

# Content-Specific Simulated Interaction PLO



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**Definition:** Simulated interactions allow teacher candidates to engage in instructional interactions in controlled environments with adults posing as students. In simulated interactions, teacher candidates provide instruction to their peers who are provided guidance on specific ways to respond. The peers are coached or directed to provide responses that depend on the instructional moves of the teacher candidate providing instruction. To guide responses, a script is provided to the peers. Those teaching then respond to the simulated students and receive feedback on their implementation of the selected instructional practice, including how it influenced student learning, from mentor teachers and/or teacher education faculty. Simulated interactions provide candidates opportunities to practice teaching HLPs before they teach them in K-12 environments. The effectiveness of simulated interactions has been established in several professions, including nursing, business, and education. Findings from studies in different professions show that simulations effect changes in knowledge, self-efficacy, and practice (e.g., Cabello & Topping, 2018; Cobbett & Snelgrove-Clark, 2016).

**Description:** This simulated interaction occurs during Phase 2 of a four-phase practice-based learning opportunity (PLO). The first-phase PLO was described as way of promoting candidates use of explicit instruction (High-Leverage Practice, HLP #16). This second-phase PLO can be used to promote candidates use of HLP#16 and use cognitive and metacognitive strategies (HLP #14). The second phase, presented here, is part of a four-phase PLO designed by Grand Valley State University (GVSU) faculty Paula Lancaster and Joe Fisher to develop the instructional skills located within the larger practice of HLP #16. Each of the phases incorporates a distinct, but related, PLO. For ease of

understanding, we refer to the phases described in the video presentation of Dr. Lancaster as individual PLOs. PLO2, described in Phase 2, addresses both explicit instruction (HLP#16) and cognitive strategy instruction (HLP#14). How to use PLO2 is further explicated in the implementation guidance we provide following the description and context for the PLO. When used together, the four PLOs address the first, second, third, and fourth stages of the enactment cycle described by McDonald and colleagues (2013). Descriptions of all the PLOs are as follows.

#### **PLO 1: Content-Neutral Simulated Interaction**

Teacher candidates develop knowledge of, and skill in, implementing explicit instruction. They are taught to design, deliver, and analyze explicit instruction to their peers using a familiar non-academic learning objective (e.g., How to make a peanut butter sandwich, how to pack a lunch, how to make a bed). Peers in the course are given a student profile to follow to role-play the behaviors and responses of elementary students in a class and support the teacher candidate in enacting particular components of explicit instruction (see student profile). Teacher candidates providing instruction in this simulation are provided feedback using an explicit instruction rubric. This PLO is the focus of the implementation guidance we provide.

#### **PLO 2: Content-Controlled Simulated Interaction**

Teacher candidates develop and deliver a content-specific lesson involving explicit instruction (HLP#16) to teach a cognitive strategy (HLP#14) to their peers. The cognitive strategy is selected based on what they will teach individual K-12 students as part of their clinical course requirements. Candidates practice the same content and are provided with a model of how to teach the content. Similar to PLO 1, peers in the course are given a student profile to follow to role play the behaviors and responses of elementary students in a class and support the teacher candidate in enacting particular components of explicit instruction. Teacher candidates providing the instruction in this simulation are provided feedback on an explicit instruction rubric.

### PLO 3: Tutoring With Content-Controlled Lessons

Teacher candidates develop and deliver a series of seven to eight content-specific lessons to an individual child over seven to eight weeks. The lesson content was used for PLO 2 and was negotiated in advance with the schools that host the GVSU candidates. To determine the content, GVSU faculty offer participating schools a couple of content areas in which candidates should learn to apply explicit instruction. If the participating school/district isn't interested in having candidates address those areas, GVSU faculty find a school that is. GVSU believes that partnerships must be mutually exclusive, and they only want to provide instruction if districts feel it is needed. Teacher candidates are provided feedback on an explicit instruction rubric. See the video for more detail about how the GVSU selects school partners.

### PLO 4: Small-Group Instruction

Teacher candidates develop and deliver content-specific lessons to small groups of children or youth within a field placement. At this point, content is decided by classroom teacher. Candidates are evaluated using an explicit instruction rubric. Note: PLOs 3 and 4 are described in the video, but are not expanded upon in the implementation guides.

