

THE

# Inclusive PE Playbook

A field guide to differentiated instruction & inclusive design

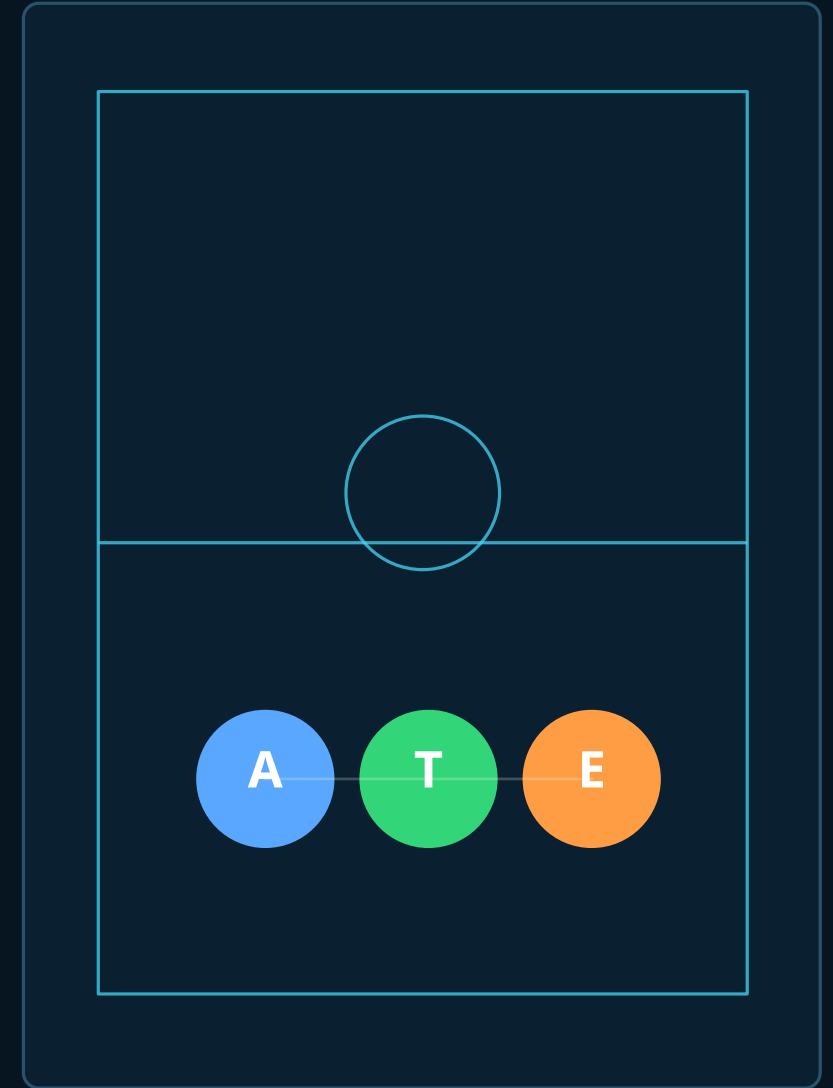
**Shared learning intent. Flexible pathways.  
Meaningful challenge for every learner.**

PE

ADAPTED PE

HEALTH & WELLNESS

A practical framework for designing access without lowering the purpose of learning.



