RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: A Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff

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Preface

According to the *National Center on Response to Intervention* "the purpose of RTI is to provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, identify students with learning or behavioral problems, and ensure that they receive appropriate instruction and related supports" (http://www.rti4success.org/). They translate this into a definition that states "response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities." They describe four essential components of response to intervention: (1) a school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral system for preventing school failure, (2) screening, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) data-based decision making for instruction, movement within the multi-level system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law). The guidebook also states response to intervention is "a framework for providing comprehensive support to students and is not an instructional practice" and that "RTI is a prevention oriented approach to linking assessment and instruction that can inform educators' decisions about how best to teach their students."

While the RTI center states the strategy is meant to be broad-based and preventative, we suggest that the approach described is too limited in how it frames what needs to go on in a classroom and schoolwide to enable learning, engage students, and keep them engaged.* Therefore, we have prepared the following guide for teachers and learning supports staff. It places response to intervention in the context of a unified and comprehensive system for enabling all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school and beyond.

The guide is designed to broaden perspectives of response to intervention, provide frameworks for contextualizing the work in classrooms and schoolwide, and generally enhance practices. It is divided into the following units:

I. Framing Response to Intervention in the Classroom
II. Pursuing Response to Intervention Sequentially and Effectively
III. Pursuing Response to Intervention as One Strategy in a Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

As aids for personnel development, each unit begins with a set of questions and ends with study, discussion, and activity guides. These can be used for both

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*There are other criticisms of RTI; relevant references covering these are included in the resource list appended to this guide.

independent study and groups formed as communities of learners. Topical guides to illustrate and aid practice are presented throughout. A few topics are amplified in appendices. In place of usual citations, references to sources and additional resources that can deepen learning and offer specific aids are provided in an appended resource list. A set of self-study surveys also are highlighted.

We view this guide as a work-in-progress. Hopefully, it will be useful in its present form. We will revise it based on feedback from the field. Let us hear what changes you recommend.

It will be obvious that this work owes much to many who share their efforts through a variety of sources. And, we can never express our appreciation enough to our Center staff (Perry Nelson and the host of UCLA students) for the many contributions they make each day.

Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor
Center Co-directors

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RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: A Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff

Response to Intervention (RTI) initiatives wisely underscore the unacceptability of waiting for students to fail. However, as with so many other efforts intended to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, this budding movement often is pursued as just another piecemeal effort. Fragmentary endeavors cannot address the complex realities confronting teachers and student support staff. Moreover, as formulated and practiced the approach often is too limited in how it frames what needs to go on to enable learning, engage students, and keep them engaged. In particular, it pays too little attention to the need to strengthen the classroom and schoolwide context in ways that enhance the effectiveness of the strategy.

Response to intervention must be built on a solid classroom and schoolwide foundation that incorporates a focus on promotion of healthy development, prevention, and responding as early after problem onset as is feasible. And it must be effectively connected to interventions designed to provide specialized student and family assistance for severe and chronic problems. In other words, RTI must be fully integrated into a systemic, unified, and comprehensive approach to school improvement.

The need for a comprehensive approach is particularly evident in schools where a significant proportion of students lack enthusiasm about attendance and about engaging in the day's lesson plans. The need is even more acute in schools where many students have become disengaged from classroom instruction, are behaving in disruptive ways, and are dropping out. To facilitate the success of such students at school, administrators, teachers, student support staff, and other key stakeholders must literally transform schools in ways that enable students to (1) get around interfering barriers and (2) (re)engage in classroom instruction. Properly designed, response to intervention strategies can help with all this, but it must be an integrated part of a well-designed and implemented school improvement plan.

With this in mind, the following guide first places response to intervention in the context of the classroom and as a sequential and hierarchical approach for all students. Then, we highlight early after onset interventions. Finally, we emphasize that that aim of enhancing equity of opportunity requires embedding classroom efforts within a comprehensive schoolwide system of student and learning supports for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

As aids for personnel development, each unit begins with a set of questions that can be used to guide independent study and community of learners' discussions. A few topics are amplified in appendices; others that can deepen learning and provide specific resource aids are referenced throughout. Finally, a set of self-study surveys are appended.

Unit I: Framing Response to Intervention in the Classroom

A. Improving the Conditions for Learning

Inviting Assistance into the Classroom
Promoting a Positive School and Classroom Climate
Redesigning Classroom Strategies

B. Personalization is Fundamental to RTI and Goes Beyond Individualization

Study and Discussion Questions

(1) Why does effective response to intervention require additional hands in the classroom?

(2) How does classroom (and schoolwide) climate relate to addressing a student's problems?

(3) How do classroom strategies need to be redesigned to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce the need for out of class referrals?

(4) How does personalization differ from individualization?

How was school today?

Well, if it's true we learn from our mistakes, I had a great day!

Unit I: Framing Response to Intervention in the Classroom

What goes on in the classroom is critical in ameliorating or exacerbating the learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems manifested by students. This reality, however, does not make addressing the problems the sole responsibility of teachers. And while response to intervention can play a strategic intervention role, implementing the approach also is not the sole responsibility of teachers; it requires a collective effort.

A. Improving the Conditions for Learning

For response to intervention to become an effective facet in classrooms, teachers and student support personnel need to work together to transform classrooms. This involves:

- inviting assistance into the classroom to bring in more help (e.g., volunteers trained to work with students-in-need; resource teachers and student support staff to team up with the teacher in the classroom)
- ensuring what goes on in the classroom (and schoolwide) establishes and maintains a stimulating, caring, and supportive climate
- redesigning classroom strategies to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce the need for out of class referrals (e.g. personalizing instruction; expanding the range of curricular and instructional options and choices; systematic use of pre-referral interventions, response to intervention, and in class special assistance; turning big classes into smaller units; reducing over-reliance on social control)

Inviting Assistance into the Classroom

Collaboration and teaming are key facets of (1) addressing barriers to learning and teaching and (2) promoting engagement, learning, performance, and healthy development.

Opening the classroom door allows for many forms of assistance, mentoring, partnership, and other collegial practices.

Teachers, especially new teachers, need as much in-classroom support and personalized on-the-job education as can be provided. All teachers need to learn more about how to enable learning among students, especially those with problems. All school staff need support from each other in enhancing outcomes for such students. Given their shared agenda, it seems evident that staff not only should work closely with each other, but also with parents, volunteers, professionals-in- training, and so forth (see Guide 1).

With respect to student/learning supports staff at a school, the emphasis should be on regularly bringing them into classrooms as team members rather than as “consultants.” This means tha some support staff will have to learn much more about classroom life and teaching. And, everyone who works in the classroom will need to move from an overemphasis on behavior modification to an understanding of the role of intrinsic motivation in engaging and re-engaging students in instruction.

Guide 1

An Example of a Role that Others Can Play in the Classroom Related to Response to Intervention

Every teacher has had the experience of planning a wonderful lesson and having the class disrupted by one or two unengaged students (who often are more interested in interacting with a classmate than pursuing the lesson). The first tendency usually is to use some simple form of social control to stop the disruptive behavior (e.g., using proximity and/or a mild verbal intervention). Because so many students today are not easily intimidated, teachers often find such strategies don't work. So, the control efforts are escalated. The teacher reprimands, warns, and finally sends the student to "time-out" or to the front office for discipline. In the process, the other students start to titter about what is happening and learning is disrupted.

In contrast to this scenario, teachers can involve others (e.g., support staff, volunters) to work with specific students in ways that help minimize disruptions, re-engage an errant student, and provide response to intervention data. For example, a volunteer can be trained to watch for and move quickly at the first indication that a student needs special guidance and support. The volunteer is taught to go and sit next to the student and quietly try to re-engage the youngster in the lesson. If this proves undoable, the volunteer takes the student to a quiet area in the classroom and initiates another type of activity or, if necessary and feasible, goes out for a brief walk. It is true that this means the student won't get the benefit of instruction during that period, but s/he wouldn't anyway and considerable data about the problem is provided.

None of this is a matter of rewarding student bad behavior. Rather, it is a strategy for avoiding the tragedy of disrupting the whole class while the teacher reprimands the culprit and in the process increases that student's negative attitudes toward teaching and school. This use of others allows teaching to continue, and as soon as time permits, it makes it possible for staff to explore with the student ways to make the classroom a mutually satisfying place to be. Moreover, by handling the matter in this way, the teacher is likely to find the student more receptive to discussing things than if the usual "logical consequences" have been administered (e.g., loss of privileges, sending the student to time-out or to the assistant principal).

Using this approach and not having to shift into a discipline mode has multiple benefits. For one, the teacher is able to carry out the day's lesson plan. For another, the other students do not have the experience of seeing the teacher having a control contest with a student. (Even if the teacher wins such contests, it may have a negative effect on how students perceive them; and if the teacher somehow "loses it," that definitely conveys a wrong message. Either outcome can be counterproductive with respect to a caring climate and a sense of community.) Finally, the teacher has not had a negative encounter with the targeted student. Such encounters build up negative attitudes on both sides which can be counterproductive with respect to future teaching, learning, and behavior. Because there has been no negative encounter, the teacher can reach out to the student after the lesson is over and start to think about how to use an aide or volunteers to work with the student to prevent future problems. (For more about volunteers, see Appendix A.)

Promoting a Positive School and Classroom Climate

Opening the classroom door must be paired with interventions that ensure all who enter are welcomed and supported. The ideal is to have an environment where students and teachers feel positively stimulated, well-supported, and engaged in pursuing the learning objectives of the day. Student engagement is especially important in preventing problems. Thus, minimally, classroom practices must enhance motivation to learn and facilitate active learning and do so in ways that promote a climate and culture of mutual caring and respect (see Guide 2 and Appendix B).

Simply stated, active learning is *learning by doing*, *listening*, *looking*, *and asking;* but it is not just being active that counts. It is the mobilization of the student to seek out and learn. Specific activities are designed to capitalize on student interests and curiosity, involve them in problem solving and guided inquiry, and elicit their thinking through reflective discussions and appropriate products. Moreover, the activities can be designed to do all this in ways that enhance engagement and intrinsic motivation by minimizing threats to and enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others (see Appendix C).

Stimulating, caring, and supportive classrooms promote academic achievement and social, and emotional learning

There are many examples of ways to facilitate active learning at all grade levels. It can take the form of class discussions, problem-based and discovery learning, a project approach, involvement in "learning centers" at school, experiences outside the classroom, and independent learning in or out of school. Obviously, computers and the internet can be valuable tools in all this.

Stimulating, caring, and supportive classrooms do much more than motivate learning of subject matter and academic skills. They provide conditions for social and emotional learning. Students learn to cooperate, share responsibility, develop understanding and skills related to conflict resolution and mediation, and much more. For staff, such classrooms provide a context for collaborating with colleagues and with a variety of volunteers to ensure mutual support and counter staff burn out. The mental health implications of all this are clear.

(*Note: Want references? See the appended resource list.*)

Guide 2

What's Involved in Promoting a Welcoming, Caring, and Hopeful Atmosphere in the Classroom and Schoolwide

In a fundamental sense, a welcoming induction and ongoing support are critical elements both in creating a positive sense of community and in facilitating a student's (and staff) school adjustment and performance. As such, they are prime conditions for learning and thus to interpreting a student's response to any intervention at school.

Schoolwide strategies for welcoming and supporting staff, students, and families at school *every day* are part of creating a mentally healthy school – one where staff, students, and families interact positively with each other and identify with the school and its goals. Analyses of practice and research suggest that a proactive approach to developing positive school and classroom climates requires careful attention to (1) enhancing the quality of life at school and especially in the classroom for students and staff, (2) pursuing a curriculum and enrichment opportunities that promote not only academic, but also social, and emotional learning, (3) fostering intrinsic motivation for learning and teaching, and (4) providing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports that enables teachers and other staff to be effective in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Examples of the focus for practice advocated in the literature include

- ensuring safety and providing social support mechanisms for students and staff
- offering an array of options for pursuing goals along with meaningful participation by students and staff in decision making
- transforming the classroom infrastructure from a big classroom into a set of smaller units organized to maximize intrinsic motivation for learning and not based on ability or problem-oriented grouping*
- providing instruction and responding to problems in a personalized way
- use of a variety of strategies for preventing and addressing problems as soon as they arise
- a healthy and attractive physical environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.

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*What small, personalized learning communities can do is (1) minimize school-related barriers, (2) ensure a range of learning and teaching opportunities, and (3) provide a comprehensive system of learning supports that enables a school to facilitate productive learning in a caring context.

Redesigning Classroom Strategies

It is evident that how classrooms are arranged and how instruction is organized helps or hinders learning and teaching and affects behavior. In essence, an optimal design promotes personalized and holistic learning and minimizes learning, behavior, and emotional problems. When a problem does arise, it is addressed immediately with response to intervention strategies (including a range of what in the past have been called "prereferral" interventions).

Meeting Learners Where They Are

The old adage: *Meet learners where they are* captures the commonsense view of good classroom practices and is the core principle for response to intervention strategies. Unfortunately, this adage often is interpreted only as a call for *matching* a student's current *capabilities* (e.g., knowledge and skills).

The irony, of course, is that most school staff know that *motivational* factors (e.g., attitudes) play a key role in poor instructional outcomes. One of the most frequent laments about students is: "They could do it, if only they *wanted* to!"

Enhancing motivation is a fundamental concern with respect to response to intervention.

We all also know that good abilities are more likely to emerge when students are motivated not only to pursue assignments, but also are interested in using what they learn. The point for emphasis is that response to intervention as with all good intervention practices involves matching *motivation* (especially *intrinsic* motivation), and this often involves overcoming *avoidance* motivation. (Students who don't *want* to perform always will look as if they have significant skills deficits.)

Many instructional approaches are effective when a student is motivated to learn what is being taught. And, for students with learning, behavior, and emotional problems, motivation for classroom learning often is the primary concern. The seeds of significant problems are planted when instruction is not a good fit. For example, learning problems generate an emotional overlay and usually behavior problems.

In learning to implement response to intervention, it is essential to learn how to address motivation as a primary consideration (see Guide 3 and Appendix C). Instruction should be based on an appreciation of what is likely to affect a student's positive and negative motivation to learn. Among the fundamental intervention implications are ensuring that classrooms offer a broad range of content, outcome, and procedural *options,* including a personalized structure to facilitate learning. With real options comes real opportunities for *involving learners in decision making.* A motivational focus also stresses development of nonthreatening ways to provide information about learning and performance.

Guide 3

Response to Intervention and Motivational Considerations

Response to intervention and all conditions for learning and must address motivational readiness and motivation as a fundamental process and outcome concern.

Response to intervention must be implemented in ways that increase, and avoid decreasing, intrinsic motivation

In transforming classrooms, the following points about motivation warrant particular attention:

(1) *Optimal performance and learning require motivational readiness.* Motivation is a key antecedent condition in any learning situation. Readiness is understood in terms of offering stimulating and supportive environments where learning can be perceived as vivid, valued, and attainable. It is a prerequisite to student attention, involvement, and performance. Poor motivational readiness may be a cause of poor learning and a factor maintaining learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Thus, the need for strategies that can produce a high level of motivational readiness (and reduce avoidance motivation and reactance) so students are mobilized to participate.

