



Behavioral Function

It's not just for Tier 3

Association for Positive Behavior Support
Conference

March 30, 2023

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A photograph of a teacher and four diverse students (two girls and two boys) gathered around a tablet computer in a classroom. The teacher, a woman with blonde hair, is pointing at the screen. The students are looking intently at the tablet. The background shows a bookshelf with books.

Objectives

- Following our session, attendees will...
 - Define and describe behavioral function
 - Describe the utility of, and rationale for, considering function across all tiers of support
 - Identify functional skills that all students need to be successful
 - Provide examples of contextually appropriate function-based behavior support at Tier 3, Tier 2, and Tier 1

Behavioral Function

- We will be referring to behavioral function in three ways:
 - Function of behavior
 - Function-based thinking
 - Functional skills



Function of Behavior

“Why” the student is engaging in the behavior

- The reinforcement that follows behavior

Positive reinforcement

- E.g., access preferred items, activities, people

Negative reinforcement

- E.g., escape or avoid tasks, activities, social interaction

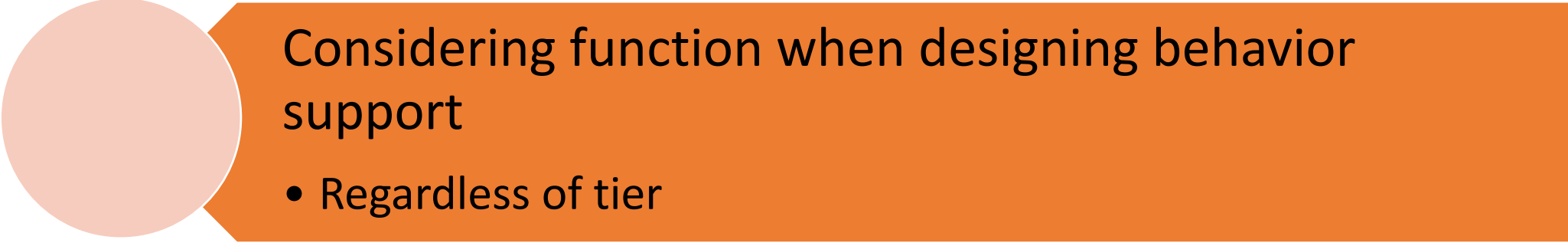
Need the student is communicating

- Valid for the student

All behavior is lawful

- Both “appropriate” and “inappropriate” (or interfering) behavior

Function-based Thinking

An orange callout box with a circular shape on the left side. The text is white and reads: "Considering function when designing behavior support".

Considering function when designing behavior support

- Regardless of tier

A grey callout box with a circular shape on the left side. The text is black and reads: "Could include functional behavior assessment (FBA)".

Could include functional behavior assessment (FBA)

- But not always

Functional Skills

Skills that relate to primary functions

Big Four (Ala'i-Rosales et al., 2019)

- From years of research on FBA

Rather than wait for interfering behavior to develop, teach skills to prevent!

Skills we need to successfully navigate life!

Goals of PBS (Carr et al., 2002; Risley, 1996)

- Increase quality of life (QOL) by teaching skills
- Decrease in behavior that interferes with learning/ QOL

We should consider function across all tiers of support.

Because...

- Behavior that interferes with learning occurs across all tiers
 - Although not as severe and chronic at T1 and T2
- Function-matched support can increase effectiveness of T1 and T2
 - Enable students receiving T3 support to be more successful in those environments
- All students need to learn functional skills
 - Learning these skills can prevent interfering behavior from developing



Behavioral Function at Tier 3

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

- For students with persistent challenging behavior that has not been (or cannot be) sufficiently addressed by Tier 2 support we use FBA to create individualized behavior support plans.
- We gather A-B-C information from:
 - The student and those who know them best (e.g., teachers, family members)
 - Direct observations of behavior in context
- We use FBA data to identify:
 - The function the challenging behavior serves for the student
 - The conditions under which challenging behavior does not occur
 - Functional reinforcers for desired behavior

Behavior Support Planning

- The result of FBA should be an Individualized behavior support plan with strategies designed to:

PREVENT

- Eliminate or neutralize setting events
- Eliminate or modify antecedent triggers
- Prompts for desired behavior

TEACH

- Functional replacement behavior
- New skills needed to access natural reinforcers

REINFORCE

- Dense schedule of reinforcement for use of replacement behavior and new skills
- Minimize reinforcement for challenging behavior

FBA in Schools: What the Research Tells Us

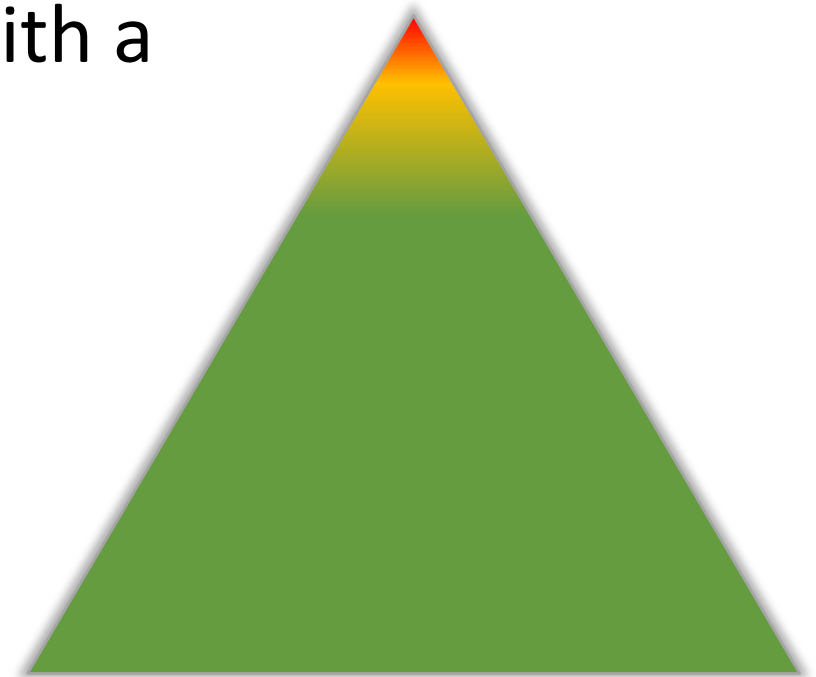
- For students who require Tier 3 support, function-based intervention is key to effectively decreasing intense and persistent challenging behavior (Cho & Blair, 2017)
- Function-based behavioral interventions have been shown to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of behavior support for students with and without disabilities who exhibit a wide range of challenging behaviors
(Blair, 1999; Carr et al., 1999; Borgmeier et al., 2019; Cho & Blair, 2017; Epstein et al., 2008; Ingram et al., 2005; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Strickland-Cohen et al., 2016)
- Growing body of research showing that Tier 3 can be effectively designed and implemented by school-based personnel to address non-dangerous behaviors
(Crone, Hawken, & Bergstrom, 2007; Dukes, Rosenberg, & Brady, 2007; Loman & Horner, 2014; Maag & Larson, 2004; Renshaw et al., 2008; Scott, Nelson, & Zabala, 2003; Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015)

Research-to-Practice Gap

- In typical practice we often employ our most effective tools only when behavior has become severe/dangerous
 - FBA/BSP used as a “last resort” and only for students with IEPs (Borgmeier et al., 2019)
- Students who engage in persistent, lower-intensity behavior are more likely to receive less effective punitive/exclusionary practices (e.g., reprimands, ODRs, suspensions; Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013)