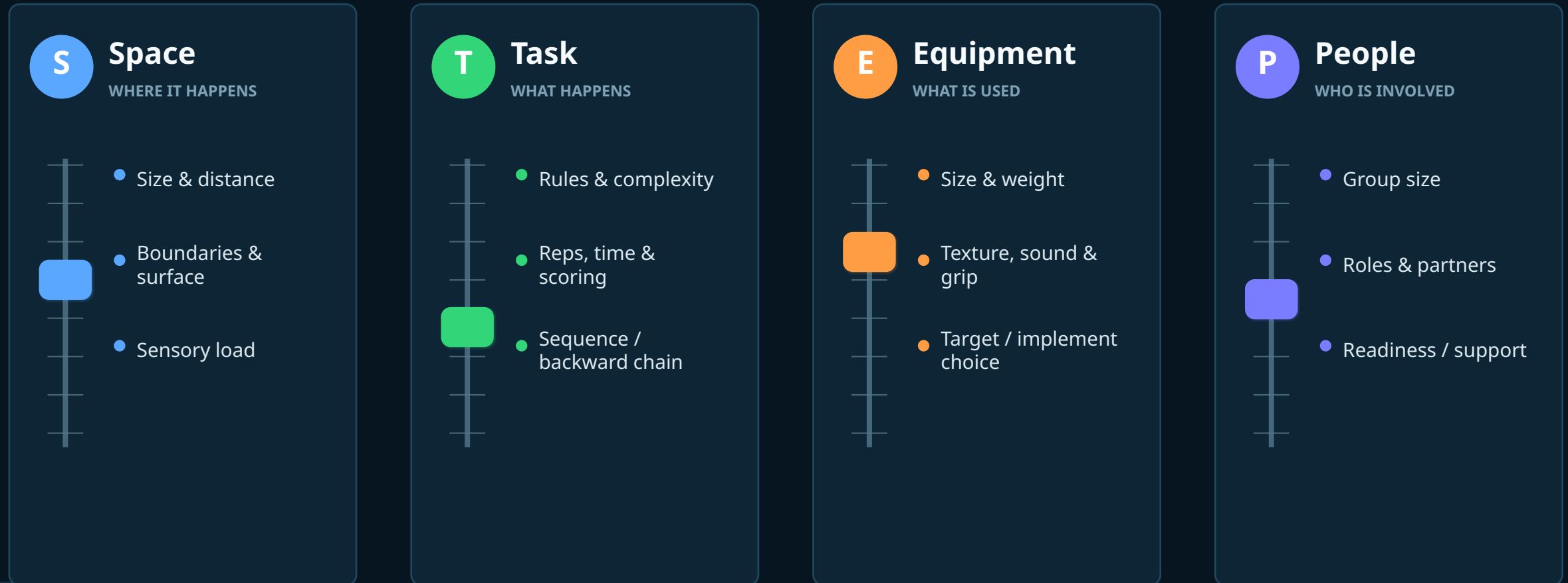
# Start with a shared learning intent—not a single way to get there.

Adapt the pathway. Preserve the purpose.



# S.T.E.P. is the modification toolkit.

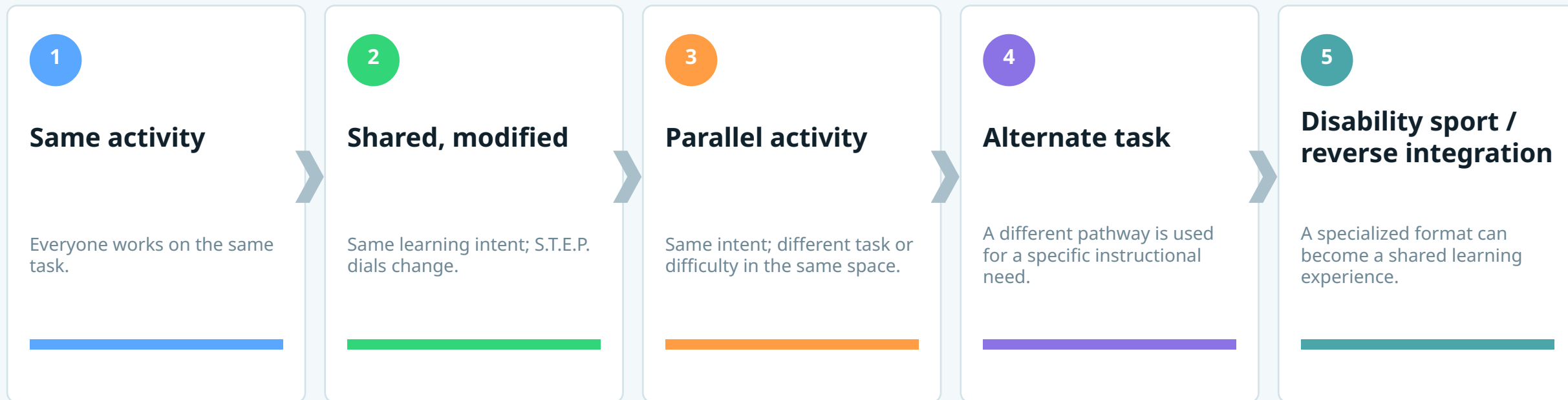
Change one dial. Observe. Adjust again.



