Designing Effective Programs for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disturbances within a Modern School Environment

Unlocking the Behavioral Code, 2018

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Miller Behavior Group

Hard Truth…

- This is really hard
  - Effective Programming for students with EBD needs to be a complex, cross context, interdisciplinary implementation of multi-domain interventions
  - Design programs that use everything we have, to simultaneously serve multiple needs in multiple settings.

What we can glean from developmental science

1. <u>correlated constraints:</u> The relationship between internal (cognitive) and ecological (family, school, peer group) systems tend to stabilize each other and thus behavior patterns

2. <u>social synchrony:</u> The actions of one individual support the actions of others—The behaviors of those around us begin to control and stabilize our behavior

3. <u>behavior as a developmental catalyst:</u> Changes in behavior can destabilize and create changes in the subsystem

4. <u>systems reorganization:</u> When one subsystem adapts to a change in behavior, the correlated systems reorganize to sustain the behavior

What we are working against when we work to replace behaviors in students with EBD

A potential story:

- Bobby is born with some predispositions to emotional challenges
- Family provides support as they can for a period of time
- Someone loses their job
- Bobby has a tantrum that turns aggressive in order to change the way his parents interact with him.
- Parents change the way they interact with Bobby's tantrums based on this event
- Parents adapt in other ways they interact with Bobby to avoid tantrums
- Parents teach other family members, school, etc. what works with them to avoid tantrums.

The new trajectory coalesces

- Bobby gets aggressive when he wants another kid at school to interact with him differently
- The students change the way they interact with him, causing the school to change the way they interact with him.
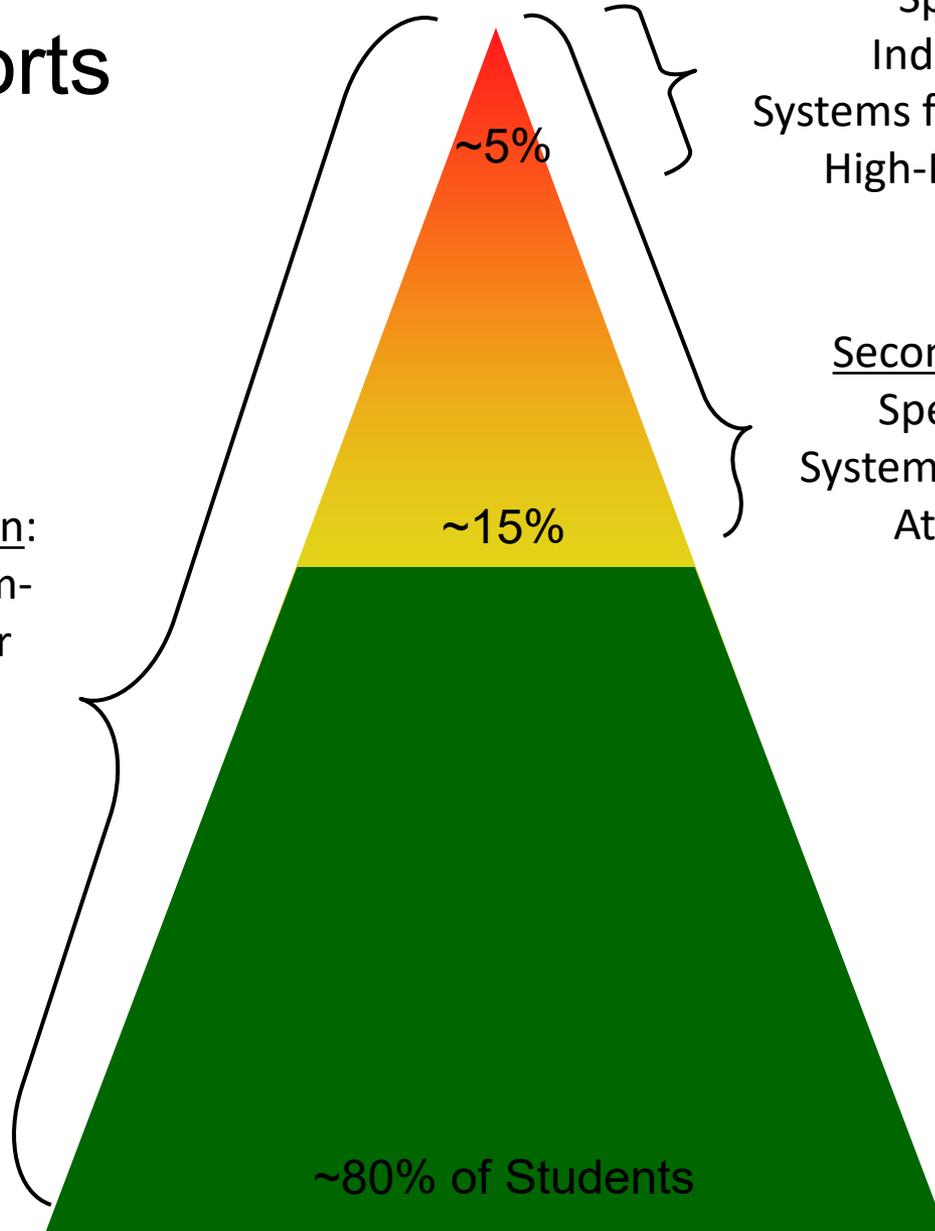
The new trajectory coalesces

What researchers can tell us about program moving parts

- Necessary Perspectives:
  1. Foundation in behavioral and pedagogical science
  2. Effectively teach, intervene, & monitor academic, behavioral, and social progress
  3. Interventionist are both "good with these kids" and fluent with clinical skills
  4. Implementation/Fidelity in implementation across contexts
  5. Process based in a strong cycle of feedback (implement, monitor, adapt)