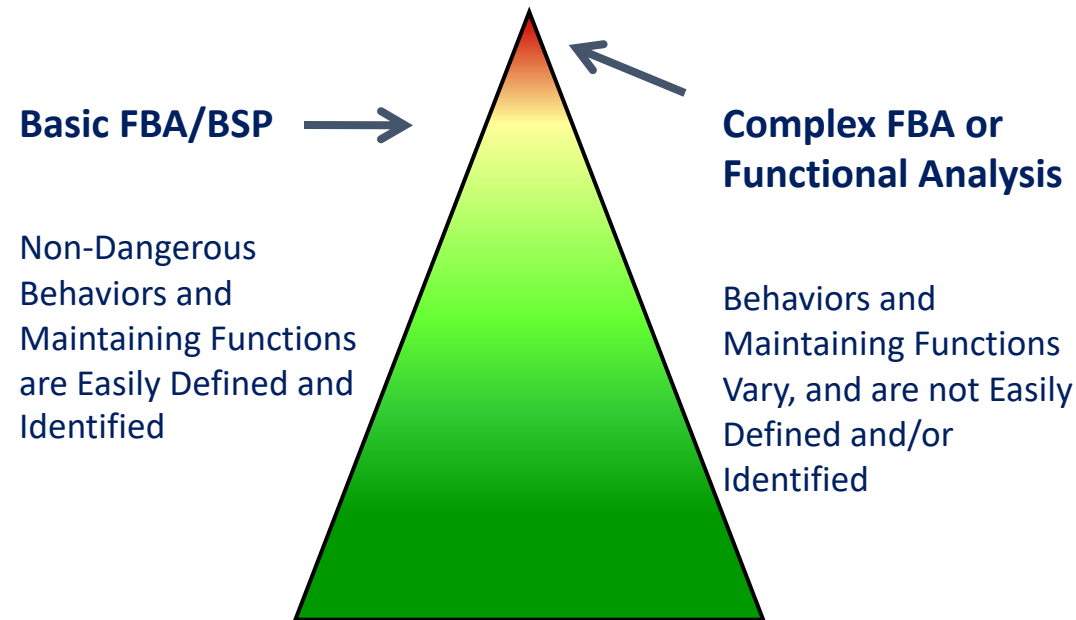
The Logic Behind Multi-Tiered Behavior Support

- SWPBIS creates a school climate that supports the appropriate academic and social behavior of ALL students with a focus on:
 - **PREVENTION**
 - **EARLY INTERVENTION**



Proactive Function-Based Support at Tier 3

- Many of problem behaviors that Tier 3 teams encounter do not require comprehensive FBA-BSP
- Using streamlined FBA-BSP procedures that “match” the level and intensity of problem behavior



Find Out More

- www.pbis.org

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Kathleen Strickland-Cohen

Chris Borgmeier

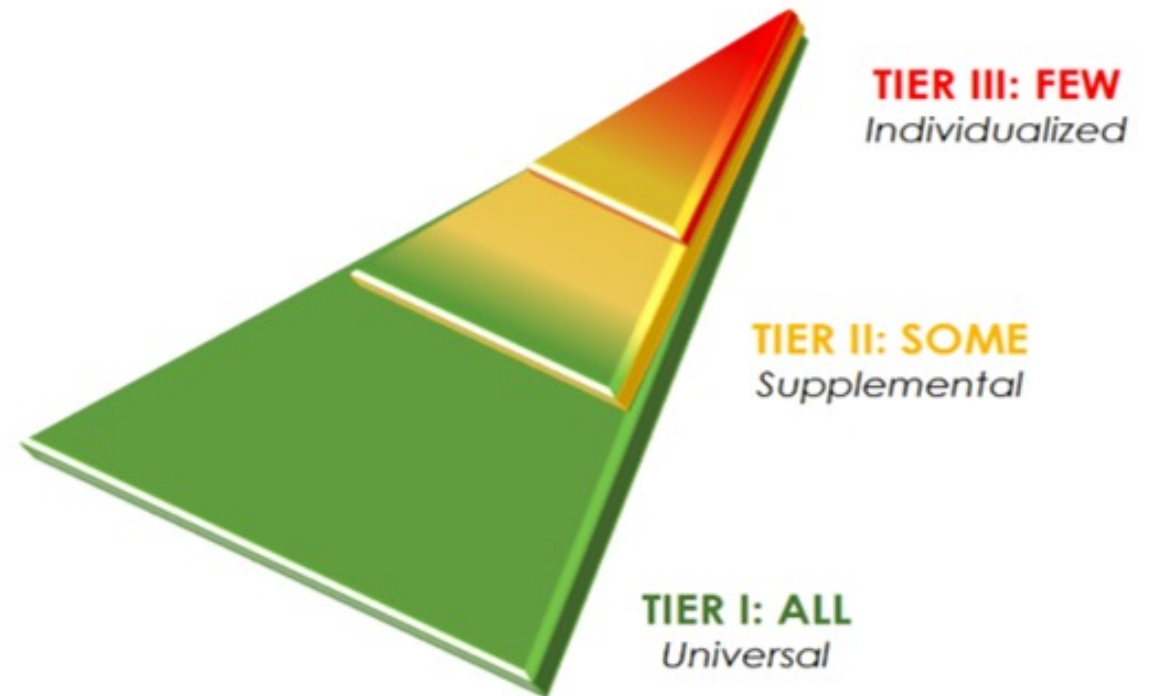
TIER 3 BRIEF FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT (FBA) GUIDE

CENTER ON PBIS

January 2022

Building Seamless Continuums of Support

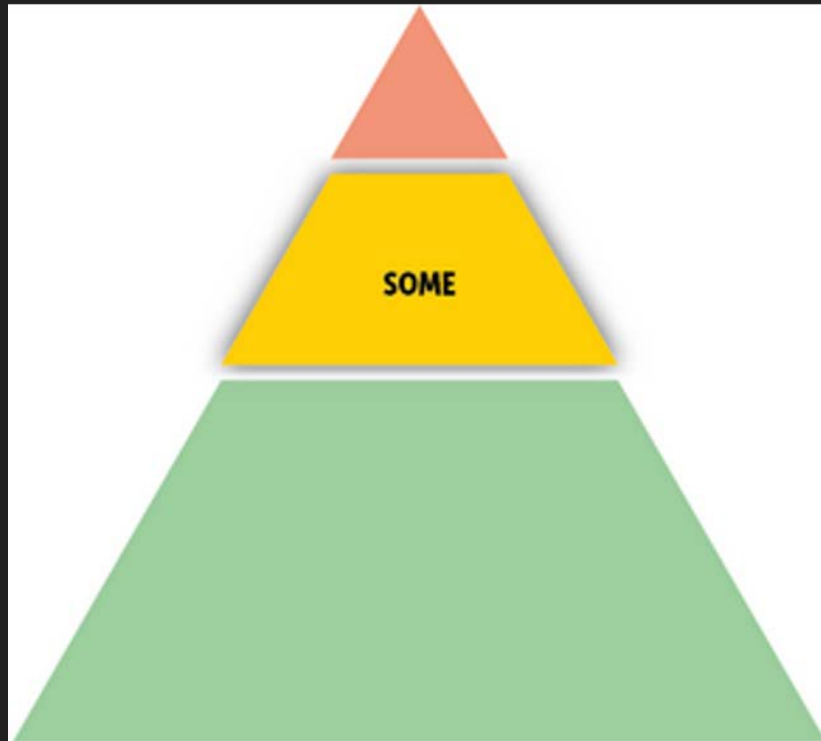
- All staff trained in FB thinking
- Advanced tiers explicitly linked to universal expectations, practices, and systems to support
 - Inclusion
 - Generalization
 - Fading



Function in Tier 2

Dylan Zimmerman

Purpose of Tier 2



- Targeted interventions
- Continuously and quickly available
- Support students before Tier 3
 - Prevent intensive Tier 3 when not necessary
- ***Function-based***

Center on PBIS. (n.d.). *What is tier 2 support?* Retrieved March 12, 2023, from <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-2>

Why use functional thinking at Tier 2

- Can improve effectiveness
 - Improve CICO when not effective (Campbell & Anderson, 2008; McIntosh et al., 2009)
- Student-centered
 - Behavior communicates a need
 - Not just behavior reduction (Carr et al., 2002; Risley, 1996)
- No reason not to! Efficient options available
 - Interview/survey tools
 - Brief observations
 - Hypothesis confirmed through data-based decision making

Function at Tier 2 – Typical Practice

Targeted Intervention	Check in, Check out	Social Skills Club	Reading Buddies	Homework Club	Lunch Buddies
Access to Adult Attention	Access Attention				
Access to Peer Attention					
Access to Choice of Alternatives/Activities	Access to Items or Activities		Avoid Activities		
Option for Avoiding Aversive Activities					
Option for Avoiding Aversive Social Peer/ Adult Attention	Avoid Attention				
Structural Prompts for 'What To Do' Throughout the Day	yes	yes			
At Least 5 Times During the Day When Positive Feedback is Set Up	yes				
A School-Home Communication System	Access Attention				
Opportunity for Adaptation into a Self-Management System					

