



Promising Practices for Supporting Youth in BC Schools

Welcome Back to School!

It's certainly been a busy summer for us at Promising Practices! We've heard from you and have been planning for an exciting set of issues for this school year. If you missed them, our issues from last year focused on building positive school climates, with particular attention to building consensus among staff, creating systems for easier teaching of social responsibility, and expanding our focus on teaching social responsibility to online environments. To get previous issues, please visit

<http://promisingpractices.research.educ.ubc.ca>

This Issue

In this special issue, you will find strategies and examples for developing and implementing effective Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Every teacher has to do them, but how can we transform them from paperwork into useful tools to involve and support students? We will outline how to do that, from simple steps for effective goal setting, to engaging the team, and monitoring progress. Find out how inside!

Want a simple and effective visual tool to make sure that all goal-setting bases are covered?

See page 7 for an IEP Goal Writing Grid!

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REVIEWING THE BASICS: A SUCCESSFUL IEP?

What Is An IEP?

An **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** is a comprehensive working document that supports goal setting, instructional planning, and evaluation for students.

An IEP:

- Is a tool for collaborative planning among team members
- Highlights the strengths and needs of students
- Identifies individualized goal areas
- Documents types of services, who will provide them, and for how long
- States procedures for monitoring and/or evaluating progress
- Identifies adaptations: adjustments made to the instructional process, materials, or assessment



Where students have very specific learning needs, the IEP may document a modification: a significant change in the learning outcomes expected for a specific student.

An IEP is required when:

A student requires more than just minor adaptations to, is working on outcomes other than the prescribed outcomes of the curriculum, or receives 25 or more hours of remedial help from someone other than the classroom teacher to meet expected learning outcomes. ([BC School Act](#))

Who Is Involved?

The composition of the IEP team will vary with individual student needs. Core team members include:

- Principal or vice principal
- Parent(s) or guardian
- Student
- Case Manager* (e.g., LAC or resource teacher)
- Teacher(s) or school staff
- District and community partners

*The Case Manager coordinates the development, documentation, implementation and evaluation of the student's IEP.

Key Features of Successful IEPs:

- Build on the student's strengths
- Focus on the individual needs of the student
- Include goals that are practical, realistic, and clearly stated
- Outline who is responsible for each goal
- Employ strategies to measure and communicate student progress
- Indicate exactly how progress is evaluated and who is responsible

To access a series of new IEP planning brochures for parents, students, and community agencies, please visit <http://promisingpractices.research.educ.ubc.ca/iep/>

TEAMWORK: ENGAGING STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Have you ever wondered how to increase engagement in the IEP process? You're not alone! Here are some tips for engaging these important partners in IEP development!

How To Involve Students In Their IEPs

Get students thinking about their strengths and needs using the following questions:

- What subjects do you enjoy? What is your favourite class?
- What do you do well in this class? What helps you do well?
- What is your hardest class? What is the hardest part of this class for you?
- What accommodations might help (e.g., a note taker, sitting at the front, extra time on tests, oral versus written tests)?

Start by describing what an IEP is, why it's important, and the roles of other people involved. The [Promising Practices website](#) will soon have a student guidebook specifically for this purpose!

How To Involve Parents

Parents often want to be active partners in the IEP process but may be intimidated or simply not know how they can contribute. Here are some steps to maximize engagement:

Encourage parents to talk to their child:

- Simple questions such as, "What do you enjoy about school?" can help inform IEP goals.

Give them notice of IEP meetings and encourage parents to come prepared:

- Ask parents to bring written notes regarding the child's areas of difficulty and any questions or concerns they may have.
- Inform parents that previous reports and any medical updates may be relevant.

Encourage participation:

- Parents may be intimidated or nervous in a school-based team meeting.
- Ensure that each team member is introduced and the Case Manager is identified.
- Check in to ensure understanding and that any concerns are addressed.
- Provide strategies to use at home that will help meet IEP goals.