S.T.E.P. is not a separate activity. It is the set of adjustments you can apply to any activity.

# Default to shared participation. Choose the format that creates meaningful access.

Options, not a ranking—default to shared; use a separate format only when needed.



Decision question

**Which option best preserves access, appropriate challenge, safety and belonging?**

# The educator's toolkit: 11 inclusive teaching practices.

Use the smallest set of moves that solves the barrier in front of you.

## Design & Environment

- 1 Adjusted pace**  
Separate learning pace from class pace.
- 2 Multi-level tasks**  
Build access, target and extension into one task.
- 3 Activities & space**  
Engineer boundaries, routes and stations for access.

## Instruction & Connection

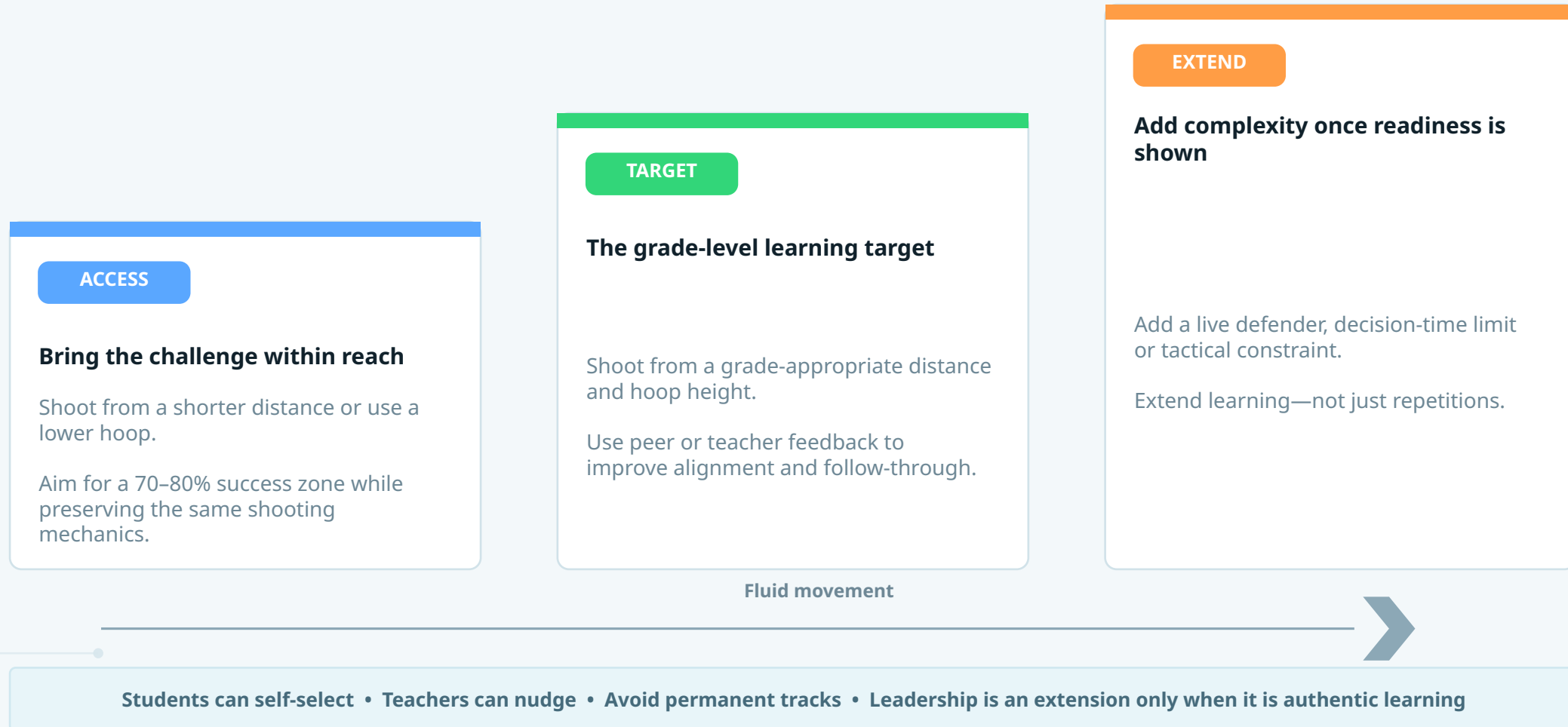
- 1 Shared learning intent**  
Anchor the class in one purpose.
- 2 Peer support**  
Use trained peers and authentic roles.
- 3 Multimodal cueing**  
Visual, verbal, demonstration and tactile—with consent.
- 4 Positive climate**  
Normalize effort, choice and movement between levels.