A Systematic Review of Function-Modified Check-In/Check-Out

Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions
2019, Vol. 21(2) 77–92

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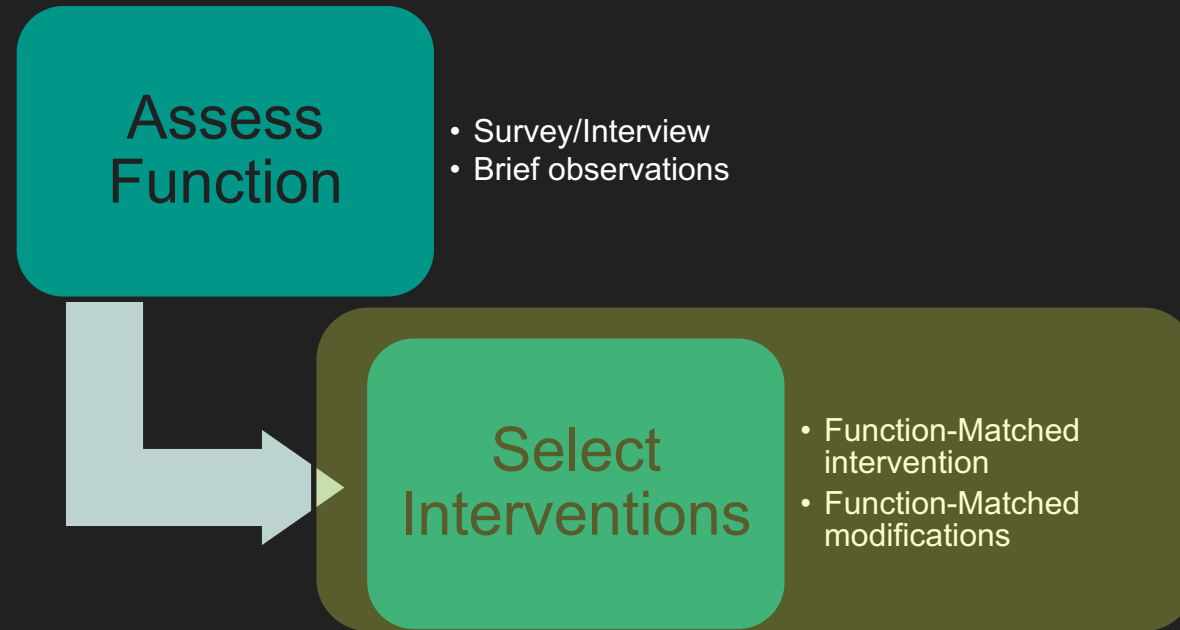


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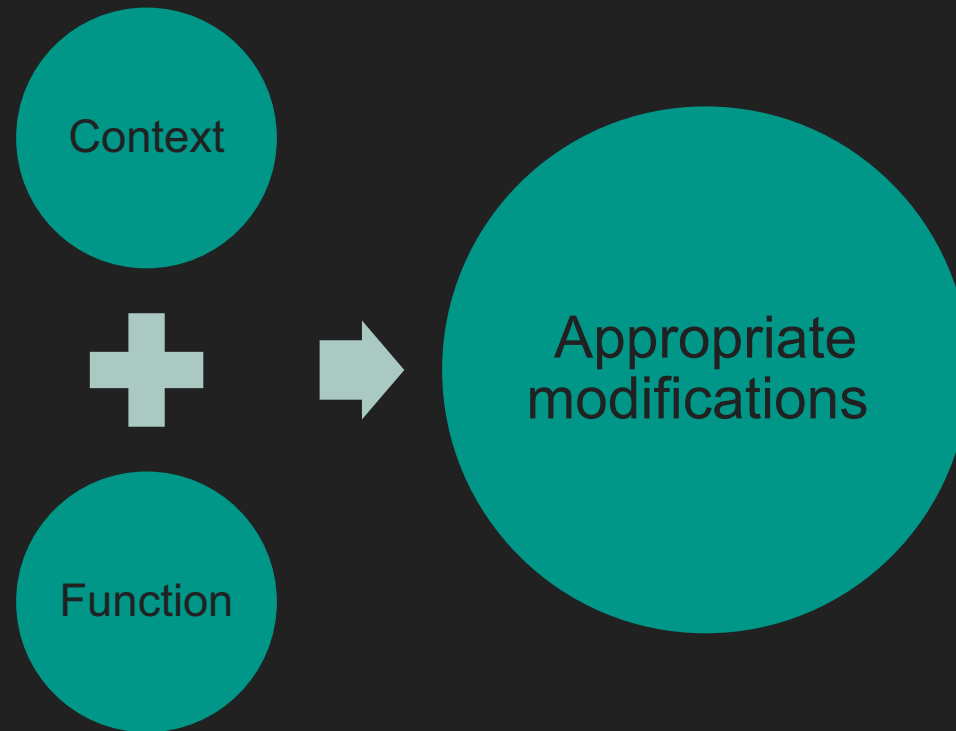
Abstract

Check-in/check-out (CICO) is widely used as a Tier 2 intervention within school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports. Evidence suggests that traditional CICO is primarily effective for students demonstrating problem behavior maintained by adult attention. A growing body of research has investigated function-modified CICO to address behaviors maintained by other consequences. The purpose of this review was to examine the evidence-base for function-modified versions of CICO to identify (a) the procedures used to assess students' behavior function and (b) the types of modifications and additions to CICO that have been empirically evaluated. We systematically reviewed 11 studies that examined the effects of function-based CICO. Researchers determined behavior function using a combination of direct observations and indirect assessments. These methods were more involved than a brief behavior screening. The modifications and additions to traditional CICO included changes that were functionally relevant and functionally independent. Based on the results of this review, more research is needed before function-based CICO can be considered an evidence-based practice. Moreover, the extent to which educators can implement function-based CICO without researcher support is also unknown. The implications of this review are discussed in terms of future research and practice.

Assessing and Designing T2 Interventions



Selecting Intervention Modifications



Selecting Intervention Modifications

		Context - Timing and Format		
Function				

The table is a 2x2 grid. The top row is labeled 'Context - Timing and Format' and the left column is labeled 'Function'. The cells contain the following text:

		Context - Timing and Format		
Function				

Time-based adult attention or praise

Precorrection: Remind student about expectations such as when to talk

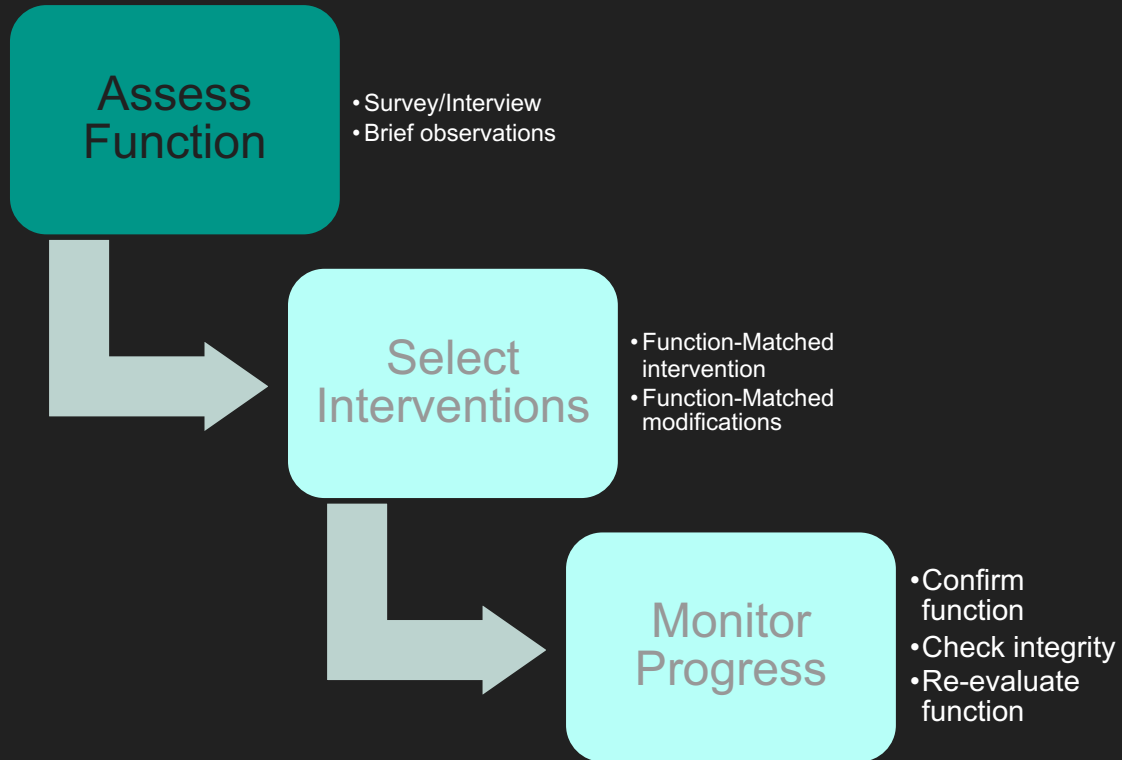
Contingent teacher attention when completing work/on task