(2) *Motivation represents both a process and an outcome concern.* Individuals may value learning something, but may not be motivated to pursue the processes used. Many students are motivated to learn when they first encounter a topic but do not maintain that motivation. Processes must elicit, enhance, and maintain motivation so that students stay mobilized. Programs must be designed to maintain, enhance, and expand intrinsic motivation so that what is learned is not limited to immediate lessons and is applied in the world beyond the schoolhouse door.

Negative motivation and avoidance reactions and any conditions likely to generate them must be circumvented or at least minimized. Of particular concern are activities students perceive as unchallenging, uninteresting, overdemanding, or overwhelming. Most people react against structures that seriously limit their range of options or that are overcontrolling and coercive. Examples of conditions that can have a negative impact on a person's motivation are sparse resources, excessive rules, and a restrictive day-in, day-out emphasis on drill and remediation.

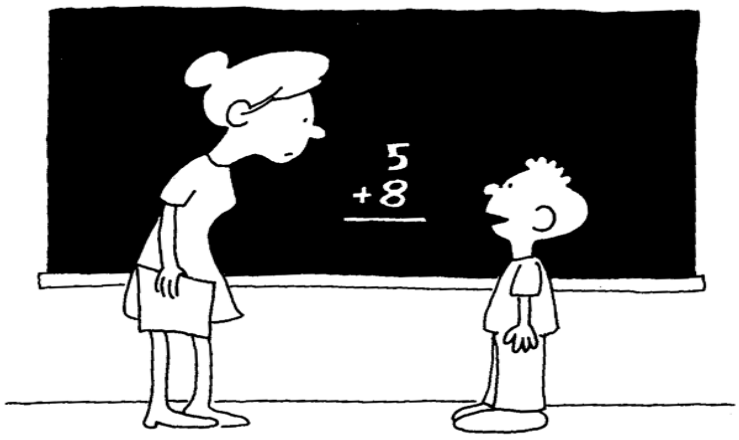
Students experiencing problems at school usually have extremely negative perceptions of and avoidance tendencies toward teachers and activities that look like "the same old thing." Major changes in approach must be made if such students are to change these perceptions. Ultimately, success may depend on the degree to which the students view the adults at school and in the classroom as supportive, rather than indifferent or controlling and the program as personally valuable and obtainable.

(cont.)

(3) *School staff not only need to try to increase motivation – especially intrinsic motivation – but also to avoid practices that decrease it.* Although students may learn a specific lesson at school (e.g., some basic skills), they may have little or no interest in using the new knowledge and skills outside of the classroom. Increasing such interest requires procedures that can reduce negative and increase positive feelings, thoughts, and coping strategies.

With behavior, learning, and emotional problems, it is especially important to identify and minimize experiences that maintain or may increase avoidance motivation. Of particular concern is the need to avoid overreliance on extrinsics to entice and reward since such strategies can decrease intrinsic motivation.

The point is to enhance stable, positive, intrinsic attitudes that mobilize ongoing pursuit of desired ends, throughout the school, and away from school. Developing intrinsic attitudes is basic to increasing the type of motivated practice (reading for pleasure for example) that is essential for mastering and assimilating what has just been learned.



B. Personalization is Fundamental to RTI and Goes Beyond Individualization

The desire to meet learners where they are sometimes is referred to as the concept of the "match" or the problem of "fit." Schools strive to design instruction that fits, but the reality is that they can only approximate an optimal fit. A close approximation probably requires *personalizing* instruction and other interventions. And, it is the student's perception that determines whether the fit is good or bad.

For some time, efforts to improve instructional fit in the classroom have revolved around the concepts of individualized or personalized instruction. The two concepts overlap in emphasizing developmental differences. That is, most *individualized* approaches stress individual differences in developmental capability. *Personalization,* however, is defined as the process of accounting for individual differences in *both capability* and *motivation*.

Personalization needs to be understood as a psychological construct. From a motivational perspective, the *learner's perception* is a critical factor in defining whether the environment is a good fit. Given this, it is important to ensure learning opportunities are *perceived by learners* as good ways to reach their goals. Thus, a basic concern in pursuing *response to intervention* and any other assessment strategy is that of eliciting learners' perceptions of how well what is offered matches both their interests and abilities.

Outlined in Guide 4 are underlying assumptions of personalized classrooms. Properly designed and carried out, personalizing instruction can be sufficient in facilitating classroom learning for most students, and this reduces the need for specialized assistance.

Personalizing regular classroom programs also can improve the effectiveness of prevention, inclusion, and prereferral interventions. In such classrooms, personalization represents a regular classroom application of the principle of using the least intervention necessary to be effective (which encompasses the concept of "least restrictive environment").

Let the main object . . . be as follows:

To seek and to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners learn more; by which schools may be the scene of less noise, aversion, and useless labour, but of more leisure, enjoyment, and solid progress.

Comenius (1632)

Guide 4

Underlying Assumptions of a Personalized Program

- Learning is a function of the ongoing transactions between the learner and the learning environment.
- Optimal learning is a function of an optimal match between the learner's accumulated capacities and attitudes and current state of being and the program's processes and context.
- Matching both learner motivation and capacities must be primary procedural objectives.
- The learner's perception is the critical criterion for evaluating whether a good match or fit exists between the learner and the learning environment.
- The wider the range of options that can be offered and the more the learner is made aware of the options and has a choice about which to pursue, the greater the likelihood that he or she will perceive the match as a good one.
- Besides improved learning, personalized programs enhance intrinsic valuing of learning and a sense of personal responsibility for learning. Furthermore. such programs increase acceptance and even appreciation of individual differences, as well as independent and cooperative functioning and problem solving.

Education is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire.

William Butler Yeats

Unit I – Reflection & Stimulus for Discussion

Key Insights about: *Teaching in schools*

Based on what you learned so far:

Identify (and discuss) what principles and practices teachers should adopt to create a positive context for learning and to facilitate appropriate learning.

So now, what's your answer to the question:

What is Good Teaching?

(1) Make a brief outline of what you see as the most important points.

(2) Discuss them with your study group or other friends and colleagues.

(3) After the discussion, decide how you might revise your outline.

If there is an opportunity for group discussion, you may find the following group process guidelines helpful:

- Start by identifying someone who will facilitate the group interchange
- Take a few minutes to make a few individual notes on a worksheet
- Be sure all major points are compiled for sharing with other groups.
- Ask someone else to watch the time so that the group doesn't bog down.

Unit II: Implementing Response to Intervention Sequentially & Effectively

A. Personalize First; Add Special Assistance as Necessary

Some Procedural Objectives and Some Major Elements of a Personalized Classroom

Providing Personalized Structure for Learning

Keeping the Focus on Effectiveness

B. Response to Intervention: An Early After Onset Practice

Adding Learning Options and Broadening Accommodations

Steps to Guide the Process

C. Response to Intervention and Specialized Assistance

Study and Discussion Questions

(1) Why should response to intervention be pursued sequentially?

(2) Why should personalized instruction precede specialized intervention?

(3) When is special assistance needed?

(4) Why should personalized instruction remain in place after it becomes necessary to implement specialized assistance?

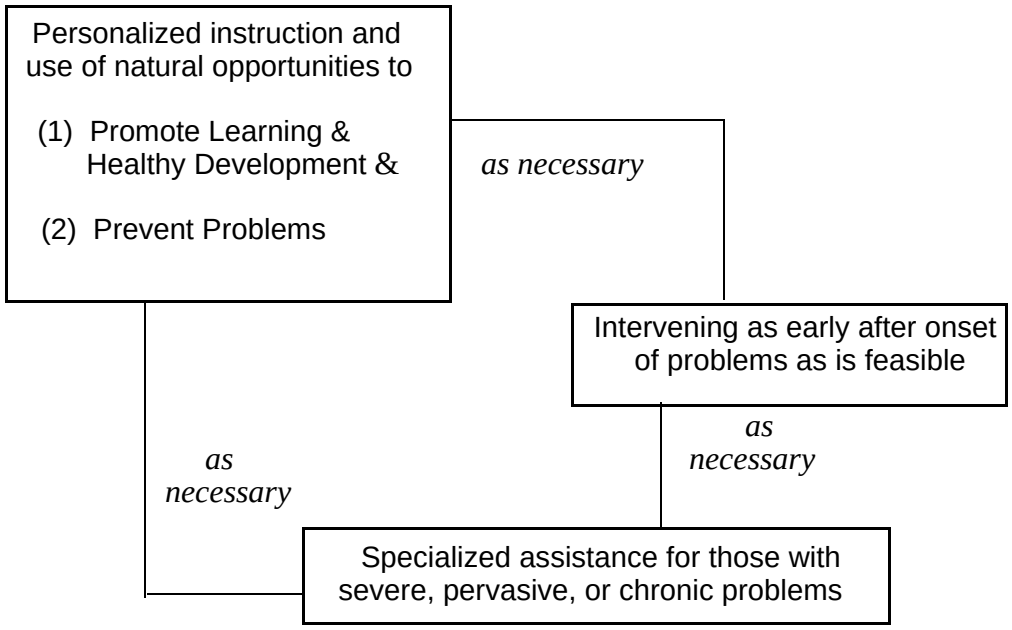
Unit II: Implementing Response to Intervention Sequentially & Effectively

A school that pursues equity of opportunity for all students strives to develop a full continuum of interventions and implements them sequentially and effectively. The continuum begins with (1) promoting assets and preventing problems and, as necessary, responds to problems (2) as early as feasible after they appear and offers (3) narrowly focused treatments and specialized help for severe/chronic problems (see Guide 5).

A sequential framework can guide RTI efforts to provide a good match and determine the most appropriate and least disruptive intervention needed for individuals with learning and behavior problems (see Guide 5).

Guide 5

A Continuum and Sequence of Interventions at a School



Guide 6

Instruction Sequence and Levels for RTI

Step 1. ***Personalizing Instruction***

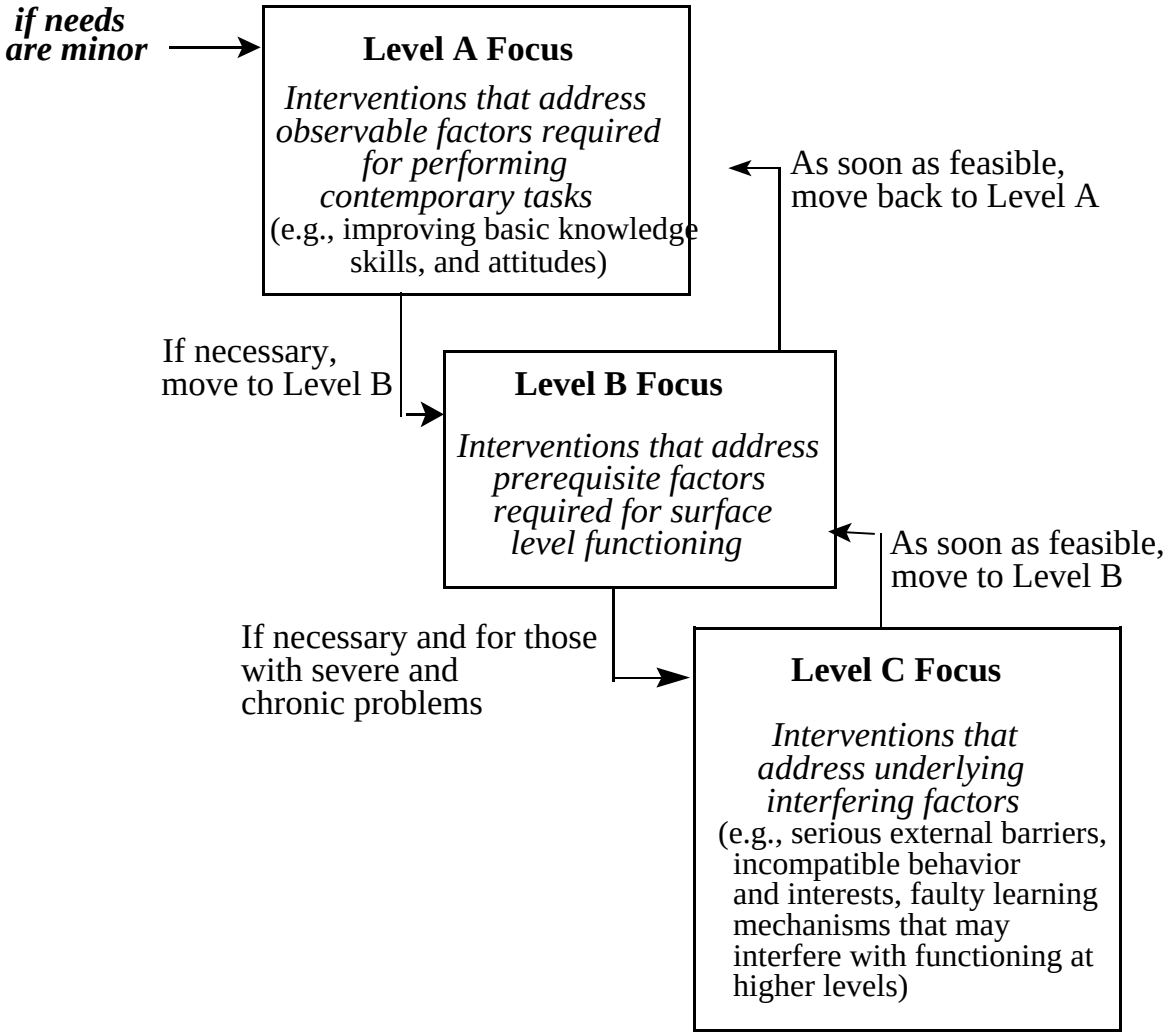
Add Step 2 as necessary

Step 2. ***Special assistance****

>for students who continue to have problems;

>maintained only as long as needed

****Step 2.*** As necessary: *Best special practices* (special assistance, such as remediation, rehabilitation, treatment) are used differentially for minor and severe problems



A. Personalize First; Add Special Assistance as Necessary

As illustrated in Guide 6, the first step in implementing a broad approach to RTI is to personalize instruction. The intent is to be highly responsive to learner differences in both motivation and development and, in the process, enhance a caring learning environment. With personalized instruction in place, the next step involves providing special assistance as needed. Note that this second step is introduced only if learners continue to have problems. As outlined in Guide 6, step 2 involves three levels of focus.

To be a bit more specific:

Step 1 personalizing instruction. The intent is to ensure a student *perceives* instructional processes, content, and outcomes as a good match with his or her interests and capabilities.

A first emphasis is on *motivation*. Practices focus on (re)engaging the student in classroom instruction, with special attention paid to increasing intrinsic motivation and minimizing psychological reactance.

Matching *developmental capabilities* is a parallel concern in Step 1. Practices focus on accounting for current knowledge and skills.

(Guide 7 highlights some major elements of a personalized program.)

Then, based on a student's responses, it is determined if *special assistance* (step 2) also is needed..

Step 2 special assistance. Students for whom personalized instruction is found to be insufficient are provided supportive assistance. In keeping with the principle of using the least intervention needed (e.g., doing what is needed in ways that are least intrusive, restrictive, disruptive), step 2 stresses use of different *levels* of special intervention. With respect to sequence, students with minor problems begin with special intervention that directly focuses on readily observable problems interfering with classroom learning and performance (Level A). Students who continue to have problems may also require a focus on necessary prerequisites (e.g., readiness attitudes, knowledge, and skills) they haven't acquired (Level B). If Levels A and B interventions don't ameliorate the problem, the focus shifts to possible underlying factors. Students with severe and chronic problems require attention at all three levels. (More on this later.)