## Autonomy & Growth

- 1 Choice & options**  
Offer meaningful choices without overwhelming.
- 2 Authentic tasks**  
Connect learning to real movement contexts.
- 3 Self-reflection**  
Compare to a personal baseline and target.
- 4 Learning to learn**  
Teach students how to choose, adjust and reflect.

# Make challenge visible—and movement between levels normal.

Access, Target and Extend describe the task, not the learner.



# Strategy Play 1: Decouple the class pace from the learning pace.

Same class time. Different rate of progression.

FIXED CLASS TIME • e.g., 40-minute block

## ACCESS LANE

### Protect the pace of success

- Shorter work bouts
- More response time
- One cue at a time
- Self-paced station when needed

## TARGET LANE

### Offer constrained choice

- Choose distance or implement
- Choose from a small task menu
- Same target, flexible route
- Build independence

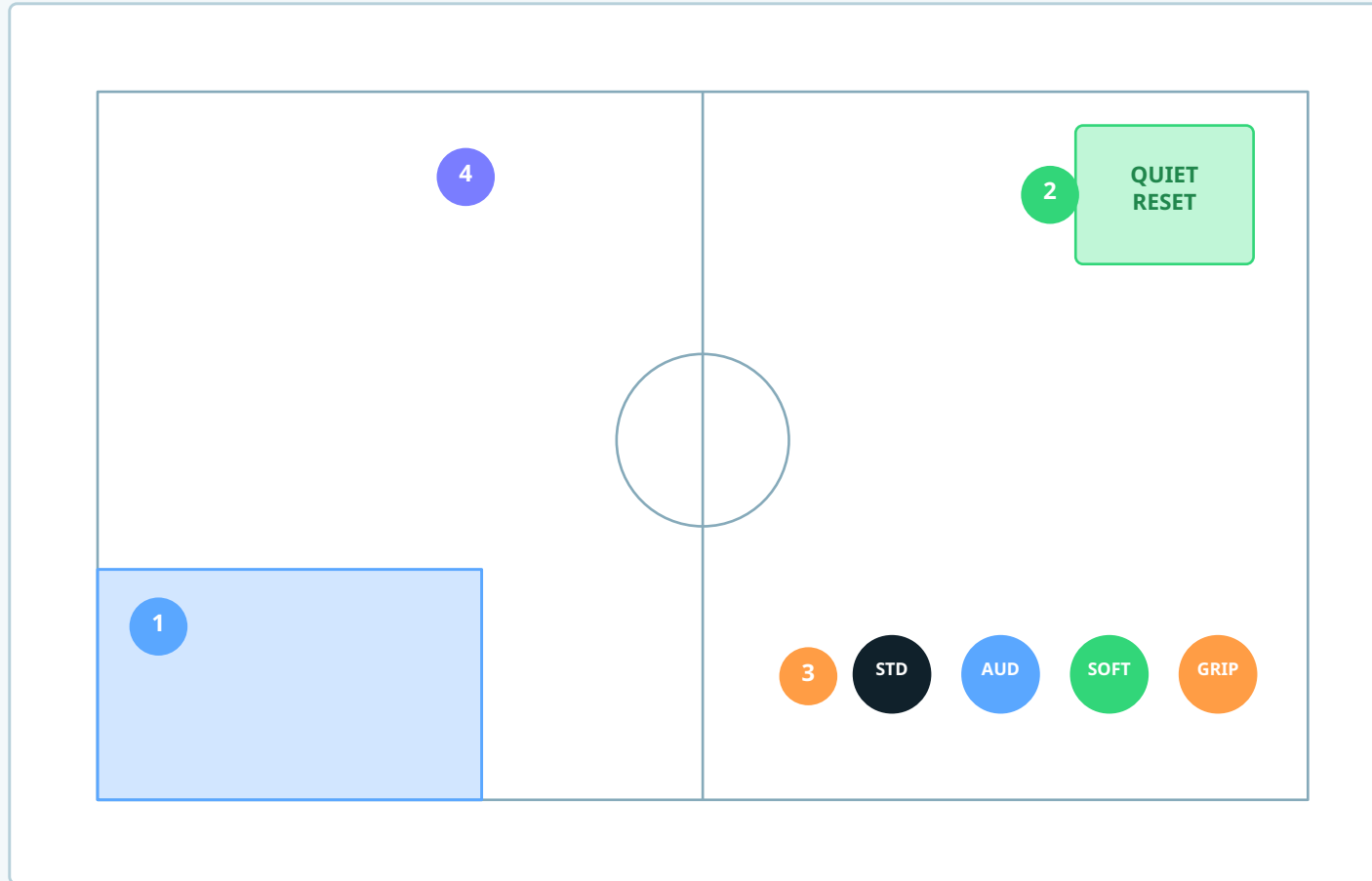
## EXTEND LANE

### Advance when ready

- Add tactical pressure
- Apply skill in a novel context
- Compress decision time
- Do not assign "more of the same"

# Strategy Play 2: Engineer the environment so success is easier to access.

Design the room before you modify the student.



Equipment is a tool of access—not a reward.

**1 High-contrast boundaries & clear routes**  
Wider lanes, visible station edges and uncluttered travel paths.

**2 Reduce unwanted sensory load**  
Offer a predictable quiet/reset zone away from speakers and clutter.

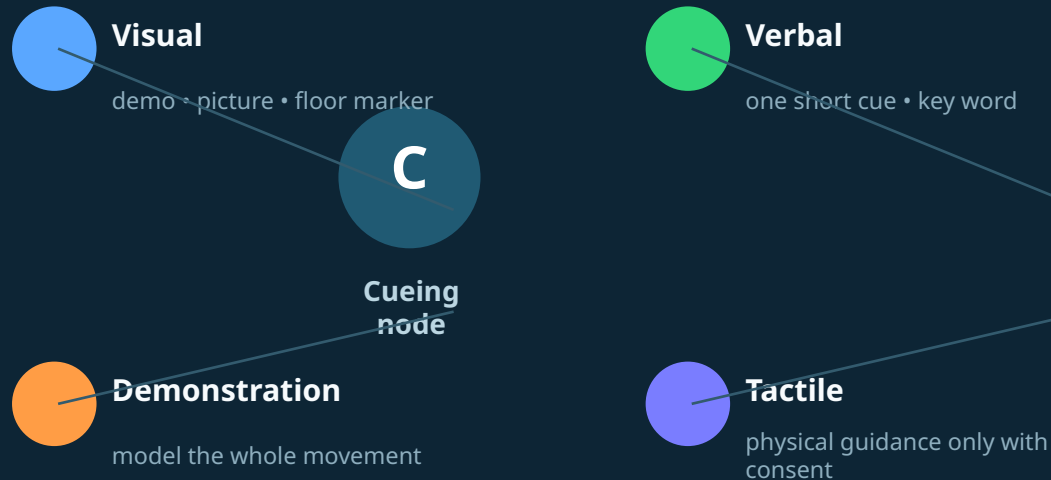
**3 Equipment menu at every station**  
Standard, auditory, softer/lighter and textured/grip options.