Contingent teacher attention when raising hand

Rewards include activities with teacher and other adults in the school

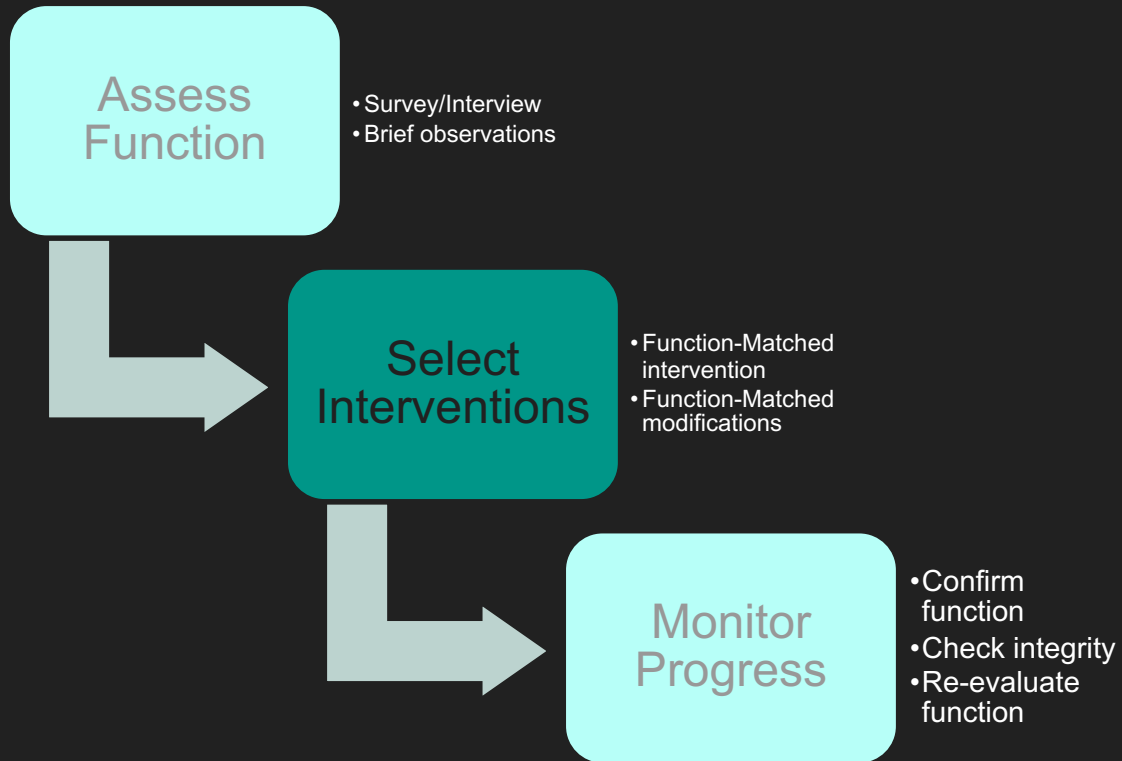
	Antecedent Modifications	Teaching Modifications	Consequence Modifications
Escape from Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed prompts for break requests into CICO or similar tracker* • Embed prompts for break requests into the classroom • Provide verbal prompts for break requests* • Modify amount or difficulty of work* • Provide opportunity to bring work home* • Allow student to sit next to helpful peer* • Precorrection: Remind student of expectations prior to challenging periods, or of homework prior to going home* • Provide time in school to complete homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach routines around requesting a break* • Teach responses to teacher giving or denying a break* • Teach study skills* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn free time after completing work* • Link daily goal and points earned to work completion* • Reward choices include options to reduce work (e.g., homework pass, leave class early pass, break opportunities)
Peer Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled peer interactions (e.g., social activities) prior to challenging periods • Change seating to minimize access to distracting peers* • Interrupt and redirect peer responses to student problem behavior* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach peers to ignore each other's distracting behavior (e.g., how to respond to peer talking off-topic) • Teach request for peer-tutor or partner work* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite a peer to daily check-out/end of day reward if goal is met* • Increase frequency of reward delivery (mid-day and afternoon)* • Seat next to preferred peer during lunch* • Seat next to preferred peer during class* • Use of the Good Behavior Game or similar interdependent group contingency during class*

Step 1: Assess for Function



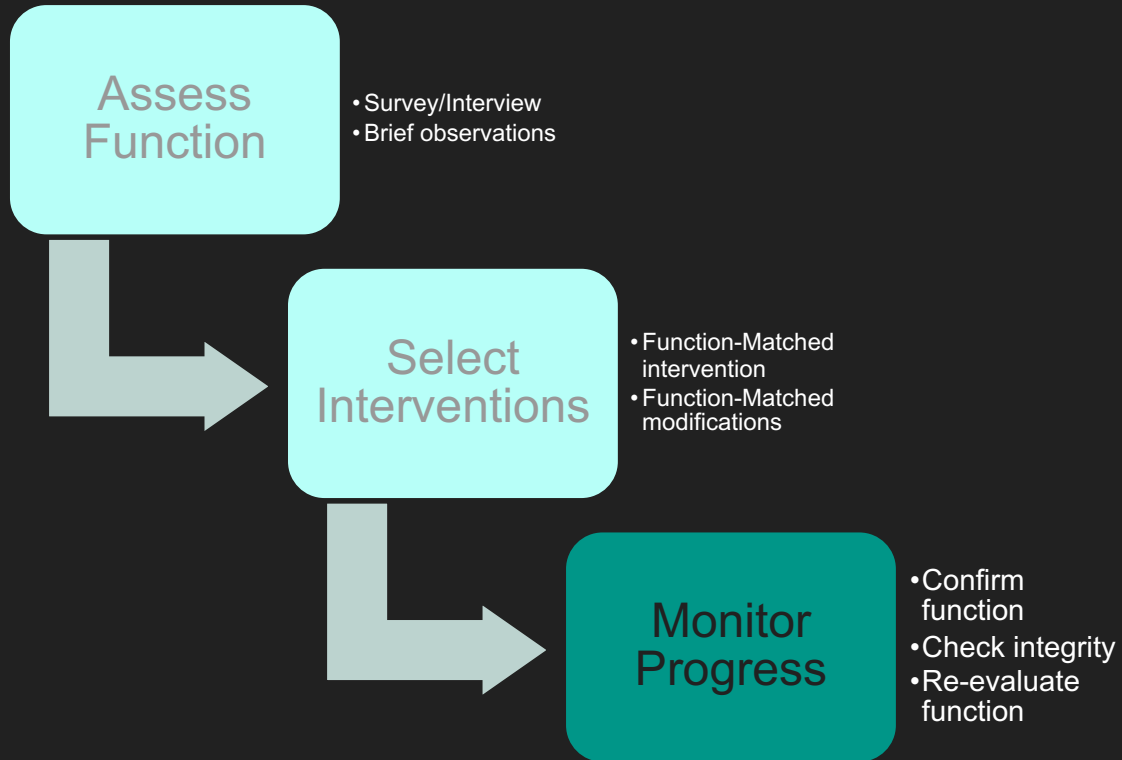
Hypothesized Function: Peer Attention

Step 2: Select Function-Matched Strategies



	Antecedent Modifications	Teaching Modifications	Consequence Modifications
Escape from Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed prompts for break requests into CICO or similar tracker* • Embed prompts for break requests into the classroom • Provide verbal prompts for break requests* • Modify amount or difficulty of work* • Provide opportunity to bring work home* • Allow student to sit next to helpful peer* • Precorrection: Remind student of expectations prior to challenging periods, or of homework prior to going home* • Provide time in school to complete homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach routines around requesting a break* • Teach responses to teacher giving or denying a break* • Teach study skills* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn free time after completing work* • Link daily goal and points earned to work completion* • Reward choices include options to reduce work (e.g., homework pass, leave class early pass, break opportunities)
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Step 2: Progress Monitoring



Identify next steps



We cannot make students learn or behave. We can create environments to increase the likelihood students learn and behave. – *Dr. Tim Lewis*

KEY CONCEPT

Behavior is functionally related to the **teaching environment**.

