

Since completing my fellowship at Johns Hopkins Kennedy-Krieger Institute in 1988, I have trained thousands of teaching staff across North America and in parts of Australia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Africa. Unfortunately, many of the same problems that existed back then in education continue to persist today, regardless of the calendar year or the postal code of the location.

The fundamental fact is that our educational systems have become extremely complicated, regardless of where you live in the world. Each day, we walk into our schools, go inside our classrooms, arrive at our learning centers, or enter our therapy settings . . . and face trying to simply keep our heads above water.

We all attempt to cover an incredible amount of information in an unrealistic, often impossible, limited amount of time. Instruction in today's educational system is typically delivered in days filled with multiple things to do and just not enough time in which to do them – with people often feeling very under-appreciated. Because of these challenges, we are frequently forced to take a reactive approach to instruction, rather than a proactive one, often not even knowing what the other person is doing due to decreased collaboration time.

I can attest to this because I spend a great deal of time in schools as the author and creator of the research-based teaching framework called T.H.E. P.A.C.T. I mentor, coach, and train educators – both in general education and special education, showing them how to deal more effectively with these very problems and how to consistently get more results from their time and increased engagement from their students.



Differentiating Instruction & UDL

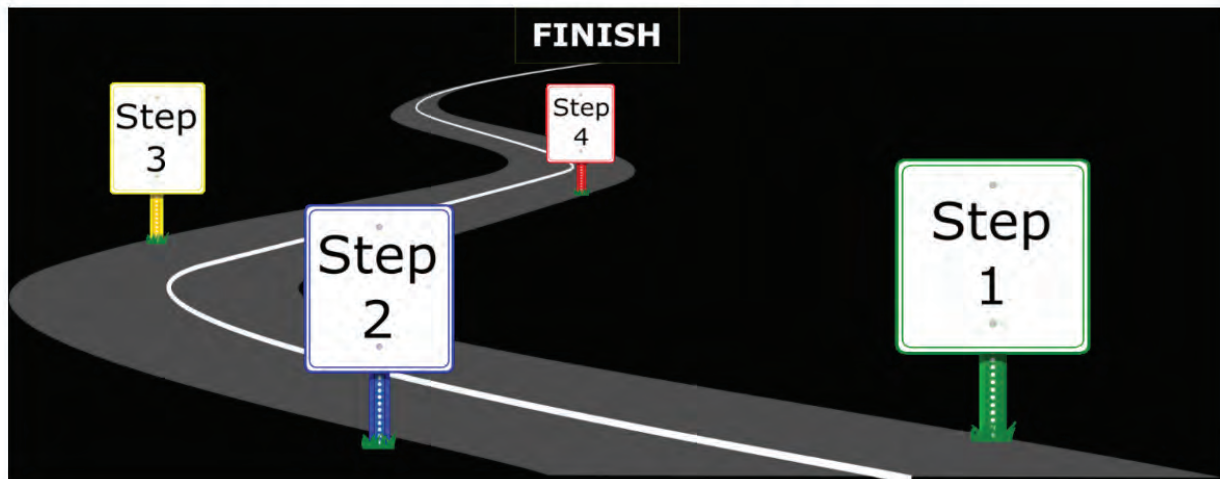
The solution is quite simple: as educators, we need to teach in the way that our brain works . . . in a sequence or order that makes sense to students, teachers, and parents.

It is also important to remember that good content does not always equal sound instruction. A vast amount of curriculum content is not delivered in “bite-sized” chunks in the classroom – nor in a brain-based sequence – that best fosters understanding and demonstration of knowledge that our students need, regardless of their ability, in order to meet the standards.

Due to challenging time constraints and unrealistic pacing guides, curriculum instruction is often like getting on an “elevator” – one day going to the 24th floor, and the next day back down to the 4th floor, and the following day, shooting up to the 60th floor, with instructional lessons not linking with each other. Students of all abilities often struggle to know the “WHAT, WHY, and HOW” of their instruction and how one lesson relates to the next.

The answer is to deliver instruction in a “connect-the-dots” teaching and learning approach: methodically taking the stairs, instead of the elevator, sequentially achieving one step of mastery at a time – drawing a line from one lesson to the next – to significantly improve overall academic performance and increase meaningful participation.

It is critical that educators have a systematic roadmap that is easy to follow for teaching anything to anyone at any grade level. This roadmap needs to have “no expiration date,” so to speak; meaning that it could be used from preschool to high school. In addition, it is crucial that this curriculum solution work with students of ANY ability, from gifted to special needs – and every learner in between, to bridge the gap between special education and general education and foster meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities using inclusive strategies.



Simplify Learning & Simplify Teaching

We need to simplify the process of learning, which in turn, simplifies teaching for teachers. T.H.E. P.A.C.T. methodology is a simple, research-based template system for learning and is of zero cost to implement since it is a conceptual framework. This delivery system of instruction is four basic steps – which means that it is easy to implement in a jam-packed school day.

These four components are presented in the framework as a “Module System” – Learn About, Read About, Write About, and Talk About – aligned to the vital components of educational standards. Educators, from preschool to high school, are now gaining control of their instruction, decreasing their prep time, and meaningfully including learners with disabilities in their classrooms.



Teach the Way Our Brain Works

This system of teaching provides “connect-the-dots” instruction, so that both students and teachers understand WHAT they are doing . . . and WHY. Regardless of subject or topic of study, teachers methodically walk students through “learning about” it, “reading about” it, “writing about” it, and “talking about” it.

Educators do this in a way that allows students to feel anchored with the “HOW-TO-DO-IT” part – by using consistent teaching activities and predictable instructional tools – so the students focus on “what” they are learning, instead of “how” they are learning it. This significantly decreases cognitive load for students of all abilities.

Reaching & Teaching Students of All Abilities

Teachers now know what to do: how to focus their time, streamline their time, organize their time, and be successful at what they need to do when showing students how one lesson connects to the next. With this methodology, teachers can reach students of all abilities in their classroom and build a true solid understanding of whatever material they are teaching.

The longstanding MYTH in education is that learners receiving specialized services need much “different” teaching strategies than those that can be used in the classroom in order to succeed in their least restrictive environment or general education setting. The TRUTH of the matter is that these successful, research-based strategies for meaningful curriculum instruction should not only be used with our learners in special education, but also need to be used with students of ALL abilities, in ANY general education classroom, so that every student – and every teacher – has the greatest chance to succeed.

To learn more, please go to AboutTHEPACT.com.



Phyl Macomber, M.S. ATP

Author, Keynote Speaker & Education Specialist

Since completing a fellowship at Johns Hopkins Kennedy-Krieger Institute in 1988, Phyl Macomber has become an award-winning keynote speaker, author, and education specialist. Phyl has consulted with and trained thousands of teaching staff and was featured in the international best seller, the Common Threads Trilogy book series, as one of the top 100 empowering women who is a passionate catalyst for systems change in education.

Phyl has been a guest on numerous radio shows to discuss simplifying instruction for students of all abilities. Phyl serves two ambassadorships - the first for the educational affairs organization, I AM Living Education Everyday and the second at Energime University, based in Manhattan, as the educational co-producer of the University's global youth program, Mission Earth Solutions. Her partnership with South Africa-based Leave No Girl Behind International is training young people in key leadership principles globally.

Phyl has created a 4-step simple system for how to teach anything to anyone, called T.H.E. P.A.C.T., which is outlined in Phyl's first book, The Power of T.H.E. P.A.C.T. Her research-based teaching strategies have been published in numerous articles featured in education publications since 2009 and are being successfully used across North America and in parts of Australia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Africa.