REACHING EVERY LEARNER

Using WA-AIM Access Points in Inclusive Education for Access and Progress in Grade Level Standards for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

**Companion Tools**

**Dr. Tania May**

**Assistant Superintendent of Special Education**

**Prepared by:**

* **Cassie Martin**, PhD, Executive Director of Special Education, OSPI

[cassie.martin@k12.wa.us](mailto:cassie.martin@k12.wa.us) | 360-725-6075

* **Alexandra Toney**, Special Education Program Supervisor, OSPI

[alexandra.toney@k12.wa.us](mailto:alexandra.toney@k12.wa.us) | 360-725-6075

* **Gail Ghere**, PhD, Research Associate, TIES Center

[ghere002@umn.edu](mailto:ghere002@umn.edu)

* **Jessica Bowman**, Research Associate, TIES Center

[bowman@umn.edu](mailto:bowman@umn.edu)

**2025**

Introduction

The [*Reaching Every Learner: Using WA-AIM Access Points in Inclusive Education for Access and Progress in Grade-Level Standards for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2025-06/reaching-every-learner.pdf) includes:

* Elementary and secondary case studies for ELA and Mathematics which:
* Provide a sample learning progression that combines the access points identified within the WA-AIM Access Point Framework, with an example of a further complexity level and the grade level standard
* Unpack methods of teaching the standard for all students within the general education classroom
* Walk through examples of measuring student understanding across complexity levels of the standard for students with significant cognitive disabilities
* End with a one-page expanded example learning progression, that unpacks complexity and example success criteria and instructional strategies across complexity levels
* Elementary and Secondary Team Unit Planning Exercise Case Studies, which demonstrate how to use the **Team Unit Planning Exercise Template** to support students with significant cognitive disabilities in making progress in grade-level standards within a unit.

This resource bundle includes two companion tools:

* A blank **Expanded Learning Progression Template**
* A blank **Team Unit Planning Exercise Template**

These tools are designed to help educators apply the *Reaching Every Learner* approach in their planning and instruction. Grounded in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, the tools support the creation of accessible, inclusive, and appropriately challenging units for all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Educators and teams can use these tools during co-planning, lesson design, and ongoing instructional adjustments to meet diverse learner needs. For guidance and practical examples, review the case studies in the *Reaching Every Learner* resource as you use the companion tools.

# Team Unit Planning Exercise Template

Increasing Student Access and Progress in Grade Level Standards by Adjusting Complexity

This tool is designed to help educators apply the *Reaching Every Learner* approach in their planning and instruction. Grounded in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, it supports the creation of accessible, inclusive, and appropriately challenging units for all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Educators and teams can use these tools during co-planning, lesson design, and ongoing instructional adjustments to meet diverse learner needs. For guidance and practical examples, we recommend reviewing the case studies in the [*Reaching Every Learner*](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2025-06/reaching-every-learner.pdf) resource as you implement the tools.

## Section 1: Whole Class

**Unit Content Overview:** Begin by writing a clear, short description of your unit's core content. This statement should capture the essential learning that will take place and provide a foundation for planning inclusive instruction for all learners**.**

**Standards Alignment:** Document the grade-level standards and corresponding WA-AIM Access Points that will be addressed in this unit. Include both content standards and any relevant supporting standards that will help guide instruction and measurement of student learning.

Grade Level and Supporting Standard(s):

Are there WA-AIM Access Points for the Standard(s)? If Yes, detail them in Section 1 of the Team Planning Exercise:

**Learning Outcomes:**Think about the unit’s standards in terms of transferable understanding. What are the 2-4 fundamental skills that represent the learning all students should achieve through this unit.

For each learning outcome, develop 2–3 success criteria demonstrate multiple ways a student could demonstrate their learning.

*Prompt:**Success criteria should be:*

* *Observable and measurable*
* *Allow for multiple demonstration methods*
* *Support differentiated instruction*
* *Connect to real-world applications*
* *Enable student self-assessment to the extent appropriate*

**Core Instructional Approaches:**Describe the primary teaching strategies and learning activities planned for the whole class.

*Prompt: Focus on methods that naturally incorporate the multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression from UDL to support all learners from the start*.

