

# IRIS TIPS

FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS



## THE IRIS CENTER

[HTTP://IRIS.PEABODY.VANDERBILT.EDU](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu)



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## 1. ENCOURAGING THE USE OF IRIS RESOURCES

### **THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO HIGHLIGHT THE BENEFITS OF USING THE IRIS WEB SITE:**

- Point out the broad variety of materials available at the IRIS Web site (*http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu* or *http://www.iriscenter.com*).
- Emphasize that IRIS online materials are free.
- Explain that the instructional strategies presented in IRIS materials are research-based.
- Illustrate the IRIS Web site's many features, including the IRIS Resource Locator, Web Resource Directory, Film Search Tool, Media Search Tool, and Online Dictionary.

### **SHARE THE IRIS SITE WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND PERSONNEL, AND TEACHERS:**

- Foster cooperation among colleagues within districts (e.g., general educators, special educators, and related service providers).
- Coordinate and track the use of IRIS resources in a given district through a matrix showing which personnel are using which resources.
- Encourage the use of the IRIS materials for inservice trainings and individual professional development.

★ **IRIS TIP:** *Encourage users to bookmark the IRIS Web site to facilitate ease of use. Users are far more likely to return to a Web resource if they can do so quickly and effortlessly.*

## 2. NAVIGATING AN IRIS STAR LEGACY MODULE

On the right-hand sidebar beside each IRIS Module is a podcast called “Navigating an IRIS Module.” This four-minute walkthrough demonstrates the structure of the IRIS Modules and explains how best to utilize and apply their resources. To receive the full informational benefit of the module, we recommend that users work through their pages in the order presented in the *STAR Legacy Cycle*, starting with the *Challenge* and moving on through the *Initial Thoughts, Perspectives and Resources, Assessment, and Wrap Up*.

To further facilitate module navigation, we've provided a link to an outline on the right-hand sidebar of each module. This outline summarizes the content of each page or section and can be used as a quick reference or a study guide.

Every IRIS Module follows the *How People Learn* (HPL) framework developed by John Bransford. Users begin by clicking the *Challenge* button at the top of the *STAR Legacy* Cycle and then proceed through the sections by using the *STAR Legacy* icon at the right side of the page or by following the links at the top or bottom of each page.

### 3. PRESENTING AN IRIS STAR LEGACY MODULE, TIPS FOR PD PROVIDERS

#### HERE ARE SOME OF OUR THOUGHTS FOR THE BEST WAY TO PRESENT THE WEALTH OF INFORMATION IN EVERY IRIS STAR LEGACY MODULE:

- Review and explain the *STAR Legacy* Cycle.
- Show the “Navigating an IRIS Module” podcast.
- Explain the How People Learn theory that underlies each module. (Note: The trainer might want to review the IRIS Module *How People Learn: Presenting the Learning Theory and Inquiry Cycle on Which the IRIS Modules Are Built*. <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/hpl/chalcycle.htm>).
- Review the module outline page.
- Review and discuss the *Challenge* and *Initial Thoughts* questions.
- Review the structure of the *Perspectives and Resources* pages:
  - Emphasize that the pages answer the *Initial Thoughts* questions.
  - Demonstrate how to navigate between pages.
- Review and discuss the *Wrap Up*:
  - Don’t forget the *Wrap Up*! Even after they’ve completed the *Assessment* questions, participants should be encouraged to review and complete this final section.
  - When participants have completed a module, suggest that they compare their *Final Thoughts* to their *Initial Thoughts* and reflect on the differences between the two sets of responses.
- Point out the *References* and *Additional Resources and Information* page at the end of the module:
  - Participants can use this section to find more information about the module’s main topic.
- Give professional development participants a realistic idea of how long a *STAR Legacy* Module will take to complete:
  - Although most IRIS Modules take about an hour to complete,

some may require more time.

- It is not necessary to complete the modules in one sitting; participants can revisit and finish at any time.
- Determine whether and how you will hold participants accountable for completing modules:
  - Remind participants that they can return to the *Perspectives and Resources* pages if they are unable to answer the questions.

#### **HERE IS SOME OTHER INFORMATION YOU MIGHT WANT TO HIGHLIGHT:**

- Some modules are presented in Spanish as well as English.
- Some modules are part of a sequence, such as those in the behavior series. Others are organized in parts, such as RTI parts 1–5.
- A text-only version of every module is available on the *Resources* page for those participants who have visual impairments.
- If participants are using their own computers to explore the IRIS Web site, remind them that they will need to install the latest versions of Adobe Flash Player, Adobe Reader, and QuickTime. Links for these programs can be found by clicking the *Help* button at the top of the IRIS Resource Locator page.
- Discuss how to locate modules on various topics using the IRIS Resource Locator. Note that searches can be organized by topic or by grade level.

