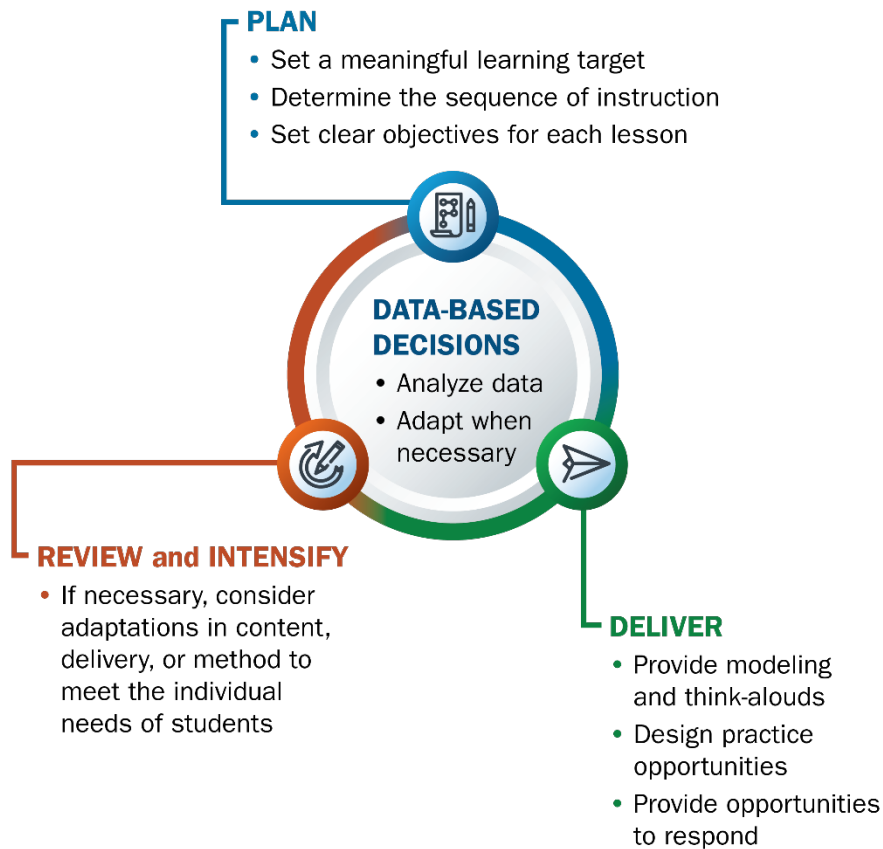




Reviewing and Intensifying Instruction

What Do Teachers Need to Know About Intensifying Instruction?

When reviewing and intensifying instruction for students with disabilities, teachers should consider the following three-phase cycle for individual, small-group, and whole-group instruction:



In this brief, we focus on the REVIEW and INTENSIFY phase of the three-phase cycle. See the PLAN brief and the DELIVER brief for information about the other phases.

Even though teachers may plan for and deliver high-quality instruction, some students with disabilities will continue to have difficulties with making progress toward academic and behavioral learning targets. Teachers should use data to monitor student progress and adapt instruction as necessary, using a process of intensifying instruction.

Intensifying Instruction for Students With Disabilities

Intensifying instruction is a process that teachers can use to provide specially designed instruction—changing the instructional content, delivery, or method to match students’ unique learning needs (Riccomini et al., 2017). Teachers can use several strategies to intensify instruction regardless of content domain, grade level, or disability type (Fuchs et al., 2017). In this research brief, we highlight intervention dosage, opportunities to respond, alignment, and transfer.



Intervention Dosage

If a student is not making adequate progress in the current instructional program, one of the first things that a teacher may determine is if the intervention needs to be implemented more often. This could mean a teacher increases the

- number of minutes in each session (e.g., increase from 20 minutes to 30 minutes),
- number of sessions per week (e.g., doing four sessions instead of two sessions), and/or
- total number of weeks (e.g., change from 10 weeks to 20 weeks).

Another aspect of intervention dosage to consider is reducing the instructional group size.



Opportunities to Respond

Students with disabilities may require as many as 10–30 times more practice opportunities to master the same skill or concept as their peers (Gersten et al., 2008). Opportunities to respond allow teachers to monitor students’ level of understanding with the content and adjust instruction. To provide students with disabilities with a high level of interaction with content, teachers can

- vary the opportunities to respond format to teacher and peer questioning (oral, written, or demonstration),
- differentiate opportunities to respond by students’ instructional level (e.g., vary the level of questioning from recall to elaboration or analyzing), and
- incorporate instructional technology during independent work time that fosters greater response opportunities.



Alignment

As described in the PLAN brief, teachers must determine the sequence of instruction. If a student is not making adequate progress, however, the sequence may need to be revised to allow for more time to develop a skill. The content of instruction also may need to be amended. With alignment, teachers should

- break complex skills into smaller segments taught in multiple lessons;
- use worked examples, both correct and incorrect;



- use hands-on tools or drawings to show different concepts or procedures; and/or
- develop language skill in the content area by creating word walls or glossaries.



Transfer

Students may learn different content but not see how that content connects to other content. Therefore, teachers may need to explicitly teach for transfer. The following are several examples of transfer:

- In reading, teach how a blend (e.g., “an”) transfers to word reading (e.g., “tan” or “man”).
- In writing, teach how writing a narrative essay (e.g., write a main idea paragraph then write a supporting paragraph) can transfer to writing an essay with compare and contrast.
- In mathematics, teach how subtraction with $9 - 4$ relates to $19 - 14$ and then $219 - 114$. Teachers may want to teach how $219 - 114$ transfers to solving $2.19 - 1.14$.

How to Get Started With Intensifying Instruction

- Consider the needs of the student and the capacity of school resources to support different aspects of intensifying instruction. Some schools may not have the staff available to support smaller group sizes, for example; however, most strategies for intensifying intervention can be implemented without undue stress to resources.
- If the student also is receiving support in another classroom (e.g., a general education classroom, resource room), collaborate with the classroom teacher to identify what strategies have been effective for the student in that setting.
- Intentionally plan for alignment and transfer while considering the unique learning needs and accommodations for students with disabilities.



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