

Teaching in Urban Schools

RTI and Learning Supports: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students

Topics to be Covered:

I. Urban Schools: Can Teachers Go it Alone?

*A Big Picture View of Why They Shouldn't
Be Asked to Do So*

II. What Teachers Can Do to Enable Learning

- (A) Using Response to Intervention as an Opportunity to Work With Others
- (B) Pursuing Response to Intervention Sequentially and Effectively
- (C) Understanding and Applying Intrinsic Motivation
- (D) Pursuing Teaching as One Strategy in a Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

About the Center at UCLA – The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project. (Contact info: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563; phone (310) 825-3634. Emails: Ltaylor@ucla.edu adelman@psych.ucla.edu Smhp@ucla.edu

For an overview of resources available at no cost from the Center, see the Center website:
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Note: Most of the handouts from this presentation are included on the Center website in both powerpoint & PDF formats.



Why is a *System of Learning Supports Imperative* for School Improvement?

Some Major Concerns

Teachers shouldn't be expected to, never mind being held accountable for, *doing it alone!*

The current focus of school improvement policy and practice is too limited to ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

The limited focus contributes to:

- High Student Dropout Rates
- High Teacher Dropout Rates
- Continuing Achievement Gap
- So Many Schools Designated as Low Performing
- High Stakes Testing Taking its Toll on Students (and staff)
- Plateau Effect



Data from the *National Assessment of Education Progress* (NAEP) clearly shows the plateau effect related to academic achievement



Why is a *System of Learning Supports Imperative* for School Improvement?



Three Lenses for viewing school improvement efforts



Lens #1 = *ALL* Students

Not some –

***ALL* youngsters
are to have an equal
opportunity to succeed at school**

Range of Learners

(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction)

I = Motivationally ready and able*

**II = Not very motivated/
Lacking prerequisite knowledge & skills/
Different learning rates and styles/
Minor vulnerabilities****

**III = Avoidant/
Very deficient in current capabilities/
Has a disability
Major health problems**

*Few youngsters start out with internal problems that interfere with learning what schools teach. There can be little doubt that external factors are primarily responsible for the majority of learning, behavior, and emotional problems encountered in schools.

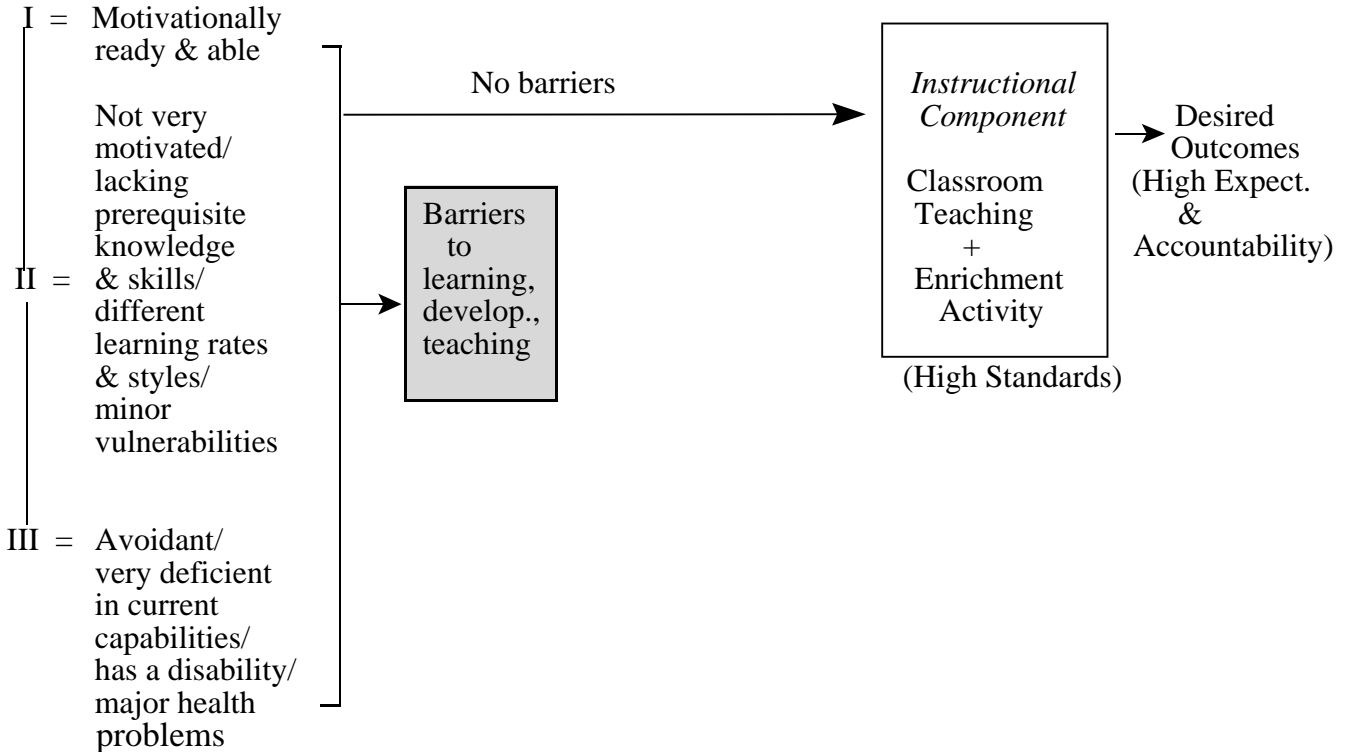
**All learners have *assets/strengths/protective factors* that can contribute to success; all have *differences* that require some degree of personalization by instructional systems; any may *internalize negative experiences* that interfere with learning at school.

