Continuing Education Units

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

UNIT III. RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: BEYOND PERSONALIZATION

(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/rtiiii.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/rtiiv.pdf

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

About the Units

If it is to address the complex realities confronting teachers and student support staff, RTI must broaden how it is conceived and practiced. As widely implemented, the approach pays too little attention to the need to strengthen the classroom and schoolwide context in ways that enhance the effectiveness of the strategy for enabling learning, engaging students, and keeping them engaged.

RTI must be built on a solid 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 highlighted 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 III. Response to Intervention: Beyond Personalization

A. An Early After Onset Practice

>Adding Learning Options and Broadening Accommodations
>Steps to Guide the Process

B. Specialized Assistance

Study and Discussion Questions

(1) What are early after onset classroom practices?

(2) Why are accommodations and "pre-referral"
     interventions essential?

(3) What is special assistance and when is it needed?

Response to Intervention: Beyond Personalization

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.

A. Early After Onset

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 appropriate accommodations (see Guide III-a) and "pre-referral" interventions (see Guide III-b) were used to resolve the problems within the regular classroom. 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 (discussed in Unit IV), 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 III-a

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 III-a 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, kinesthetics, 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

Guide III-b

Pre-referral 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 *pre-referral 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.

Prereferral Intervening (Guide III-b 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.

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?*

The process outlined in Guide III-b represents a set of problem solving steps and tasks that can be used as follows to guide a broad response to intervention approach:

(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.)

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(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 Guides II-a and II-b).

B. Specialized Assistance

As stressed in Unit II, 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 in Unit II, 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 II-b. However, as indicated, 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 resource list at the end of Unit IV.*)

Unit Concluding Comments

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 in Unit II and amplified in this unit 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 IV.

**Unit III – Reflection & Stimulus for Discussion**

Key Insights about:

>*what is involved in intervening as early-after-problem onset as feasible*

>*specific practices that should proceed special assistance*

Based on what you learned so far, discuss your ideas for maximizing the use of Response to Intervention in 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.
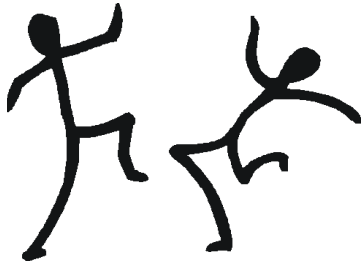
Unit III – Activity

- Make a list of what interventions can be used to plan how to proceed as soon as feasible after a student manifests a learning, behavior, and/or emotional problem.

- Put an asterick next to those activities, materials, resources, personnel that are designed to mobilize a student who is not motivated to engage in an intervention being used to assess his or her responses.

- 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.