**4 Plan for mobility before class starts**  
Turning radius, transfer space and accessible routes are part of the setup.

# Strategy Play 3: Teach through multiple channels—and group with purpose.

Cue flexibly. Group dynamically. Rotate roles.

## MULTIMODAL CUEING



## DYNAMIC GROUPING



### Golden rule

Group for the lesson goal. Never permanently track students. Rotate high-status roles.

Peer support = a model and a partner—not a substitute teacher. Extension = deeper learning—not automatic leadership.

# Activity Crosswalk: Invasion Games

Basketball • soccer • handball

## SHARED LEARNING INTENT

Create and defend space to advance an object and score.

|                                                          | A ACCESS                                                                       | T TARGET                                                             | E EXTEND                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task Design                                              | 3v0 or 3v1; larger target area; catch-and-pass option; lower-pressure scoring. | 3v2 or small-sided game with grade-appropriate rules and targets.    | 3v3 with a live defender, touch limit, smaller target or scoring constraint.                 |
| Cueing & Questions                                       | "Show me where the open space is."<br>Use floor markers or a visual lane.      | "What created that passing lane?"<br>Use one tactical cue at a time. | "How will you manipulate the defender before the pass?"<br>Design a play or sequence.        |
| Pressure / Decision-Making                               | Longer decision window; pause/restart allowed; predictable defender.           | Normal game tempo with guided feedback between rounds.               | Compress decision time, add transition pressure or require off-ball movement before scoring. |
| All four S.T.E.P. dials remain available at every level: |                                                                                |                                                                      |                                                                                              |
|                                                          | SPACE                                                                          | TASK                                                                 | EQUIPMENT                                                                                    |
|                                                          |                                                                                |                                                                      | PEOPLE                                                                                       |

# Activity Crosswalk: Movement & Fitness

Push-ups • planks • circuits

## SHARED LEARNING INTENT

Sustain an appropriate level of effort with sound movement mechanics.

### A ACCESS

### T TARGET

### E EXTEND

#### Task / Movement Choice

Choose wall, bench or floor push-up based on the effort target—not on a label.

Use the variation that meets the quality standard for the prescribed interval.

Add tempo, load, range or a paired movement only while form stays sound.

#### Pace & Workload

Shorter work bouts, longer recovery or self-paced station.

Planned work/rest ratio with a personal technique target.

Increase density or complexity gradually—not simply speed or fatigue.

#### Beyond-Class Transfer

Identify an equivalent movement using household or park equipment.

Track a personal benchmark and reflect on technique, effort and recovery.

Design a 4-week personal progression with a realistic goal and checkpoints.

All four S.T.E.P. dials remain available at every level:

SPACE

TASK

EQUIPMENT

PEOPLE

# Activity Crosswalk: Striking & Fielding

Tee-ball • softball • paddle activities

## SHARED LEARNING INTENT

**Track, strike and place an object into open space with control.**

|                                                          | A ACCESS                                                                       | T TARGET                                                                     | E EXTEND                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task Design                                              | Strike from a tee or bounce; larger/lighter object; wider target zone.         | Use a self-toss or consistent partner feed with grade-appropriate equipment. | Use a moving feed, smaller target zone or directional-placement constraint.             |
| Tracking & Cueing                                        | High-contrast ball; “track → turn → contact”; slow rehearsal before live reps. | Visual + verbal cue pair; partner feedback on one technique point.           | Use delayed or variable feeds; student identifies the cue that best supports timing.    |
| Tactical Application                                     | Stationary fielders and marked open-space targets.                             | Live fielders with normal scoring in small-sided play.                       | Place the ball to manipulate fielders; add tactical scoring zones or running decisions. |
| All four S.T.E.P. dials remain available at every level: |                                                                                |                                                                              |                                                                                         |
|                                                          | SPACE                                                                          | TASK                                                                         | EQUIPMENT                                                                               |
|                                                          |                                                                                |                                                                              | PEOPLE                                                                                  |

# The Diagnostic Troubleshooter: Match the barrier to the first adjustment.

Start with the smallest change likely to restore access and challenge.