This sequence helps to minimize false positive diagnoses (e.g., LD, ADHD) and identifies those who should be referred for special education assessment.

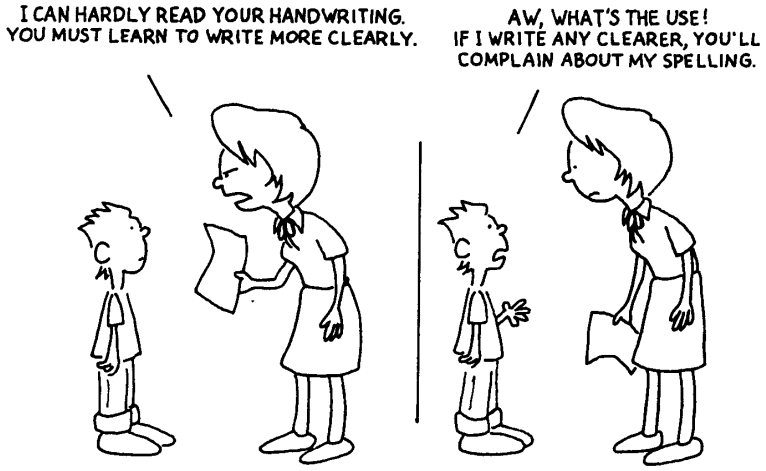
Note, again, that the impact at any time depends on the student's perception of how well an intervention fits his or her needs.

Guide **7**

Major Elements of a Personalized Program

Major elements of personalized programs include:

- turning large classes into small units (many small group and individual learning opportunities – see Appendix D)
- in-classroom collaboration and teaming
- regular use of informal and formal conferences for discussing options, making decisions, exploring learners' perceptions, and mutually evaluating progress
- a broad range of options from which learners can make choices with regard to types of learning content, processes, needed support and guidance, and desired outcomes
- active decision making by learners in making choices (with appropriate guidance and support) and in evaluating how well the chosen options match their motivation and capability
- establishment of program plans and mutual agreements about the ongoing relationships between the learners and the program personnel
- mutual evaluations of progress, problems, and learners' perceptions of the "match" in analyzing responses to all interventions
- reformulating plans and renegotiating agreements.



Procedural Objectives and Some Major Elements of a Personalized Classroom

While the framework looks linear, we all know that learning is an ongoing, dynamic, and transactional process. Recognizing this, it helps to have a set of procedural objectives to guide implementation of personalized *instruction* and response to *intervention*.

For example, a primary procedural objective is to establish and maintain an appropriate working relationship with students. This is done by creating a sense of trust and caring, open communication, and providing support and guidance as needed. A basic aspect is clarifying the purpose of learning activities and processes (especially those designed to help correct specific problems) and why processes will be effective.

Examples of other procedural objectives are to

- clarify the nature and purpose of evaluative processes and apply them in ways that deemphasize feelings of failure (e.g., explaining to students the value of feedback about learning and performance; providing feedback in ways that minimize any negative impact)
- guide and support motivated practice (e.g., by suggesting and providing opportunities for meaningful applications and clarifying ways to organize practice);
- provide opportunities for continued application and generalization (e.g., so learners can pursue additional, self-directed learning in the area or can arrange for additional support and direction).

Classroom teaching, of course, requires focusing on more than one procedure at a time. In general, procedures and content are tightly interwoven means to an end. And, with advanced technology (e.g., computers, video), many new means are available for blending content and process into personalized activities.

Providing Personalized Structure for Learning

Classroom structure often is discussed as all or nothing – structured or unstructured. The tendency also is to equate structure simply with limit setting and social control. Such practices tend to produce vicious cycles. The emphasis on control can have a negative impact on students' motivation (e.g., producing psychological reactance), which makes it harder to teach and control them. As long as students do not value the classroom, the teacher, and the activities, poor learning and inappropriate behavior are likely outcomes. This increasingly can lead school staff to push, prod, and punish. Such a cycle results in the whole enterprise of schooling taking on a negative tone for students and staff and tends to work against the effective use of RTI strategies.

The view of structure as social control is particularly prevalent in responding to student misbehavior. In such cases, it is common for observers to say that youngsters need "more structure." Sometimes the phrase used is "clearer limits and consequences," but the idea is the same. Youngsters are seen as "out of control," and the solution is seen as applying more external controls.

Obviously, it is not possible to facilitate the learning of youngsters who are out of control. Also obvious is the reality that some procedures used to control behavior interfere with efforts to facilitate learning. A teacher cannot teach youngsters sent out of the classroom or suspended from school. And students may be less receptive to the teacher upon returning to class.

Structure in not about control per se; it is about personalized support and guidance

In general, efforts to use external means to control behavior (e.g., isolating students in a "time out" situation, sending them for discipline) are incompatible with developing working relationships that facilitate the effective use of RTI strategies. Using the term *structure* to describe extreme efforts to control behavior fails to recognize that the objective is to facilitate learning and performance, not just control behavior.

Good teaching involves a definition of structure that goes well beyond how much control a teacher has over students. Structure must be viewed as *the type of support, guidance, and direction provided the learner, and encompasses all efforts to clarify essential information – including communication of limits as necessary*. Structure can be *personalized* by varying it to match learners' current motivation and capabilities with respect to specific tasks and circumstances.

Good support and guidance in the classroom allow for active interactions between students and their environment, and these interactions are meant to lead to a relatively stable, positive, ongoing working relationships. How positive relationships are depends on how learners perceive the communications, support, guidance, direction, and limit setting. Negative perceptions can be expected to generate avoidance behavior and poor working relationships.

When a continuum of structure is made available and students are able to indicate their preferences, the total environment appears less confining. The main point of personalizing structure is to provide a high level of support and guidance for students when they need it and to avoid creating a classroom climate that is experienced by students as tight and controlling. Such an approach is a great aid in establishing the type of positive working relationships necessary for effective teaching and use of RTI strategies and also provides a basis for turning big classes into smaller units.

Figuring out the best way to provide personalized structure is one of the most important problems a teacher faces in building working

relationships with students. The problem is how to make the structure neither too controlling nor too permissive. Good schools do not want to create an authoritarian atmosphere, and no one working at a school wants to be pushed around. Most school staff find that a positive working relationship requires mutual respect; a warm working relationship requires mutual caring and understanding.

It is clear that when students misbehave, staff must respond immediately – but the emphasis needs to be on enhancing personalized structure rather than simply on punishment. Yes, students will go beyond allowable limits and must experience some logical and reasonable consequences. At the same time, simply reemphasizing limits (e.g., the rules) and enforcing them often is counterproductive. Misbehavior must be handled in ways that do not increase student disengagement with school learning.

Even better are strategies that enhance engagement by responding in a positive and matter-of-fact way. This involves responding with support, guidance, and direction that keeps a student focused on the learning activities. As discussed in Unit I, volunteers, aides, and student support staff can be used to positively engage disruptive students at the first sign of problems. Then, as soon as feasible, offending students can be encouraged to dialogue about *why* the misbehavior occurred and what needs to be done to prevent future occurrences (including decisions about consequences now and in the future). The message is: *We all make mistakes at times; we just need to find a way to make things better.* The tone is: *We can still respect and like each other and work together after we do a bit of problem solving.*

With respect to staff-student communication in general, it is important not only to keep students informed but also to interact in ways that consistently convey a sense of appropriate and genuine warmth, interest, concern, and respect. The intent is to help students "know their own minds," make their own decisions, and at the same time feel that others like and care about them.

A personalized approach encourages students to take as much responsibility as they can for identifying the types and degree of structure they require. Some request a great amount of support and guidance; others prefer to work autonomously. Some like lots of help on certain tasks but want to be left alone at other times. Many activities can be pursued without help, and should be, so that students learn how to attain and maintain independence. Other tasks require considerable help if learning is to occur.

Although teachers currently are the primary source of support and guidance in classrooms, new directions for student support call for student and learning support staff to be an integral part of a classroom team. Such personnel would be invaluable in training aides, other students, and volunteers in providing special support and guidance so that classroom structure can be varied to meet learners' needs.

Keeping the Focus on Effectiveness

Based in part on school effectiveness research, there is growing consensus about what constitutes good schools and classrooms. Guides 8 and 9 offer syntheses that encapsulate prevailing thinking.

Ultimately, given our society's commitment to equity, fairness, and justice, school improvement means doing the best at every school for *all* students. For school staff, equity, fairness, and justice start with designing instruction in ways that account for a wide range of individual differences and circumstances. But, the work can't stop there if all students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Teachers and student support staff must work together to design all facets of classrooms and what goes on schoolwide with a view to accommodating and assisting all students and especially those who are not motivationally ready and able to profit from instructional improvements. Broadly conceived and implemented, response to intervention strategies can play a catalytic role in developing the type of school improvements that can ensure equity of opportunity.

A Note About Identifying LD and ADHD

Beyond having potential for preventing and correcting a full range of learning and behavior problems, the personalized, sequential, and hierarchical approach outlined in this unit is seen as having promise for identifying different types of learning and behavior problems and for detecting errors in diagnosis.

For example, when only personalized instruction is needed to correct a learning and/or behavior problem, it seems reasonable to suggest that the individual does not have a learning *disability* or ADHD. At the same time, when a highly mobilized individual still has extreme difficulty in learning, the hypothesis that the person has a disability seems safer. Thus, we suggest that personalization is a necessary first step in facilitating valid identification of different types of learning and behavior problems. We now turn to the second step, providing special assistance.

Guide 8

A Synthesis of Principles/Guidelines Underlying Good Schools and Teaching*

The following are widely advocated guidelines that provide a sense of the philosophy for school efforts to address barriers to development and learning and promote healthy development. This synthesis is organized around concerns for (1) stakeholders, (2) the teaching process, and (3) school and classroom climate.

(1) With respect to *stakeholders*, good schools and good teaching

- employ a critical mass of high quality leadership and line staff who believe in what they are doing, value the search for understanding, see errors as valuable sources of learning, and pursue continuing education and self-renewal,
- involve all staff and a wide range of other competent, energetic, committed and responsible stakeholders in planning, implementation, evaluation, and ongoing renewal,
- identify staff who are not performing well and provide personalized capacity building opportunities, support, or other corrective remedies.

(2) With respect to the *teaching process*, good schools and good teaching use the strengths and vital resources of all stakeholders to

- ensure the same high quality for all students,
- formulate and effectively communicate goals, standards, and quality indicators for cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development,
- facilitate continuous cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development and learning using procedures that promote active learning in- and out-of-school,
- ensure use of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches (e.g., approaches that are extensive and intensive enough to ensure that students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and develop in healthy ways),
- make learning accessible to all students (including those at greatest risk and hardest-to-reach) through development of a full continuum of learning supports (i.e., an enabling component),
- tailor processes so they are a good fit in terms of both motivation and capability and are no more intrusive and disruptive than is necessary for meeting needs and accounting for distinctive needs, resources, and other forms of diversity,
- deal with students holistically and developmentally, as individuals and as part of a family, neighborhood, and community,
- tailor appropriate measures for improving practices and for purposes of accountability.

(3) With respect to school and classroom *climate*, good schools and good teaching

- delineate the rights and obligations of all stakeholders,
- are guided by a commitment to social justice (equity) and to creating a sense of community,
- ensure staff, students, family members, and all other stakeholders have the time, training, skills, and institutional and collegial support necessary to create an accepting and safe environment and build relationships of mutual trust, respect, equality, and appropriate risk-taking.

And, in general, good schools and good teaching are experienced by all stakeholders as user friendly, flexibly implemented, and responsive.

*Synthesized from many sources including the vast research literature on good schools and good teaching; these sources overlap, but are not as restricted in their focus as the literature on effective schools and classrooms – see next Guide.

Guide 9

A Synthesis of Characteristics of Effective Schools and Classrooms that Account for *All* Learners*

Effective Schools

- Commitment to shared vision of equality
  >High expectations for student learning
  >Emphasis on academic work that is meaningful to the student

- Daily implementation of effective processes
  >Strong administrative leadership
  >Alignment of resources to reach goals
  >Professional development tied to goals
  >Discipline and school order
  >A sense of teamwork in the school
  >Teacher participation in decision making
  >Effective parental outreach and involvement

- Monitoring student progress through measured indicators of achievement
  >Setting local standards
  >Use of national standards
  >Use of data for continuous improvement of school climate and curricula

- Optimizing school size through limited enrollment, creation of small schools within big schools (e.g., academies, magnet programs), and other ways of grouping students and staff

- Strong involvement with the community and with surrounding family of schools
  >Students, families, and community are developed into a learning community
  >Programs address transitions between grades, school, school-to-career, and higher education

*Synthesized from many sources including the vast research literature on effective schools and classrooms.

Effective Classrooms

- Positive classroom social climate that
  >personalizes contacts and supports in ways that build trust over time and meets learners where they are
  >offers accommodation so all students have an equal opportunity to learn
  >adjusts class size and groupings to optimize learning
  >engages students through dialogue and decision making and seizing "teachable moments"
  >incorporates parents in multiple ways
  >addresses social-emotional development

- Designing and implementing quality instructional experiences that
  >involve students in decision making
  >contextualize and make learning authentic, including use of real life situations and mentors
  >are appropriately cognitively complex and challenging
  >enhance language/literacy
  >foster joint student products
  >extend the time students engage in learning through designing motivated practice
  >ensure students learn how to learn and are prepared for lifelong learning
  >ensure use of prereferral intervention strategies
  >use a mix of methods and advanced technology to enhance learning

- Instruction is modified to meet students' needs based on ongoing assessments using
  >measures of multiple dimensions of impact
  >authentic assessment tools
  >students' input based on their self-evaluations

- Teachers collaborate and are supported with
  >personalized inservice, consultation, mentoring, grade level teaming
  >special resources who are available to come into the classroom to ensure students with special needs are accommodated appropriately

B. Response to Intervention: An Early After Onset Practice

Most students do not have learning and behavior problems.

Children with significant disabilities usually are identified even prior to kindergarten.

Others who manifest learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems are identified soon after they begin school.

Some students make a reasonable start at school, but it is not long before their problems become evident.

For many years, the impetus for identifying problems was so that referrals could be made for special assistance. This led to increasing numbers of referrals, many of which led to assessment for special education.

As it became evident that too many students were being inappropriately diagnosed, efforts were made to ensure that interventions and appropriate accommodations were used to resolve the problems within the regular classroom. The processes were commonly referred to *prereferral interventions* (see Guide 10) and accommodations (see Guide 11). In the last reauthorization of the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), concern for reducing referrals and improving intervention effectiveness was codified in terms of "Response to Intervention" and a commitment to "Early Intervening." Implemented within a comprehensive framework for student and learning supports, these strategies have the potential to enable teachers and other concerned parties to respond early after the onset of problems.

About Early Intervening Services

IDEA Regulations call for a district to use up to 15 percent of the amount it receives each year under Part B of IDEA to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services, which may include interagency financing structures, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support and accommodations to succeed in a general education environment.

Guide 10

Prereferral Intervening

School violence, poor academic performance, misbehavior in class -- with increasing numbers of students identified as troubled or in trouble, schools must design systems for intervening prior to referral for special assistance. Otherwise, the system will grind to a halt. What has been called a *prereferral intervention* process delineates steps and strategies to guide teachers in identifying the sources of learning and behavior problems (student, teacher, curriculum, environment, etc.) and how to resolve them within the regular classroom.