Tiered Behavior Supports

Tertiary Prevention:
Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

~5%

Secondary Prevention:
Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

~15%

Primary Prevention:
School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

~80% of Students

The Three Tier Model
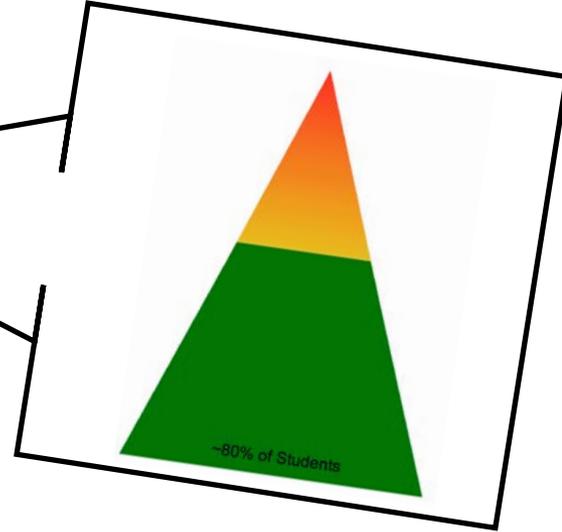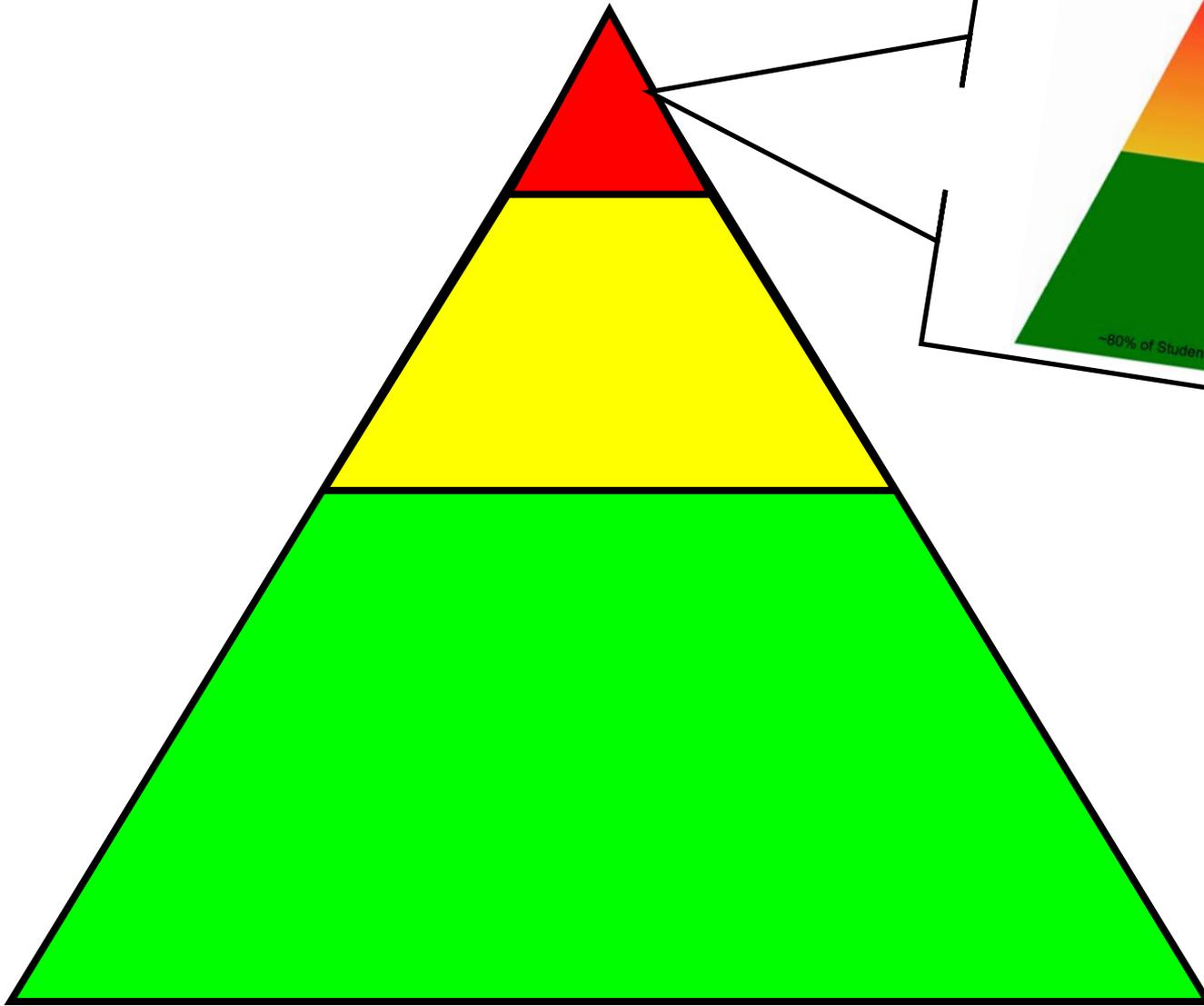
~80% of Students

Setting up Your Triangle (e.g. 20 students)

- Universal supports: System used for all students
  - Intense enough that the majority of students are responding (e.g 13-15 students)
- Increasingly intense supports For students who do not respond to universal—(e.g. 3-6 students)
- Wraparound supports

The largest obstacle is the shear scope/scale of
the universal support system:

~80% of Students
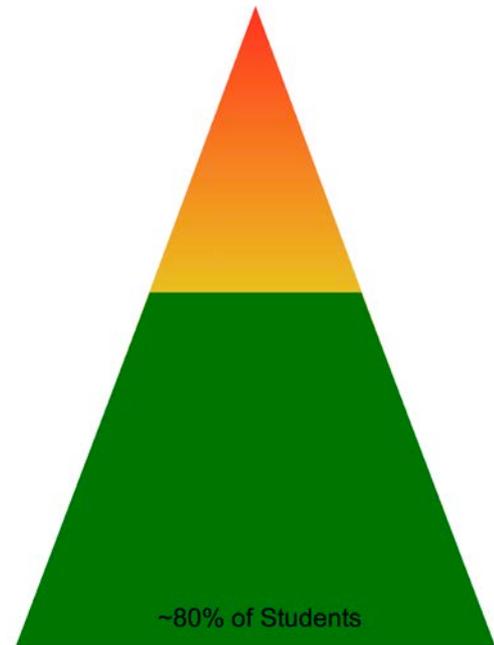
EBD-Program:

Social Competence &
Academic Achievement

OUTCOMES

Supporting
Decision
Making

PRACTICES

Supporting
Student Behavior

DATA
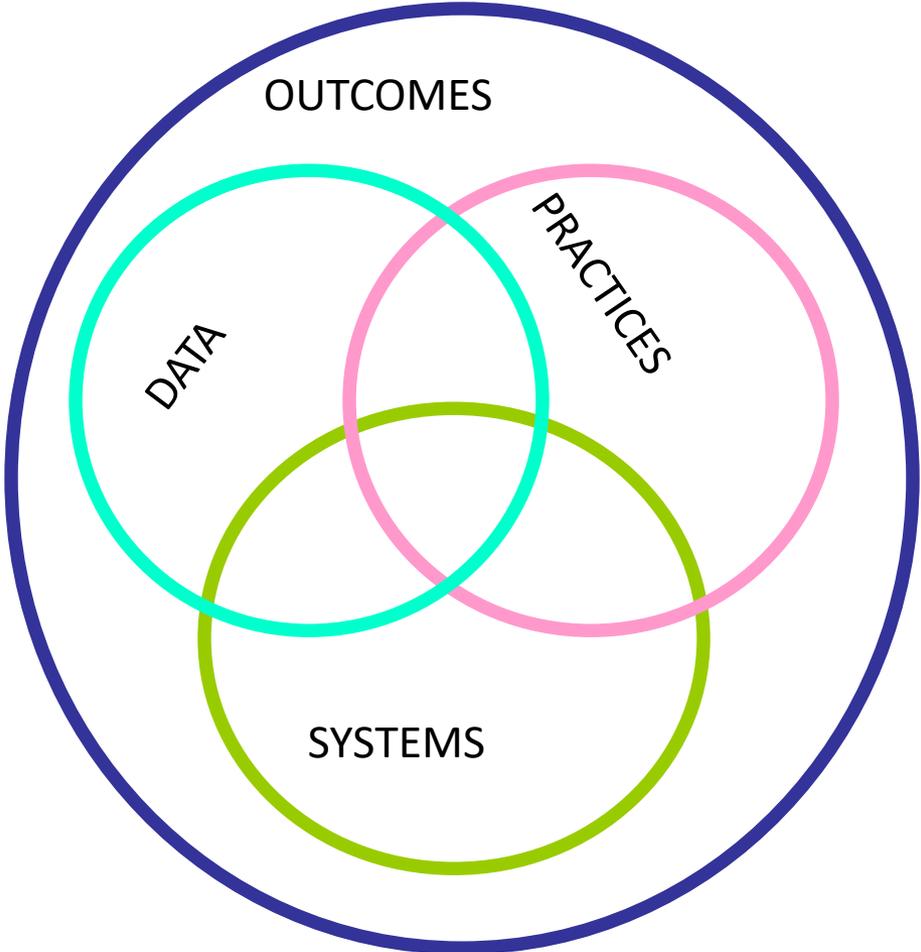
SYSTEMS

Supporting
Staff Behavior

What are we trying to accomplish with an EBD program?

1. Developmental system reorganization
   - Facilitating behavioral change and the necessary interventions to reorganize daily thinking and experience to support a new developmental trajectory.
2. Replacement behavior training (RBT) that allows student to get needs met in manners appropriately adapted to the context
3. Social development that leads to effective navigation across all social interaction
   - Effectively participate in activities with tangential or distant benefits
   - Effectively self advocate without creating ancillary aversives