Lens # 2 = Barriers to Learning

Barriers to Learning and School Improvement

Range of Learners

(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction at any given point in time)



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

Environmental Conditions**

Neighborhood

- >extreme economic deprivation
- >community disorganization, including high levels of mobility
- >violence, drugs, etc.
- >minority and/or immigrant status

Family

- >chronic poverty
- >conflict/disruptions/violence
- >substance abuse
- >models problem behavior
- >abusive caretaking
- >inadequate provision for quality child care

School and Peers

- >poor quality school
- >negative encounters with teachers
- >negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models

Person Factors**

Individual

- >medical problems
- >low birth weight/neurodevelopmental delay
- >psychophysiological problems
- >difficult temperament & adjustment problems
- >inadequate nutrition

**A reciprocal determinist view of behavior recognizes the interplay of environment and person variables.

Caution: Don't misinterpret the term

- *Barriers to Learning*

It encompasses much more than a deficit model of students.

And, it is part of a holistic approach that emphasizes the importance of

- *Protective Buffers*
(e.g., strengths, assets, resiliency, accommodations)

and

- *Promoting Full Development*
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Examples of *Risk-Producing Conditions* that Can be Barriers to Development and Learning

E n v i r o n m e n t a l C o n d i t i o n s *			Person Factors* Individual
<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>School and Peers</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >extreme economic deprivation >community disorganization, including high levels of mobility >violence, drugs, etc. >minority and/or immigrant status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >chronic poverty >conflict/disruptions/violence >substance abuse >models problem behavior >abusive caretaking >inadequate provision for quality child care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >poor quality school >negative encounters with teachers >negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >medical problems >low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay >psychophysiological problems >difficult temperament & adjustment problems >inadequate nutrition

Examples of *Protective Buffers*

Conditions that prevent or counter risk producing conditions – strengths, assets, corrective interventions, coping mechanisms, special assistance and accommodations

E n v i r o n m e n t a l C o n d i t i o n s *			Person Factors* Individual
<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>School and Peers</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >strong economic conditions/ emerging economic opportunities >safe and stable communities >available & accessible services >strong bond with positive other(s) >appropriate expectations and standards >opportunities to successfully participate, contribute, and be recognized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >adequate financial resources >nurturing supportive family members who are positive models >safe and stable (organized and predictable) home environment >family literacy >provision of high quality child care >secure attachments – early and ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >success at school >safe, caring, supportive, and healthy school environment >positive relationships with one or more teachers >positive relationships with peers and appropriate peer models >strong bond with positive other(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >higher cognitive functioning >psychophysiological health >easy temperament, outgoing personality, and positive behavior >strong abilities for involvement and problem solving >sense of purpose and future >gender (girls less apt to develop certain problems)

Examples of Conditions for *Promoting Full Development*

Conditions, over and beyond those that create protective buffers, that enhance healthy development, well-being, and a value-based life

E n v i r o n m e n t a l C o n d i t i o n s *			Person Factors* Individual
<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>School and Peers</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >nurturing & supportive conditions >policy and practice promotes healthy development & sense of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >conditions that foster positive physical & mental health among all family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >nurturing & supportive climate school-wide and in classrooms >conditions that foster feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >pursues opportunities for personal development and empowerment >intrinsically motivated to pursue full development, well-being, and a value-based life

*A reciprocal determinist view of behavior recognizes the interplay of environment and person variables.