The following is one example of such a process:

(1) Formulate an initial description of the problem.

(2) Get the youngster's view of what's wrong and, as feasible, explore the problem with the family.

As every teacher knows, the causes of learning, behavior, and emotional problems are hard to analyze. What looks like a learning disability or an attentional problem may be emotionally-based. Misbehavior often arises in reaction to learning difficulties. What appears as a school problem may be the result of problems at home. The following are some things to consider in seeking more information about what may be causing a youngster's problem.

(a) Through enhanced personal contacts, build a positive working relationship with the youngster and family.

(b) Focus first on assets (e.g. positive attributes, outside interests, hobbies, what the youngster likes at school and in class).

(c) Ask about what the youngster doesn't like at school.

(d) Explore the reasons for "dislikes" (e.g., Are assignments seen as too hard? as uninteresting? Is the youngster embarrassed because others will think s/he does not have the ability to do assignments? Is the youngster picked on? rejected? alienated?)

(e) Explore other possible causal factors.

(f) Explore what the youngster and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, friend, etc.).

(g) Discuss some new things the youngster and those in the home would be *willing* to try to make the situation better.

(cont.)

Prereferral Intervening (Guide 10 cont.)

(3) Try new strategies in the classroom -- based on the best information about what is causing the problem.

Some Things to Try

- Make changes to (a) improve the match between a youngster's program and his/her interests and capabilities and (b) try to find ways for her/him to have a special, positive status in class, at the school, and in the community. Talk and work with other staff in developing ideas along these lines.

- Add resources for extra support (aide, volunteers, peer tutors) to help the youngster's efforts to learn and perform. Create time to interact and relate with the youngster as an individual.

- Discuss with the youngster (and those in the home) why the problems are occurring.

- Specifically focus on exploring matters with the youngster that will suggest ways to enhance positive motivation.

- Change aspects of the program (e.g.,materials, environment) to provide a better match with his/her interests and skills.

- Provide enrichment options (in and out of class).

- Use resources such as volunteers, aides, and peers to enhance the youngster's social support network.

- Specifically focus on exploring ways those in the home can enhance their problem-solving efforts.

- If necessary include other staff (e.g., counselor, principal) in a special discussion with the youngster exploring reasons for the problem and ways to enhance positive involvement at school and in class.

(4) If the new strategies don't work, *talk to others* at school to learn about approaches they find helpful (e.g., reach out for support/mentoring/coaching, participate with others in clusters and teams, observe how others teach in ways that effectively address differences in motivation and capability, request additional staff development on working with such youngsters).

(5) If necessary, use the *school's referral processes* to ask for additional support services.

(6) Work with referral resources to *coordinate your efforts* with theirs for classroom success.

Guide **11**

Accommodations

If students seem easily distracted, the following might be used:

- identify any specific environmental factors that distract students and make appropriate environmental changes
- have students work with a group that is highly task-focused
- let students work in a study carrel or in a space that is “private” and uncluttered
- designate a volunteer to help whenever students becomes distracted and/or start to misbehave, and if necessary, to help them make transitions
- allow for frequent "breaks"
- interact with students in ways that will minimize confusion and distractions (e.g., keep conversations relatively short; talk quietly and slowly; use concrete terms; express warmth and nurturance)

If students need more support and guidance, the following might be used:

- develop and provide sets of specific prompts, multisensory cues, steps, etc. using oral,written, and perhaps pictorial and color-coded guides as organizational aids related to specific learning activities, materials, and daily schedules
- ensure someone checks with students frequently throughout an activity to provide additional support and guidance in concrete ways (e.g., model, demonstrate, coach)
- support student efforts related to self-monitoring and self-evaluation and provide nurturing feedback keyed to student progress and next steps

If students have difficulty finishing tasks as scheduled, try the following:

- modify the length and time demands of assignments and tests
- modify the nature of the process and products (e.g., allow use of technological tools and allow for oral, audio-visual, arts and crafts, graphic, and computer generated products)

Accommodations (Guide 11 cont.)

504 Accommodation Checklist

Various organizations concerned with special populations circulate lists of 504 accommodations. The following is one that was downloaded from website of a group concerned with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (see http://www.come-over.to/FAS/IDEA504.htm).

Physical Arrangement of Room

- seating student near the teacher
- seating student near a positive role model
- standing near student when giving directions/presenting lessons
- avoiding distracting stimuli (air conditioner, high traffic area)
- increasing distance between desks

Lesson Presentation

- pairing students to check work
- writing key points on the board
- providing peer tutoring
- providing visual aids, large print, films
- providing peer notetaker
- making sure directions are understood
- including a variety of activities during each lesson
- repeating directions to student after they are given to the class: then have him/her repeat and explain directions to teacher
- providing written outline
- allowing student to tape record lessons
- having child review key points orally
- teaching through multi-sensory modes, visual, auditory, kinestetics, olfactory
- using computer-assisted instruction
- accompany oral directions with written directions for child to refer to blackboard or paper
- provide model to help students, post the model, refer to it often
- provide cross age peer tutoring
- to assist the student in finding the main idea underlying, highlighting, cue cards, etc.
- breaking longer presentations into shorter segments

Assignments/worksheets

- giving extra time to complete tasks
- simplifying complex directions
- handing worksheets out one at a time
- reducing the reading level of the assignments
- requiring fewer correct responses to achieve grade (quality vs. quantity)
- allowing student to tape record assignments/homework
- providing a structured routine in written form
- providing study skills training/learning strategies
- giving frequent short quizzes and avoiding long tests
- shortening assignments; breaking work into smaller segments
- allowing typewritten or computer printed assignments prepared by the student or dictated by the student and recorded by someone else if needed.
- using self-monitoring devices
- reducing homework assignments
- not grading handwriting
- student not be allowed to use cursive or manuscript writing
- reversals and transpositions of letters and numbers should not be marked wrong, reversals or transpositions should be pointed out for corrections
- do not require lengthy outside reading assignments
- teacher monitor students self-paced assignments (daily, weekly, bi-weekly)
- arrangements for homework assignments to reach home with clear, concise directions
- recognize and give credit for student's oral participation in class

Test Taking

- allowing open book exams
- giving exam orally
- giving take home tests
- using more objective items (fewer essay responses)
- allowing student to give test answers on tape recorder
- giving frequent short quizzes, not long exams
- allowing extra time for exam
- reading test item to student
- avoid placing student under pressure of time or competition

Organization

- providing peer assistance with organizational skills
- assigning volunteer homework buddy
- allowing student to have an extra set of books at home
- sending daily/weekly progress reports home
- developing a reward system for in-schoolwork and homework completion
- providing student with a homework assignment notebook

Behaviors

- use of timers to facilitate task completion
- structure transitional and unstructured times (recess, hallways, lunchroom, locker room, library, assembly, field trips, etc.)
- praising specific behaviors
- using self-monitoring strategies
- giving extra privileges and rewards
- keeping classroom rules simple and clear
- making "prudent use" of negative consequences
- allowing for short breaks between assignments
- cueing student to stay on task (nonverbal signal)
- marking student's correct answers, not his mistakes
- implementing a classroom behavior management system
- allowing student time out of seat to run errands, etc.
- ignoring inappropriate behaviors not drastically outside classroom limits
- allowing legitimate movement
- contracting with the student
- increasing the immediacy of rewards
- implementing time-out procedures

Adding Learning Options and Broadening Accommodations

Classroom programs must offer variety in order to mesh with student interests. And, considerable variety seems necessary for some students – especially those with low motivation for or negative attitudes about school. For such individuals, few currently available options may be appealing. How much greater the range of options must be depends primarily on the strength of their avoidance tendencies. Determining what will engage them is a major teaching challenge and an immediate focus for special interventions.

Besides adding options, it is imperative to accommodate a wider range of behavior than usually is tolerated. For example, environments can be changed to better account for youngsters who are very active and/or distractable. For some students, some behavioral expectations and standards initially must be relaxed. This usually involves widening limits for a time so that certain behaviors of a given student will not be designated as infringing the rules.

> *Accommodative strategies are intended to affect students' motivation by involving them in activities they value and believe are attainable with appropriate effort.*

Remember that, in general, the initial focus in working with a student with low motivation or negative attitudes is on ensuring interventions are perceived by the student as a good fit for learning at school. This requires dialoguing with them and facilitating their efforts to

- identify a range of learning options they perceive as of considerable personal value and as attainable with an appropriate amount of effort (including, as necessary, alternatives to established curriculum content and processes);
- make personal and active decisions.

A Note about Learner Decision Making

Key to the success of interventions is the involvement of students in making decisions from valued options. Fostering student perceptions of real choice (e.g., being in control of one's destiny, being self-determining) can help counter perceptions of coercion and control. Shifting such perceptions can reduce reactance and enhance engagement in classroom learning.

It is worth reiterating an earlier point here: Before some students will decide to participate in a proactive way, they have to perceive the learning environment as positively different – and quite a bit so – from the one in which they had so much trouble. In specific cases, this may mean *temporarily* putting aside established options and standards and focusing on the most fundamental choice: *Do they want to participate or not?*

Steps to Guide the Process

The following is one example of a set of problem solving steps and tasks designed to guide a response to intervention process:

(1) Formulate an initial description of the problem. Get youngsters' views of what's wrong and, as feasible, explore the problem with the family. As every teacher knows, the causes of learning, behavior, and emotional problems are hard to analyze. What looks like a learning disability or an attentional problem may be emotionally-based. Misbehavior often arises in reaction to learning difficulties. What appears as a school problem may be the result of problems at home.

The following can help school staff find out more about the causes of youngsters' problems and what interventions to try.

- Through enhanced personal contacts, build a positive working relationship with youngsters and their families.
- Focus first on assets (e.g. positive attributes, outside interests, hobbies, what youngsters like at school and in class).
- Ask about what youngsters don't like at school.
- Explore the reasons for "dislikes" (e.g., Are assignments seen as too hard? as uninteresting? Are youngsters embarrassed because others will think they don't have the ability to do assignments? Are youngsters picked on? rejected? alienated?)
- Clarify other likely causal factors.
- Explore what youngsters and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, friend, etc.).
- Discuss some new things youngsters and those in the home would be *willing* to try to make the situation better.

(2) Try new strategies in the classroom – based on what has been discovered so far. Enhance student engagement through (a) an emphasis on learning and enrichment options that students indicate they want to and can pursue and (b) a temporary deemphasis on areas that are not of high interest.

(3) Related to the above, it may be important to find ways for students to have special, positive status in class and/or in others arenas around the school/community. (This helps counter a negative image students may have created among peers and negative feelings about themselves which, in turn, helps work against students' tendencies to pursue negative behaviors.)

(4) Enhance use of aides, volunteers, peer tutors/coaches, mentors, those in the home, etc. not only to help support student efforts to learn and perform, but to enhance students' social support networks.

(5) If the new strategies don't work, it is time to reach out for support/mentoring/coaching and to request additional staff development for working with such youngsters.

(6) After trying all the above, add some tutoring specifically designed to enhance student engagement in learning and to facilitate learning of specific academic and social skills that still appear to be interfering with effective classroom performance and learning.

Only after all this is done and has not worked is it time to use the school's referral processes to ask for additional support services. As such services are added, of course they must be coordinated with what is going on in the classroom, school-wide, and at home.

Properly conceived and implemented, response to intervention as an early after onset approach is expected to improve the learning opportunities for many students and reduce the number who are *inappropriately* diagnosed with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders, thereby minimizing identification of students who don't need expensive special education. (It is important to emphasize that the tactic involves specific and well-monitored plans for "identified" students and is not to be used as a delaying tactic related to getting students the interventions they need.)

As noted, response to intervention overlaps ideas about prereferral interventions and accommodations but is intended to be more systematically implemented with particular attention to enhancing teacher capability for carrying out "well-designed and well-implemented early intervention" to address a student's problems in the regular classroom. In the context of a classroom, this means pursuing response to intervention in a sequential and hierarchical manner (again see Guide 6).

C. Response to Intervention and Specialized Assistance

As already stressed, before providing special assistance on a person-by-person basis, the logical first step is to personalize instruction and enhance enrichment opportunities. By improving the fit between what goes on in the classroom and individual differences in motivation and capability, most students should be mobilized to try harder.

A few, however, may continue to have significant learning and behavior problems (e.g., those whose difficulties are the result of interfering internal factors such as specific vulnerabilities or a major disability). As noted, this is when special assistance should kick in – but only for as long as necessary.

Special assistance is an essential aspect of revamping classroom systems to address the needs of *all* learners. The assistance often is just an extension of general strategies; sometimes, however, more specialized interventions are needed. In either case, the process objectives are the same – to improve the match between the intervention and a learner's motivation and capabilities.

Special assistance is provided in the classroom and in some instances outside the classroom. Any student who is not learning as well as *most* others in the classroom is a candidate for special assistance. Using effective special assistance is fundamental to reducing misbehavior, suspensions, expulsions, grade retention, referrals to special education, and dropouts.

As with personalization, special assistance must systematically and fully focus on motivation. This involves (a) assessing student motivation for the assistance, (b) overcoming negative attitudes, (c) enhancing motivational readiness, (d) maintaining motivation throughout the learning process, and (e) nurturing the type of intrinsic motivation that results in ongoing engagement. Attending to these matters is key to maximizing maintenance, generalization, and expansion of learning. Ignoring such matters means intervening with passive (and often hostile) learners. When motivation considerations are given short shrift, assessments and diagnoses are confounded, and intervention may just as readily exacerbate as correct students problems.

All who are available to work with the youngster in the classroom (e.g., teachers, aides, volunteers, resource teachers, student support staff) must take the time to develop an understanding of students who are not learning well. This encompasses an appreciation of strengths as well as weaknesses (including missing prerequisites and interfering behaviors and attitudes, limitations, likes, dislikes).

Part of the information comes from analyses of responses to intervention. However, for such information to be valid, extensive efforts must be made to ensure students are mobilized and interventions are appropriately designed to account for developmental differences and vulnerabilities. Accomplishing all this requires access to, control over, and willingness to use a wide range of options and accommodations. And, it may be necessary to reduce levels of abstraction, intensify the way stimuli are presented and acted upon, and increase the amount and consistency of guidance and support.

When special assistance is indicated, the teacher may focus on any of the three levels outlined in Guide 6. However, as noted, the sequence and level differ depending on whether students have minor and occasional problems or have severe and pervasive problems.

Practices at each level:

For learners with minor or occasional problems, the initial focus is on directly facilitating learning related to immediate tasks and interests and on expanding the range of interests. Practices involve (1) continued adaptation of methods to match and enhance levels of motivation and development and (2) reteaching specific skills and knowledge when students have difficulty.

If problems continue, the focus shifts to assessment and development of missing prerequisites (Level B) needed for functioning at the higher level. Again, procedures are adapted to improve the match, and reteaching is used when the learner has difficulty. If missing prerequisites are successfully developed, the focus returns to observable factors (Level A).

The intent in proceeding in this sequential and hierarchical way is to use the simplest and most direct approaches first whenever problems appear minor. However, if available data indicate the presence of severe and pervasive motivation or developmental problems, instruction for missing prerequisites (Level B) is begun immediately.

