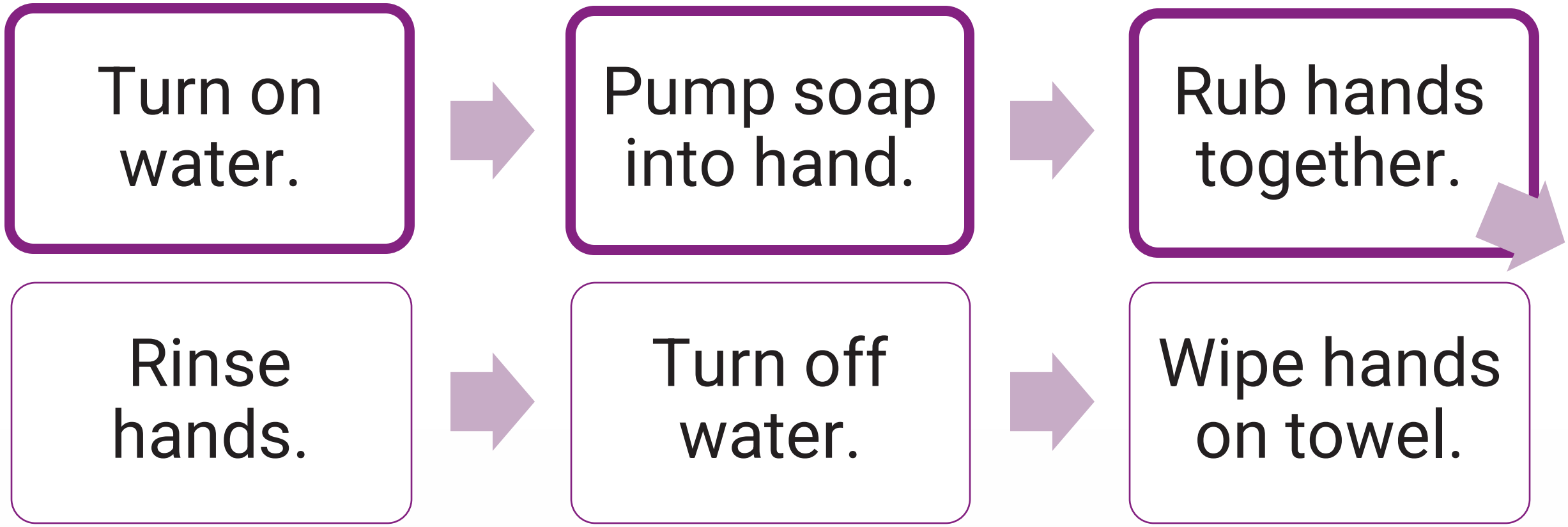
# Forward Task Chaining

Teach one step at a time, from the beginning.

As each step is mastered, instruction on the next step begins.

**Benefits:** Follows natural order of learning the skill; generates behavioral momentum.

# Forward Task Chaining: Example



# Backward Task Chaining

Teacher performs all steps of a task except the last one, which is then taught to the student and practiced until mastered. Then, the next-to-last step is taught, and so on.

**Benefits:** Student is able to see all steps that will eventually be required to perform the task independently; feels a sense of accomplishment from being the one to perform the final step.

# Activity: Backward Task Chaining

**Use backward chaining to teach a student to memorize their phone number.**

Present magnetic numbers or other visually engaging ways to display each digit.

Start by reciting the entire phone number (while pointing to the visual supports), telling the student they will fill in the last digit.

**Teacher: "8…6…7…5…3…0…"**
**Student: "9!"**

Repeat as necessary; then add one more digit.

**Teacher: "8…6…7…5…3…"**
**Student: "0…9!"**

# Modeling and Think-Aloud

Video: Go beyond a model; reveal a Think-Aloud 

| Show | Tell | Gather Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Demonstrate each step one by one.<br><br>Emphasize and exaggerate each step as you model. | Verbally narrate for students what you are doing in each step.<br><br>Verbally narrate for students what you are thinking during each step. | Determine what students already know; make connections to new knowledge.<br><br>Paraphrase responses back to students to provide additional exposure. |

# Model-Lead-Test Strategy

| MODEL (“I do”) | LEAD (“We do”) | TEST (“You do”) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher demonstrates the skill or task while students observe. | Teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in guided practice of the skill or task. | Students perform the skill or task independently. |

# Model-Lead-Test: Example

| | |
|---|---|
| **I Do** | Teacher says, "Precipitation is liquid that falls from the sky." |
| **We Do** | Teacher and students say together, "Precipitation is liquid that falls from the sky." |
| **You Do** | Students say, "Precipitation is liquid that falls from the sky." |

# Reflect: Modeling and Think-Aloud

How do you …

**Model** | **Lead** | **Test**

… in your instruction?