Make sure that parents are updated about IEP progress:

- Report cards are a great place for teachers to communicate students' progress and current areas of focus.
- [Positive Parent Postcards](#) (Promising Practices Issue 1, Volume 1) can also be used to report progress.
- Parents can also be encouraged to contact their child's Case Manager about any concerns or to arrange more frequent updates.

SETTING IEP GOALS: CLOPS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Student goals are the core of the IEP and form the foundation for all other components, so setting them well is critical! A well-defined goal consists of the current level of performance (CLOP), goal statement, objectives to reach the goal, strategies to reach objectives, and plans for evaluation.

Current Level of Performance (CLOP)

A **CLOP** is an annual “snapshot” of how a student is performing in a specific area, compared to grade-level expectations or individualized programming. CLOPs act as the basis for goal setting and instruction by informing anyone working with a student of what he or she currently can and can’t do. CLOPs are also used for non-academic goals as well. Effective CLOPs:

- Describe the student’s strengths and needs using objective language, positive and negative
- Establish baseline measures of performance from where to measure progress (instead of using diagnostic information, e.g., “he has cerebral palsy”)
- Are current, measurable, objective, functional, and as specific as possible

Example CLOP: Ian currently reads 84 words correctly per minute using Grade 3 Oral Reading Fluency passages.

Goal Statement

The **goal statement** outlines student outcomes for a school year where they are different from the learning outcomes set in an applicable educational program. Objectives for effective goal statements can be summed up with the acronym SMART, which is used in several jurisdictions (e.g., [Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2008](#)).

SMART Objectives

Specific. Written in clear, unambiguous language.

Measurable. Allows student achievement to be described, assessed, and evaluated.

Achievable & Action-oriented. Realistic for the student and written in terms of what the student will do.

Realistic & Relevant. Focused on positive and achievable changes that are meaningful for the student. A goal should be set at a high but attainable level to encourage high expectations.

Time-limited. Can be accomplished within a specific time period (i.e., weeks, school year).

Some common challenges include setting goals that are too ambitious, unrelated to student needs, lacking specificity or measurability, or sweeping across multiple curricular areas. These common pitfalls and ways to overcome them can be found on the next page.

Example Goal Statement: Ian will increase his oral reading fluency score from 84 words correct per minute to 105 words correct per minute by the end of the school year.



AVOIDING COMMON PITFALLS: GOAL REVISION EXERCISE

Add detail to goals to meet SMART objectives!

Original: *Will improve reading, writing, and math.*

➡ Improved: *Will identify the main character in 90% of narrative passages read by the end of the semester.*

Original: *Will increase her appropriate social interaction with others.*

➡ Improved: *Will initiate conversations or activities with peers during recess at least once per day by June 25, 2012.*

Original: *Will increase written output.*

➡ Improved: *Will increase the number of words written in weekly journal entries from approximately 20 words to greater than 40 words by the end of the school year.*

Original: *Will achieve passing grade in all subjects.*

➡ Improved: *Will achieve a passing grade in English at the end of each semester.*

Will achieve a passing grade in Social studies at the end of each semester.

Original: *Will refrain from touching, hitting, and throwing objects at other students during all interactions (e.g., kicking, pushing, punching).*

➡ Improved: *When prompted, will select and use a strategy for recognizing and removing herself from environments that cause her to lose control during at least 80% of opportunities this semester.*

Original: *To turn in assignments in timely manner.*

➡ Improved: *Will submit her assignments within the first 15 minutes of class 80% of the time throughout the year.*

Objective

IEP objectives are measurable, intermediate steps between the present levels of educational performance and established annual goals. Objectives serve as milestones for measuring progress toward the goals.

Example Objectives: 1. By end of Term 1, Ian will read 95 words correctly per minute.

2. By end of Term 2, Ian will read 105 words correctly per minute.

A complete IEP will contain CLOP, goal, and objectives accompanied by appropriate strategies and plans for evaluation. The link between these elements must be made clear and driven by the student's needs and goals: please refer to Tips for Tomorrow on page 7 for a goal template that unifies these elements! The next section will outline how to include progress monitoring in IEP goals.