#### **Context for the 4 PLOs:**

The first three PLOs, described in the video presentation, occur within a course taken during the junior year of GVSU's teacher preparation program. This course occurs at the beginning of the program's professional practice sequence. The course is meant to be an introduction to inclusive teaching for elementary teachers. Teacher candidates spend a fair amount of time during the first six weeks in class learning about explicit instruction and aspects of early-reading instruction. PLO 1 is practiced in the first six weeks, and so is PLO 2. In approximately the seventh week of the same course, PLO 3 is introduced. The course is held in a local elementary school and candidates are paired. Each pair is given a folder with lesson shells for specific phonemic awareness and phonics explicit instruction lessons. The pairs complete the lessons and work with the same child for approximately 30 minutes a week for the remaining seven weeks. The instructor is present and observes each group, stepping in as needed and providing feedback on the lesson plans, instruction, and reflections. In the semester following completion of this course, teacher candidates enroll

in *Teacher Assisting*, during which they are expected to deliver small-group explicit instruction (PLO 4).

## Content-Specific Simulated Interaction PLO

### [Watch Video](#)

#### Stage 1: Developing Prerequisite Knowledge

-What is this stage about?

In this stage, candidates develop knowledge of how to use explicit instruction (HLP#16) to teach a cognitive strategy (HLP#14). They review what they have learned about explicit instruction, learn about cognitive strategies, and then learn how they can apply explicit instruction to teach a cognitive strategy.

-How does the instructor implement this stage?

**Step 1:** Candidates read two practitioner papers on cognitive strategy instruction and compare instruction described to explicit instruction learned in PLO 1.

**Step 2:** Candidates watch video on HLP#14 and discuss how cognitive strategy instruction is similar to what they learned about explicit instruction (HLP#16, Resource A).

**Step 3:** Instructor provides a lecture describing and modeling cognitive strategy instruction, breaking it down into its various components (See Resource B.1 and B.2) and engages candidates in a discussion of how components are represented on the explicit instruction rubric (Resource D). Cue candidates to pay specific attention to how the instructor provided a think-aloud.

**Step 4:** Candidates are taught to use the explicit instruction rubric (Resource D) to rate cognitive strategy instruction. Candidates watch an unedited video of a high school teacher using HLP#14 (Resource C) and identify behaviors they observed on the rubric. As a class, they discuss strong examples of rubric behaviors and areas of instruction that can be strengthened. The course instructor may model for students how specific behaviors could be strengthened.

-Materials and resources used to implement Stage 1

#### **Suggested Readings:**

Hagaman, J. L., Luschen, K., & Reid, R. (2010). The "RAP" on reading comprehension. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 43(1), 22-29.

Harris, K. R., Graham, S., & Mason, L. (2002). POW plus TREE equals powerful opinion essay. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 34(4), 70-73.

[Resource A: HLP #14 video](#)

[Resource B.1: Decomposition of HLP#14](#)

[Resource B.2: Script for modeling HLP#14](#)

[Resource C: Unedited videos of teachers using HLP #14](#)

[Resource D: Explicit Instruction Rubric](#)

-Questions other faculty/PD providers might have when implementing this practice

*What challenges do candidates confront when learning to provide explicit instruction?*

**Challenge 1:** Candidates do not always understand the difference between explaining and showing students how to complete the steps of a strategy and thinking aloud while demonstrating the steps. When the instructor engages in the decomposition task, they can guide candidates to describe what the instructor did when they thought aloud and how the instructor's actions might be helpful to students.

**Challenge 2:** Candidates may struggle to engage students during the model and think-aloud portion of the cognitive strategy. The instructor will ask candidates to describe what he or she did to engage students and generate other strategies they might use for engaging students.

## Stage 2: Planning the lesson

-What is this stage about?

In this stage, candidates use the explicit instruction lesson-planning template to plan a content specific lesson. The example provided by GVSU faculty is the paraphrasing strategy or RAP strategy.

-How does the instructor implement this stage?

**Step 1:** Before candidates plan the cognitive strategy instruction lesson, they review how to use the structured protocol and lesson-planning template. They also review the paragraph provided by the instructor to be used in the lesson. Have them review the structure of each component of the lesson plan and discuss how each component of the explicit instruction rubric is applied in a cognitive strategy lesson. The goal is to help the candidate identify what might be similar to the Pack a Lunch activity presented in PLO 1 and what might be different.