IF

Needs more time or a slower pace



## Turn the PACE dial first

Self-paced station • shorter work bouts • longer response time • one cue at a time

IF

Needs an entry point to a complex skill



## Turn TASK / EQUIPMENT

Use the Access version • lighter/larger implement • backward chain • simplify one rule

IF

Is overwhelmed by sensory load



## Turn SPACE / AFFECT

Reduce noise or glare • simplify visual clutter • predictable sequence • quiet reset zone

IF

Is ready for meaningful extension



## Turn TASK / PEOPLE

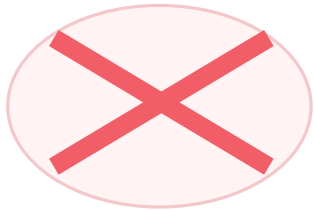
Strategic constraint • novel context • increased decision pressure • authentic leadership only when it deepens learning

Sensory note: reduce unwanted input first; add useful sensory information only when it improves access.

# Assessment & climate: Measure growth against meaningful targets—not classmates.

Norms can inform. They should not become the grade.

## PEER RANKING FOR GRADES



Avoid as the basis  
for a student's grade.

## PERSONAL GROWTH + LEARNING TARGETS



Use progress toward  
an appropriate target.

## Assessment tools

- Standards-aligned rubric
- Personal baseline or checkpoint
- IEP goal where applicable
- Multiple ways to demonstrate learning

## Growth climate

- Private, specific feedback
- Effort + learning—not punishment
- Choice in demonstration
- Student reflection on next step

## The question that matters

**Did the student improve  
toward an appropriate target  
while maintaining dignity,  
challenge and belonging?**

# Inclusive Lesson Blueprint — completed example

Grade 5 Basketball • Passing Into Space

## SHARED LEARNING INTENT

**Create passing lanes by moving to open space and sending a controllable pass under light pressure.**

### 1 ACCESS / TARGET / EXTEND

#### ACCESS

3v0 or 3v1. Larger/lighter ball option. Wider passing lanes. Catch → scan → pass.

#### TARGET

3v2 keep-away to target zones. Ball choice stays available. Cue: “move • show • pass.”

#### EXTEND

3v3. Three-second decision rule. Score only after an off-ball cut creates a passing lane.

Levels are task choices—not student labels. Movement between them is normal.

### 2 S.T.E.P. LOGISTICS

SPACE: half-court zones + quiet reset area  
TASK: 45s play / 20s reset  
EQUIPMENT: standard + lighter ball  
PEOPLE: roles rotate every round

### 3 INSTRUCTION

Visual floor arrows + quick demo  
Verbal cue: “move • show • pass”  
One tactical question between rounds  
Peer feedback stays specific and brief

### 4 ASSESSMENT CHECK

Teacher observes 3 possessions  
Personal target: create 2 usable passing lanes in 3 possessions  
Student exit reflection: Which cue helped most?  
Next step: Access / Target / Extend choice for tomorrow

This blueprint is designed to fit on one page so a teacher can plan, teach and adjust from the same view.

# The 1-Page Inclusive Lesson Blueprint

A reusable planning template for any activity or unit.

**SHARED INTENT****What should every student be learning?**

Personal target(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**1 ACCESS / TARGET / EXTEND**

Access: \_\_\_\_\_

Target: \_\_\_\_\_

Extend: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 S.T.E.P. LOGISTICS**

Space: \_\_\_\_\_ Task: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_ People: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety / sensory note: \_\_\_\_\_

**3 INSTRUCTION**

Visual cue / demo: \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal cue: \_\_\_\_\_

Work / rest / reflection rhythm: \_\_\_\_\_

**4 ASSESSMENT CHECK**

What evidence of growth will I collect?

