

# From Teacher Candidate to Inclusive Educator: A Conceptual Framework for Training Teacher Candidates to Support Emergent Bilingual Students and Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms

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## Abstract

*This manuscript describes a conceptual framework for preparing teacher candidates to be effective inclusive educators for emergent bilingual students and students with disabilities. The manuscript aligns with the journal theme by emphasizing the importance of supporting teacher candidates in their development as inclusive educators. Based on the shared characteristics of two research-based approaches, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarria et al., 2018) and the high-leverage practices for inclusive education (HLP) framework (McLeskey et al., 2019), the authors present a lesson plan model that helps teacher candidates integrate research-based practices into teaching and learning opportunities during their clinical teaching.*

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher preparation, students with disabilities, emergent bilingual students

**T**he purpose of this paper is threefold. First, the authors describe the conceptual underpinnings of an emerging framework for preparing teacher candidates (TCs) to be effective inclusive educators for emergent bilingual students (EBs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). Next, the authors will examine the shared characteristics of two research-based approaches that inform inclusive education practices: the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model used for EBs (Echevarria et al., 2018) and the high-leverage practices for inclusive education (HLP) framework used to guide instruction for SWDs in inclusive classroom settings (McLeskey et al., 2019). As a final step, the authors will present a lesson plan model that helps teacher candidates

integrate the shared characteristics of the SIOP and HLP models into inclusive teaching and learning opportunities during their clinical teaching. This work was originally presented at the 2023 Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) annual conference.

## Conceptual Underpinnings

In today's increasingly diverse classrooms, teachers need to possess the knowledge and skills to work with EBs and SWDs to promote an inclusive, supportive, and equitable learning environment. Parallel to this increasing diversity, all teachers are now expected to be inclusive educators who provide effective academic instruction in

classroom settings consisting of students with a variety of support needs, including EBs and SWDs. Approximately 20% of Texas public school students are classified as a SWD who receives either special education services or accommodations through a Section 504 plan (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Similarly, approximately 20% of Texas students can be considered EB, receiving support through either bilingual education models or English as a Second Language support (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Students in both populations (SWDs and EBs) receive a significant portion of their education in inclusive general classroom settings, including students with more extensive language and/or disability support needs. SWDs receiving services via a Section 504 plan are educated almost exclusively in general classroom settings and over 70% of students receiving special education services are educated in the general classroom setting at least 80% of their school day (Texas Education Agency, 2023). Similarly, over half of EBs receive a significant portion of their content instruction in general classroom settings (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

The expectation for being inclusive educators includes pre-service TCs throughout their fieldwork, beginning with early field experience opportunities and extending into their clinical teaching experiences. To develop into effective inclusive educators, TCs need explicit learning opportunities throughout their teacher preparation program to acquire and implement research-based strategies that meet the support needs of EBs and SWDs in general classroom settings (Kent & Giles, 2016). At the authors' university, the teacher preparation program provides coursework and field opportunities related to diverse student populations, but the courses are sometimes siloed and structured so that they are specific to one student population in near exclusivity. As an example, pre-service TCs may take a special education course and a bilingual education course in the same semester. However, there may be little to no intentional overlap between the content and instructional strategies learned in these courses.

To provide the explicit learning opportunities needed to help TCs become effective inclusive educators for EBs and SWDs, the authors developed a conceptual framework based on two research-based approaches for inclusive education: the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model used for EBs (Echevarria et al., 2018) and

the high leverage practices for inclusive education (HLP) framework used to guide instruction for SWDs in inclusive classroom settings (McLeskey et al., 2019). There is considerable overlap and similarity between these two approaches in terms of the instructional strategies used in general classroom settings. The purpose of the conceptual framework is to help TCs understand the shared characteristics of these two models so that they are able to integrate a variety of research-based practices that are effective for both EBs and SWDs in inclusive general education classrooms.