If help in learning missing prerequisites (Level B) is not effective, the focus shifts to underlying interfering factors (Level C). Only at this level is the emphasis on factors that may interfere with functioning (e.g., incompatible behaviors and interests, dysfunctional learning mechanisms).

In pursuing underlying interfering factors (Level C), there is increased and intensified use of a wide range of instructional techniques. As soon as feasible, the focus shifts back to prerequisites (Level B) and then on to current tasks and interests (Level A). The special strategies are used whenever and as long as necessary.

(*Note: Some references related to providing special assistance in the classroom are included in the appended resource list.*)

Clearly, a wide range of external and internal barriers to learning and teaching pose pervasive and entrenched challenges to educators across the country, particularly in chronically low performing schools. Failure to directly address such barriers ensures that (a) too many children and youth will continue to struggle in school, and (b) teachers will continue to divert precious instructional time to dealing with behavior and other problems that can interfere with classroom engagement for all students.

The sequential approach outlined above addresses the core difficulty of mobilizing unmotivated students (and particularly those who have become actively disengaged from classroom instruction). It also provides a way to enhance the assessment of whether more intensive and perhaps specialized assistance (and perhaps diagnosis) is required. In the absence of such a sequential approach, assessment of whether a student has a true disability or disorder, such as LD or ADHD, often is compromised.

Moreover, it should be evident that response to intervention strategies must encompass a wide range of classroom and schoolwide interventions designed to systemically enable learning and teaching by addressing interfering factors. We discuss this in terms of a comprehensive system of student and learning supports in Unit III.

Unit II – Reflection & Stimulus for Discussion

Key Insights about:
>*Personalized Instruction*

>*Special Assistance: Sequence and Hierarchy*

Based on what you learned so far:

Define (and discuss) what the term
(a) *personalized instruction means and*
outline the key features of a personalized classroom;
(b) *special assistance means and*
outline the key features of pursuing such an approach in and out of the classroom.

If there is an opportunity for group discussion, you may find the following group process guidelines helpful:

- Start by identifying someone who will facilitate the group interchange
- Take a few minutes to make a few individual notes on a worksheet
- Be sure all major points are compiled for sharing with other groups.
- Ask someone else to watch the time so that the group doesn't bog down.

Unit II – Activity

- Make a list of what you would want to have in a classroom so that students would find it an appealing place to learn.
- Make another list of the types of activities, materials, resources, personnel you would want to have available for students to engage them in learning at school.
- Read the following and then observe a classroom that is for students who need special assistance. Note the degree to which the points discussed are borne out.

A tendency has been noted in some quarter for curriculum to be redefined and constricted once an individual is identified as needing special assistance For example, remedial programs may focus primarily on a limited range of factors related to basic skills and pay relatively little attention to other opportunities that enhance learning. Always working on one's problems and trying to catch up can be a grueling experience. One has to be tremendously motivated (and perhaps a bit masochistic) to keep working on fundamentals and problem areas day in and day out.

Limiting the focus to special assistance presumes the learner cannot learn when motivated to do so and risks making the whole curriculum rather deadening. Broadening the focus to an increased range of developmental tasks and enrichment activities not only can balance the picture a bit, but also may prove to be the key to finding better ways to help an individual overcome her or his problems. A comprehensive curriculum also is essential to minimize the degree to which students are delayed in accomplishing major developmental tasks that are not affected by factors interfering with learning.

Even among those with pervasive and severe problems, there are likely to be some areas in which their learning problems are not severely handicapping. These are areas in which learning can proceed without special assistance or, at least, in which the focus can be on other levels. In such cases, an individual would be pursuing learning at several levels at once.

Unit III: Pursuing Response to Intervention as One Strategy in a Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

A. A Continuum of Intervention: Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid

B. Six Arenas of Learning Supports Intervention

C. Continuum + Content = An Enabling Component

D. Where Does RTI and PBIS Fit In

Study and Discussion Questions

(1) What is a comprehensive system of student and learning supports?

(2) How does response to intervention fit into a comprehensive system of student and learning supports?

(3) Why should teachers be involved in developing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports?

Unit III: Pursuing Response to Intervention as One Strategy in a Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

If response to intervention is pursued simplistically as a matter of providing more and better instruction, it is unlikely to be effective for a great many students. Instruction must be supported by a broad-range of student and learning supports focusing on factors interfering with good instruction and productive learning.

If response to intervention is understood as one strategy in a comprehensive system of classroom and school-wide learning supports, schools not only can more effectively address problems early after onset, but can prevent many from occurring. Thus, referrals for special education assessment decrease and come only after a broad-range of student and learning supports prove inadequate in enabling learning.

From this perspective, the primary context for response to intervention is a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system to reduce learning, behavior, and emotional problems, promote social/emotional development, and effectively re-engage students in classroom learning. Such a system should not only reduce the number of students inappropriately referred for special education or specialized services, but also should enhance attendance, reduce misbehavior, close the achievement gap, and increase graduation rates.

As illustrated in Guide 12, school improvement must encompass an enabling/learning supports component if it is to effectively address interfering factors and re-engage disconnected students. Work related to pioneering initiatives around the country is providing realistic and cost-effective guidance for fully integrating the component into school improvement policy and practice. The aim is to coalesce and enhance student and learning supports in ways that can enable all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school. The work is especially critical where large numbers of students are affected and at any school that is not yet paying adequate attention to equity and diversity concerns.

As indicated in Guide 12, an enabling component involves first addressing interfering factors and then (re)engaging students in classroom instruction. The reality is that interventions that do not stress engaging students fully in classroom learning generally are insufficient in sustaining, over time, student involvement, good behavior, and effective learning at school.

In essence, beginning in the classroom with differentiated classroom practices and by ensuring school-wide learning supports, an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

- addresses barriers through a broader view of "basics" and through effective accommodation of individual differences and disabilities
- enhances the focus on motivational considerations with a special emphasis on intrinsic motivation as it relates to individual readiness and ongoing involvement and with the intent of fostering intrinsic motivation as a basic outcome
- adds remediation, treatment, and rehabilitation as necessary, but only as necessary.

Guide 12

An Enabling or Learning Supports Component to Address Barriers and Re-engage Students in Classroom Instruction

Range of Learners
(based on their response to academic instruction at any given point in time)

On Track
Motivationally ready & able

Moderate Needs
Not very motivated;

Lacking prerequisite knowledge & skills;

Different learning rates, & styles;

Minor vulnerabilities.

High Needs
Avoidant;

Very deficient in current capabilities;

Has a disability;

Major health problems

No barriers

Barriers** to learning, development, and teaching

Enabling Component*

(1) Addressing interfering factors

(2) Re-engaging students in classroom instruction

Enhancing the Focus on the Whole Child

Instructional Component

Classroom Teaching + Enrichment Activity

High Standards

Desired Outcomes for All Students

(1) Academic achievement

(2) Social-emotional well-being

(3) Successful postsecondary transition

High Expectations and Accountability

*In some places, an Enabling Component is called a Learning Supports Component. Whatever it is called, the component is to be developed as a comprehensive system of learning supports at the school site.

****Examples of Risk-Producing Conditions that Can be Barriers to Learning**

Environmental Conditions			Person Factors
Neighborhood	***Family***	***School and Peers***	***Individual***
>extreme economic deprivation	>chronic poverty	>poor quality school	>medical problems
>community disorganization, including high levels of mobility & unemployment	>domestic conflict/ disruptions/violence	>negative encounters with teachers	>low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay
>violence, drugs, crime, etc.	>parent/sibling substance abuse or mental illness	>negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models	>psychophysiological problems
>minority and/or immigrant isolation	>modeling problem behavior	>many disengaged students	>difficult temperament & adjustment problems
>Lack of positive youth development opportunities	>abusive caretaking		>inadequate nutrition and health care
	>inadequate provision for quality child care		

Note: A reciprocal determinist view of behavior recognizes the interplay of environment and person variables with negative environmental conditions exacerbating person factors.

A. A Continuum of Intervention: Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid

A comprehensive system of student and learning supports involves more than a multi-level or multi-tiered continuum of interventions

Current conceptualizations of response to intervention embrace a continuum of interventions and refer to the continuum as a multi-level or multi-tiered model. Few will argue against the notion that conceptualizing levels of intervention is a good starting point for framing the nature and scope of interventions needed to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. However, as our center has stressed over the years, the levels of the continuum need to be conceptualized in terms of what they aim to do and as interrelated and overlapping intervention subsystems focused on (1) promoting development and preventing problems, (2) responding to problems as early-after-onset as feasible, and (3) treating severe, pervasive, and chronic problems. Moreover, each subsystem is seen as needing to link school and community interventions in ways that integrate, coordinate, and weave resources together. As graphically illustrated in Guide 13, (a) each level represents a subsystem, (b) the three subsystems overlap, and (c) all three require integration into an overall system that encompasses school and community resources.

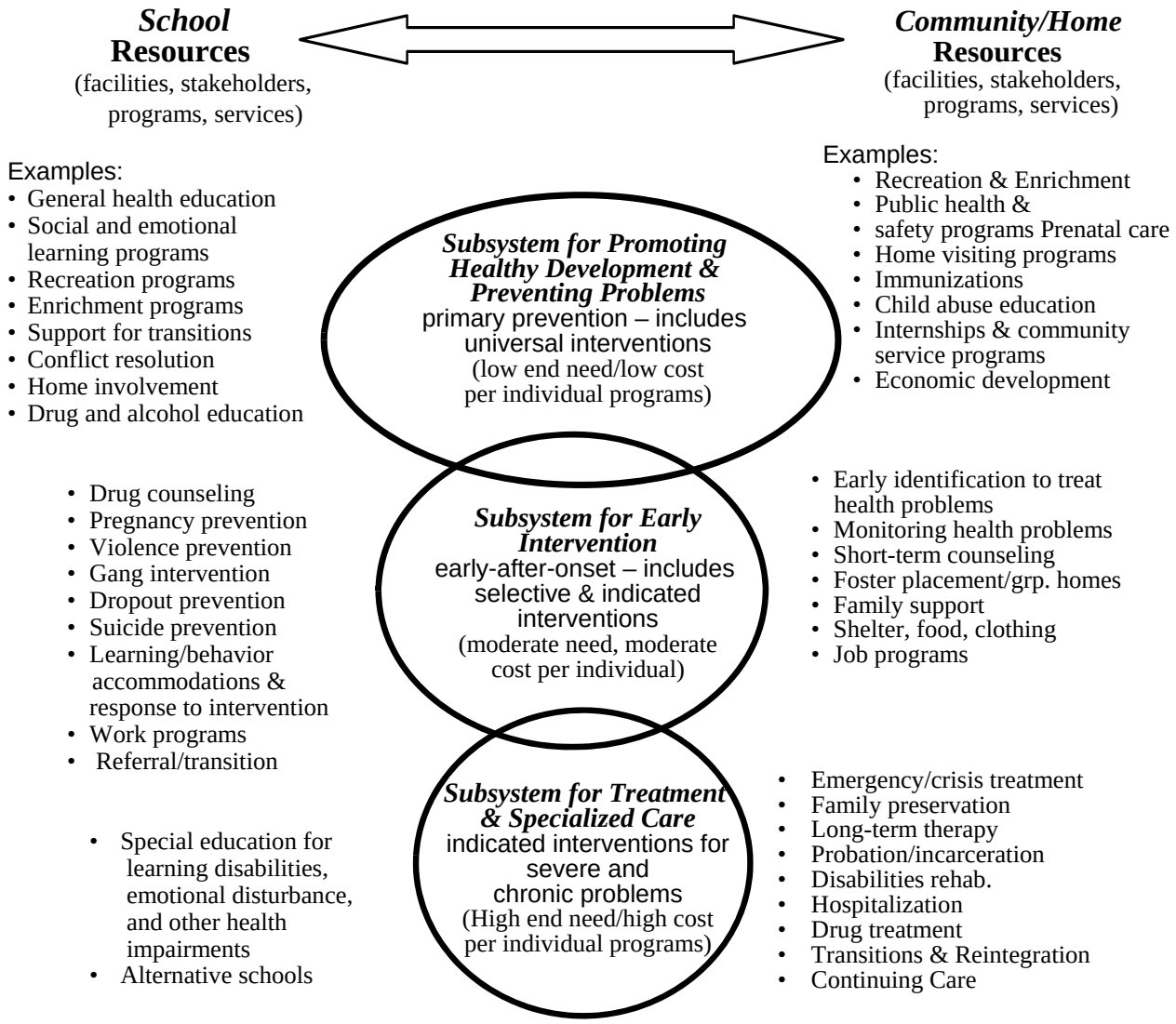
A comprehensive system of student and learning supports, however, involves more than a continuum of interventions. There is the pressing matter of coalescing the laundry list of fragmented programs and services designed to promote healthy development and address barriers to learning and teaching. This requires a formulation to guide organizing programs and services into a circumscribed set of arenas reflecting the content purpose of the activity.

Why does history keep repeating itself?

Because we weren't listening the first time!

Guide 13

A Full Continuum of Interconnected Intervention Subsystems*



Systematic school-community-home collaboration is essential to establish cohesive, seamless intervention on a daily basis and overtime within and among each subsystem. Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services.

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*Various venues, concepts, and initiatives permeate this continuum of intervention *systems.* For example, venues such as day care and preschools, concepts such as social and emotional learning and development, and initiatives such as positive behavior support, response to intervention, and coordinated school health. Also, a considerable variety of staff are involved. Finally, *note that this illustration of an essential continuum of intervention systems differs in significant ways from the three tier pyramid that is widely referred to in education circles in discussing universal, selective, and indicated interventions* (see the Center 2011 report entitled "Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid Toward a Comprehensive Framework for Student and Learning Supports" at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/threetier.pdf).

B. Six Arenas of Learning Supports Intervention

Our work emphasizes six arenas encompassing interventions to:

- Enhance regular classroom strategies to enable learning (e.g., improving instruction for students who with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and those have become disengaged from learning at school; includes a focus on prevention, early intervening, and use of strategies such as response to intervention)
- Support transitions (i.e., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes and many other transitions)
- Increase home & school connections & engagement
- Respond to, and where feasible, prevent crises
- Increase community involvement and support (outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)
- Facilitate student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

Some version of the six basic arenas has held-up over the last decade in a variety of venues across the country.

C. Continuum + Content = An Enabling Component

The continuum and six content arenas can be formed into an intervention framework for a comprehensive system of learning supports (see Guide 14). Such a framework can guide and unify school improvement planning for developing the system. The matrix provides a unifying framework for mapping what is in place and analyzing gaps.

Overtime, this type of mapping and analyses are needed at the school level, for a family of schools (e.g.,a feeder pattern of schools), at the district level, community-wide, and at regional, state, and national levels. We have presented all this in detail elsewhere and need not do so here (e.g., see reference list). Suffice it to note that developing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports involves reworking policy (including accountability) and operational infrastructure, ensuring strong leadership and commitment, revising leader and staff job descriptions, and braiding together school and community resources.

The matrix in Guide 14 highlights the range of interventions relevant to fully pursuing response to intervention strategies. Placing response to intervention in such a context clearly will require fundamental systemic change and considerable capacity building. Of particular concern is increasing teacher and support staff capacity for implementing the Step 1 and 2 interventions described above and illustrated in Guide 6 and for playing a role in developing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching. Another concern is facilitating development of the type of collaborative classrooms and grouping strategies that have the effect of turning big classes into smaller units (see Appendix A and D).