Essential EBD Program Systems
Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior
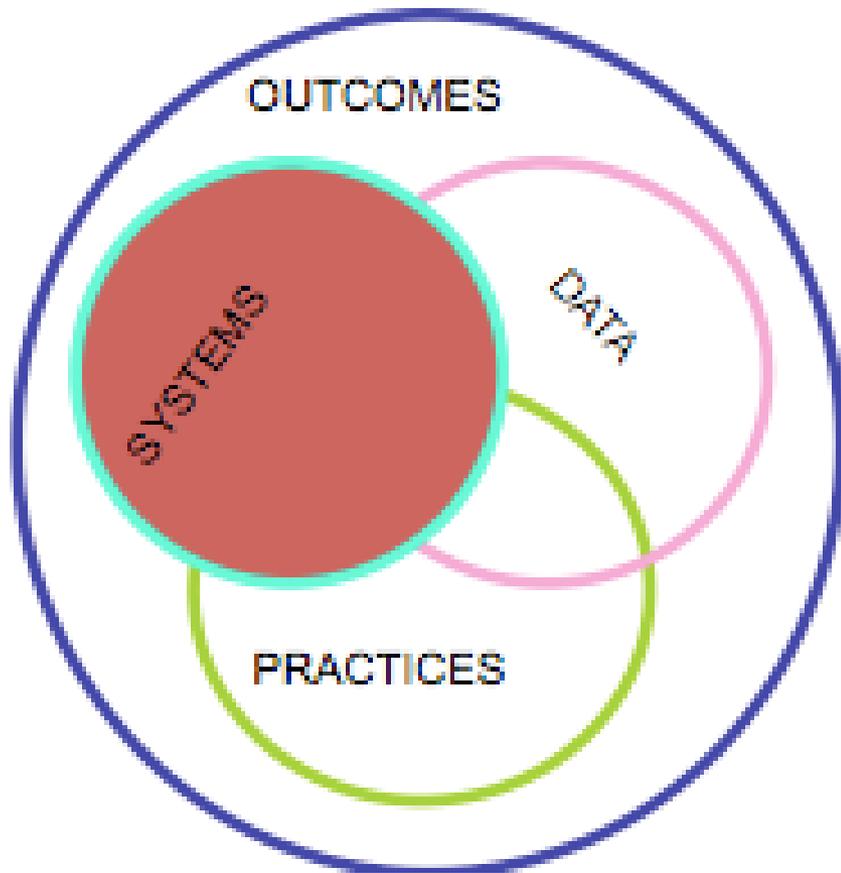
- **Behavior support program**
- **IEP/BIP** management
  - Progress monitoring
- **Inclusion/push-in supports**
  - Staff/gen. ed training
  - Fidelity checks
  - Evidence-based content delivery
- **Transition supports**
- Program evaluation/adaptation feedback loop
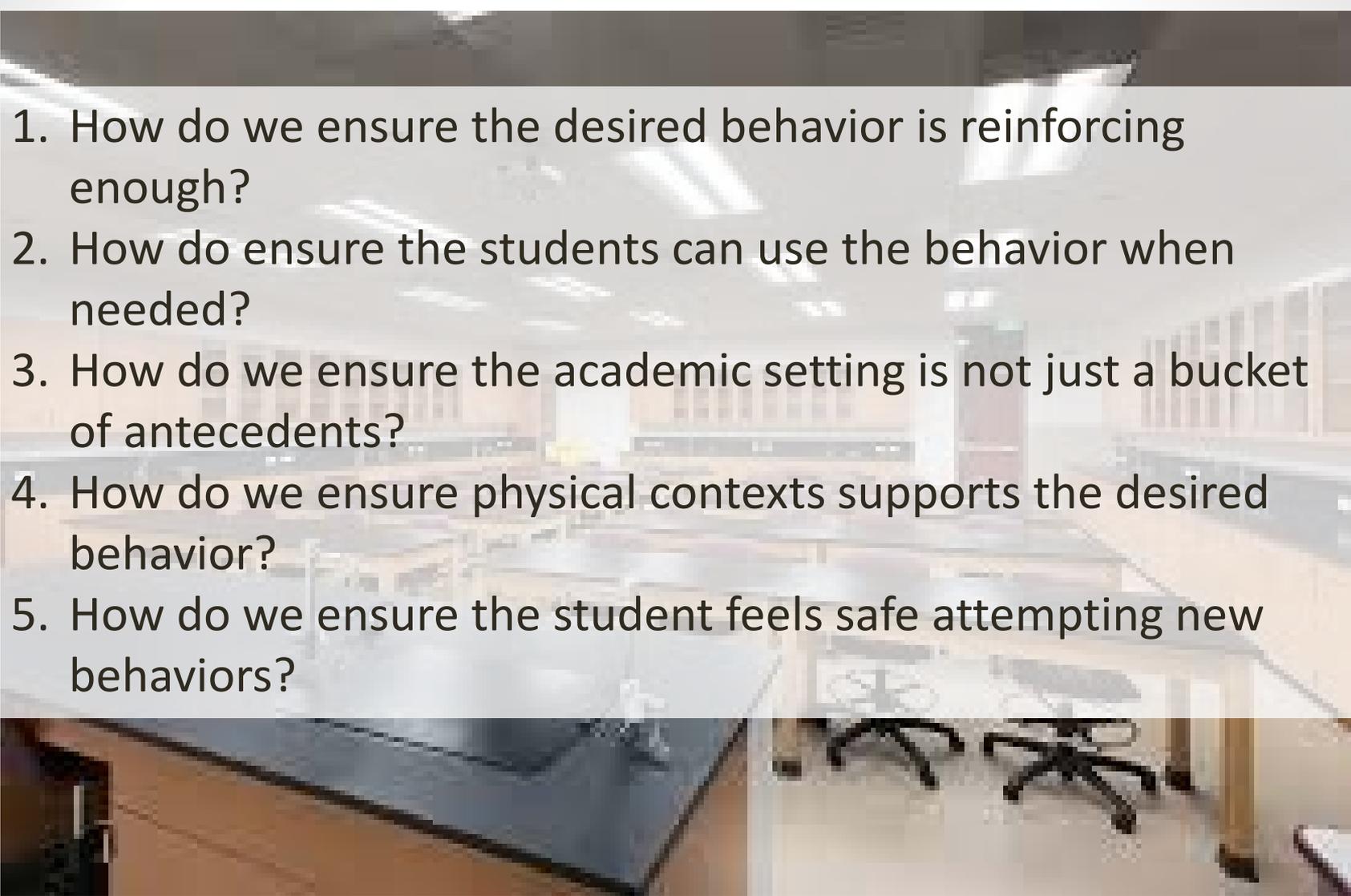
1. How do we ensure the desired behavior is reinforcing enough?
2. How do ensure the students can use the behavior when needed?
3. How do we ensure the academic setting is not just a bucket of antecedents?
4. How do we ensure physical contexts supports the desired behavior?
5. How do we ensure the student feels safe attempting new behaviors?

Start by talking about what we teach: Universal Social Skills Curriculum?

A technical term for what we teach all students when it comes to how to act, participate, and treat each other in typical school settings

Core features:

1. Social skills promoting academic success
2. Social skills promoting interpersonal success
3. Diverse approaches for getting needs met

Universal social skills Instruction supports a trade: maladaptive for adaptive

- Milieu success:
  - Trading brands of high quality attention
  - Learning escape skills that don't carry stigmas or additional aversive consequences

- General access to common functions = learning how typicaladults... and how it brings them more benefit
  - escape situations they don't like without hurting relationships
  - Escape/break from aversive tasks without losing the benefit of task completion
  - Solicit attention without ostracizing themselves
  - Gain or continue access to desired activities w/out gaining aversives

- Effective instruction trains both acquisition and performance
  - Help me learn what I am truly not aware of
  - Develop within a context where CB is meeting the need already

Teaching Matrix		SETTING						
		All Settings	Hallways	Playground	Cafeteria		Assembly	Bus
Expectations	Respect Ourselves	Be on task. Give your best eff...		...plan.	Eat all your food. Select healthy foods.	Study, read, compute.		...for...
	Respect Others	Ha... to self. Help/share with others.	Use normal voice volume. Walk to right.	Play safe. Include others. Share equipment.	Practice ...d table	Whisper. Return books.	Listen/watch. Use appropriate applause.	Use a qu... voice. Stay in your seat.
	Respect Property	Recycle. Clean up after self.	Pick up...	...ys a... utensils. Clean up in ...age can.	...utensils. Clean up eating area.	Push in chairs. Treat books carefully.	Pick up. Treat chairs appropriately.	Wipe your feet. Sit appropriately.

1. SOCIAL SKILL

2. NATURAL CONTEXT

3. BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES

Eber & Sugai, 2009

Beyond the general contexts

Academic Setting

- Group/individual tasks
- New/difficult tasks
- Practice/redundant tasks
- Lengthy/multi-step tasks
- Complex/acquisition level familiar tasks

Social Settings

- Contextually appropriate/quasi-appropriate overt whole group/adutlt attention
- Typical peer overt/covert methods gaining peer attention

Consider under what conditions (rather than specific settings) you want the students using the behavior

What should you be teaching?