# Provide Frequent Opportunities to Respond

**Responses can be:**

- Verbal, written, or action
- Individual, partner, or group

Providing students an opportunity to respond **at least three times per minute** can improve academic and behavioral outcomes.

**Monitor for accuracy:**

- Is the response correct or incorrect?
- If *incorrect*, what type of corrective feedback would be appropriate?
- If *correct*, what type of reinforcement would be appropriate?

# Provide Effective Feedback

**Effective feedback is:**

- Delivered as soon as possible.
- Specific and informative.
- Actionable and involves students in the process.
- Delivered with an appropriate tone (positive, not punitive).
- Ended with students giving the correct response.

# Provide Feedback as Soon as Possible

- Multiple studies have indicated that feedback is most effective when it is provided immediately.
- The longer students have to wait for feedback, the more likely they are to lose the connection between their efforts and their results. This decreases the efficacy of the feedback and can ultimately impact student outcomes.

# Be Specific with Feedback

Help students **recognize their mistakes** and **learn how to correct them** by providing explicit and informative feedback.

| Examples | Nonexamples |
| --- | --- |
| You remembered to carry the one to the next column! | Great job! |
| Let's read that sentence again and make sure your answer matches. | Not quite there yet. |
| I noticed you typed an extra number into your calculator. | Try again. |

# Activity: Providing Feedback

| | |
|---|---|
| **Academic Goal** | |
| **Feedback Example** | |
| **Feedback Nonexample** | |

# Make Adjustments That Align to Student Need

- Adapt Curriculum Tasks and Materials
- Provide Appropriate Levels of Scaffolding and Prompting

# Encourage Independence and Interdependence

**"Continually ask yourself what the next step is that will enable a student to become more independent and less dependent on adult support (Causton & MacLeod, 2021)."**

*Example: If a student seems to rely on you to stay on task, ask the teacher if the student can instead be paired with a peer for occasional check-ins to maintain on-task behavior.*

Causton, J., & MacLeod, K. (2021). *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

# Accommodations

**Accommodation** – a change in *how* students access information and demonstrate learning (*without* substantially changing the instructional level, content, or performance criteria).

- Presentation
- Response format and procedures
- Instructional strategies
- Time and scheduling
- Environment
- Equipment

# Presentation Accommodations

| Type | Barrier | Accommodation | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Presentation** | The way information is presented (e.g., text, verbal instruction). | Allow students to access information in ways other than a standard visual or auditory.<br><br>Change the way the information is presented. | ▪ Large-print books/materials<br>▪ Visual cues (e.g., color-coding)<br>▪ Audiobooks |

# Other Accommodations

| Type | Barrier | Accommodation | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Response** | The way in which a student is required to respond (e.g., writing, speech). | Allow students to complete assignments in ways other than typical verbal or written responses. | ▪ Speech-to-text software<br>▪ Scribe<br>▪ Digital recorder |
| **Setting** | The characteristics of the environment (e.g., noise level, lighting). | Allow for a change in the environment or in how the environment is structured. | ▪ Preferential seating (e.g., near teacher, away from the door)<br>▪ Testing in a separate location |
| **Timing and Scheduling** | The timing and scheduling of instruction (e.g., time of day, length of assignment). | Allow changes to when and how long students have to complete tasks.<br>Allow assignments to be broken down into smaller sections. | ▪ Extended time to complete task<br>▪ Frequent breaks<br>▪ Shorter testing sessions |

# Modifications

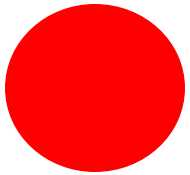
**Modification** – a change in *what* students are expected to learn (e.g., the instructional level, content, and/or performance criteria).