Guide 14

A Unifying Intervention Framework to Aid Schools, Families, and Neighborhoods in Providing a Comprehensive and Cohesive System of Supports

Integrated Intervention *Subsystems*

Arenas of Intervention *Content*	Subsystems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Subsystem for Early Intervention	Subsystem for Treatment & Specialized Care
In Classrooms			
Support for Transitions			
Crisis response/prevention			
Home involvement			
Community engagement			
Student & Family Assistance			

Developmental Levels

Pre-school

Grades k-3

Grades 4-5

Grades 6-8

Grades 9-12

Post-secondary

Can you tell me what "status quo" means?

Sure. It's a fancy name for the mess we're in.

D. Where Does RTI and PBIS Fit In

A question frequently asked of our Center is: Where does some specific initiative, such as RTI and PBIS, fit into a comprehensive system of student and learning supports? With reference to the matrix in Guide 14, well-conceived approaches to RTI and PBIS fit into every cell. And, from our perspective, most such initiatives not only fit, they provide an opportunity to move forward in fully integrating a comprehensive system of supports into school improvement policy and practice.

It is necessary, however, to understand that there is considerable variability in how RTI and PBIS are currently operationalized across the country. The tendency in some places is to proceed as if more and better instruction and more positive social control related to undesired behavior is all that is needed. Clearly, good instruction and positive ways of dealing with behavior problems are necessary, but often are insufficient. From various reports, it seems clear that RTI and PBIS frequently are not conceived or implemented in ways that (1) address major barriers to learning and teaching and also (2) re-engage disconnected students in actively pursuing classroom instruction.

If RTI is treated simply as a way to provide more and better instruction and PBIS focuses only on positively addressing undesired behavior, the interventions are unlikely to be effective over the long-run for a great many students. However, if RTI and PBIS are understood as part and parcel of a comprehensive system of classroom and school-wide student and learning supports, schools will be in a better position not only to address problems effectively early after their onset, but will prevent many from occurring.

Implied in all this is that (1) staff are designated specifically to work on ensuring development of an optimal learning environment in classrooms and schoolwide, (2) classroom teachers are learning how to implement "well-designed early intervention" in the classroom, and (3) support staff are learning how to play a role, often directly in the classroom, to expand intervention strategies as necessary.

Our Center has delineated a set of seven basic steps for how to proceed in developing a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports. See:

Establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports at a school: Seven steps for principals and their staff
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf

The steps include specific ways to mobilize school stakeholder commitment and how to organize staff to rethink, design, and implement the changes over the next few years as an essential and integrated component of school improvement.

Unit III – Reflection & Stimulus for Discussion

Key Insights about: *Establishing a School-wide* Enabling *or Learning Supports Component*

Based on what you learned so far:

Identify (and discuss) what is meant by an enabling component and outline the major arenas the component encompasses.

If there is an opportunity for group discussion, you may find the following group process guidelines helpful:

- Start by identifying someone who will facilitate the group interchange
- Take a few minutes to make a few individual notes on a worksheet
- Be sure all major points are compiled for sharing with other groups.
- Ask someone else to watch the time so that the group doesn't bog down.

Unit III – Activity

- Using large sheets of paper, draw the matrix illustrated below (adapted from Guide 14) and "map" the existing programs and services at your school.
- Note which cells in the matrix are "impoverished."
- What are your conclusions about the school's approach to enabling learning by providing comprehensive learning supports?

Integrated Intervention *Subsystems*

Arenas of Intervention *Content*	Subsystems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Subsystem for Early Intervention	Subsystem for Treatment & Specialized Care
In Classrooms			
Support for Transitions			
Crisis response/prevention			
Home involvement			
Community engagement			
Student & Family Assistance			

Concluding Comments

The complex set of factors causing poor student performance call for a comprehensive and systemic set of interventions. This is particularly essential in school settings where a large proportion of the student body are not performing well. In such schools, the effectiveness of response to intervention strategies will be dependent on how well the school addresses barriers to learning and teaching.

As another stand-alone initiative, response to intervention risks becoming just one more fragmented and marginalized approach to addressing learning and teaching problems. At the same time, the interest and resources being devoted to the initiative present an opportunity to catalyze and leverage the type of systemic change that can help transform how schools go about ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Schools can use the opportunity to embed all stand-alone initiatives, such as response to intervention, positive behavioral interventions, dropout prevention programs, and so forth, into a design for developing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports. Development of such a system and fully integrating it into school improvement policy and practice enhances a school's focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. Such a system is key to promoting the well-being and intrinsic motivation for school success of all students, their families, and the school staff and is a key element in facilitating emergence of a positive school climate.

It is the response to such a comprehensive set of interventions that will provide the type of data necessary for sound decision making about how best to enable learning and reduce misdiagnoses of LD and ADHD.

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Other Resources

One easy way to access a wide range of resources for enhancing classroom and schoolwide interventions is to use our Center's Online Clearinghouse *Quick Finds*. See the Quick Find menu of topics at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm

Also see the U.S. Department of Education's *What Works Clearinghouse* – see Topics at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/topics.aspx

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>New Directions for Student and Learning Supports

See the toolkit for Rebuilding Student Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm

Appendices

A. **Volunteers as an Invaluable Resource**

B. **About School and Classroom Climate**

C. **Intrinsic Motivation and the Classroom**

D. **Turning Big Classes into Smaller Units**

E. **Self-Study Surveys**

Appendix A

Volunteers as an Invaluable Resource*

Volunteers can be a multifaceted resource in a classroom and throughout a school. For this to be the case, however, the school staff must value volunteers and learn how to recruit, train, nurture, and use them effectively. When implemented properly, school volunteer programs can enable teachers to personalize instruction, free teachers and other school personnel to meet students' needs more effectively, broaden students' experiences, strengthen school-community understanding and relations, enhance home involvement, and enrich the lives of volunteers. In the classroom, volunteers can provide just the type of extra support needed to enable staff to conference and work with students who require special assistance.

Volunteers may help students on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Group interactions are especially important in enhancing a student's cooperative interactions with peers. One-to-one work is often needed to develop a positive relationship with a particularly aggressive or withdrawn student, in re-engaging a student who has disengaged from classroom learning, and in fostering successful task completion with a student easily distracted by peers. Volunteers can help enhance a student's motivation and skills and, at the very least, can help counter negative effects that arise when a student has difficulty adjusting to school. Working under the direction of the teacher and student support staff, they can be especially helpful in establishing a supportive relationship with students who are having trouble adjusting to school.

The Many Roles for Volunteers in the Classroom and Throughout the School

I. Welcoming and Social Support
- A. In the Front Office
  1. Greeting and welcoming
  2. Providing information to those who come to the front desk
  3. Escorting guests, new students/families to destinations on the campus
  4. Orienting newcomers
- B. Staffing a Welcoming Club
  1. Connecting newly arrived parents with peer buddies
  2. Helping develop orientation and other information resources for newcomers
  3. Helping establish newcomer support groups

II. Working with Designated Students in the Classroom
- A. Helping to orient new students
- B. Engaging disinterested, distracted, and distracting students
- C. Providing personal guidance and support for specific students in class to help them stay focused and engaged

III. Providing Additional Opportunities and Support in Class and on the Campus
- A. Recreation
- B. Enrichment
- C. Tutoring
- D. Mentoring

IV. Helping Enhance Positive Climate Throughout the School – including assisting with "chores"
- A. Assisting with Supervision in Class and Throughout the Campus
- B. Contributing to Campus "Beautification"
- C. Helping to Get Materials Ready

(cont.)

Volunteers can be recruited from a variety of sources: parents and other family members; others in the community such as senior citizens and workers in local businesses; college students; and peers and older students at the school. There also are organized programs that can provide volunteers, such as local service clubs. And, increasingly, institutions of higher education are requiring students to participate in learning through service. Schools committed to enhancing home and community involvement in schooling can pursue volunteer programs as a productive element in their efforts to do so.

Few teachers have the time to recruit and train a cadre of volunteers. Teachers can work with student support staff and the school administration to set up a volunteer program for the school. Initially, a small group of volunteers can be recruited and taught how to implement and maintain the volunteer program (e.g., how to recruit a large pool of volunteers, help train them, nurture them, work with them to recruit replacements).

The cost of volunteer programs is relatively small compared to the impact they can have on school climate and the quality of life for students and school staff.

*For more on this topic, see our center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Volunteers in Schools* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/volunteers.html

Appendix B

About School and Classroom Climate

The concept of *climate* plays a major role in shaping the quality of school life, teaching, learning, and support. School and classroom climate are temporal, and somewhat fluid, perceived qualities of the immediate setting which emerge from the complex transaction of many factors. In turn, the climate reflects the influence of the underlying, institutionalized values and belief systems, norms, ideologies, rituals, and traditions that constitute the school *culture*. And, of course, the climate and culture at a school also are shaped by the surrounding political, social, cultural, and economic contexts (e.g., home, neighborhood, city, state, country).

School and classroom climate sometimes are referred to as the learning environment, as well as by terms such as atmosphere, ambience, ecology, and milieu. Depending on quality, the impact on students and staff can be beneficial for or a barrier to learning.

Key concepts for understanding school and classroom climate are social system organization; social attitudes; staff and student morale; power, control, guidance, support, and evaluation structures; curricular and instructional practices; communicated expectations; efficacy; accountability demands; cohesion; competition; "fit" between learner and classroom; system maintenance, growth, and change; orderliness; and safety. Moos (e.g., 1979) groups such concepts into three dimensions: (1) Relationship (i.e., the nature and intensity of personal relationships within the environment; the extent to which people are involved in the environment and support and help each other); (2) Personal development (i.e., basic directions along which personal growth and self-enhancement tend to occur); and (3) System maintenance and change (i.e., the extent to which the environment is orderly, clear in expectations, maintains control, and is responsive to change).

Research has indicated a range of strategies for enhancing a positive climate. All school staff have a significant role to play in ensuring that such strategies are well-implemented and maintained.

Our center at UCLA has emphasized that school climate is a perceived quality of the setting (Adelman & Taylor, 2005). It emerges in a somewhat fluid state from the complex transaction of many immediate environmental factors (e.g., physical, material, organizational, operational, and social variables). Both the climate of the classroom and the school reflect the influence of a school's culture, which is a stable quality emerging from underlying, institutionalized values and belief systems, norms, ideologies, rituals, and traditions. And, of course, classroom climate and culture both are shaped by the school's surrounding and embedded political, social, cultural, and economic contexts (e.g., home, neighborhood, city, state, country).

Importance of Classroom Climate

Classroom climate is seen as a major determiner of classroom behavior and learning. Understanding the nature of classroom climate is a basic element in improving schools.

The concept of classroom climate implies the intent to establish and maintain a positive context that facilitates classroom learning, but in practice, classroom climates range from hostile or toxic to welcoming and supportive and can fluctuate daily and over the school year. Moreover, because the concept is a psychological construct, different observers may have different perceptions of the climate in a given classroom. Therefore, for purposes of his early research, Moos (1979) measured classroom environment in terms of the shared perceptions of those in the classroom. Prevailing approaches to measuring classroom climate use (1) teacher and student perceptions, (2) external observer's ratings and systematic coding, and/or (3) naturalistic inquiry, ethnography, case study, and interpretative assessment techniques (Fraser, 1998; Freiberg, 1999). Because the concept is a psychological construct, climate in a given school and classroom can be perceived differently by observers. With this in mind, Moos (1979) measured classroom environment in terms of the shared perceptions of those in the classroom. The National School Climate Council (2007) recommends that school climate assessments focus on four dimensions: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the institutional environment – using surveys that encompass the perceptions of students, parents and guardians, and school personnel.*

Analyses of research suggest significant relationships between classroom climate and matters such as student engagement, behavior, self-efficacy, achievement, and social and emotional development, principal leadership style, stages of educational reform, teacher burnout, and overall quality of school life. For example, studies report strong associations between achievement levels and classrooms that are perceived as having greater cohesion and goal-direction and less disorganization and conflict. Research also suggests that the impact of classroom climate may be greater on students from low-income homes and groups that often are discriminated against.

Given the correlational nature of classroom climate research, cause and effect interpretations remain speculative. The broader body of organizational research does indicate the profound role accountability pressures play in shaping organizational climate (Cohen, 2006; Cohen, et al., 2009, 2010;Mahoney & Hextall, 2000). Thus, it seems likely that the increasing demands for higher achievement test scores and control of student behavior contribute to a classroom climate that is reactive, over-controlling, and over-reliant on external reinforcement to motivate positive functioning.

A Caring Context for Learning

From a psychological perspective, learning and teaching are experienced most positively when the learner cares about learning and the teacher cares about teaching. *Moreover, the whole process benefits greatly when all the participants care about each other.* Thus, good schools and good teachers work diligently to create an atmosphere that encourages mutual support, caring, and a sense of community. Such an atmosphere can play a key role in preventing learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems and promoting social and emotional learning and well-being.

Caring has moral, social, and personal facets. And when all facets of caring are present and balanced, they can nurture individuals and facilitate the process of learning. At the same time, caring in all its dimensions should be a major focus of

what is taught and learned. This means a focus throughout on fostering positive socio-emotional and physical development.

Caring begins when students (and their families) first arrive at a school. Classrooms and schools can do their job better if students feel they are truly welcome and have a range of social supports. A key facet of welcoming encompasses effectively connecting new students with peers and adults who can provide social support and advocacy.

On an ongoing basis, caring and a positive classroom and schoolwide climate is best maintained through use of personalized instruction, regular student conferences, activity fostering social and emotional development, and opportunities for students to attain positive status. Efforts to create a caring classroom and schoolwide climate benefit from programs for cooperative learning, peer tutoring, mentoring, advocacy, peer counseling and mediation, human relations, and conflict resolution. Special attention is needed to promote practices that enhance motivation to learn and perform, while avoiding practices that decrease motivation and/or produce avoidance motivation and that focuses on mobilizing unmotivated students (and particularly those who have become actively disengaged from classroom instruction). Clearly, a myriad of strategies can contribute to students feeling positively connected to the classroom and school.

*Note: The National School Climate Council (2007) offers the following definitions:

"School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of people's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures."

"A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction from learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment."

Resources

Increasing interest in enhancing school climate is reflected in the establishment of the National School Climate Center and the U.S. Department of Education's initiative for Safe and Supportive Schools. See

- the brief School Climate Research Summary posted on the National School Climate Center site – http://nscc.csee.net/effective/school_climate_research_summary.pdf
- the National School Climate Standards – http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php
- the U.S. Dept. of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant program which aims to provide the resources for systems to measure school climate and safety at the building level and to help intervene in those schools with the greatest needs – http://www2.ed.gov/programs/safesupportiveschools/index.html

For more resources, see our center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on *School Climate* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/environments.htm

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Appendix C

Intrinsic Motivation and the Classroom

Intrinsic motivation is a fundamental concern in every classroom. Understanding intrinsic motivation clarifies how essential it is to avoid processes that limit options, make students feel controlled and coerced, and that focus mainly on "remedying" problems. Overreliance on extrinsic motivation risks producing avoidance reactions in the classroom and to school and, thus, can reduce opportunities for positive learning and for development of positive attitudes. Over time, the result is that too many students disengage from classroom learning.

Practices for preventing disengagement and efforts to re-engage disconnected students (families, staff) require minimizing conditions that negatively affect intrinsic motivation and maximizing those that enhance it.