## **HLP and SIOP: Two Research-Based Approaches**

### **High Leverage Practices for Special Education (HLP)**

High leverage practices for special education (HLPs) are a specific set of research-based strategies that have been identified as core competencies for all special educators working in inclusive classroom settings. Developed through an almost five-year process, the HLP framework was developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) to ensure that TCs are prepared to use research-based, high-impact strategies to improve the academic and behavioral outcomes of SWDs (McLeskey, et al., 2019). As the nation's leading organization for program approval and accreditation of special education teacher preparation programs, the CEC was uniquely positioned to lead this initiative.

The HLP framework consists of 22 specific teaching practices that are 1) part of the daily work of teachers, and 2) appropriate for novice teachers to learn, practice, and master as part of their teacher preparation program (McLeskey, et al., 2019). The HLPs are organized into four practice categories, consisting of strategies related to collaboration, assessment, social/ emotional/ behavior supports, and instruction. The conceptual framework described in this manuscript focused specifically on the HLPs included in the *instruction* category. These instructional practices identified as HLPs all have strong evidence of their effectiveness for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for SWDs in inclusive classrooms (McLeskey, et al., 2019). Table 1 lists the 12 HLPs in the *instruction* practice category.

Table 1. HLPs in the *instruction* category (McLeskey, et al., 2019)

HLP 11	Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals.
HLP 12	Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal.
HLP 13	Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
HLP 14	Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.
HLP 15	Provide scaffolded supports.
HLP 16	Use explicit instruction.
HLP 17	Use flexible grouping.
HLP 18	Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
HLP 19	Use assistive and instructional technologies.
HLP 20	Provide intensive instruction.
HLP 21	Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.
HLP 22	Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

### Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is an instructional framework designed to integrate language and content instruction in inclusive classrooms (Echevarria et al., 2018). Using the SIOP methodology, teachers provide instruction, practice opportunities, and assessment in content (e.g., language arts, social studies, math, and science) and language (e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary) at the same time. The SIOP model emerged as an effective alternative to the English as a Second Language (ESL) pull-out method in which EBs would have to leave their classroom to work with an ESL expert on their language needs but would miss

core instruction time in their general education classrooms (Echevarria et al., 2018). SIOP provides a structure through which teachers provide research-validated language support in inclusive general education classrooms. It guides teachers' instruction and assessment of EBs through eight components and 30 key features that all have empirical evidence of effectiveness with EBs. The eight components of the model are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment. Table 2 lists the eight SIOP components with the key features for each component.

Table 2. Components and features of SIOP (Echevarria, et al., 2018)

Component	Features
SIOP 1: Lesson Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content objective defined, displayed, and reviewed with students</li> <li>2. Language objectives clearly defined, displayed, and reviewed with students</li> <li>3. Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students</li> <li>4. Supplementary materials used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful</li> <li>5. Adaptation of content to all levels of student proficiency</li> <li>6. Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening and/or speaking</li> </ol>
SIOP 2: Building Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences</li> <li>8. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts</li> <li>9. Key vocabulary emphasized</li> </ol>
SIOP 3: Comprehensible Input	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels</li> <li>11. Clear explanation of academic tasks</li> <li>12. A variety of techniques used to make content concepts clear teaching ideas for comprehensible input</li> </ol>
SIOP 4: Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Ample opportunities provided for students to use learning strategies</li> <li>14. Scaffolding techniques consistently used, assisting and supporting student understanding</li> <li>15. A variety of questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills</li> </ol>

SIOP 5: Interaction	<p>16. Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaboration responses about lesson concepts</p> <p>17. Grouping configurations support language and content objectives of the lesson</p> <p>18. Sufficient wait time for student responses consistently provided</p> <p>19. Ample opportunity for students to clarify key concepts in L1 needed with aide, peer, or L1 text</p>
SIOP 6: Practice and Application	<p>20. Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge in the classroom</p> <p>21. Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge</p> <p>22. Activities integrate all language skills teaching ideas for practice &amp; application</p>
SIOP 7: Lesson Delivery	<p>23. Content objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery</p> <p>24. Language objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery</p> <p>25. Students engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the period</p> <p>26. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to students' ability levels</p>
SIOP 8: Review and Assessment	<p>27. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary</p> <p>28. Comprehensive review of key content concepts</p> <p>29. Regular feedback provided to students on their output</p> <p>30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives</p>