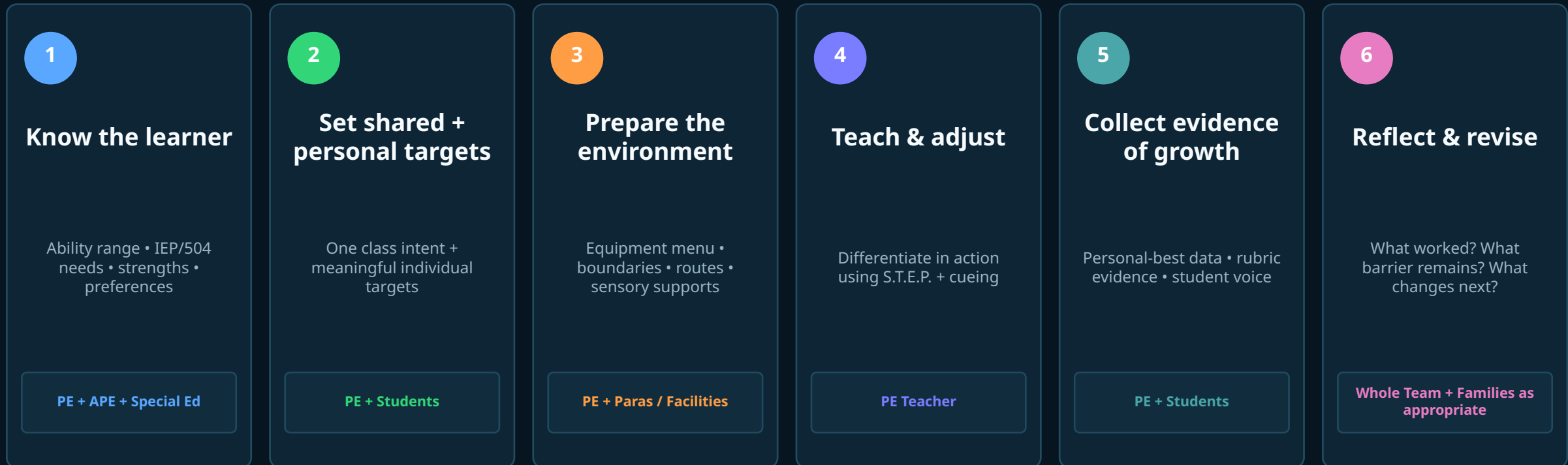
How can students show learning? \_\_\_\_\_

What will I adjust next time? \_\_\_\_\_

**Planning prompt: What stays the same for everyone—and what can flex without changing the learning intent?**

# The implementation roadmap: Inclusion is a shared responsibility.

Build the conditions before the lesson, adjust during it, and revise after it.



**Inclusive design is not an individual workaround. It is a planning, teaching and support system shared across the team.**

# The goal is not to make the task easier.

The goal is to make meaningful challenge accessible.



One meaningful purpose  
that anchors the class.

Multiple ways to access,  
practice and demonstrate.

Progress toward an  
appropriate learning target.

**Design so every student can participate meaningfully, experience appropriate challenge, and grow as a mover.**

# Research & professional practice base

Frameworks and sources informing the playbook.

**CAST (2024)**

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0. [udlguidelines.cast.org](https://udlguidelines.cast.org)

**SHAPE America (2024)**

National Physical Education Standards. [shapeamerica.org/standards/pe](https://shapeamerica.org/standards/pe)

**U.S. Department of Education**

IDEA §§300.39 and 300.108 — physical education, special PE and adapted PE. [sites.ed.gov/idea](https://sites.ed.gov/idea)

**Wilhelmsen, T., & Sørensen, M. (2017)**

Inclusion of Children With Disabilities in Physical Education: A Systematic Review of Literature From 2009 to 2015. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 34(3), 311–337.

**Haegele, J. A., et al. (2024)**

Universal design for learning in physical education: Overview and critical reflection. *European Physical Education Review*, 30(2), 250–264.

**van Munster, M. A., Lieberman, L. J., & Grenier, M. A. (2019)**

Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction in Physical Education. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 36(3), 359–377.