

Evidence-Informed Educator

The Instructional Hierarchy

The Instructional Hierarchy is a model of skill acquisition. The hierarchy has been researched for decades – when we learn something new, we move through a series of predictable stages. Educators need to be aware of the instructional hierarchy since we are most effective when our instruction matches the student's current level of proficiency.



<p>Students are inaccurate with limited proficiency with the target skill.</p>	<p>Students perform a skill accurately, but slowly and laboriously. They are not automatic.</p>	<p>Students are accurate and automatic, and beginning to use the skill in new contexts.</p>
<p>Educators respond with explicit and systematic instruction with immediate feedback and guided practice.</p>	<p>Educators respond with the intensity and practice needed to reach automaticity. This might involve timed practice with goal setting and feedback.</p>	<p>Educators respond with feedback on application, cues for generalization, varied tasks, and fading adult support.</p>
<p>For example, Gabriel is has been taught that ā can be spelled -ay. This is new content for him. To support acquisition of the skill so he can read words accurately, his teacher gives him targeted practice decoding lists of words with the grapheme -ay.</p>	<p>For example, Maria can read words accurately but is slow in connected text. To support fluency, her teacher scoops the phrases as an additional scaffold during a repeated reading routine.</p>	<p>For example, Jason can fluently spell words using common inflectional morphemes. To support generalization, his teacher provides a intentional sentence combining task for him to apply this skill when writing complex sentences.</p>