## Context

This project is being conducted in a four-year public university in Texas which is one of the largest teacher preparation programs in its region. In 2018, the university revised the curriculum for elementary and middle school teacher certification candidates. The purpose of the curriculum revision was to provide TCs with scaffolded, field-intensive

learning opportunities that culminate in a full-year residency program. In this university's year-long residency model, TCs are placed in an inclusive classroom with the same mentor teacher and university supervisor for a full year. Throughout both their year-long residency clinical teaching and their two previous field-based semesters, TCs gain valuable experiences working with EBs and SWDs in inclusive general education classrooms. These

field experience opportunities are supported by university coursework that addresses a range of content-specific methodologies (e.g., methods courses in academic disciplines such as science and social studies) and student-specific methodologies (e.g., methods courses focused on EBs and SWDs). As part of every methods course, TCs complete applied instructional practice activities in their field experience placements.

The three project leads/authors of this study are full-time faculty working with TCs in both the university classroom and field-based settings. Two authors are in the bilingual/ESL program area teaching courses that prepare TCs to work with EBs. One author works in the special education program preparing teacher candidates to work with SWDs. During both informal hallway conversations and later more structured planning sessions, the authors began to identify considerable overlap between the methods that TCs were learning to support EBs and SWDs in inclusive general education classrooms. After initially conducting research on how TCs developed their sense of agency and identity as inclusive educators (authors, date), the authors began developing the conceptual framework and lesson plan model described in this manuscript. The proposed lesson plan template serves as the practical manifestation of the conceptual framework which connects SIOP and HLPs in fostering an inclusive learning environment for EBs and SWDs.

By explicitly mapping out the complimentary characteristics of research-based strategies that

support EBs and SWDs in inclusive classrooms, the authors have been better able to support TCs develop as inclusive educators who can effectively support all students in their classrooms. As described in the following sections, one key deliverable from this project has been the development and implementation of a lesson plan model that helps TCs integrate the shared characteristics of the SIOP and HLP models into inclusive teaching and learning opportunities throughout their clinical teaching experiences.

### **The SIOP and HLP Models as an Integrated Lesson Planning Approach**

An important step in this project was to examine the shared characteristics of these two research-based approaches that inform inclusive education practices. By creating a crosswalk that clearly shows the overlap between components from the SIOP and HLP frameworks, the authors have been able to make these connections explicit for TCs in both their university classes and their field work. As presented in Table 3, the SIOP / HLP crosswalk shows how each component area of the SIOP model for EBs is directly aligned with aspects of the HLP model for SWDs. This visual model allows the authors to help TCs see the connections and prioritize these strategies as ones that are research-based and most likely to have positive benefits for both EBs and SWDs in inclusive general education classroom instruction.

Table 3. SIOP / HLP crosswalk

SIOP for EBs	HLPs for SWDs
SIOP 1: Lesson Preparation	HLP 11: Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals. HLP 12: Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal. HLP 13: Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
SIOP 2: Building Background	HLP 15: Provide scaffolded supports. HLP 16: Use explicit instruction.
SIOP 3: Comprehensible Input	HLP 15: Provide scaffolded supports. HLP 16: Use explicit instruction.
SIOP 4: Strategies	HLP 15: Provide scaffolded supports. HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
SIOP 5: Interaction	HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement. HLP 19: Use assistive and instructional technologies
SIOP 6: Practice and Application	HLP 14: Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence. HLP 21: Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.
SIOP 7: Lesson Delivery	HLP 14: Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence. HLP 16: Use explicit instruction. HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
SIOP 8: Review and Assessment	HLP 22: Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

## Overview of the SIOP/HLP Lesson Plan

Once the SIOP / HLP crosswalk was completed, the authors developed a lesson plan model designed to help TCs integrate the shared characteristics of the SIOP and HLP frameworks into inclusive teaching and learning opportunities throughout their clinical teaching experiences. The lesson plan is designed to be used in both ESL methods courses and special education methods courses that are taken by the majority of TCs in the university’s teacher preparation programs. By using this approach, TCs are working with this model across multiple semesters and multiple classes. For example, TCs in the university’s elementary level teacher certification program initially examine the lesson plan in an introductory special education course prior to beginning their field-based semesters. Then, during the second semester of field experiences, the TCs begin using the lesson plan for both class assignments and field-based practice opportunities in ESL methods classes. Finally, the TCs use the lesson plan for multiple class

assignments and clinical teaching opportunities throughout their year-long residency as components of both their ESL and special education classes.

