Mental Health in Schools UCLA Center Program and Policy Analysis+

Continuing Education Units

RTI *and* Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports:
Four Units for Continuing Education

UNIT II: IMPLEMENTING RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION SEQUENTIALLY & EFFECTIVELY

(April, 2012)

Unit I: Response to Intervention:
   Improving Conditions for Learning in the Classroom
   Access at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtii.pdf

Unit II: Implementing Response to Intervention Sequentially & Effectively
   Access at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtiii.pdf

Unit III. Response to Intervention: Beyond Personalization
   Access at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtii.pdf

**Unit IV: Pursuing Response to Intervention as One Strategy in a
      Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports**
   Access at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtii.pdf

RTI *and* Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports:
Four Units for Continuing Education

About the Units

A s formulated and practiced, *Response to Intervention* (RTI) 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.

If it is to address the complex realities confronting teachers and student support staff, RTI efforts 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.

Properly designed, response to intervention strategies can particularly help in schools where a significant proportion of students lack enthusiasm about attendance and about engaging in the day's lesson plans. To facilitate the success of such students, 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. 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 Center has developed these four units for continuing education. Unit I placed response to intervention in the context of a redesigned classroom. Unit II highlights response to intervention as a sequential and hierarchical approach for all students the foundation of which is personalization. Unit III focuses on early after onset interventions and specialized assistance. Unit IV emphasizes that the 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 with brief supplementary readings; others that can deepen learning and provide specific resource aids are referenced throughout. A description and example of a set of self-study surveys also is appended.

About Ensuring Response to Intervention is Broad-Based and Preventative

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). Their 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, 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 continuing education units for teachers and learning supports staff. The units broaden perspectives of response to intervention, provide frameworks for contextualizing the work in classrooms and schoolwide, and generally enhance practices. And 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.

> *There are other criticisms of RTI; relevant references covering these are included in the resource list at the end of Unit IV.

**Unit II: Implementing Response to Intervention
Sequentially & Effectively**

A. Personalization is Fundamental to RTI and Goes Beyond Individualization

B. Personalize First; Add Special Assistance as Necessary

>Some Procedural Objectives and Some Major Elements
of a Personalized Classroom
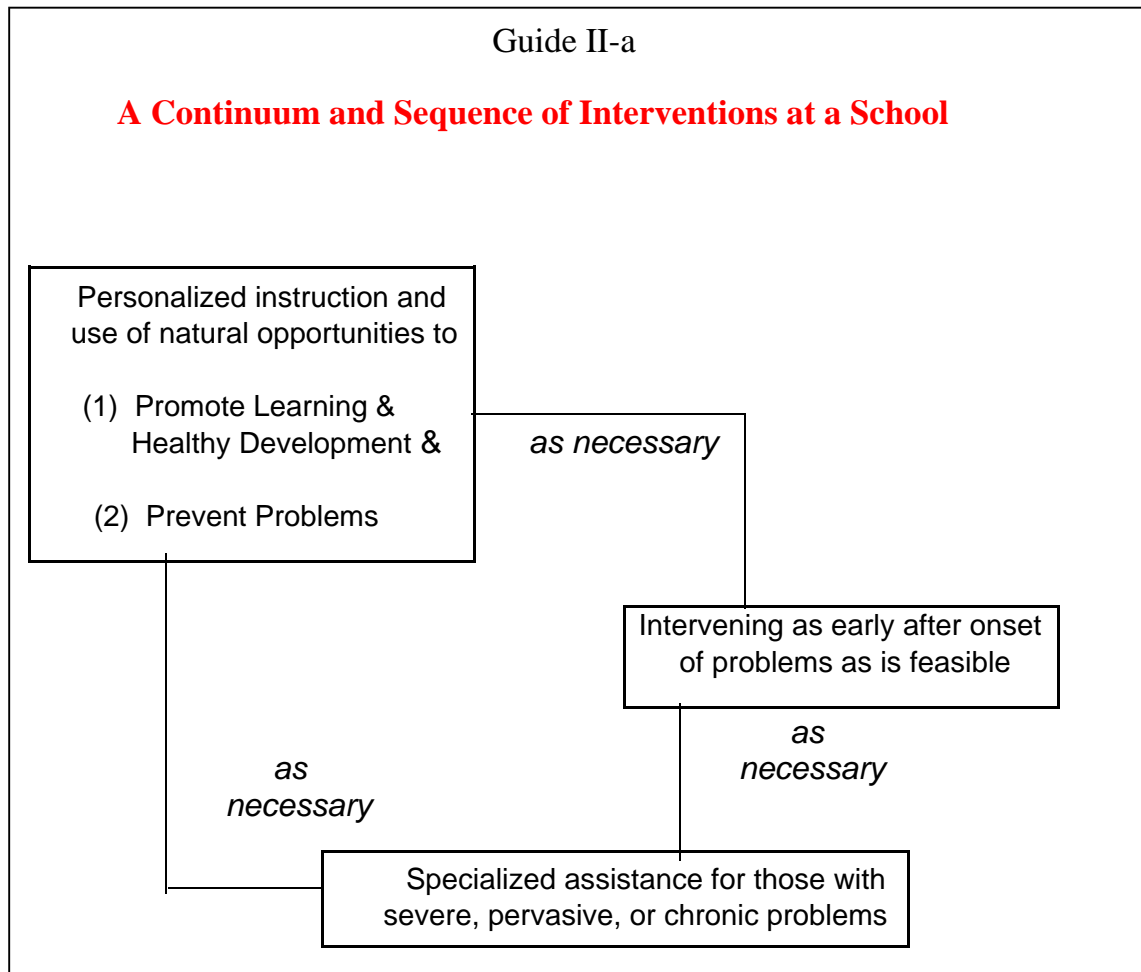>Providing Personalized Structure for Learning