PROGRESS MONITORING: FOLLOWING THROUGH

Progress monitoring is an ongoing process, and it should measure a teachable skill. It informs instructional decisions and teacher expectations for students, serves as documentation for student growth, and facilitates efficient communication on progress, leading to fewer special education referrals.


Progress monitoring tools should be brief, easy to administer and score, and sensitive to change. They should be the same as those used for measuring CLOP. Good examples of progress monitoring or CLOP tools are curriculum-based assessments (e.g., [DIBELS](#)), checklists, observations, class tests or assignments, and work samples. Graphing progress on a regular basis can provide a visual aid for tracking changes in student performance. Progress monitoring plans (including the tool and frequency) can be embedded directly in the goal statement.

Example Progress Monitoring Plan: Ian will increase his number of words correctly per minute by 3 words per week, measured by DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency passages during language arts period each Monday.

IEP COMPONENT CHECKLIST: MAKING THE LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE

- ✓ Any adaptations or modifications to the program
- ✓ Other professionals involved (e.g., SLP, nurse, social worker, mental health clinician, CYSN worker)
- ✓ Current levels of performance
- ✓ Special education and related services
- ✓ Goals and short-term objectives
- ✓ How and when goal progress will be measured
- ✓ Transition planning for secondary school

SPOTLIGHT ON A SCHOOL DISTRICT



An emerging practice in IEP development is to set it up electronically as a web-based document, allowing involved professionals to access and update IEPs more easily. **School District 42 in Maple Ridge, BC** started implementing electronic IEPs in the past year and includes an embedded document template for delineating goals, CLOPs, objectives, and strategies. Although it is still in initial implementation, some emerging benefits of this new approach include time efficiency and easier coordination between teachers and professionals. Having IEPs available online is one way to facilitate efficient collaboration and frequent reference to IEPs.



Tips for Tomorrow

Tips for Tomorrow is a section for teachers that provides simple, practical and low-cost resources to use... as soon as tomorrow!

The Goal Writing Template: Fill Every Box For a Complete Goal!

- Step 1 In discussion with the student, parent, and any community partners involved, set goals with reference to SMART objectives.
- Step 2 Using the goal statement as the overarching aim, fill in the grid, starting with the CLOP and moving into specific objectives, and then brainstorm strategies for both home and school to meet the goals.
- Step 3 Use the completed grid as a reference in ongoing IEP progress monitoring

Goal Statement: Billy will submit assignments within the first 15 minutes of class

Current Level of Performance: Billy comes to class without his homework completed 50% of the time.

Objective 1: Billy will remember to bring his assignments home.

Evaluation: Number of times Billy brings homework home.

Method: Parents will crosscheck school bag and list and record every day.

Date: Outcome:

Person(s) responsible:
Teacher (to provide checklist)
Parents

Objective 2:

Evaluation:

Method:

Date: Outcome:

Date: Outcome:

Person(s) responsible:

Objective 3:

Evaluation:

Method:

Date: Outcome:

Date: Outcome:

Person(s) responsible:

Strategies: Checklist of items needed to complete before leaving the classroom.



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Promising Practices is a publication of the University of British Columbia, with support from the BC Representative for Children and Youth.

Our mission is to provide educators and parents with positive approaches that have been shown to work in creating positive school environments, preventing challenging behaviour and supporting students who are at risk for challenges.

We welcome your comments and ideas for future newsletter articles at:

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Visit us on the web and sign up for future issues at:

<http://promisingpractices.research.educ.ubc.ca>

To find out more about PBS in BC, including examples from BC schools, free downloadable materials, and info on the Making Connections Conference, visit

<http://bcpbs.wordpress.com/>

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

In the next issue of Promising Practices, we will focus on building positive school cultures and supporting students in secondary schools. Look forward to tips on creating caring environments and re-engaging students in their school communities.