## **4. ASSESSING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) NEEDS OF THE STAFF AND DISTRICT AND ALIGNING THEM TO IRIS RESOURCES**

#### **HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ASSESS DISTRICT PD-LEVEL NEEDS:**

- Review district mission and vision statements to help focus on possible topics.
- Identify available sources of observation data.
- Decide on participant outcomes, from increased knowledge and skills development to fidelity of implementation.
- Survey teachers and administrators to determine which IRIS resources they wish to begin with.
- Include IRIS opportunities in district PD catalog of offerings.

★ **IRIS TIP:** *It is crucial that professional developers help foster a sense of accomplishment among participants by reminding them that their use of IRIS Modules and resources will improve student-learning outcomes.*

### **HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ASSESS SCHOOL PD-LEVEL NEEDS:**

- Review student performance on CRT and benchmark testing.
- Survey the building administrator(s) on PD needs.
- Compare school and student needs with a list of IRIS resources.

### **HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ASSESS INDIVIDUAL PD-LEVEL NEEDS:**

- Survey educators.
- Use teacher performance reviews to identify areas of need.
- Develop a personal learning plan that includes IRIS.

### **AND SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Decide how to evaluate the effect of proposed PD.
- Make sure that IRIS Modules are incorporated in activities throughout the year in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- Identify topics that would be a good fit for team-based professional development (such as RTI) that include paraeducators or paraprofessionals, special and general education teachers, leadership personnel, and related service providers.
- Identify the IRIS Case Studies that most closely align with the working conditions of the district.

## **5. USING IRIS STAR LEGACY MODULES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO USE IRIS STAR LEGACY MODULES, A FEW OF THE MOST COMMON INCLUDE:**

- Work through the IRIS Module as a group:
  - If participants are not using their own computers, arrange to meet in a computer lab.
  - Use the *Challenge* and *Initial Thoughts* sections of the module to introduce the topic and to initiate discussion.
  - Complete the information included in *Perspectives and Resources* on individual computers, in pairs, or in small groups.
  - Use the *Assessment* component to spark group discussion.
  - Conclude with the *Wrap Up*.
- Work through portions of the IRIS Module as a group:
  - Introduce the *Challenge* as a means to stimulate the participants'

- interest and to allow them to share their *Initial Thoughts*.
- Ask participants to complete the *Perspectives and Resources* section on their own.
- Determine whether and how you want to hold participants accountable for completing the module.
- Alternatively, ask the participants to review the *Assessment* section in order to gauge the degree to which their thinking about the *Challenge* scenario has evolved.
- Conclude with the *Wrap Up* at the next training or in an online discussion tool.
- Ask participants to complete the module before the training begins. Review the main components of the module together.
- Apply the information to situations that the participants have observed in their own schools.
- Brainstorm ways to apply the information to current situations within each participant's classroom.
- See to it that participants leave the training with a plan of action based on their needs.
- Enhance individual professional development:
  - Assign the *Challenge*, *Initial Thoughts*, and selected *Perspectives and Resources* to participants either in groups or as individuals.
  - Determine whether and how you want to hold participants accountable for completing the module.
  - Districts could also use an online discussion tool as an accountability measure.
- Use IRIS Modules as a component of professional development credit-offering:
  - Each module comes with built-in assessment questions that districts might use as an evaluation tool.

## **6. REMINDING PARTICIPANTS THAT MODULES ARE NOT THE ONLY RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE IRIS CENTER**

The IRIS Center Web site offers an entire library of resources and tools. Be sure to emphasize to participants the value of spending some time looking around for what's on hand.

**CASE STUDIES:** IRIS Case Studies help users strengthen their understanding of select topics and enhance their problem-solving abilities. Designed to accommodate a wide range of user skills, case studies are divided into three progressive levels:

**Level A** - Gathering information

**Level B** - Analyzing Information

**Level C** - Synthesizing Information

Professional development providers should determine which levels to focus on based on participants' needs and experiences. For example, Level A might be more appropriate for a paraeducator, Level B for a beginning teacher, and Level C for a veteran teacher. In other instances, an experienced paraeducator might be a more appropriate candidate for Level C, whereas a veteran teacher might be better suited for level A.

Each case study includes *Strategies and Resources* (STAR) sheets containing the information necessary to address the case study scenarios.