- Behavior = what the student 'does' (appropriate/inappropriate)
- Teaching environment = all that happens before, during, and after the student's behavior



ABC-F

Routine: “During _____”

Antecedent/Trigger:

When _____



Behavior:

The student does _____



Consequence/Out**C**ome:

... and as a result _____

Therefore, the **F**unction
of the behavior is to: _____

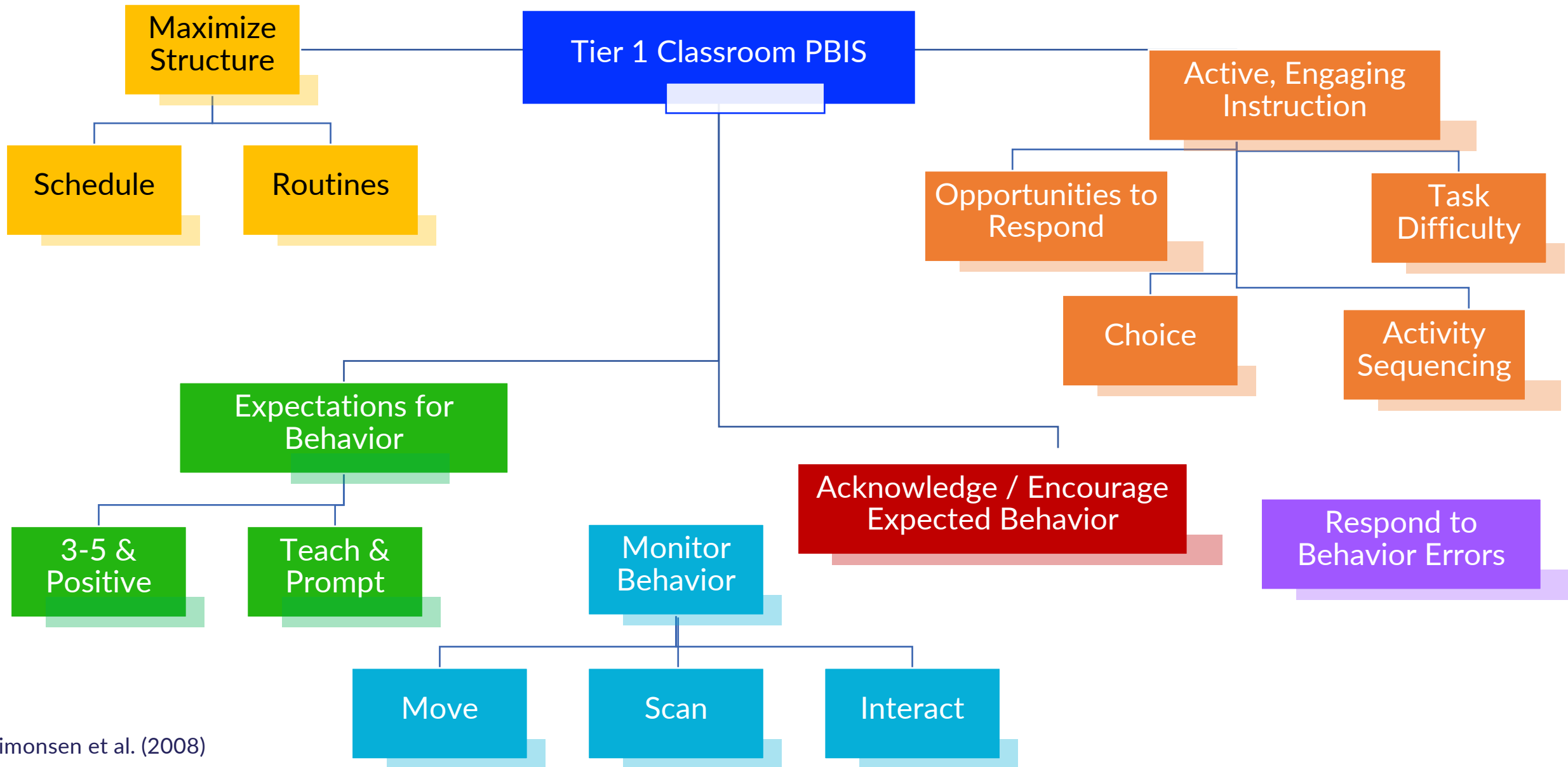


Learning and Teaching Environment

- **Environments** that increase this likelihood are guided by a **core set of effective practices** that are implemented with consistency and fidelity.