The lesson plan is presented in the figures below. Examples of characteristics that align with key components of the SIOP and HLP are indicated in each figure. In designing the format, the authors prioritized a design that is relatively straightforward and includes key overlapping components of the SIOP and HLP models. While lesson plan formats that are lengthier and require for narrative description are used in some teacher preparation courses at the authors’ university, they felt it was important that the TCs had a model that could be easily used in their field-based settings. The overall design is geared toward implementation in inclusive general education classroom settings.

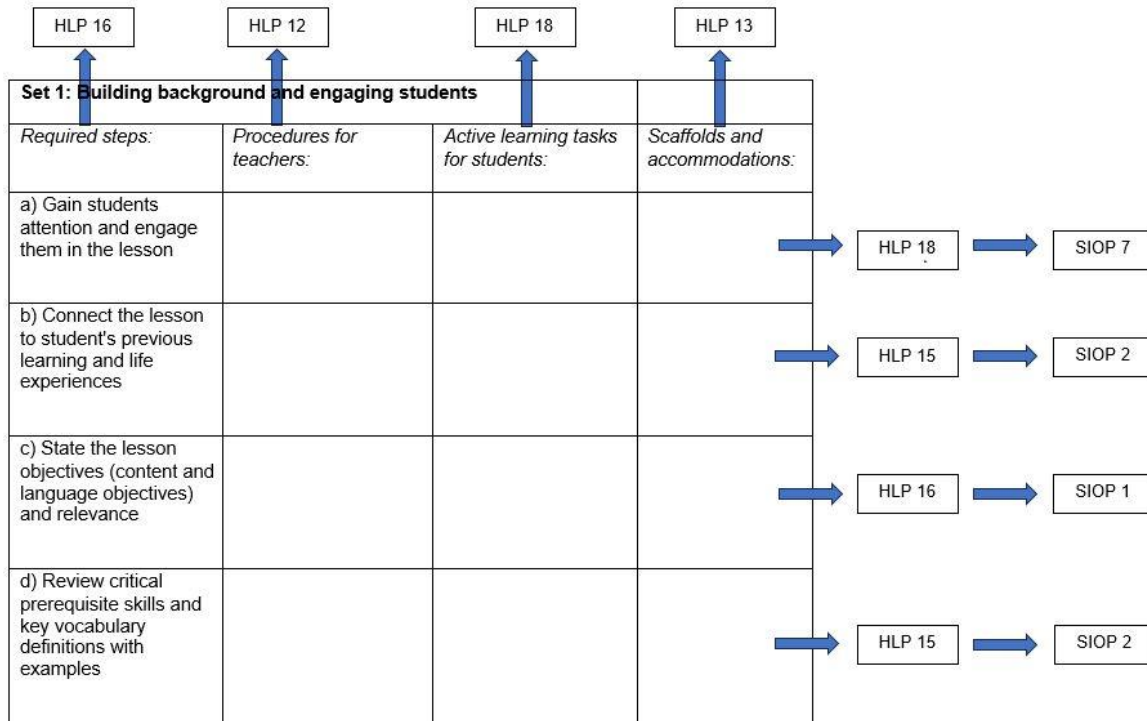
The first section of the SIOP/HLP lesson plan model focuses on the preparation components of SIOP and HLP. This is presented in Figure 1.



The next section of the SIOP/HLP lesson plan model directs the TC to focus on building background and engaging students. As is the case in all aspects of this lesson plan approach, TCs are prompted to ensure that students are actively engaged throughout each step of the lesson. This is presented in Figure 2.