Appreciating Intrinsic Motivation

Psychological scholarship over the last fifty years has brought renewed attention to motivation as a central concept in understanding learning and attention problems. This work is just beginning to find its way into personnel preparation programs and schools. One line of work emphasizes the relationship of learning and behavior problems to deficiencies in intrinsic motivation and clarifies the importance of focusing on

- feelings of self-determination
- feelings of competence and expectations of success
- feelings of interpersonal relatedness
- the range of interests and satisfactions related to learning.

Activities to correct deficiencies in intrinsic motivation are directed at improving awareness of personal motives and true capabilities, learning to set valued and appropriate goals, learning to value and to make appropriate and satisfying choices, and learning to value and accept responsibility for choice.

The point for emphasis here is that engaging and re-engaging students in learning involves matching motivation. Matching motivation requires an appreciation of the importance of a student's perceptions in determining the right mix of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. It also requires understanding the key role played by expectations related to outcome. Without a good match, social control strategies can suppress negative attitudes and behaviors, but are unlikely to re-engage disconnected students in classroom learning.

Strong intrinsic motivation can be viewed as a fundamental *protective factor* and as a key to developing *resiliency.* Students who are intrinsically motivated to learn at school seek out opportunities and challenges and go beyond requirements. In doing so, they learn more and learn more deeply than do classmates who are extrinsically motivated. Facilitating the learning of such students is fairly straightforward and meshes well with school improvements that primarily emphasize enhancing instructional practices. The focus is on helping establish ways for students who already are motivationally ready and able to achieve and maintaining and enhancing their motivation. The process involves knowing when, how, and what to teach and also knowing when and how to structure the situation so students can learn on their own.

In contrast, students who manifest learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems usually are not motivationally ready and able to pursue nonpersonalized instructional practices. They often have extremely negative perceptions of teachers, programs, and school and generally are not open to people and activities that they perceive as "the same old thing." Any effort to re-engage disengaged students must begin by addressing negative perceptions. Teachers and school support staff must work together to reverse conditions that led to such perceptions. Minimally, exceptional efforts must be made to enhance such a student's perceptions that (1) the teacher and other interveners are supportive (rather than controlling and indifferent) and (2) content, outcomes, and activity options are personally valuable and obtainable.

Examples of practices for *maximizing intrinsic motivation* are:

- Personalized (as opposed to individualized) instruction
- Building relationships and planning instruction with an understanding of student perceptions and including a range of real life needs, as well as personal and cooperative experiences
- Providing real, valued, and attainable options and choices ensuring shared decision making
- Enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others

Examples of *minimizing threats to intrinsic motivation* are:

- Ensuring a welcoming, caring, safe, and just environment
- Countering perceptions of social control and indifference
- Designing motivated applications as opposed to rote practice and deadening homework
- Ensuring extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities
- Providing regular feedback in ways that minimize use of evaluative processes that threaten feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others

Motivation and School Improvement: Beyond Reinforcement Theory

Two common reasons people give for not bothering to learn something are "It's not worth it" and "I know I won't be able to do it." In general, the amount of time and energy spent on an activity seems dependent on how much it is valued by the person and on the person's expectation that what is valued will be attained without too great a cost.

About Valuing

What makes something worth doing? Prizes? Money? Merit awards? Praise? Certainly! We all do a great many things, some of which we don't even like, because the activity leads to a desired reward. Similarly, we often do things to escape punishment or other negative consequences that we prefer to avoid.

Rewards and punishments may be material or social. For those with learning, behavior, and emotional problems, there is widespread use of such "incentives" (e.g., systematically giving points or tokens that can be exchanged for candy, prizes, praise, free time, or social interactions). Punishments have included loss of free time and other privileges, added work,

fines, isolation, censure, and suspension. Grades have been used both as rewards and punishments. Because people will do things to obtain rewards or avoid punishment, rewards and punishment often are called *reinforcers*. Because they generally come from sources outside the person, they often are called *extrinsics*.

Extrinsic reinforcers are easy to use and can immediately affect behavior. Therefore, they are widely used. Unfortunately, the immediate effects are usually limited to very specific behaviors and often are short-term. Moreover, extensive use of extrinsics can have some undesired effects. And, sometimes the available extrinsics simply aren't powerful enough to get the desired results.

It is important to remember that what makes an extrinsic rewarding is that it is *experienced by the recipient* as a reward. What makes it a highly valued reward is that the recipient highly values it. If someone doesn't like candy, there is not much point in offering it as a reward. Furthermore, because the use of extrinsics has limits, it's fortunate that people often do things even without apparent extrinsic reason. In fact, a lot of what people learn and spend time doing is done for intrinsic reasons. *Curiosity*, for example, seems to be an innate quality that leads us to seek stimulation, avoid boredom, and learn a great deal.

People also pursue some things because of an innate *striving for competence*. Most of us value feeling competent. We try to conquer some challenges, and if none are around, we usually seek one out. Of course, if challenges seem unconquerable or make us too uncomfortable (e.g., too anxious or exhausted), we try to put them aside and move on to something more promising.

Another important intrinsic motivator is an internal push toward *self-determination*. People seem to value feeling and thinking that they have some degree of choice and freedom in deciding what to do. And, human beings also seem intrinsically moved toward establishing and maintaining relationships. That is, we value the feeling of *interpersonal connection.* (See the reference list for key citations on motivation.)

About Expectations

We may value something a great deal; but if we believe we can't do it or can't obtain it without paying too great a personal price, we are likely to look for other valued activities and outcomes to pursue. Expectations about these matters are influenced by past experiences that influence our perceptions of how easy or hard it will be to obtain a desired outcome. Sometimes we know we can easily do something, but it may not be something we value pursuing. At other times, we may value something a great deal but not believe we can do it or can only obtain it by paying too great a personal price. Under such circumstances, we are likely to look for other valued activities and outcomes to pursue.

Previously unsuccessful arenas usually are seen as unlikely paths to valued extrinsic rewards or intrinsic satisfactions. We may perceive past failure as the result of our lack of ability; or we may believe that more effort was required than we were willing to give. We may also feel that the help we needed to succeed was not available. If our perception is that very little has changed with regard to these factors, our expectation of succeeding now will be rather low. *In general, then, what we value interacts with our expectations, and motivation is one product of this interaction.* (See next page).

A Bit of Theory

Engaging and re-engaging students depends on how the classroom and school address concerns about valuing and expectations. Schools and classrooms that offer a broad range of learning and enrichment opportunities (e.g., content, outcomes, procedural options) and involve students in decision making are best equipped to meet the challenge. At the risk of over-simplifying things, the following discussion underscores a few facets of motivation theory.

E x V

Can you decipher this? (Don't go on until you've tried.)
Hint: the "x" is a multiplication sign.

In case the equation stumped you, don't be surprised. The main introduction to motivational thinking given most folks in the past involves some form of reinforcement theory (which essentially stresses extrinsic motivation). Thus, all this may be new to you, even though motivational theorists have been wrestling with it for a long time, and intuitively, you probably understand much of what they are talking about.

"E" represents an individual's *expectations* about outcome (in school this often means expectations of success or failure). "V" represents *valuing*, with valuing influenced by both what is valued intrinsically and extrinsically. Thus, in a general sense, motivation can be thought of in terms of expectancy times valuing. *Such theory recognizes that human beings are thinking and feeling organisms and that intrinsic factors can be powerful motivators. This understanding of human motivation has major implications for learning, teaching, parenting, and mental health interventions.*

Within some limits (which we need not discuss here), high expectations and high valuing produce high motivation, while low expectations (E) and high valuing (V) produce relatively weak motivation.

Youngsters may greatly value the idea of improving their reading. They usually are not happy with limited skills and know they would feel a lot better about if they could read. But, often they experience everything the teacher asks them to do is a waste of time. They have done it all before, and they *still* have a reading problem. Sometimes they will do the exercises, but just to earn points to go on a field trip and to avoid the consequences of not cooperating. Often, however, they try to get out of doing the work by distracting the teacher. After all, why should they do things they are certain won't help them read any better.

(Expectancy x Valuing = Motivation 0 x 1.0 = 0)

High expectations paired with low valuing also yield low approach motivation. Thus, the oft-cited remedial strategy of guaranteeing success by designing tasks to be very easy is not as simple a recipe as it sounds. Indeed, the approach is likely to fail if the outcome (e.g., improved reading, learning math fundamentals, applying social skills) is not valued or if the tasks are experienced as too boring or if doing them is seen as too embarrassing. In such cases, a strong negative value is attached to the activities, and this contributes to avoidance motivation.

(Expectancy x Valuing = Motivation 1.0 x 0 = 0)

Appropriate appreciation of all this is necessary in designing a match for optimal learning and performance.

How many students does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but the student has to want to change the bulb!

Caution about Over-relying on Extrinsics

The discussion of valuing and expectations underscores that motivation is not something that can be determined solely by forces outside the individual. Others can plan activities and outcomes to influence motivation and learning; however, how the activities and outcomes are experienced determines whether they are pursued (or avoided) with a little or a lot of effort and ability. Understanding that an individual's perceptions can affect motivation has clarified some undesired effects of over-relying on extrinsics.

Because of the prominent role they play in school programs, grading, testing, and other performance evaluations are a special concern in any discussion of overreliance on extrinsics as a way to reinforce positive learning. Although grades often are discussed as simply providing information about how well a student is doing, many, if not most, students perceive each grade as a reward or a punishment. Certainly, many teachers use grades to try to control behavior – to reward those who do assignments well and to punish those who don't. Sometimes parents add to a student's perception of grades as extrinsic reinforcers by giving a reward for good report cards.

We all have our own horror stories about the negative impact of grades on ourselves and others. In general, grades have a way of reshaping what students do with their learning opportunities. In choosing what to study, students strongly consider what grades they are likely to receive. As deadlines for assignments and tests get closer, interest in the topic gives way to interest in maximizing one's grade. Discussion of interesting issues and problems related to the area of study gives way to questions about how long a paper should be and what will be on the test. None of this is surprising given that poor grades can result in having to repeat a course or being denied certain immediate and long-range opportunities. It is simply a good example of how systems that overemphasize extrinsics may have a serious negative impact on intrinsic motivation for learning. *And if the impact of current practices is harmful to those who are able learners, imagine the impact on students with learning and behavior problems!*

The point is that extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic reasons for doing things. Although this is not always the case and may not always be a bad thing, it is an important consideration in deciding to rely on extrinsic reinforcers in addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Many individuals with learning problems also are described as hyperactive, distractable, impulsive, behavior disordered, and so forth. Their behavior patterns are seen as interfering with efforts to remedy their learning problems. Although motivation has always been a concern to those who work with learning and behavior problems, the emphasis in handling these interfering behaviors usually is on using extrinsics as part of efforts to directly control and/or in conjunction with direct skill instruction. For example, interventions are designed to improve impulse control, perseverence, selective attention, frustration tolerance, sustained attention and follow-through, and social awareness and skills. In all cases, the emphasis is on reducing or eliminating interfering behaviors, usually with the presumption that then the student will re-engage in learning. However, there is little evidence that these strategies enhance a student's motivation toward classroom learning (National Research Council, 2004).

About Psychological Reactance and Re-engagement

When students are not engaged in the lessons at hand, it is commonplace to find them pursuing courses of action teachers find troublesome. The greatest concern usually arises when a student's behavior is disruptive. Schools react to such behavior with an array of *social control* strategies. At one time, a heavy dose of punishment was the dominant approach. Currently, the emphasis is on more positive practices designed to provide "behavior support" in and out-of-the-classroom.

An often stated assumption is that stopping students' misbehavior makes them amenable to teaching and enhances classroom learning. In a few cases, this may be so. However, the assumption ignores all the work on understanding *psychological reactance* and the need for individuals to restore their sense of self-determination (Deci & Flaste, 1995). Moreover, it belies two painful realities: the number of students who continue to manifest poor academic achievement and the staggering dropout rate in too many schools.

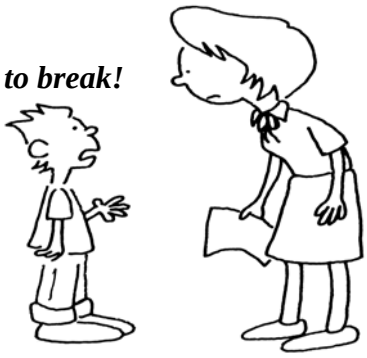
Psychological reactance is a motivational force that seems to arise when an individuals perceive threats to their self-determination. When this happens, they are motivated to react in ways that protect or restore their sense of personal control.

The argument sometimes is made that the reason students continue to misbehave and not do well at school is because the wrong socialization practices (e.g., punishment, illogical consequences) are used or that good social control practices are implemented incorrectly. Thus, the ongoing emphasis is on convincing schools to (1) continue to minimize punishment and (2) do better in executing programs for social skills training, asset development, character education, and positive behavior support. The move from punishment to positive approaches is a welcome one. However, most of the new initiatives have not focused enough on a basic system failure that must be addressed if improved behavior is to be maintained. That is, strategies that focus on positive behavior have paid too little attention to helping teachers understand psychological reactance and the implications

for engagement and disengagement related to classroom learning. Teachers tell us that they are taught a bit about engaging students, but neither pre- nor inservice focus much on how to prevent students from disengaging and how to re-engage a student who has become disconnected.

So: the irony is that overreliance on extrinsics to control behavior may exacerbate student problems. Motivational research suggests that when people perceive their freedom of choice is threatened, they have a psychological reaction that motivates them to restore their sense of freedom. (For instance, when those in control say: You can't do that ... you must do this ..., the covert and sometimes overt psychological reaction of students often is: *Oh, you think so!*) This line of research also suggests that with prolonged denial of freedom, people's reactivity diminishes, they become amotivated and usually feel helpless and ineffective.
All this argues for 1) minimizing student disengagement and maximizing re-engagement by moving school culture toward a greater focus on intrinsic motivation and 2) minimizing psychological reactance and resistance and enhancing perceptions that lead to re-engagement in learning at school by rethinking social control practices.

If you didn't make so many rules,
there wouldn't be so many for me to break!



Note: While our focus here is on students, any discussion of motivation has applications to family members and school personnel. Think about the challenge of home involvement in schooling, and think about teacher burnout and dropout; think about systemic change.

Appendix D

Turning Big Classes into Smaller Units

Just as it is evident that we need to turn schools with large enrollments into sets of small schools, we must do the same in the classroom everyday. As a report in 2000 from the American Youth Policy Forum states:

> "The structure and organization of a High School of the Millennium is very different than that of the conventional high school. First and foremost, [the school] is designed to provide small, personalized, and caring learning communities for students . . . . The smaller groups allow a number of adults . . . to work together with the students . . . as a way to develop more meaningful relationships and as a way for the teachers to better understand the learning needs of each student."

The Key is Grouping

Aside from times when a learning objective is best accomplished with the whole class, the general trend should be to create small classes out of the whole. This involves grouping students in various ways, as well as providing opportunities for individual activity. At a fundamental level, grouping is an essential strategy in turning classrooms with large enrollments into a set of simultaneously operating small classes.

Clearly, students should never be grouped in ways that harm them (e.g., putting them in low ability tracks, segregating those with problems). But grouping is essential for effective teaching. *Appropriate grouping* facilitates student engagement, learning, and performance. Besides enhancing academic learning, it can increase intrinsic motivation by promoting feelings of personal and interpersonal competence, self-determination, and positive connection with others. Moreover, it can foster autonomous learning skills, personal responsibility for learning, and healthy social-emotional attitudes and skills.