Empirically Documented Best Practices



Routines & Procedures

1

5

Active Supervision

Expectations & Rules

2

6

Opportunities to Respond

Encourage Expected Behavior

3

7

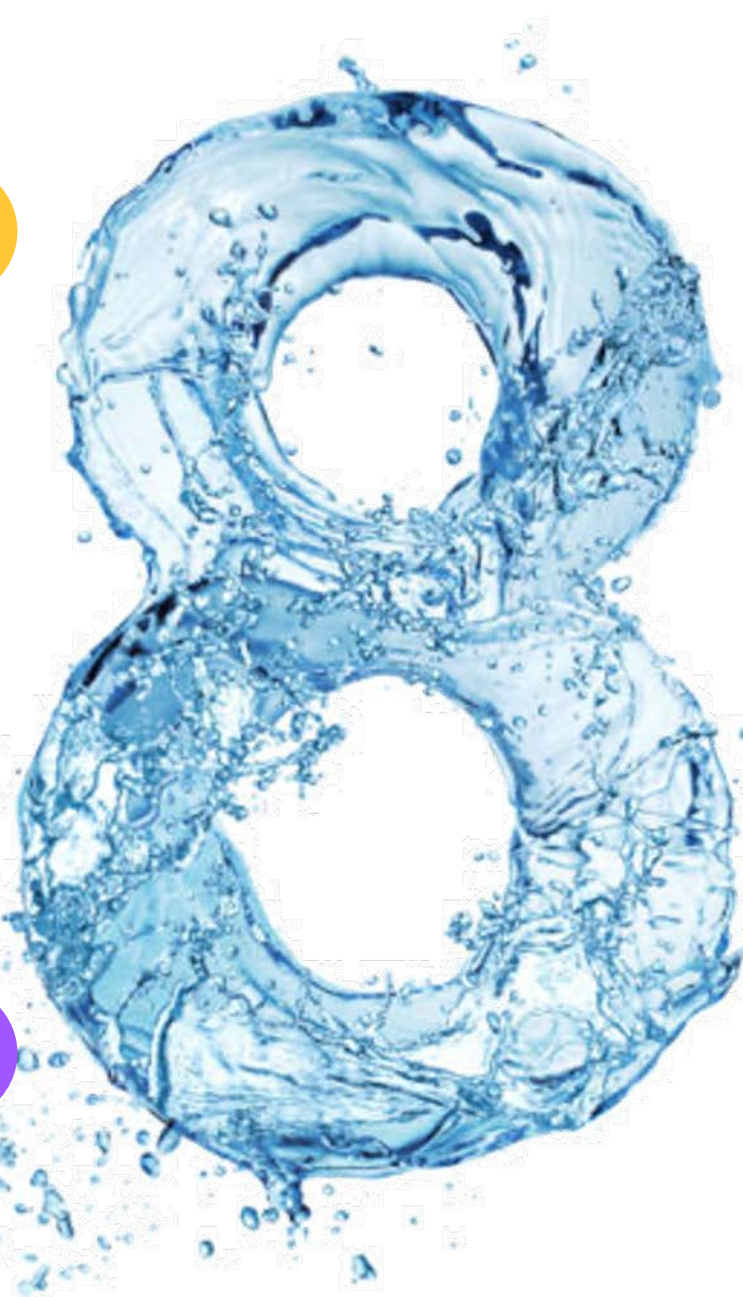
Activity Sequencing + Offering Choice

Respond to Behavior Errors

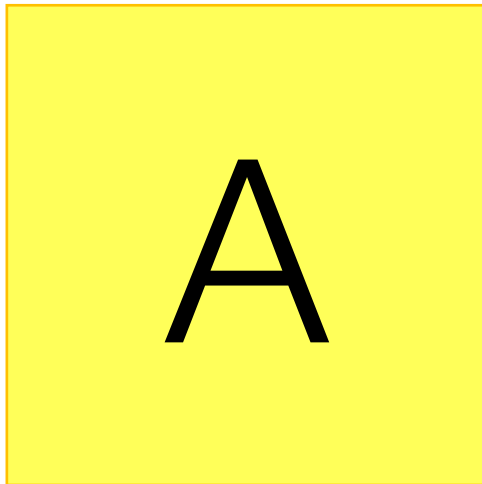
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8

Task Difficulty

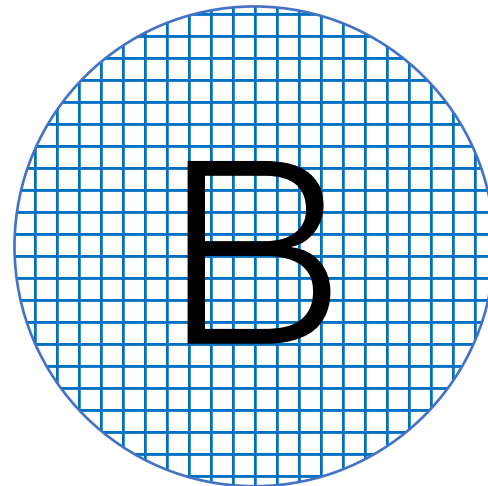


Adult Behaviors = Student Change

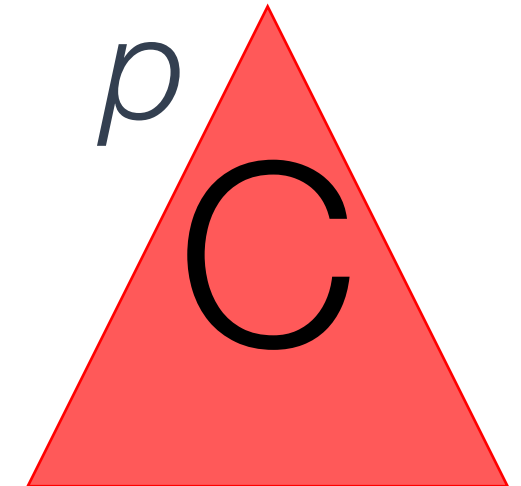


Student Characteristics
skills, abilities, social learning history, function/motivation, academic history

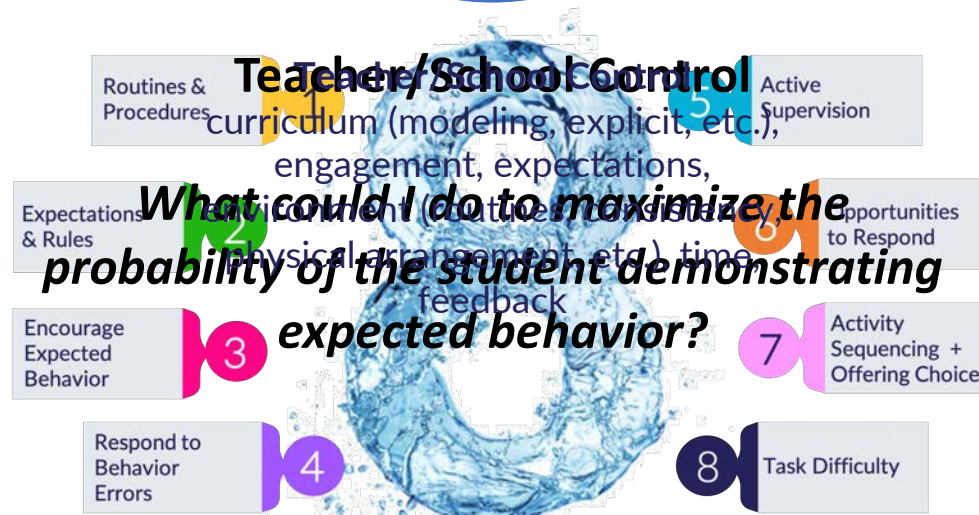
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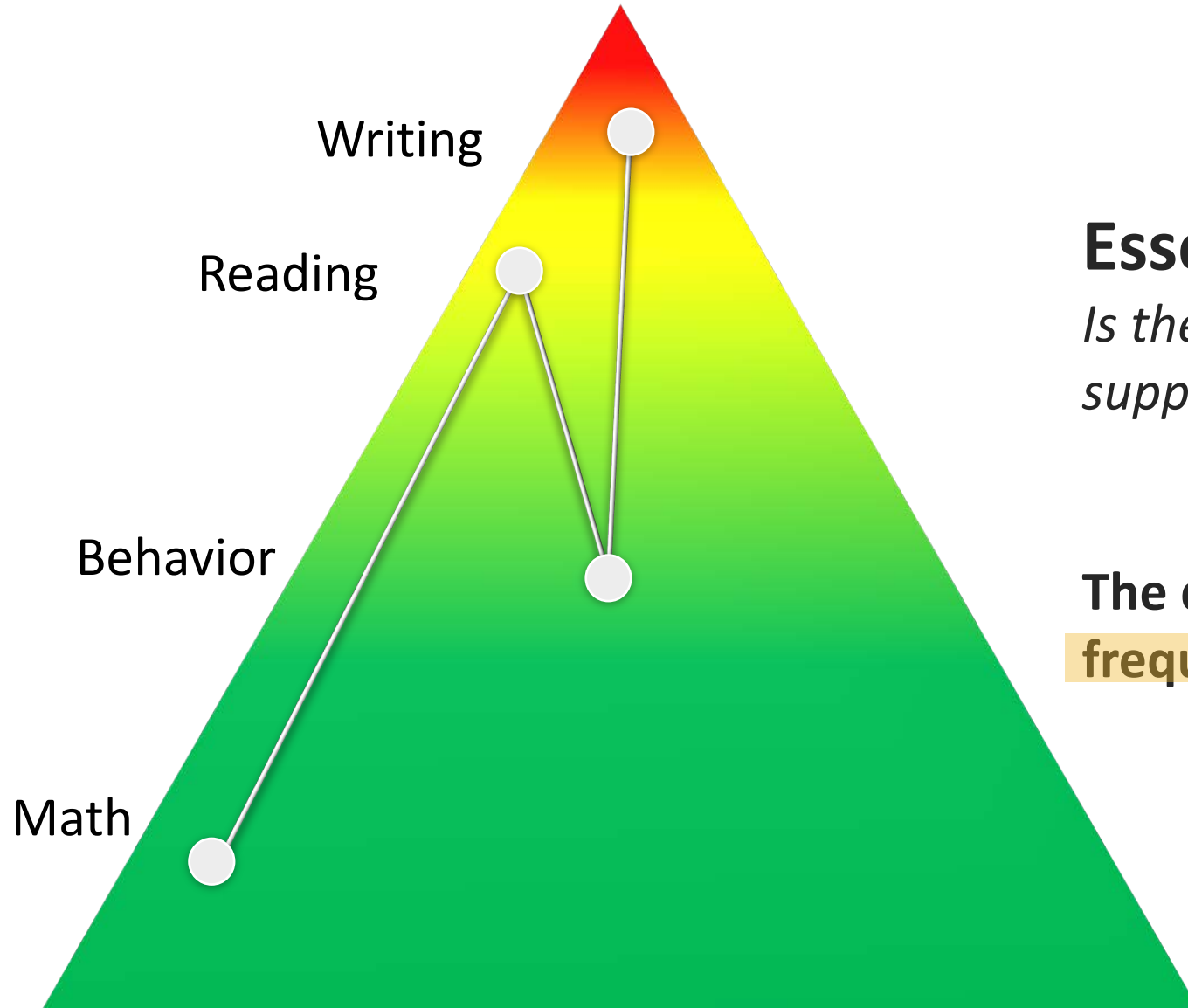
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Desired State
measurable skills that predict favorable student outcomes (SEB & academic)