- Prioritizing content based on students' learning profiles, including prior knowledge and skills gaps.
- Reducing or changing the requirements for the *range* and *depth* of content to be covered.
- Working on a lower grade-level standard.
- Being graded on a different scale than peers.

| Barrier | Example Modification |
|---|---|
| Reading printed text | Alternate assignment |
| Decoding text | Read a lower-level book |
| Staying on task | Assignment with fewer questions |
| Writing responses | Shorter assignment |

# Activity: Categorizing Accommodations

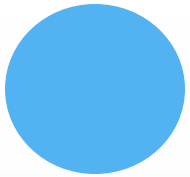
Color code the accommodations according to which activity they best support.



Sitting and Listening



Reading a Text



Writing

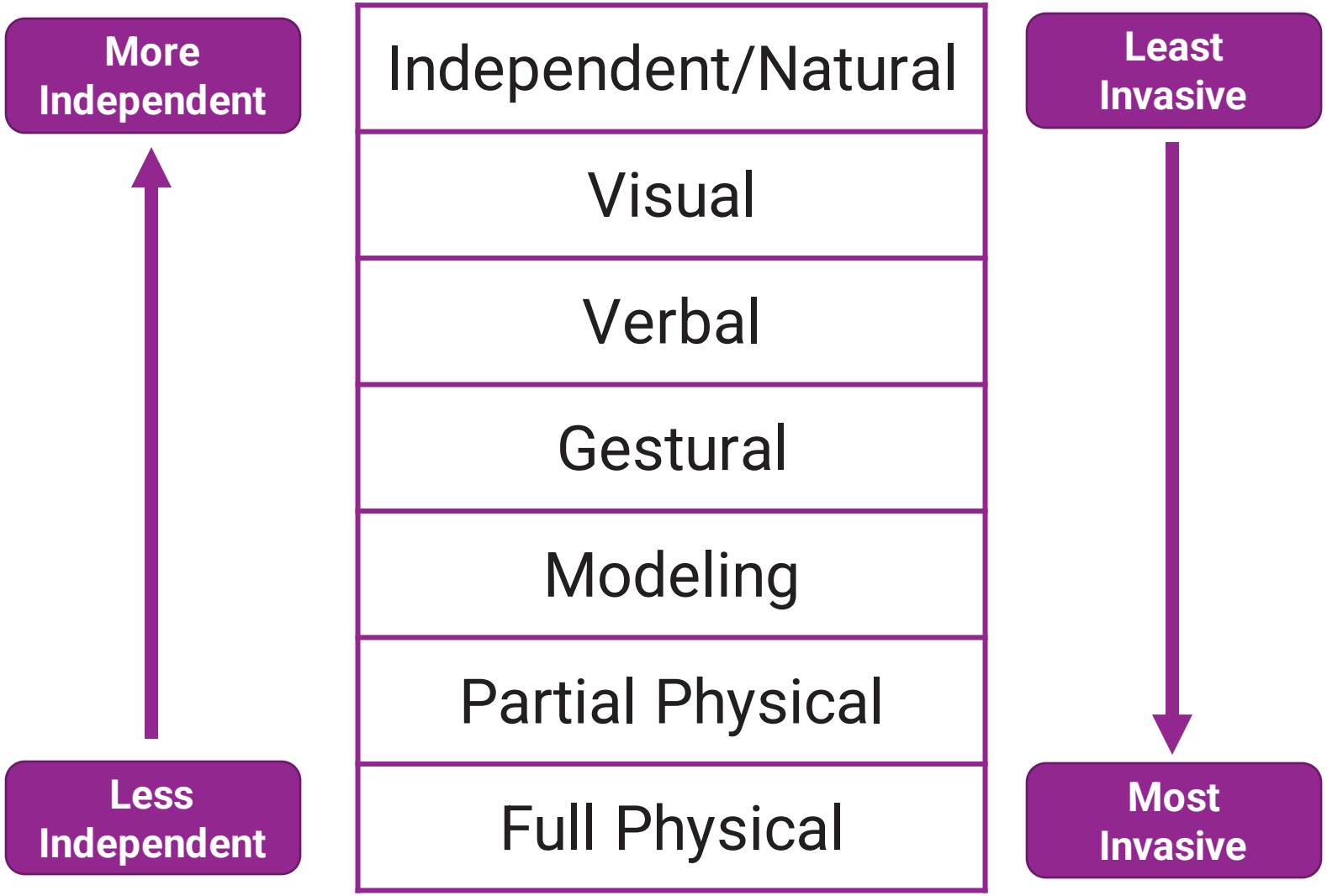
# What to Do Before Providing a Prompt

**Provide ample wait time for the student to process.**

**Set up materials in a way that students won't necessarily require prompting (e.g., color coding, numbering, a list).**

**Work with the classroom teacher to set up peer supports for all students (e.g., "Check with your elbow partner to make sure you're on the right page.").**