A well-designed classroom enables teachers to spend most of their time rotating among small self-monitored groups (e.g., two to six members) and individual learners. With team teaching and staff collaboration, such grouping can be done across classrooms.

Effective grouping is facilitated by ensuring teachers have adequate resources (including space, materials, and help). The key to effective grouping, however, is to take the time needed for youngsters to learn to work well with each other, with other resource personnel, and at times independently. Students are grouped and regrouped flexibly and regularly based on individual interests, needs, and for the benefits to be derived from diversity. Small learning groups are established for cooperative inquiry and learning, concept and skill development, problem solving, motivated practice, peer- and cross-age tutoring, and other forms of activity that can be facilitated by peers, aides, and/or volunteers. In a small group, students have more opportunities to participate. In heterogeneous, cooperative learning groups, each student has an interdependent role in pursuing a common learning goal and can contribute on a par with their capabilities.

Three types of groupings that are common are:

- *Needs-Based Grouping:* Short-term groupings are established for students with similar learning needs (e.g., to teach or reteach them particular skills and to do so in keeping with their current interests and capabilities).
- *Interest-Based Grouping*: Students who already are motivated to pursue an activity usually can be taught to work together well on active learning tasks.
- *Designed-Diversity Grouping*: For some objectives, it is desirable to combine sets of students who come from different backgrounds and have different abilities and interests (e.g., to discuss certain topics, foster certain social capabilities, engender mutual support for learning).

All three types provide opportunities to enhance interpersonal functioning and an understanding of working relationships and of factors effecting group functioning. And, in all forms of grouping, approaches such as cooperative learning and computer-assisted instruction are relevant.

Recognize and Accommodate Diversity

Every classroom is diverse to some degree. Diversity arises from many factors: gender, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, religion, capability, disability, interests, and so forth. In grouping students, it is important to draw on the strengths of diversity. For example, a multi-ethnic classroom enables teachers to group students across ethnic lines to bring different perspectives to the learning activity. This allows students not only to learn about other perspectives, it can enhance critical thinking and other higher order conceptual abilities. It also can foster the type of intergroup understanding and relationships essential to establishing a school climate of caring and mutual respect. And, of course, the entire curriculum and all instructional activities must incorporate an appreciation of diversity, and teachers must plan ways to appropriately accommodate individual and group differences.

Collaborative or Team Teaching

As Hargreaves (1994) notes:

> "The way to relieve the uncertainty and open-endedness that characterizes classroom teaching is to create communities of colleagues who work collaboratively [in cultures of shared learning and positive risk-taking] to set their own professional limits and standards, while still remaining committed to continuous improvement. Such communities can also bring together the professional and personal lives of teachers in a way that supports growth and allows problems to be discussed without fear of disapproval or punishment."

Obviously, it helps to have multiple collaborators in the classroom. An aide and/or volunteers, for example, can assist with establishing and maintaining well-functioning groups, as well as providing special support and guidance for designated individuals. As teachers increasingly open their doors to others, assistance can be solicited from paid tutors, resource and special education teachers, pupil services personnel, and an ever widening range of volunteers (e.g., tutors, peer buddies, parents, mentors, and any others who can bring special abilities into the classroom and offer additional

options for learning). And, of course, team teaching offers a potent way to expand the range of options for personalizing instruction. Not only can teaming benefit students, it can be a great boon to teachers. A good collaboration is one where colleagues mesh professionally and personally. It doesn't mean that there is agreement about everything, but there must be agreement about what constitutes good classroom practices.

Collaborations can take various forms. For example, teaming may take the form of:

- *Parallel Work* – team members combine their classes or other work and teach to their strengths. This may involve specific facets of the curriculum (e.g., one person covers math, another reading; they both cover different aspects of science) or different students (e.g., for specific activities, they divide the students and work with those to whom each relates to best or can support in the best way).

- *Complementary Work* – one team member takes the lead and another facilitates follow-up activity.

- *Special Assistance* – while one team member provides basic instruction, another focuses on those students who need special assistance.

Usually, the tendency is to think in terms of two or more teachers teaming to share the instructional load. We stress, however, the value of expanding the team to include support staff, aides, volunteers, and designated students to help in creating small groupings. Teachers and support staff can work together to recruit and train others to join in the collaborative effort. And, with access to the Internet and distance learning, the nature and scope of collaboration has the potential to expand in dramatic fashion.

A Note About Students as Collaborative Helpers

Besides the mutual benefits students get from cooperative learning groups and other informal ways they help each other, formal peer programs can be invaluable assets. Students can be taught to be peer tutors, group discussion leaders, role models, and mentors. Other useful roles include: peer buddies (to welcome, orient, and provide social support as a new student transitions into the class and school), peer conflict mediators, and much more. Student helpers benefit their peers, themselves, and the school staff, and enhance the school's efforts to create a caring climate and a sense of community.

References Cited in Appendix D

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Appendix E. Self-Study Surveys

1. **About the Center's Surveys**

2. **One Example: *Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning***

1. About the Center's Self-Study Surveys

Surveying and Planning to Enhance Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning at a School Site

The Center has developed a set of self-study surveys to aid school staff as they try to map and analyze their current programs, services, and systems with a view to developing a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to addressing barriers to learning.

In addition to an overview Survey of Learning Supports System Status, there are self-study surveys to help think about ways to address barriers to student learning by enhancing

- Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning
- Crisis Assistance and Prevention
- Support for Transitions
- Home Involvement in Schooling
- Community Outreach for Involvement and Support
- Student and Family Assistance Programs and Services
- School-Community Collaboration

The entire set are online at:
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf

About the Self-Study Process to Enhance the Component for Addressing Barriers to Student Learning

This type of self-study is best done by teams.

However, it is *NOT* about having another meeting and/or getting through a task!

It is about moving on to better outcomes for students through

- working together to understand what is and what might be
- clarifying gaps, priorities, and next steps

Done right it can

- counter fragmentation and redundancy
- mobilize support and direction
- enhance linkages with other resources
- facilitate effective systemic change
- integrate all facets of systemic change and counter marginalization of the component to address barriers to student learning

A group of school staff (teachers, support staff, administrators) could use the items to discuss how the school currently addresses any or all of the areas of the component to address barriers (the enabling component). Members of a team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the real payoff comes from group discussions.

The items on a survey help to clarify

- what is currently being done and whether it is being done well and
- what else is desired.

This provides a basis for a discussion that

- analyzes whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed).
- decides about what resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts that need embellishment
- identifies gaps with respect to important areas of need.
- establishes priorities, strategies, and timelines for filling gaps.

The discussion and subsequent analyses also provide a form of quality review.

2. One Example of a Self-study Survey

Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning

This arena provides a fundamental example not only of how learning supports overlap regular instructional efforts, but how they add value to prevailing efforts to improve instruction. Classroom-based efforts to enable learning can (a) prevent problems, (b) facilitate intervening as soon as problems are noted, (c) enhance intrinsic motivation for learning, and (d) re-engage students who have become disengaged from classroom learning. This is accomplished by increasing teachers' effectiveness so they can account for a wider range of individual differences, foster a caring context for learning, and prevent and handle a wider range of problems when they arise. Effectiveness is enhanced through personalized staff development and opening the classroom door to others who can help. One objective is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to develop a classroom infrastructure that transforms a big class into a set of smaller ones. Such a focus is essential for increasing the effectiveness of regular classroom instruction, supporting inclusionary policies, and reducing the need for specialized services.

Work in this arena requires programmatic approaches and systems designed to personalize professional development of teachers and support staff, develop the capabilities of paraeducators and other paid assistants and volunteers, provide temporary out of class assistance for students, and enhance resources. For example: personalized help is provided to increase a teacher's array of strategies for accommodating, as well as teaching students to compensate for, differences, vulnerabilities, and disabilities. Teachers learn to use paid assistants, peer tutors, and volunteers in targeted ways to enhance social and academic support.

As appropriate, support *in the classroom* also is provided by resource and itinerant teachers and counselors. This involves restructuring and redesigning the roles, functions, and staff development of resource and itinerant teachers, counselors, and other pupil service personnel so they are able to work closely with teachers and students in the classroom and on regular activities.

Classroom-based Approaches ...

Indicate all items that apply.

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
I. Opening the Classroom Door				
A. Are others invited into the classroom to assist in enhancing classroom approaches?				
1. aides (e.g., paraeducators; other paid assistants)?	___	___	___	___
2. older students?	___	___	___	___
3. other students in the class?	___	___	___	___
4. volunteers?	___	___	___	___
5. parents?	___	___	___	___
6. resource teacher?	___	___	___	___
7. specialists?	___	___	___	___
8. other? (specify)_____	___	___	___	___
B. Are there programs to train aides, volunteers, and other "assistants" who come into the classrooms to work with students who need help?	___	___	___	___
II. Redesigning Classroom Approaches to Enhance Teacher Capability to Prevent and Handle Problems and Reduce Need for out of Class Referrals				
A. Is instruction personalized (i.e., designed to match each student's motivation and capabilities)?	___	___	___	___
B. When needed, is in-classroom special assistance provided?	___	___	___	___
C. Are there small group and independent learning options?	___	___	___	___
D. Are behavior problems handled in ways designed to minimize a negative impact on student attitudes toward classroom learning?	___	___	___	___
E. Is there a range of curricular and instructional options and choices?	___	___	___	___
F. Are prereferral interventions used?	___	___	___	___
G. Are materials and activities upgraded to				
1.ensure there are enough basic supplies in the classroom?	___	___	___	___
2. increase the range of high-motivation activities (keyed to the interests of students in need of special attention)?	___	___	___	___
3. include advanced technology?	___	___	___	___
4. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
H. Are regular efforts to foster social and emotional development supplemented?	___	___	___	___

Classroom-based Approaches (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
I. Which of the following can teachers request as special interventions?				
1. Family problem solving conferences?	___	___	___	___
2. Exchange of students to improve student-teacher match and for a fresh start?	___	___	___	___
3. Referral for specific services?	___	___	___	___
4. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
J. What programs are there for temporary out-of-class help?				
1. a family center providing student & family assistance?	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
2. designated problem remediation specialists?	___	___	___	___
3. a "time out" situation?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____				
K. What is done to assist a teacher who has difficulty with limited English speaking students?				
1. Is the student reassigned?	___	___	___	___
2. Does the teacher receive professional development related to working with limited English speaking students?	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
3. Does a bilingual coordinator offer consultation?	___	___	___	___
4. Is a bilingual aide assigned to the class?	___	___	___	___
5. Are volunteers brought in to help (e.g., parents, peers)?	___	___	___	___
6. Other? (specify) _____				

III. Enhancing and Personalizing Professional Development

A. Are teachers clustered for support and staff development?	___	___	___	___
B. Are demonstrations provided?	___	___	___	___
C. Are workshops and readings offered regularly?	___	___	___	___
D. Is consultation available from persons with special expertise such as				
1. learning supports staff (e.g., psychologist, counselor, social worker, nurse)?	___	___	___	___
2. resource specialists and/or special education teachers?	___	___	___	___
3. members of special committees?	___	___	___	___
4. bilingual and/or other coordinators?	___	___	___	___
5. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
E. Is there a formal mentoring program?	___	___	___	___
F. Is team teaching or co-teaching used as an opportunity for teachers to learn on the job?	___	___	___	___
G. Is the school creating a learning community?	___	___	___	___
H. Is there staff social support?	___	___	___	___

Classroom-based Approaches (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
I. Is there formal conflict mediation/resolution for staff?	___	___	___	___
J. Is there a focus on learning how to integrate intrinsic motivation into teaching and classroom management?	___	___	___	___
K. Is there assistance in learning to use advanced technology?	___	___	___	___
L. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

IV. Curricular Enrichment and Adjunct Programs

A. What types of technology are available to the classroom?

1. Are there computers in the classroom?	___	___	___	___
2. Is there a computer lab?	___	___	___	___
3. Is computer assisted instruction offered?	___	___	___	___
4. Are there computer literacy programs?	___	___	___	___
5. Are computer programs used to address ESL needs?	___	___	___	___
6. Does the classroom have video recording capability?	___	___	___	___
7. Is instructional TV used in the classroom?	___	___	___	___
8. Is there a multimedia lab?	___	___	___	___
9. Other? (specify)_____	___	___	___	___

B What curricular enrichment and adjunct programs do teachers use?

1. Are library activities used regularly?	___	___	___	___
2. Is music/art used regularly?	___	___	___	___
3. Is health education a regular part of the curriculum?	___	___	___	___
4. Are student performances regular events?	___	___	___	___
5. Are there several field trips a year?	___	___	___	___
6. Are there student council and other leaders opportunities?	___	___	___	___
7. Are there school environment projects such as				
a. mural painting?	___	___	___	___
b. horticulture/gardening?	___	___	___	___
c. school clean-up and beautification?	___	___	___	___
d. other? (specify)_____	___	___	___	___
8. Are there special school-wide events such as				
a. sports	___	___	___	___
b. clubs and similar organized activities?	___	___	___	___
c. publication of a student newspaper?	___	___	___	___
d. sales events?	___	___	___	___
e. poster contests?	___	___	___	___
f. essay contests?	___	___	___	___
g. a book fair?	___	___	___	___
h. pep rallies/contests?	___	___	___	___
i. attendance competitions?	___	___	___	___
j. attendance awards/assemblies?	___	___	___	___
k. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
9. Are guest contributors used (e.g., outside speakers/performers)?	___	___	___	___
10. Other (specify)?_____	___	___	___	___

V. **Classroom and School-wide Approaches Used to Create and Maintain a Caring and Supportive Climate**	**Yes**	**Yes but more of this is needed**	**No**	**If no, is this something you want?**
A. Are there school-wide approaches for				
1. creating and maintaining a caring and supportive climate?	___	___	___	___
2. supporting high standards for positive behavior?	___	___	___	___
3. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
B. Are there classroom approaches for				
1. creating and maintaining a caring and supportive climate?	___	___	___	___
2. supporting high standards for positive behavior?	___	___	___	___
3. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

VI. Capacity Building for Classroom-based Approaches

A. Are there programs to enhance broad stakeholder Involvement in classroom-based approaches?	___	___	___	___
B. Programs used to meet the educational needs of personnel related to classroom-based approaches –				
1. Is there ongoing training for learning supports staff with respect to classroom-based approaches?	___	___	___	___
2. Is there ongoing training for others involved in providing classroom-based approaches (e.g., teachers, peer buddies, office staff, administrators)?	___	___	___	___
3. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
C. Which of the following topics are covered in educating stakeholders?				
1. How others can work effectively in the classroom?	___	___	___	___
2. Re-engaging students who have disengaged from classroom learning	___	___	___	___
3. Personalizing instruction	___	___	___	___
4. Addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems	___	___	___	___
5. Enriching options and facilitating student and family Involvement in decision making	___	___	___	___
D. Indicate below other things you want the school to do to assist a teacher's efforts to address barriers to students' learning.				

Indicate below any other ways used at the school to assist a teacher's efforts to address barriers to students' learning.

Other matters relevant to Classroom-based approaches are found in the surveys on

>Support for Transitions >Home Involvement in Schooling >Community Involvement & Support