STUDENT CENTERED SUPPORT

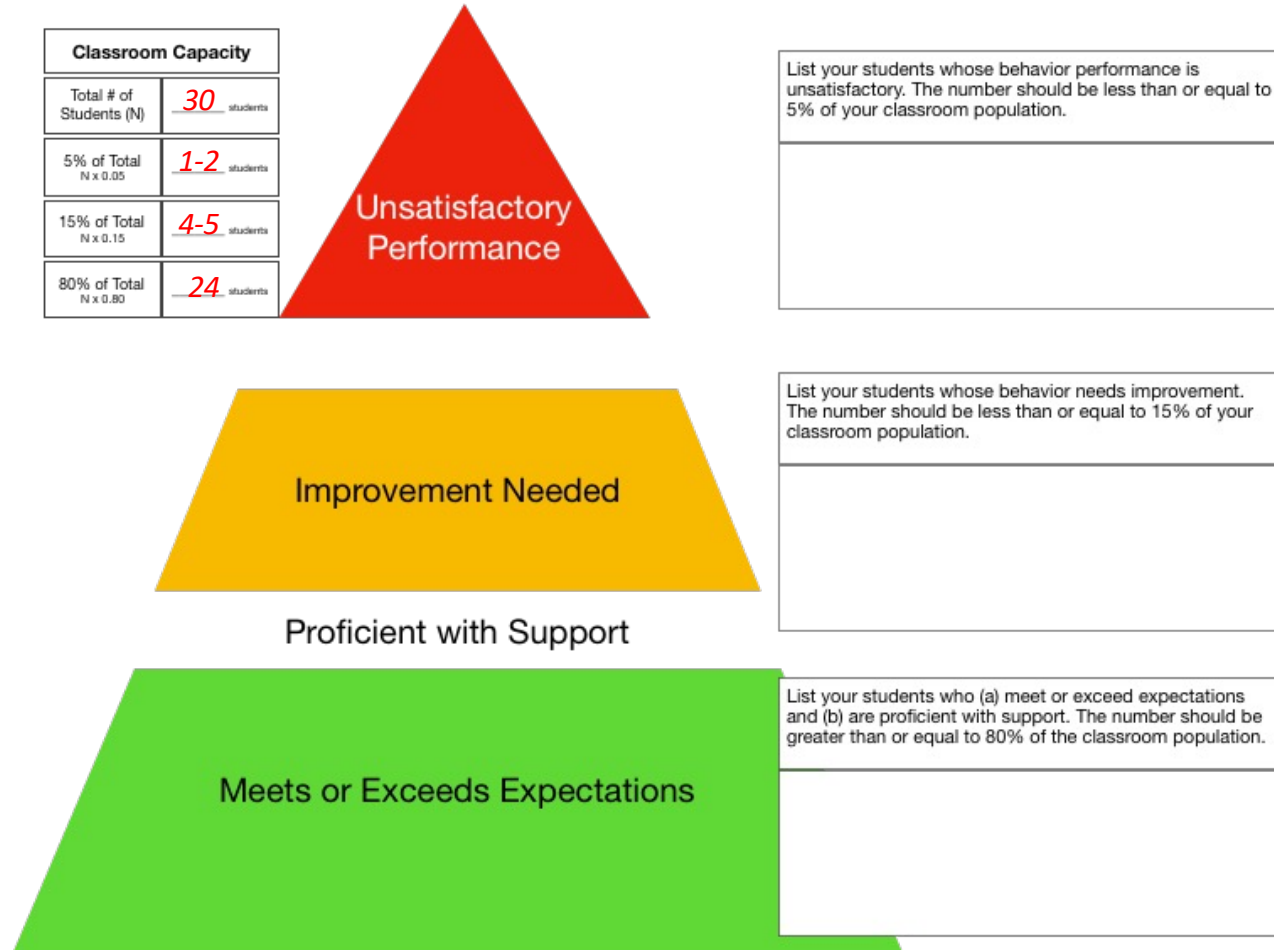


Essential Question:

Is the student successful at this level of support?

The difference is the **intensity** and **frequency** of supports.

CLASSROOM CONTINUUM



August

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
32	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
33	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
34	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
35	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
36	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

September

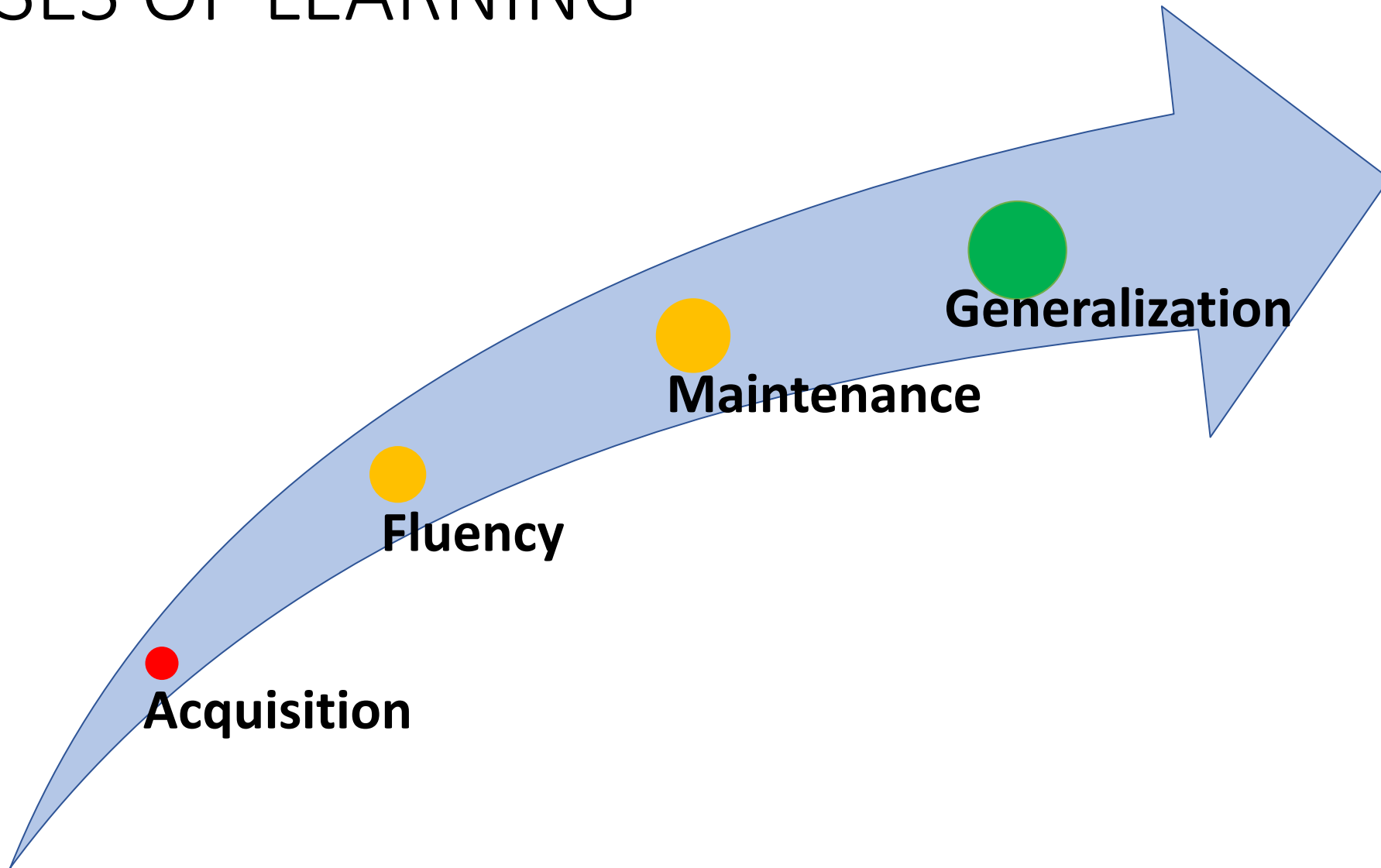
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
35	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
36	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
37	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
38	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
39	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
40	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