# Prompting Hierarchy



| Independent/Natural |
| --- |
| Visual |
| Verbal |
| Gestural |
| Modeling |
| Partial Physical |
| Full Physical |

| Description |
| --- |
| Allowing the environment to provide natural cues to help the student know what to do. |

| Example |
| --- |
| Natural: The bell rings and the class begins putting away their materials. |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| **Visual** |
| Verbal |
| Gestural |
| Modeling |
| Partial Physical |
| Full Physical |

| **Description** |
|---|
| Visual prompts could include objects, pictures, drawings, or symbols that cue a student of what is expected. |

| **Example** |
|---|
| Students are asked to line up. One student remains seated. The paraprofessional hands them a picture card showing the student in line. The student gets in line. |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| Visual |
| **Verbal** |
| Gestural |
| Modeling |
| Partial Physical |
| Full Physical |

| Description |
|---|
| **Indirect** – verbal information that prompts the student to think about what is expected without stating it explicitly<br>**Direct** – specific verbal information about the expected student behavior or response |

| Examples |
|---|
| Make an **indirect** verbal statement by asking, "What snack do you want?" If the student does not respond, provide a **direct** verbal prompt by stating, "Say, 'more crackers please.'"<br>**Indirect:** "Sarah, what should happen next?"<br>**Direct:** "Sarah, stand up now." |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| Visual |
| Verbal |
| **Gestural** |
| Modeling |
| Partial Physical |
| Full Physical |

| Description |
|---|
| Physical movements that communicate or emphasize a cue (e.g., head nod, pointing, thumb up). |

| Example |
|---|
| A student is walking around the classroom. The paraprofessional looks at the student and points to their seat. The student sits.<br><br>Paraprofessional points to the schedule written on the board to indicate that it's time to transition. |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| Visual |
| Verbal |
| Gestural |
| **Modeling** |
| Partial Physical |
| Full Physical |

| **Description** |
|---|
| Demonstrating the expected student behavior or response without physical touch; can be partially or fully modeled. |

| ***Example*** |
|---|
| **Partial Model:** A student has completed a task and is able to ask for a break but is not asking. The teacher makes the initial /br/sound. The student says, “Break please” and is given a 30-second break.<br>**Full Model:** A teacher asks a student to open a book and models doing it while making the request. |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| Visual |
| Verbal |
| Gestural |
| Modeling |
| **Partial Physical** |
| Full Physical |

| **Description** |
|---|
| Physical touch used to indicate or encourage a correct response (e.g., touching a hand, nudging an elbow) without full physical guidance. |

| **Example** |
|---|
| A student is asked to point to the green apple. They do not respond. The paraprofessional touches the student's elbow and repeats the directions. The student touches the green apple.<br><br>Begin to zip a student's coat, allowing the student to pull the zipper up the rest of the way. |

| |
|---|
| Independent/Natural |
| Visual |
| Verbal |
| Gestural |
| Modeling |
| Partial Physical |
| **Full Physical** |

| **Description** |
|---|
| Direct physical assistance for most or all of the movement required for a task. |

| **Example** |
|---|
| A student is asked to point to the green apple. They do not respond. The paraprofessional takes their hand and uses it to point to the green apple.<br><br>Providing hand-over-hand assistance while a student writes their name. |

# Wrap-Up and Next Steps

# Exit Slip

Thank you for attending today's session! We value your feedback, please complete the following:

- MEGA Conference Evaluation, and
- Today's Exit Slip.

# Future Session

- **Date:** Wednesday, September 13th
- **Session Topic:** Communication and Instruction Support of Students with Significant Disabilities
- **Time:** 8:30-3:30 p.m. CT
- **Location:** Montgomery
- **Power School Course 303455 | SES-PCG Onsite: Communication and Instruction Support of Students with Significant Disabilities**

# Thank You, Alabama!