What instructional strategies and activities can be used to increase access and progress in the standard?

## Section 2: Planning for Students with Extensive Support Needs

**Access and Engagement Analysis:** What is one barrier to learning we anticipate for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

* Is it related to how student interest or engagement is addressed in the instruction?
* Is it related to how the student’s background knowledge (e.g., vocabulary) is addressed in the learning environment?
* Is it related to options available for how students can show what they know?

**Brainstorm one way to remove this barrier:** What is one way you might remove the identified barrier in the learning environment?

**Complexity Adjustment Planning:**Use this space to brainstorm how the content and tasks can be adjusted so that students can access the grade level standard(s) at different complexity levels. Once the list is built, then order it by complexity to create a continuum of complexity for how students can deepen their understanding in the unit.

*Prompt: Consider how abstract concepts can be made more concrete and complex tasks broken into manageable components. Collaboration between general education and special education staff will enhance this exercise.*

**Bank of Support Strategies:** Outline a bank of instructional strategies that will assist students with significant cognitive disabilities to access and make meaningful progress in the learning activities. Consider visual supports, scaffolds, and technology.

**Ongoing Planning for Individualized Support Strategies:** Use this space as you are planning and refining instruction to document the individual support strategies students are needing. This box is intentionally shaded as educators may choose to leave this blank initially and instead update this over time.

*Remember: For students who have an IEP, or other student support plan, accommodations, modifications and support strategies that are determined to be needed may already be documented*.

**Progress Monitoring Approach** Describe how you will collect evidence of learning for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Include multiple ways students can demonstrate understanding and how data will be gathered to inform instructional decisions.

*Prompt: The progress monitoring approaches outlined should tie back to the learning outcomes and success criteria you identified in section 1*.

# Blank Expanded Learning Progression for \_\_\_\_Click or tap here to enter text.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **WA-AIM Access Points** | *If none, what are adjusted levels of complexity for the standard* | **Teacher adjusted** | **Grade Level Standard** |
|  | **Less Complex** | **Intermediate** | **More Complex** | **Further Complexity** | **Grade Level Standard** |
| Student Skill | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | .Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Complexity  Details | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Success Criteria Ex: | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Instructional Strategy Examples | Visual Supports  Click or tap here to enter text.  Scaffolds  Click or tap here to enter text.  Technology  Click or tap here to enter text. | Visual Supports  Click or tap here to enter text.  Scaffolds  Click or tap here to enter text.  Technology  Click or tap here to enter text. | Visual Supports  Click or tap here to enter text.  Scaffolds  Click or tap here to enter text.  Technology  Click or tap here to enter text. | Visual Supports  Click or tap here to enter text.  Scaffolds  Click or tap here to enter text.  Technology  Click or tap here to enter text. | Visual Supports  Click or tap here to enter text.  Scaffolds  Click or tap here to enter text.  Technology  Click or tap here to enter text. |

# Legal Notice

| Creative Commons | *Except where otherwise noted, this work by the* [*Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*](https://ospi.k12.wa.us) *is licensed under a*[*Creative Commons Attribution License*](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). |
| --- | --- |

*Alternate material licenses with different levels of user permission are clearly indicated next to the specific content in the materials.*

*This resource may contain links to websites operated by third parties. These links are provided for your convenience only and do not constitute or imply any endorsement or monitoring by OSPI.*

*If this work is adapted, note the substantive changes and re-title, removing any Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction logos. Provide the following attribution:*

*“This resource was adapted from original materials provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Original materials may be accessed at* <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2025-06/reaching-every-learner-companion-tools.docx>*.*

*Please make sure that permission has been received to use all elements of this publication (images, charts, text, etc.) that are not created by OSPI staff, grantees, or contractors. This permission should be displayed as an attribution statement in the manner specified by the copyright holder. It should be made clear that the element is one of the “except where otherwise noted” exceptions to the OSPI open license.*

*For additional information, please visit the* [*OSPI Interactive Copyright and Licensing Guide*](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2689472/CopyrightLicensingGuide)*.*

*OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.*

*Download this material in PDF at (*<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2025-06/reaching-every-learner-companion-tools.docx>*). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Front Desk at 360-725-6000.*