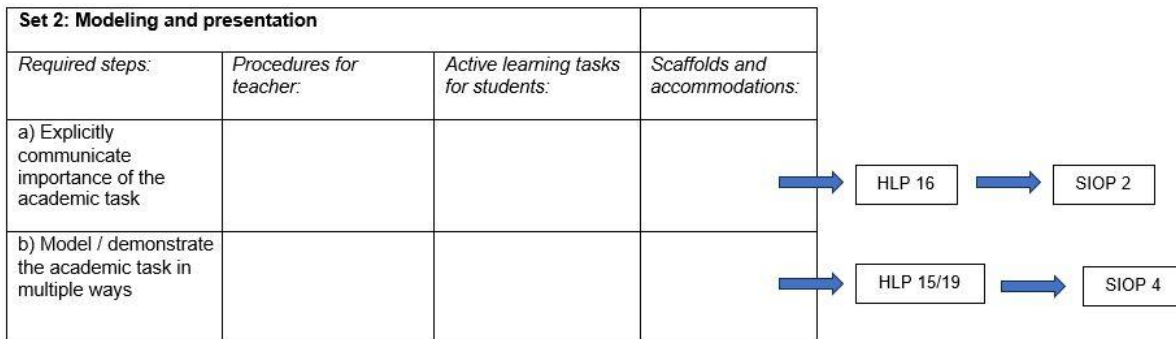
Figure 2. SIOP/HLP lesson plan: Building background and engaging students.



After building background and engaging the students, TCs focus on the modeling and

presentation aspects of SIOP and HLPs. These aspects are grounded in multiple areas of the SIOP and HLP frameworks. This is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. SIOP/HLP lesson plan: Modeling and presentation.



Following modeling and presentation, TCs move into the guided practice and strategy development section of the lesson design. TCs are prompted to

outline procedures for themselves, active learning tasks for students, and scaffolds and accommodations. This is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. SIOP/HLP lesson plan: Guided practice and strategy development.

<b>Set 3: Guided practice and strategy development</b>			
<i>Required steps:</i>	<i>Procedures for teacher:</i>	<i>Active learning tasks for students:</i>	<i>Scaffolds and accommodations</i>
a) Guide students through multiple opportunities to engage in the academic task			→ HLP 15 → SIOP 1
b) Ask specific questions and provide think-aloud opportunities to develop student thinking and understanding			→ HLP 14 → SIOP 5
c) Provide ongoing feedback and coaching to student groups and individual students			→ HLP 22 → SIOP 8

The final section of the lesson plan emphasizes review, independent practice, and assessment. This section prompts TCs to address SIOP and HLP components that enable EBs and SWDs to

demonstrate their learning with the support of appropriate scaffolds and accommodations. This is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. SIOP/HLP lesson plan: Review and independent practice / assessment.

<b>Set 4: Review and independent practice / assessment</b>			
<i>Required steps:</i>	<i>Procedures for teacher:</i>	<i>Active learning tasks for students:</i>	<i>Scaffolds and accommodations</i>
a) Review the lesson objectives (content and language objectives) and the key academic tasks and vocabulary			→ HLP 15 → SIOP 8
b) Prompt students to articulate their learning			→ HLP 14 → SIOP 4
c) Provide opportunity for students to demonstrate skill acquisition and mastery (i.e., assessment of student learning)			→ HLP 21 → SIOP 8

## SIOP/HLP Lesson Plan in Action: An Illustrative Example

As mentioned, the lesson plan is designed for ESL and special education methods courses taken by most TCs in the university’s teacher preparation programs. By using this approach, TCs are working with this model across multiple semesters and multiple classes, including both early field experience opportunities and their year-long residency clinical teaching. The example below shows one way the authors use the SIOP/HLP lesson plan to help teacher candidates integrate these models' shared characteristics into their field-based clinical experiences.