1. Functionally equivalent skills that lead to survival
   - ✓ Appropriately ending aversive tasks
2. Functionally effective skills that lead to thriving
   - ✓ Effectively soliciting attention from a love interest

- Contextually specific forms effective for typically developing peers
  - Acceptable overt
  - Acceptable covert

Examples of successfully navigating the social milieu

- Gain and maintain peer attention at both appropriate and inappropriate times
  - Share experiences
  - Entertain (Quasi-appropriately)
  - Greet and connect
- Exit aversive situations
  - Tactfully withdraw
  - Make excuses
  - Covertly take a break

Your Matrix Context

- Common tough situations
  - Don't want to complete a task
  - Want to end an interaction
- Common interactions
  - When you perceive a threat
  - When someone confronts you with uncomfortable information
- Common needs
  - When you need to catch your breadth
  - When you need some love

The breadth and Depth can be daunting

- First week of school--survival
  - Focus on what they need to make it in differing context
    - Practice core behaviors in varied ways/settings
  - Brief instruction through out the day
- Successive weeks—getting needs met
  - Weekly theme
  - A few minutes a day
- By end of Q1—Thrive skills
  - Self recruiting praise/reinforcement
  - Covert methods of gaining high quality attention from peers
- Re-teaching/visiting schedule: Moderately high frequency

All Content Delivery

Simply put

- Intense, varied, and differentiated instruction
  - Enough instruction to effectively move individual students through acquisition
  - Enough different approaches to more fully illuminate the concept, and its benefits for them
  - Differentiated approaches to allow for learner's cognitive profiles
- Greatly increased # of practice opportunities
  - Enough practice to bring individuals to mastery prior to skill being expected in the desired settings
  - Practice with the skill within the terminal context prior to expecting its use within that setting
- Quality and relevance significant enough to engage students

Plan lessons as you would for academic instruction

Critical Features:

- Clearly outlined/defined behavior

- Clear high utitiliy Rationale

- Examples "fit" the general case

- Non-examples are similar to examples of expected behavior

- Non-examples are typical of what students do

- Opportunities to practice

- Expected behavior(s) acknowledged

Developing desired behavior

Reinforcement is the…

$$\underline{Value \times time \times frequency}$$

Effort

Reinforcement programs are effective for an individual when…

- ✓ The stimulus change has value

- ✓ Access is granted within proximal time

- ✓ Practice is frequent enough to provide a motivating amount of Access

- ✓ The performance effort is low enough that it does not significantly reduce access

Relationship is foundational

How we interact with students in general will determine in large part, if we are even able to reinforce them

Guiding questions:

1. What does our non-instructional attention/interactions look like?

2. How important does the student feel?

Positive environment: an 'intangible' directly related to the quality of our interactions

✓ Five instances of acknowledgement for every correction.

✓ Focus on establishing "behavioral momentum" prior to establishing a workload
   • Begin each class period with a celebration.
   • Quality interaction as first interaction
   • Requests interspersed between positive interactions

✓ Provide multiple paths to success/praise.
   • Acknowledge desired behavior, participation, academic work, smiles, etc.
   • Use Group contingencies, as well as contingencies (reserved for those who need individual support)

Adapted from: Horner, Sugai, & Rossetto-Dickey (retrieved 2011)

End the pattern of the squeaky wheel getting the grease

What we "attend to" will likely be what we get more of

- What sort of behavior you will engage with first (reinforce)
- How you can provide minimal attention when dealing with the squeaky wheel (extinguish)
- How do you keep your positive interactions relevant
- What interpersonal skills do you want to model

Specific & Contingent Praise

Core components:

- Immediate & brief
- Specific
  - I love how you are in your seats and ready to learn" vs. "good job"
- Phrased in school-wide common language
  - "Great job of ….., that was just like we practiced" vs. "correct"
  - "Joey, Jenny. Stacked & Racked. Perfect. Thank you!"
- Relevant
  - Genuine vs. canned
  - Varied by kid preference: private if necessary

Pairing praise with a high frequency/low intensity reward will speed development

- Increase student attending
- Signal difference in importance between behaviors
- Differentiate different qualities of the same behavior

The lower the value of the reward, the more frequently it should be used.

- A high point system allows you to provide reward frequently
- A monthly reward doesn't provide the frequency necessary to speed development.

Scaling class-wide reinforcement systems for an EBD program

The overarching goal is to make school a rewarding place to be.

1. Use at least 1 "generalized conditioned reinforcer"
    - ✓ Accounts for variability both within/between individuals
    - ✓ Fast and easy to deliver
2. Provide multiple layers of reinforcement
3. Set precise expectations for each individual to access

Regardless of your method, ensure you are…

✓ Able to provide high frequency/low value
✓ Able to adapt to meet individual needs within your system
✓ Doable and applicable for implementers

Common Generalized Conditioned Reinforcers

- Point systems
- Economies

✓Tons of opportunities to earn

✓Applied across context

✓Method for tracking matches social/developmental level

1	I	6	卌 I
2	II	7	卌 II
3	III	8	卌 III
4	IIII	9	卌 IIII
5	卌	10	卌 卌

Design for what will work for most, not how it may be abused

Effective Group Contingency

The safest route to go is an independent group contingency.

✦Same expectation/independent access

✦Great fit with generalized conditioned reinforcer
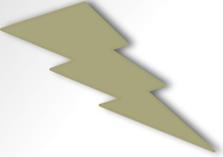
Incorporating Self-Management

Added benefits

- ✓ Aids in making program more student directed
- ✓ Is an effective intrapersonal skill most students with EBD need to learn
- ✓ Reduces effort on behalf of staff

Self-management components

- Self-monitoring & evaluation
- Self-recording & reinforcing
- Comparison checks

Particularly useful and important in secondary settings

Augmenting the Level System:

Built around "protecting privilege", the level system makes it very hard to deliver access frequently or based on a specific performance of a precise behavior.
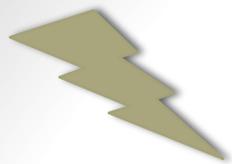
- Couple with a generalized conditioned reinforcer (like a point system)
- Movement on levels should be based on trend and targets not absolute
  - Points provide access to reinforcer, level determines reinforcer option
  - Higher levels = more independence/better reinforcers/more sophisticated behaviors
  - Consecutive achievement = higher levels
  - Consecutive under achievement = movement to lower levels
  - Punishers basic infractions are disconnected from the level

Deterring challenging behavior

Students with EBD have extremely idiosyncratic and brittle reinforcement profiles.

