

**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440**

State Title I Office

WHAT WORKS

STRATEGY: INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

Overview:

An individual learning plan or ILP is a user (student) specific program or strategy of education or learning that takes into consideration the student's strengths and weaknesses (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). It is a tool that allows educators to plan, monitor, manage, and evaluate student achievement by identifying student needs and applying research-based interventions based on student needs.

This tool is commonly used in schools by educators as well as by supervisors in the business world. An ILP is often used by the employee to assess individual accomplishments and/or needs in essential knowledge, skill, and abilities.

The idea behind an ILP is that the needs of individual students are different, and thus, must be addressed differently (one size does not fit all). An ILP typically looks at student strengths and weaknesses, sets individual goals, outlines research based interventions to attain goals, assigns the individual responsible, sets a timeline, and finally, evaluates progress attained. An ILP reflects a change in current practice in order to improve the academic achievement of a student.

ILPs are commonly used in programs for learning-disabled students, students of limited English proficiency, and Title I students. However, some states and districts have taken it a step further and required the use of ILPs for all students who are not proficient. In Washington State, individual learning plans are required for students who were not successful on any or all of the content areas of the Washington Assessment for Student Learning during the previous school year. Other districts require teachers to generate ILPs for all students who score more than six months below grade level on a uniform district or state test.

An ILP can be a powerful tool for individualizing instruction, promoting a team approach, and collaborative effort in teaching (i.e., teacher, resource staff, and parents all working together to help the student) and subsequently raising the academic achievement of at-risk students.

Research:

Research shows that teachers can provide more individual attention and instruction to students as needed when there is a documentable process in place to give students individual attention. Teachers must increasingly become more knowledgeable about the needs of their students and become greater advocates for each student's individual learning needs.

There is research to support both differentiating instruction (Tomlinson, C., 2000) and individualizing instruction (Coulter, G., 2004) as methods of raising achievement. An ILP can be a valuable tool for educators to use in differentiating and individualizing instruction to help schools attain the ultimate goal of raising student achievement.

Resources:

- Individual Learning Plan – www.det.act.gov.au/services/word/ACTGuidelinesSampleForms.doc. This is a document that provides many templates and sample forms to assist schools in preparing for and participating in the ILP process.
- An electronic ILP product from Learning Points Associates, along with a set of frequently asked questions, can be accessed at www.learningpt.org/downloads/e-ILPfaq.pdf or by calling 800-252-0283.
- An in-depth sample ILP in a multitude of subjects can be accessed at www.ideaforfamilies.org/members/forms/docs/k8forms.k8_ilp.pdf.
- An ILP for Limited English Proficient Students can be accessed at www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp/pdf/ilp.pdf
- Other ILP templates can be accessed at <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resources.shtm> on the Title I website.