Study and Discussion Questions

(1) How does personalization differ from individualization?

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

(3) Why should personalized instruction precede specialized intervention?

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

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 II-a).

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 II-b).

Guide II-a

A Continuum and Sequence of Interventions at a School

Personalized instruction and use of natural opportunities to

(1) Promote Learning & Healthy Development &

(2) Prevent Problems

as necessary

Intervening as early after onset of problems as is feasible

as necessary

as necessary

Specialized assistance for those with severe, pervasive, or chronic problems

Guide II-b
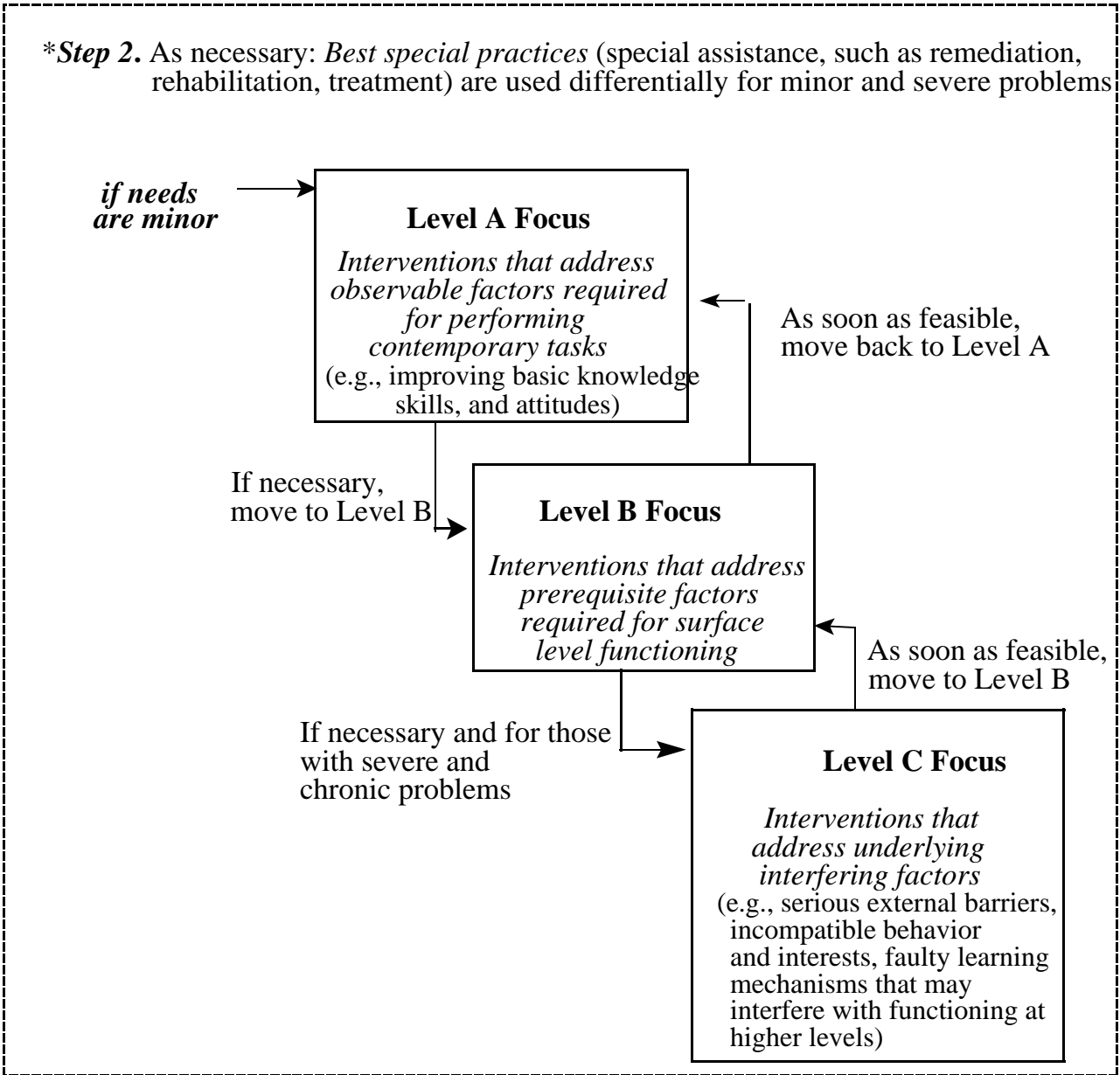
Instruction Sequence and Levels for RTI