- Motivation is hard to create and easy to break

Punishment systems must balance instructional value with motivational impact

- Lead to more likely selection of desired behavior
- Does not break reinforcers

Foundation (high quality context)

Classroom environment/Context

↓

Student Behavior

Pay-off for individual

Desired Behavior

Challenging Behavior

↓

Acknowledging Appropriate Behavior
- Specific praise (4:1)
- Acknowledgement system

Responding to Inappropriate Behavior
- (error correction) Prompt to desired behavior
- Preplanned consequence

Foundation (high quality context)

Teach expectations	ASR	Effective routines	Supportive environment	Pre-correction

Student Behavior

Pay-off for individual

Desired Behavior

Challenging Behavior

Acknowledging Appropriate Behavior
- Specific praise (4:1)
- Acknowledgement system

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Challenging Behavior Teacher Routine

Direction/request & Wait Time (5-10 seconds)

Desired behavior

- ✓ Participating in fun/interesting lesson
- ✓ High levels of academic success
- ✓ Having fun/int. interpersonal interactions
- ✓ Praise
- ✓ Reward

If, Challenging Behavior

Redirect: Prompt to expectation (fit to activity)

Walk away & Wait 5-10 sec.

If, Desired Behavior

Reinforce (light) Acknowledge Specific praise

If, Challenging Behavior

Preplanned Consequence
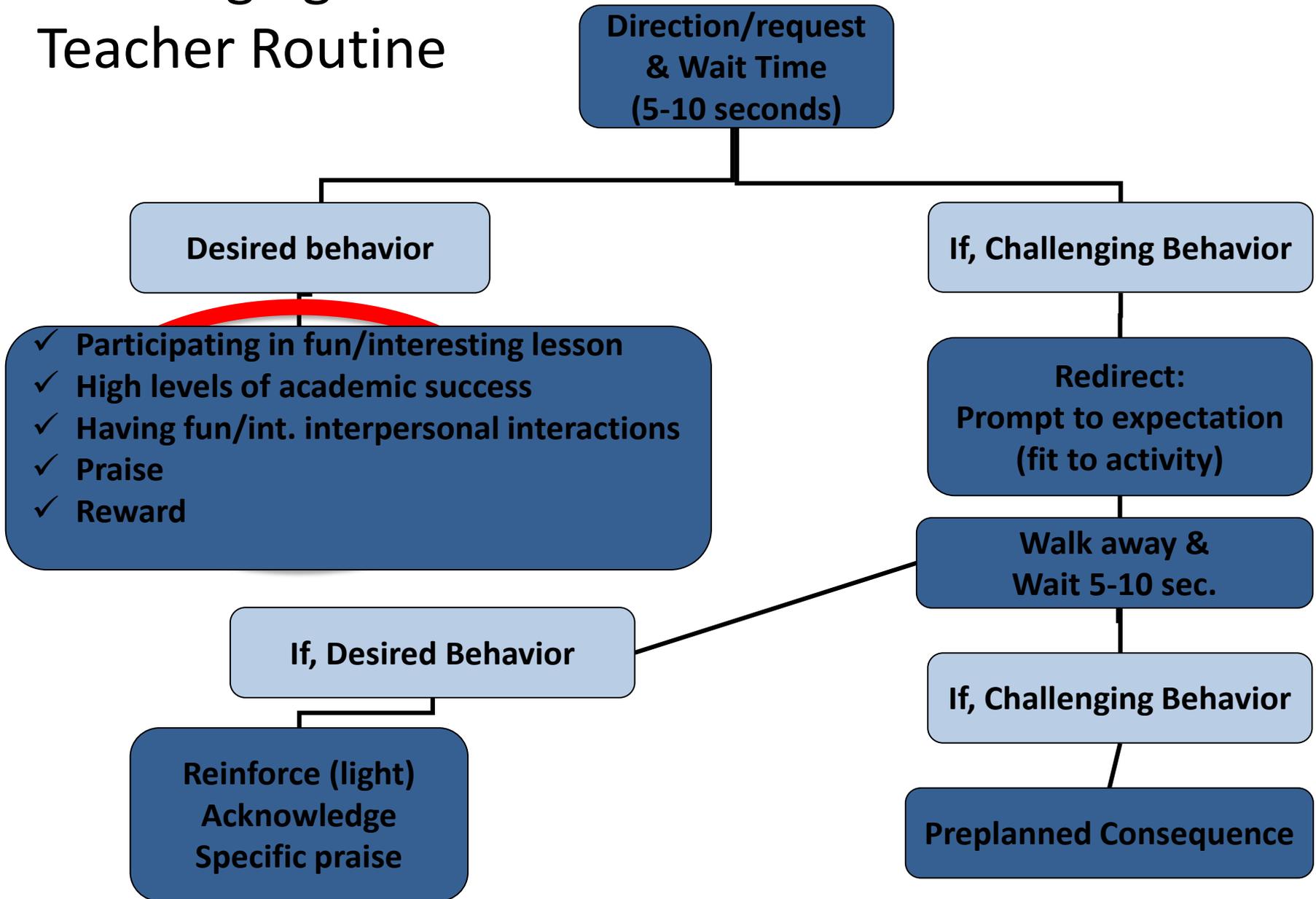
Low Level Challenging Behavior
Teacher Routine

Direction/request & Wait Time (5-10 seconds)

Desired behavior

Reinforce!!!! Specific Praise Acknldgmt. system

If, Challenging Behavior

Redirect: Prompt to expectation (fit to activity)

Walk away & Wait 5-10 sec.