**Step 2:** Candidate will use the structured protocol, lesson plan template, and sample paragraph to design a content specific lesson (e.g., *Teaching the Paraphrasing Strategy*).

-Materials and resources used to implement Stage 2

[Resource E: Structured Protocol and Lesson Planning Template](#)

[Resource D: Explicit Instruction Rubric](#)

[Resource F: Sample Paragraph](#)

-Questions other faculty/PD providers might have when implementing this practice

*Can any lesson planning template be used?*

Yes, if it contains the key components of explicit instruction and prompts candidates to think aloud during the model step.

### **Stage 3: Enacting the lesson**

-What is this stage about?

In this stage, candidates deliver the lesson they planned in Phase 2, and their peers play the student role according to the guidance provided in the simulation script.

-How does the instructor implement this stage?

**Step 1:** Before candidates plan the cognitive strategy instruction lesson, they review how to use the structured protocol and lesson-planning template. They also review the paragraph provided by the instructor to be used in the lesson. Have them review the structure of each component of the lesson plan and discuss how each component of the explicit instruction rubric is applied in a cognitive strategy lesson. The goal is to help the candidate identify what might be similar to the Pack a Lunch activity presented in PLO 1 and what might be different.

**Step 2:** Candidate will use the structured protocol, lesson plan template, and sample paragraph to design a content specific lesson (e.g., *Teaching the Paraphrasing Strategy*).

-Materials and resources used to implement Stage 3

[Resource E: Structured Protocol and Lesson Planning Template](#)

[Resource D: Explicit Instruction Rubric](#)

[Resource F: Sample Paragraph](#)

-Questions other faculty/PD providers might have when implementing this stage

*How can instructors help candidates to provide constructive feedback, particularly on the think-aloud?*

Instructors will need to re-emphasize the importance of constructive feedback to candidates. They should also help peers think about the feedback they should provide about think-alouds. For instance, candidates may be directed to consider if their peer's think-aloud helps them understand how to use the RAP strategy.

### **Stage 4: Evaluating the lesson**

-What is this stage about?

In this stage, candidates reflect on and receive feedback on instruction. Those playing the role of students complete the explicit instruction rubric. The candidate who played the role of the teacher

may also complete the explicit instruction rubric after watching a video of his or her instruction. The feedback is then discussed in a brief post-conference.

-How does the instructor implement this stage?

**Step 1:** Candidates who played the role of students analyze their feedback from the completed explicit instruction rubric.

**Step 2:** The candidate who taught watches a video of him or herself and completes the explicit instruction rubric.

**Step 3:** The simulation group, comprising the candidate who taught and candidates who played students, share their feedback and discusses ways to improve the instruction.

-Materials and resources used to implement Stage 4

[Resource D: Explicit Instruction Rubric](#)

-Questions other faculty/PD providers might have when implementing this practice

*How does this class-based activity move to authentic implementation?*

As candidates become more comfortable with delivering RAP or other content-specific lessons to peers, they can begin delivering lessons to individual or small groups of K-12 students and work their way up to delivering lessons to a whole group. Also, when working in a K-12 setting, make sure the content is relevant to the students and is curriculum-based and approved by the mentor teacher.

## Resources



- [Resource A: HLP #14 video](#)
- [Resource B.1: Decomposition of HLP#14](#)
- [Resource B.2: Script for modeling HLP#14](#)
- [Resource C: Unedited videos of teachers using HLP #14](#)
- [Resource D: Explicit Instruction Rubric](#)
- [Resource E: Structured Protocol and Lesson Planning Template](#)

- [Resource F: Sample Paragraph](#)
- [Resource G: Simulation Script RAP](#)

### **Definition References**

Cabello, V. M., & Topping, K. J. (2018). Making scientific concepts explicit through explanations: Simulations of high leverage practice in teacher education. *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering, and Education*, 6, 35-48. [10.5937/ijcrsee1803035C](https://doi.org/10.5937/ijcrsee1803035C)

Cobbett, S. & Snelgrove-Clark, E. (2016). Virtual versus face-to-face simulation in relations to student knowledge, anxiety, and self-confidence in maternal-newborn nursing: A randomized control trial.

## **Video**

[Watch Video](#)