For more on this and for references to relevant literature, see:

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Lens # 3 = Engagement & Disengagement*

Source of Motivation

		Extrinsics	Intrinsics	Intrinsics/ Extrinsics
<i>Intervention Concerns</i>	Engagement			
	Disengagement (psychological reactance)			

****Avoiding Over-reliance on Extrinsics, Maximizing
Intrinsic Motivation, and Minimizing Behavior
Control Strategies***

Engaging & Re-engaging Students in Classroom Learning

How are schools

>maximizing Intrinsic Motivation?

>minimizing Behavior Control Strategies?

Motivation,

and especially Intrinsic Motivation

are fundamental intervention considerations

related to student (and staff) problems.

Brief Activity

Picture students who do not come to school motivated and ready to learn.

Then,

Using the three lenses, jot down what you think urban schools are doing to:

(1) Address barriers to learning

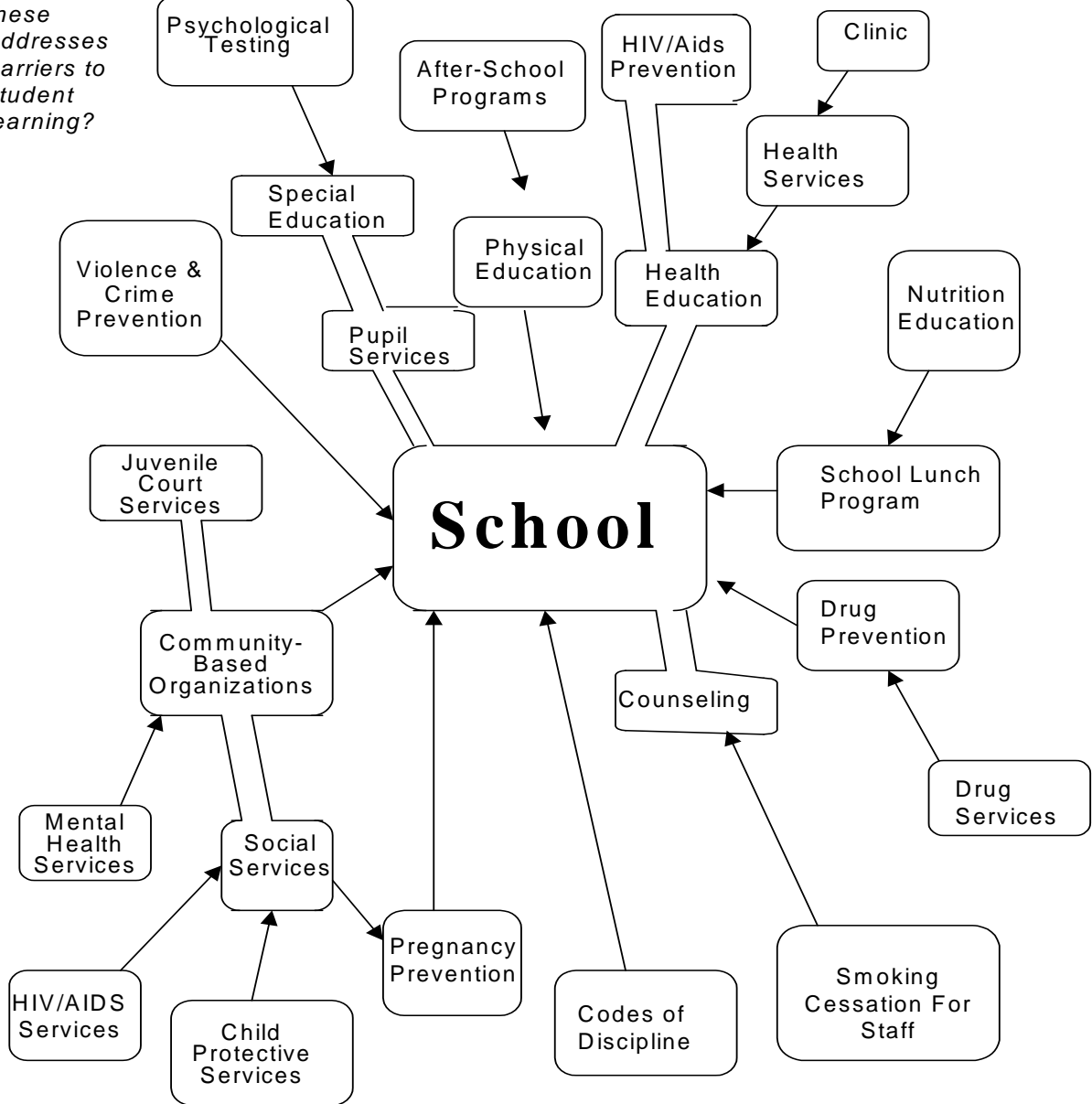
(2) Re-engage disconnected students

Addressing barriers to learning & teaching: Are Teachers Going it Alone?