If, Desired Behavior

Reinforce (light) Acknowledge Specific praise

If, Challenging Behavior

Preplanned Consequence

```
                Basic                        Level I                        Level II
               Violation

                  │                             │                              │
                  ▼                             ▼                              ▼
        ┌──────────────────┐         ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
        │  Take a moment to │         │     Refer to      │          │     Refer to      │
        │  reteach expected │         │ "Procedures for   │          │ "Procedures for   │
        │     behavior      │         │      Rule         │          │      Rule         │
        └──────────────────┘         │ Violations...Level I" │       │ Violations...level II" │
                  │                   └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
                  ▼                      ↙            ↘                 ↙            ↘
        ┌──────────────────┐
        │    "Catch" the    │      Behavior is      Behavior        Behavior is      Behavior
        │   student doing   │      Extinguished     continues       Extinguished     Continues
        │ expected behavior │
        │ and reinforce with│
        │  positive feedback│
        └──────────────────┘
```

Establish guidelines for different levels of intensity

Level 1:
Behaviors that impact only the student
-Not prepared

| Level 2: |
| --- |
| Behaviors that interfere with the learning of others |
| |

Inclusion="Reorganizing" the Gen. Ed. subsystem

The general education is the toughest setting with the least support:

- Significantly lower quality reinforcement system
- Far less instruction around social "todos"
    - Different behavioral/social expectations
- Limited instructional practices

Default position is to send the student into the classroom with a paraprofessional
and let them provide all support.

A System reorganization perspective to Inclusion

School day

Time in inclusive settings

Unstructured Time

Direct Programming time
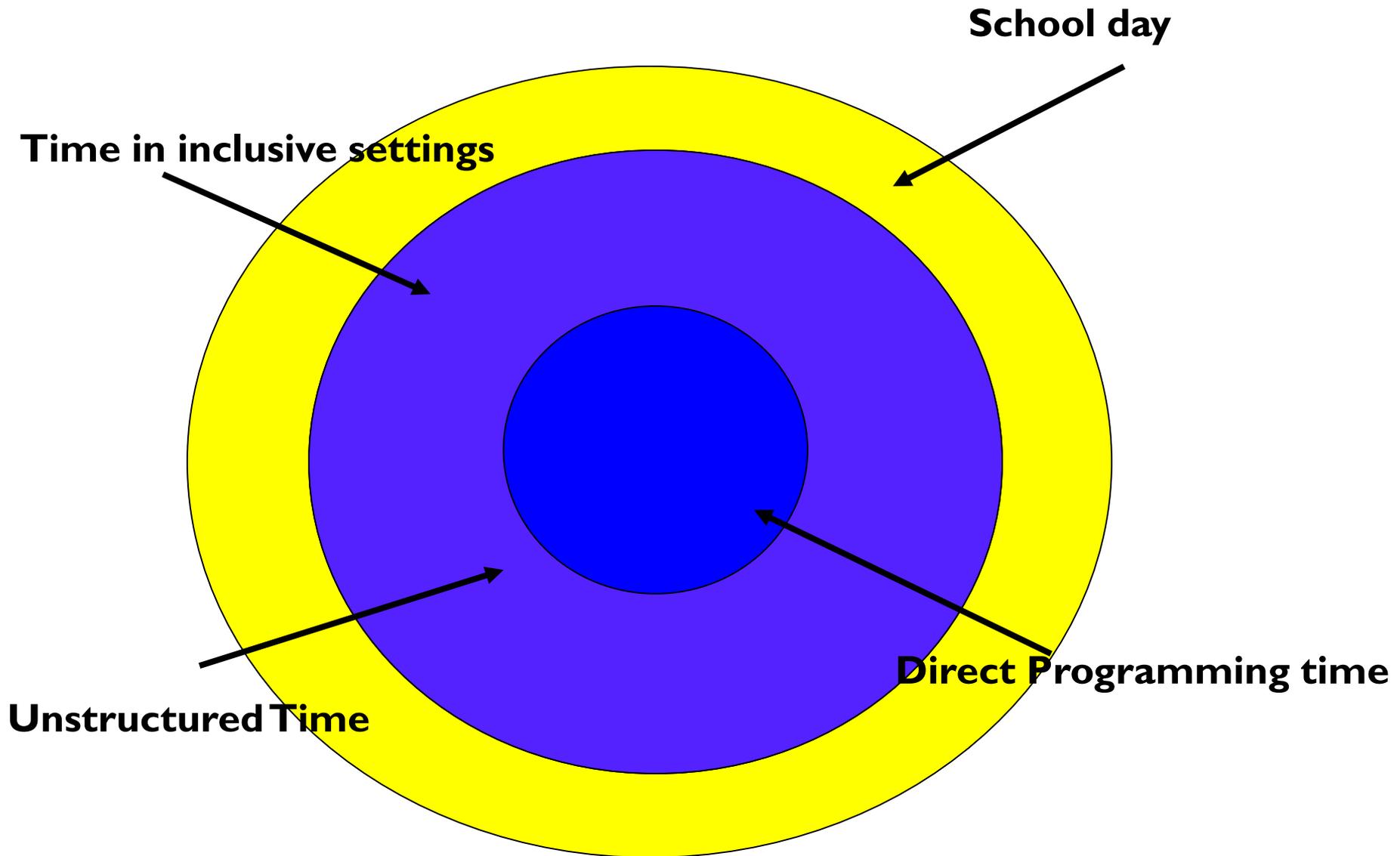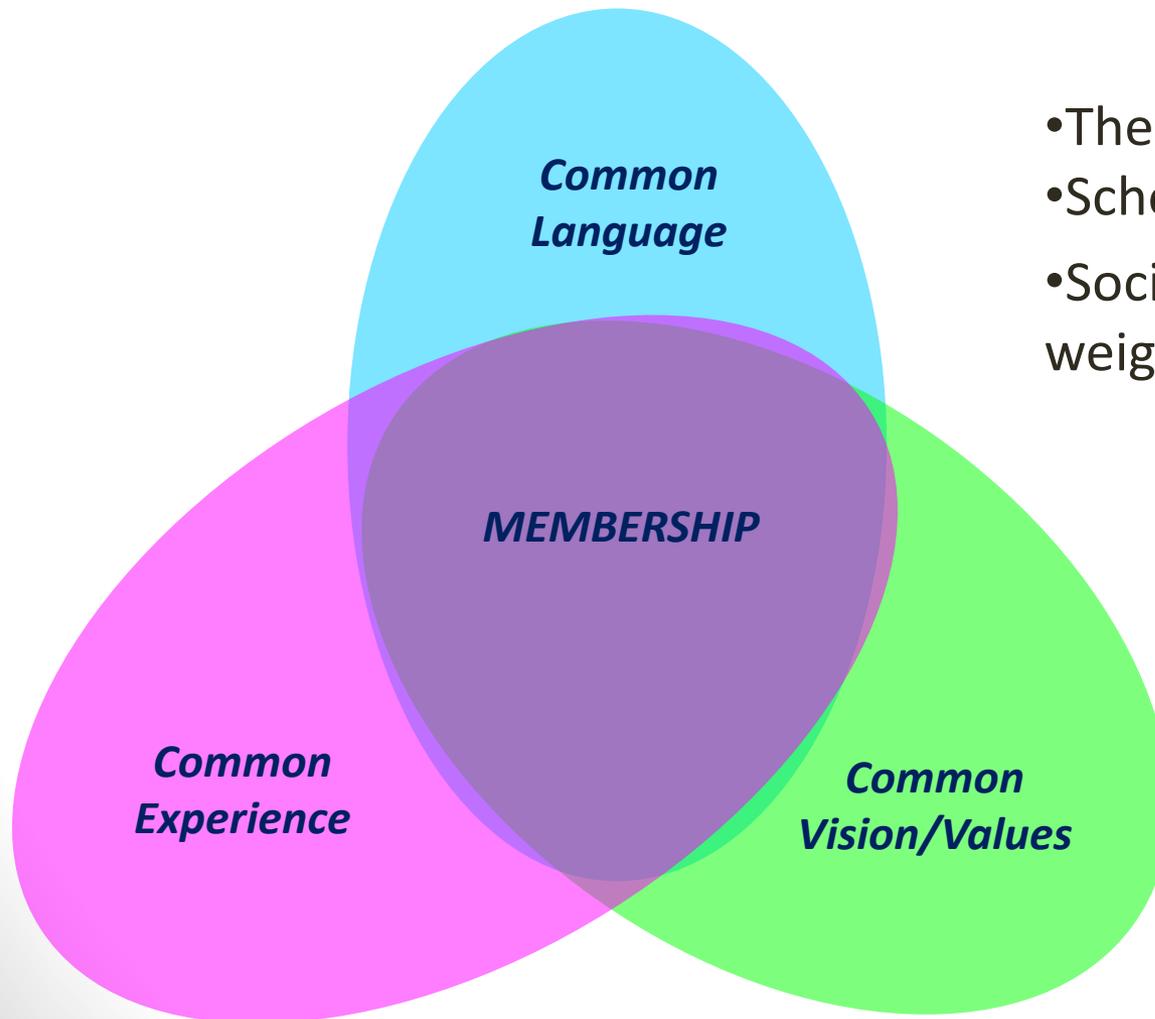
Adapted from Heward, 1994