October

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
40	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
42	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
43	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
44	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
45	5	6	7	8	9	10	11



PHASES OF LEARNING

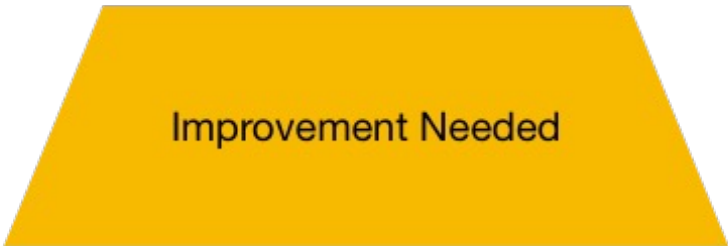


CLASSROOM CONTINUUM

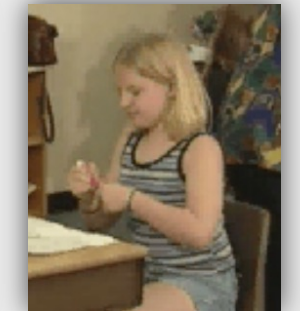
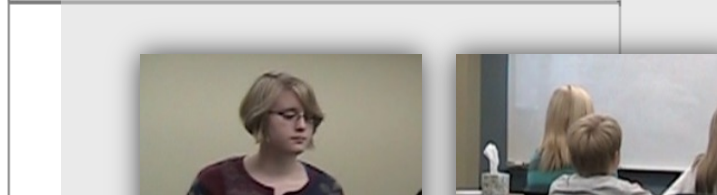
Classroom Capacity	
Total # of Students (N)	<u>30</u> students
5% of Total $N \times 0.05$	<u>1-2</u> students
15% of Total $N \times 0.15$	<u>4-5</u> students
80% of Total $N \times 0.80$	<u>24</u> students



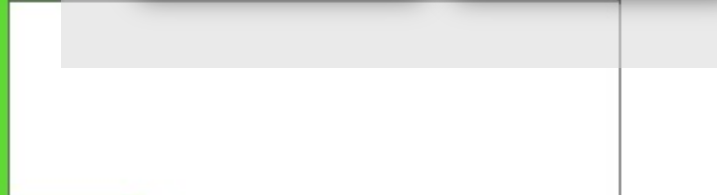
List your students whose behavior performance is unsatisfactory. The number should be less than or equal to 5% of your classroom population.




List your students whose behavior performance needs improvement. The number should be less than or equal to 15% of your classroom population.



List your students whose behavior performance and (b) are proficient or greater than proficient.



Maximize Structure	Respond to Behavior	Actively Engage Students in Observable Ways
1. Classroom Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Clarify expected behavior and provide specific precorrects ⊕ Teach student how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask for attention ○ Self-Monitor ○ Ask for a break ⊕ Consider student participation in social skills instructional group ⊕ Teach academic skills 	4. Encourage Expected Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase reinforcement of expected behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High rates of verbal and non-verbal feedback ○ Increase positive communication between home and school ⊕ Provide increased opportunities for interaction with adults and/or peers ⊕ Provide opportunity to earn time for self-selected activities ⊕ Reward student for attempting tasks, staying focused on tasks 	6. Opportunities to Respond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase OTR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner/Group ○ Verbal and Non-verbal options ○ Pre-conference with student(s) to build a variety of engaging response strategies ⊕ Use technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interactive Games ○ Discussion Boards
2. Classroom Procedures & Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Teach Procedures ⊕ Teach how to ask for help ⊕ Individualize procedure for use of resources (e.g. assistive technology, 100's chart, multiplication table, graphic organizers) ⊕ Check to see if student has needed materials and if not, provide them before they are needed 	5. Discourage Unexpected Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Provide consistent and calm response ⊕ Limit verbal interaction for problem behavior ⊕ Teacher ignore problem ⊕ Prompt peers to ignore problem behavior ⊕ Non-verbal signal ⊕ Offer brief assistance ⊕ Offer alternative methods or materials for task ⊕ Schedule standard times to make up work 	7. Task Difficulty & Academic Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Design assignments to meet student skill level ⊕ Pre-teach content ⊕ Modify amount or type of activity ⊕ Provide extra help/check for understanding
3. Active Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase Active Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule more frequent interactions ○ Proximity Control ○ Provide task check-in (eg, 3 more minutes...) 		8. Activity Sequencing & Offering Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Provide opportunity to help other students ⊕ Provide option to work independently ⊕ Provide task list and allow student to choose order of completion ⊕ Provide opportunity to engage in a preferred activity first ⊕ Allow student to choose location, materials, etc

Using the **Great** to Increase Student Success 

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Function-based actions: Purple = Gain Attention Blue = Avoid Attention Green = Avoid Task

Purple: Gain Attention

Blue: Avoid Attention

Green: Avoid Task

ALLISON



Maximize Structure	Respond to Behavior	Actively Engage Students in Observable Ways
<p>1. Classroom Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Clarify expected behavior and provide specific precorrects ⊕ Teach student how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask for attention ○ Self-Monitor ○ Ask for a break ⊕ Consider student participation in social skills instructional group ⊕ Teach academic skills 	<p>4. Encourage Expected Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase reinforcement of expected behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High rates of verbal and non-verbal feedback ○ Increase positive communication between home and school ⊕ Provide increased opportunities for interaction with adults and/or peers ⊕ Provide opportunity to earn time for self-selected activities ⊕ Reward student for attempting tasks, staying focused on tasks 	<p>6. Opportunities to Respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase OTR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner/Group ○ Verbal and Non-verbal options ○ Pre-conference with student(s) to build a variety of engaging response strategies ⊕ Use technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interactive Games ○ Discussion Boards
<p>2. Classroom Procedures & Routines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Teach Procedures ⊕ Teach how to ask for help ⊕ Individualize procedure for use of resources (e.g. assistive technology, 100's chart, multiplication table, graphic organizers) ⊕ Check to see if student has needed materials and if not, provide them before they are needed 	<p>5. Discourage Unexpected Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Provide consistent and calm response ⊕ Limit verbal interaction for problem behavior ⊕ Teacher ignore problem ⊕ Prompt peers to ignore problem behavior ⊕ Non-verbal signal ⊕ Offer brief assistance ⊕ Offer alternative methods or materials for task ⊕ Schedule standard times to make up work 	<p>7. Task Difficulty & Academic Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Design assignments to meet student skill level ⊕ Pre-teach content ⊕ Modify amount or type of activity ⊕ Provide extra help/check for understanding
<p>3. Active Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Increase Active Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule more frequent interactions ○ Proximity Control ○ Provide task check-in (eg, 3 more minutes...) 	<p>8. Activity Sequencing & Offering Choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Provide opportunity to help other students ⊕ Provide option to work independently ⊕ Provide task list and allow student to choose order of completion ⊕ Provide opportunity to engage in a preferred activity first ⊕ Allow student to choose location, materials, etc 	

<p>During:</p> <p>Work time</p>	<p>When:</p> <p>Teacher circulates near</p>	<p>Student will:</p> <p>Drop pencil, get tissues, go to the trashcan</p>	<p>Outcome:</p> <p>Teacher moves on</p>
			<p>Function:</p> <p>Avoid attention</p>

KEVIN



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During: Class instruction and work time	When: The teacher is working at the board	Student will: Make loud noises, tap others, make faces, dance	Outcome: Students laugh
			Function: Gain attention

RAYANNE



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Routine – During... Class work time	Antecedent (Trigger) – When... The teacher gives a direction	Behavior - Student will... Refuse, shout rude and disrespectful comments, sigh dramatically	outCome: Other students laugh
			Function: Gain attention

INTENSITY + FREQUENCY

- General education classroom
 - Several students not meeting behavior expectations
- Teacher focused on intensity and frequency use of effective classroom practices
- Positive student outcomes
 - Decrease instances of unexpected behavior