Student & Learning Supports: What we see around the country

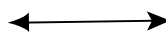
Talk about fragmented!!!

Which of these addresses barriers to student learning?



Adapted from: *Health is Academic: A guide to Coordinated School Health Programs* (1998). Edited by E. Marx & S.F. Wooley with D. Northrop. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fragmented policy



Fragmented practices

The problems with student and learning supports

Current situation at all levels in the educational system with respect to student/learning supports is that efforts are

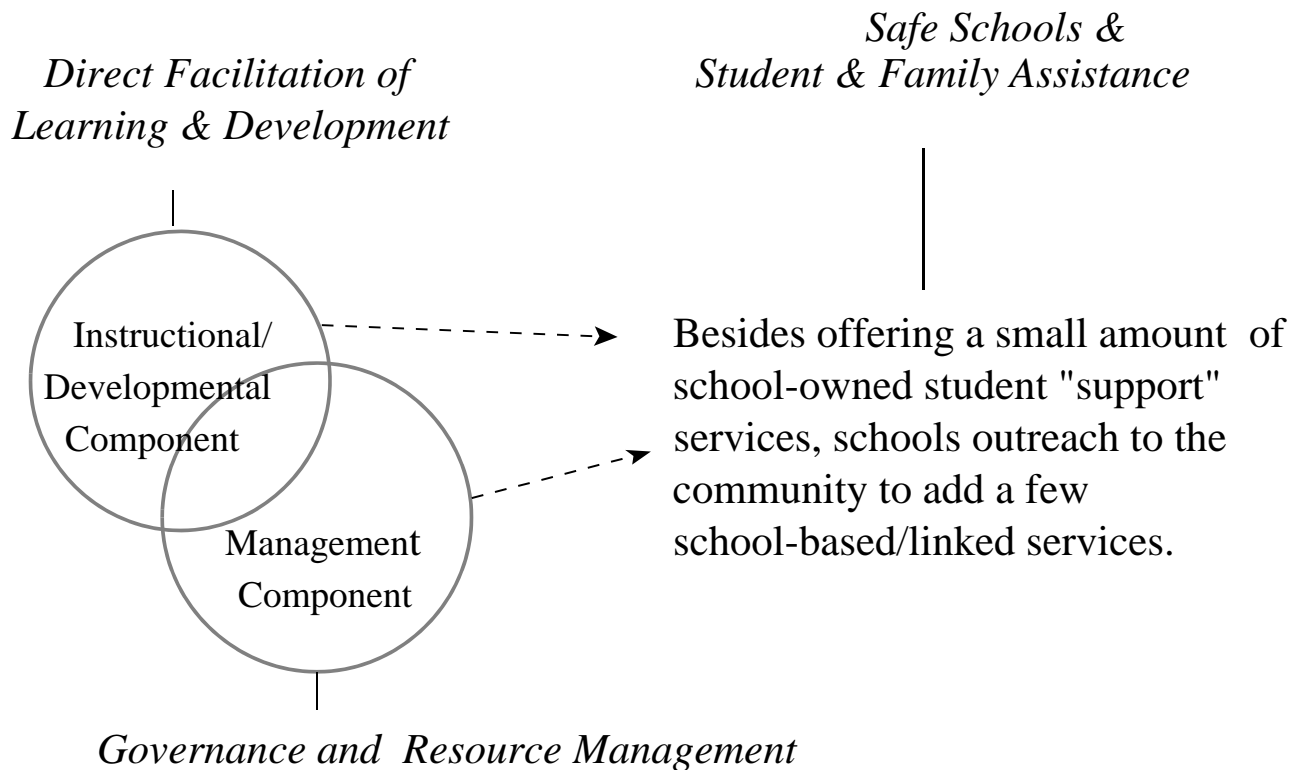
Marginalized in school improvement policy & practice.

This leads to:

- *Fragmentation*
- *Poor Cost-Effectiveness* (up to 25% of a school budget used in too limited and often redundant ways)
- *Counterproductive Competition for Sparse Resources* (among school support staff and with community-based professionals who link with schools)

Why the Marginalization?