If you are not doing it already it might be uncomfortable

- Administrative sponsorship
  - The more effective programming the less impact the student's behavior has on the school
  - Cross context efforts will drastically improve instructional impact
  - There is a legal component
- Pre-inclusion prep. For gen. ed. Teacher
  - Empower the teacher to teach your student
  - Empower the teacher to team-up with the para educator in the class
- Early and frequent follow up for the teacher
  - Support them as if they were a student
- Fidelity checks
  - Observe the implementation to see if it looks right
- Just in-time training
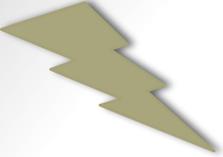 - Shore it up

Universal level School Connectedness supports foster a relationship between the student, staff and community

- Bonding: Building reinforcing relationships with staff and peers will begin to create a sense of "group membership"
  - When someone belongs to a group they are more likely to behave in a way that reflects the groups values
- Attachment: Comes from a sense of joy and contribution to the community/environment
  - Attachment fosters time "in context"
- Engagement: Participating in "setting specific behavior" and goals around the behavior's performance
  - Engagement is directly related to reinforcement: The more failure the less engagement
- School climate: Perceived safety and value (honored contribution)
  - The more safe an honored a person feels within a context, the more equitable and "useful" the context feels

Effective EBD/School culture facilitates school connectedness

Venn diagram: **Common Language**, **Common Experience**, **Common Vision/Values**, overlapping at **MEMBERSHIP**

- The student is important
- School is a safe place
- Social outcomes out-weigh academic progress

Continually considering School Connectedness

- Bonding and attachment:
  - Significant amount of positive interactions across the context
    - Immediate, varied, frequent, authentic
    - Beyond opportunities for reinforcement
    - Displays of genuine interest in student
  - Efforts to support and/or bring student's interests into the school
    - Significant efforts are made for students to participate in extra-curriculars they are interested in.
    - Student interests are incorporated into the setting
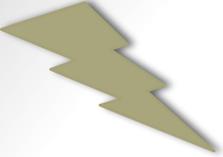
Continually considering School Connectedness

- Safe school climate:
  - Develop a strong school/home relationship
    - Support/create welcoming opportunities for family participation at school events/opportunities
    - Establish quality home/school communication system
    - Be proactive with the families (center relationship around team approach, and not student mistakes)
      - Update when changes to program have impact
      - Acknowledge and voice appreciation for the work that they are doing

  - Provide significant support for inclusion/push-in settings
  - Work to influence school culture to become accepting of emotional response differences
    - Is there a space for these students to participate and contribute?

Universal: Transition

- Teach all students to become effective self-advocates
  - Listen for starting points and take the slow road
  - Frank discussion around barriers
- Progress-monitor your gap analysis for both performance and content gaps

It really is all about early and ongoing gap analysis

- Post secondary goals guiding annual planning as early as possible
  - Clearly identified long term outcomes.
    - What behaviors/skills are required for the student/family's desired outcomes
    - Where are we now
    - What do we need to learn
    - How does that inform this year's IEP
  - Understand how annual progress may lead to need for adaptation of long term objectives
    - And thus next annual plan
      - Change in target skills for specific domain
      - Re-prioritization of domains
- Creates the opportunity for a gap analysis
  - Needed skills compared to current
  - Growth measured against desired rate of growth

To Summarize...

- ✓ Focus on establishing a program that fosters relationships, "system reorganization", and school connectedness
- ✓ Teach the skills for the situations/conditions they need
- ✓ Insure the intensity of behavioral management methods is high enough that the majority of your students are
  - ✓ A focus on developing the variables within a supportive context
  - ✓ Establishing Varied and dynamic reinforcement system
  - ✓ Use consequences as a deterrent (rig the scale) vs. punitive
- ✓ Create systems to ensure the inclusion context is working for the student
- ✓ Integrate a proactive system of monitoring, evaluating, adapting

Questions & Resources

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