★ **IRIS TIPS:**

- *Present Level A in an inservice training. Assign Level B or C as an accountability measure.*
- *Discuss the case study in a PLC meeting.*
- *Work through the case study in a training. Ask participants to reflect on how they might implement the STAR Sheet strategies in their classroom and what the outcomes might be.*

**ACTIVITIES:** IRIS Activities are designed to help users incorporate or synthesize information about a disability related topic. They include games, ideas for discussions about books or movies, Web site applications, and case studies. They are appropriate for individuals and either small or large groups.

★ **IRIS TIPS:**

- *Use activities to supplement the information in IRIS Modules.*
- *Use activities as attention-getters.*
- *PLCs might use activities to address topics of interest.*

**INFORMATION BRIEFS:** IRIS Information Briefs are gathered from a wide variety of sources and offer quick facts and details on a range of disability related subjects.

## ★ IRIS TIPS:

- *Following an in-class observation, an observer might recommend information briefs to address the teacher’s needs.*
- *PLCs might provide links to information briefs to be read in preparation for a PLC meeting.*
- *Professional development providers might attach an information link PDF to an email about a specific training topic.*

## 7. COMBINING IRIS RESOURCES TO CREATE A MULTI-FACETED TRAINING

Many IRIS Resources are designed to enhance or complement one another. For example, a teacher might use the *Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors (Part 1): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle* module in conjunction with the “Encouraging Appropriate Behavior” case study to further illustrate the principles of the acting-out cycle.

- Use activities (e.g., “Back to Square One” or “Hang in There”) to further extend the module.
- Ask participants to identify the acting-out cycle as described in these activities.
- Ask them to identify other factors (e.g., lesson demands) that might contribute to the acting-out cycle.
- Play the Behavior Game to identify positive, negative, and inappropriate consequences.

To facilitate a better and more thorough understanding of the information provided in a module, case study, activity, or information brief, we suggest that professional development providers encourage communication among teachers and other district-level personnel through the use of online messaging and discussion tools.

## 8. COMMON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

*Suggested Resources for Behavior and Classroom Management*

### Modules\*

- Addressing and Non-Compliant Behaviors Parts 1 and 2
- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Who’s in Charge?
- You’re In Charge!

## **Case Studies**

- Encouraging Appropriate Behavior
- Fostering Student Accountability for Classroom Work
- Measuring Behavior
- Norms and Expectations

## **Activities**

- Back to Square One
- Behavior Game
- Conduct an A-B-C Analysis
- Hang in There

## **Information Briefs**

- Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder
- Positive Consequence Strategies
- School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (3 levels)
- Teaching Social Skills

## *Suggested Resources for RTI*

### **Modules\***

- RTI Parts 1-5
- High-Quality Math Instruction
- Classroom Assessment Parts 1 and 2

## **Case Studies**

- RTI: Data-Based Decision Making
- RTI: Progress Monitoring

## **Information Briefs**

- Determining Adequate Yearly Progress: Kindergarten Through Grade 6 with Curriculum Based Measurement
- Helping Educators Discuss RTI with Parents and Students
- New Strategies to Help Diverse Students Succeed
- RTI and Universal Design for Learning: How Might They Intersect In the General Education Classroom

## *Suggested Resources for Learning Strategies and Differentiated Instruction*

### **Modules\***

- Universal Design for Learning
- PALS: A Reading Strategy – modules address different grade levels
- CSR: A Reading Comprehension Strategy
- Using Learning Strategies

### **Case Studies**

- Algebra Parts 1 and 2
- Early Reading
- Written Expression: Grades 2–5

### **Information Briefs**

- Differentiated Instruction in Math
- Helping Students with Disabilities Succeed In State & District Writing Assessments
- Never Too Late: Approaches to Reading Instruction for Secondary Students with Disabilities
- What is the Difference Between Social and Academic English

## *Suggested Resources for Accommodations*

### **Modules\***

- Assistive Technology
- Accommodations to the Physical Environment: Setting up a Classroom for Students with Visual Disabilities
- Cultural and Linguistic Differences: What Teachers Should Know
- The Pre-Referral Process: Procedures for Supporting Students with Academic and Behavior Concerns

### **Case Studies**

- Effective Room Arrangement

### **Activities**

- He's Just a Goofy Guy
- Assistive Technologies
- Wheelchair Accessibility
- A Broken Arm

## **Information Briefs**

- Severe and/ or Multiple Disabilities
- Special Topic Area: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Test Accommodations for LEP Students
- The Assistive Technology Planner: From Research to Implementation
- Universal Design for Learning

\* Note: Module series are best completed in the recommended order.

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