In the semester before their year-long residency, TCs take an ESL methods course that includes 10 hours of applied field experience working with EBs and SWDs in a general education classroom. TCs work with both their university professor and mentor teachers to design and implement two lessons using the SIOP/HLP framework. Their mentor teachers assist the TCs in identifying a group of students that include both EBs and SWDs, some of whom are dual identified as both an EB and a SWD. The TCs then design and

implement the two lessons with this group of students either in a whole class setting or in a smaller group setting.

In their lesson plan development, TCs address each SIOP/HLP component. The lesson plan model is organized into four sets: 1) Building background and engaging students, 2) Modeling and presentation, 3) Guided practice and strategy development, and 4) Review and independent practice/assessment. In each set, TCs complete three columns detailing a) procedures for teachers, b) active learning tasks for students, and c) scaffolds and accommodations. These three columns must be addressed for each step of the lesson.

The section below provides an illustrative example from a TC in a kindergarten classroom. In this lesson, the content objective was “students will retell a story in the correct order” and the language objective was “students will demonstrate their listening skills by listening to their partner retell a story in the correct order”. As shown in Table 4, the TC has outlined procedures for the teacher, active learning tasks for students, and identified scaffolds and accommodations to support both EBs and SWDs participating in the lesson.

Table 4. Partial sample of the lesson plan depicting *Modeling and presentation*

Set 2: Modeling and presentation			
<i>Required steps</i>	<i>Procedures for teacher</i>	<i>Active learning tasks for students</i>	<i>Scaffolds and accommodations</i>
b) Model/demonstrate the academic task in multiple ways	Teacher will model what active listening, thinking aloud while reading, and asking questions about sequencing looks like	Students will observe and practice active listening, thinking aloud, and asking sequencing questions	Sentence stems Students will use sentence stems for thinking aloud and sequencing questions such as ‘The story makes me think of...’, ‘The story started with.....’ or ‘At the end of the story....’

The SIOP/HLP lesson plan prompts TCs to focus on the lesson components where the two conceptual frameworks align, with an emphasis on active student learning tasks and scaffolds and accommodations for each step. This model does not cluster accommodations into a stand-alone category listed at the start of the lesson plan, but instead includes it for each step to elicit targeted, specific strategies. For example, TCs reflect on what accommodations are needed in the modeling stage and what accommodations are needed in the review

and independent practice/assessment stage, which may look very different from each other. When TCs identify active learning tasks and scaffolds and accommodations for each procedure, they can identify strategies which may better support EBs and SWDs in each step. The example in Table 5 below illustrates the possible processes in Set 4: “Review and independent practice/assessment” for the same language and content objectives provided in the example above.

Table 5. Partial sample of the lesson plan depicting *Review and independent practice / assessment*

Set 4: Review and independent practice/assessment			
<i>Required steps</i>	<i>Procedures for teacher</i>	<i>Active learning tasks for students</i>	<i>Scaffolds and accommodations</i>
c) Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their skill acquisition and mastery (i.e., assessment of student learning)	The teacher will assess student learning by having them sequence story events in the correct order. Teacher will facilitate the activity and observe.	Students will sequence the story events in the correct order using picture cards the teacher provides in small groups.	Labeled picture cards The picture cards depict a story event but also has a short label to it for students to use both points as they decide to sequence them

## Conclusion

This manuscript described the conceptual underpinnings of an emerging framework for TCs to be effective inclusive educators for EBs and SWDs. Based on the shared characteristics of two research-based approaches, the authors presented a lesson plan model that helps TCs integrate the shared characteristics of the SIOP and HLP models into inclusive teaching and learning opportunities during their clinical field experiences. Future research on the lesson plan model will investigate its effectiveness on the learning outcomes of EBs

and SWDs, as well as examining how the model can incorporate other relevant theoretical frameworks that are used in educator preparation programs (e.g., Learning by Scientific Design or the 5E model for guided-inquiry). The lesson plan template serves as the embodiment of the shared attributes of the SIOP and HLP theoretical frameworks, thereby giving them a tangible and visible form. It aims to foster theory-to-practice connections and give TCs a roadmap to follow as they teach EBs and SWDs in inclusive general education classrooms.

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