

## Message From the Guest Editors: An Introduction to the Special Issue—Part I

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### **Article:**

Being strategic implies intentionality. It involves knowing what one wants to happen, and then intentionally seeing that it occurs. It also implies having a toolbox from which one can pull tools or tactics to apply, and it implies selecting the best tool for the occasion. The “best” tools are those that get the job done while requiring the least amount of time and energy to use them. To select the appropriate tool, one must analyze the situation for which a tool is needed to determine the problem’s critical attributes and then match these up with the attributes of various tools to find the best fit. This requires one to possess not only knowledge about each of the tools in the toolbox, but also knowledge about the problem-solving context for which the tool is needed. Being strategic also means that one monitors the effectiveness of the tool once it is employed to both ensure the tool is working efficiently and to learn more about the tool itself (what it can and cannot accomplish) as well as to learn more about the problem-solving situation.

Teaching strategies is not easy, but it clearly works. Swanson’s (1999) meta-analysis clearly points to the efficacy of teaching strategies as one of the most powerful things teachers can do to improve the lives of students with high-incidence disabilities. We have been at this in a relatively aggressive manner for 2 decades now. One might conclude somewhat serendipitously that there have been as many conceptual models of strategy instruction proposed as there have been researchers and scholars interested in this topic.

This special issue of *Exceptionality*, the first of two on the topic, features two articles that are timely and relevant to the topic of strategic instruction. We offer specific theoretical frameworks and tactics to facilitate the transfer of research-based interventions, namely strategic instruction, to educational practice. We also use social psychological theory to construct a triadic model to generate solutions to promote systemic change in teachers’ use of strategic approaches to instruction and management.

The second of the two articles featured in this special issue reviews the literature pertaining to strategy instruction in written language. Troia reminds us that effective strategy instruction is complex and multifaceted.

This special issue and the next feature diverse models of instruction that are aimed at enhancing the strategic processes employed by students, teachers, and researchers. Some models reflect very explicit forms of instruction where carefully crafted strategies are designed by experts and then explicitly taught to students while incorporating elements of cognitive-behavioral instruction. Others (e.g., Butler’s article in Part II) integrate cognitive-behavioral, sociocultural, and constructivist learning theories in a manner designed to lead students to develop strategies. We hope the readers of this special issue find it informative and worthy of sharing with other students, teachers, and researchers.

### **REFERENCE**

Swanson, H. L. (1999). Instructional components that predict treatment outcomes for students with disabilities: Support for a combined strategy and direct instruction model. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 14,129–140.