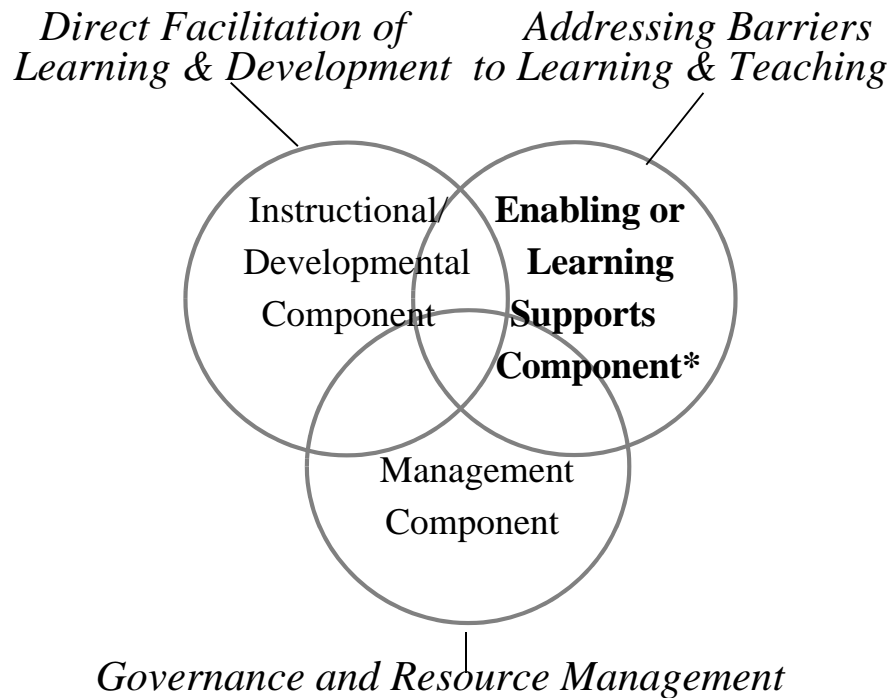
How school improvement policy & practice addresses barriers to learning and teaching



Clearly, there are some supports; what's missing is a dedicated, unified, and comprehensive component directly focused on:

- AND
- (1) addressing barriers to learning & teaching
 - (2) re-engaging students who have become disconnected from classroom instruction

The need is to move from the prevailing two-component framework to a three-component framework in order to develop a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

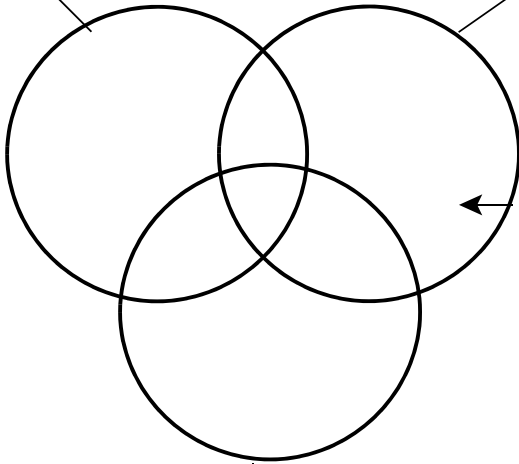


*The Learning Supports Component is designed to *enable* learning by addressing factors that interfere with learning and teaching. It is established in policy and practice as primary and essential and is developed into a comprehensive approach by weaving together school and community resources.

Unifying Policy & Practice for Addressing Barriers to Learning

Direct Facilitation of Learning
(*Instructional Component*)

Addressing Barriers to Learning/Teaching
(*Enabling or Learning Supports Component* –
an umbrella for ending marginalization by
unifying the many fragmented efforts and
evolving a comprehensive approach)



Governance and Resource Management
(*Management Component*)

Examples of Initiatives, programs and services

- >positive behavioral supports
 - >programs for safe and drug free schools
 - >full service community schools & Family Resource Ctrs
 - >*Safe Schools/Healthy Students*
 - >*School Based Health Center* movement
 - >Coordinated School Health Program
 - >bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity programs
 - >re-engaging disengaged students
 - >compensatory education programs
 - >special education programs
 - >mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act & other federal programs
 - >And many more activities by student support staff
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Activity

Discuss what you think teachers at urban schools would answer if asked what proportion of their students show up each day motivationally ready and able to do what the teacher has planned to teach that day.

Then, discuss:

Why are so many students not motivationally ready and able?