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

*if needs
are minor* →

Level A Focus

*Interventions that address
observable factors required
for performing
contemporary tasks*
(e.g., improving basic knowledge
skills, and attitudes)

As soon as feasible,
move back to Level A

If necessary,
move to Level B →

Level B Focus

*Interventions that address
prerequisite factors
required for surface
level functioning*

As soon as feasible,
move to Level B

If necessary and for those
with severe and
chronic problems →

Level C Focus

*Interventions that
address underlying
interfering factors*
(e.g., serious external barriers,
incompatible behavior
and interests, faulty learning
mechanisms that may
interfere with functioning at
higher levels)

3

A. 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 essential to remember that 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. Psychologically, 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 II-c 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 II-c

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

B. Personalize First; Add Special Assistance as Necessary

As illustrated in Guide II-b, 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 II-b, 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 II-d 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 II-d

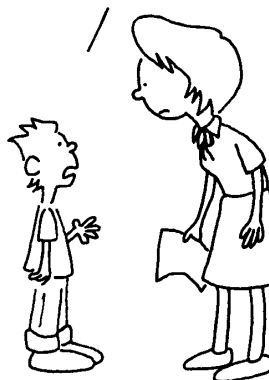**Major Elements of a Personalized Program**

Major elements of personalized programs include:

• turning large classes into small units (many small group and individual learning opportunities – see Brief Reading II)

• 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.

I CAN HARDLY READ YOUR HANDWRITING. YOU MUST LEARN TO WRITE MORE CLEARLY.
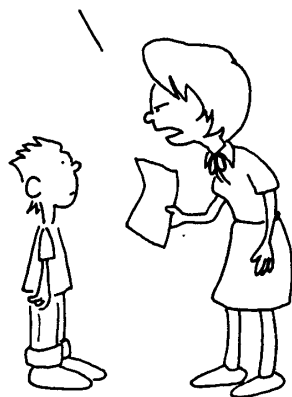
AW, WHAT'S THE USE! IF I WRITE ANY CLEARER, YOU'LL COMPLAIN ABOUT MY SPELLING.

Procedural Objectives and Some Major Elements of a Personalized Classroom

We all know that learning is nonlinear; it is an ongoing, dynamic, and transactional process. With this in mind, 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, many new means are available for blending content and process into personalized activities.

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 has 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Unit Concluding Comments

A personalized approach encourages students to take as much responsibility as they can in the classroom.

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.

As highlighted in Unit IV, student and learning support staff can be invaluable in training aides, other students, and volunteers in providing special support and guidance so that classroom can be personalized to meet learners' needs.

Key Insights about:

>*A Sequential and Hierarchical Approach*

>*Personalized Instruction*

Based on what you learned so far:

(a) *discuss the implications for classroom practice of personalized instruction;*

(b) *outline the key features of a personalized 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 quarters 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.

Brief Reading II

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.

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American Youth Policy Forum(2000). *High schools of the millennium report.* Washington, DC: Author.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age.* New York: Teachers College Press.