

*Lunchtime Keynote*

# Academic Underachievement & Problem Behavior: A Case of the Chicken and the Egg or...

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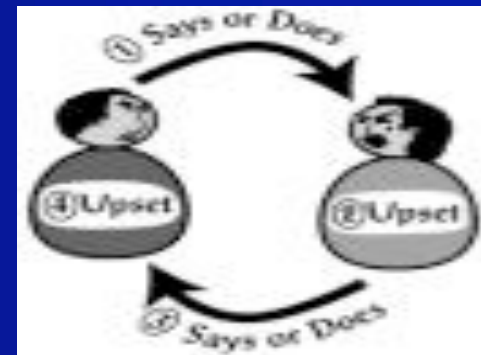
**“Low achievement and  
problem behaviors go  
hand in hand”**

*~ Kauffman, 1997 p.247 ~*



"The academic deficits of these students thus may be exacerbated by the lack of effective academic instruction they receive, which in turn is due in part to their disruptive classroom behavior."

*~ Sutherland, Wehby & Yoder, 2002 ~*





# Common Assumptions

“Get the student’s behavior under control first and then address academics.”

Or

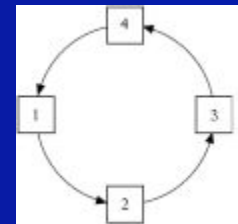
“You can’t teach these students until their behavior has been changed.”

# Implications

- Many undesirable behaviors in the classroom are motivated by avoidance of the task
- Instructional materials may serve as an aversive stimulus for the disruptive behavior (resulting in removal of the student)
- Teachers may provide low level work to avoid upsetting the student
- Students learning in basic skills is characterized by “splinter skills”

# Negative Reinforcement Paradigm

- EBD student's disruptive behavior is *negatively reinforced* by removal of the academic task (or removal of student)
- Teacher's are *negatively reinforced* by removal of the the disruptive behaviors (changing task or removing student)



- Study showed students with EBD rates of correct oral responses were approximately .84 to 1.2 per hour
- Also, teachers praised student correct responding at rate of .68 This means Students with EBD receive teacher praise for correct responding 4 to 5 times per day (Van Acker et al. 1996)

### Similar findings for other subjects

- Spelling 40% correct
- Vocabulary 43% correct

### Independent work % correct

- Reading 51.1 to 62.5
- Math 20.15-69.8
- Spelling 53.45 – 76.47

(Hogan & Prater, 1993; Carr & Punzo, 1993; Shores et al 1993)

# Rule for Initial Learning



A basic rule in the design of Instructional Programs, correct responding for initial learning needs to be at a rate of:

- **CEC- 80% (1987)**
- **Direct Instruction- 70%**



Teaching strategies:  
Study showed that:

**Less than 20% of teacher directives to students with and without disabilities were preceded with information that would enable the students to respond correctly.**

**(Shores et al, 1993).**

Focus on compliance vs. academics

- Correct compliance responses to teacher directions were **five times** higher than correct responses to academic tasks

(Van et al 1996)

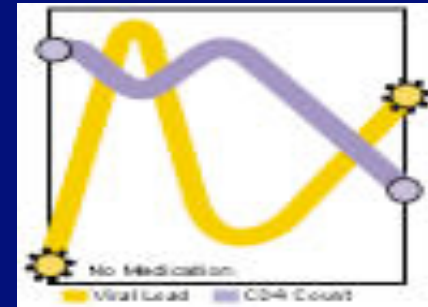
# Design Independent work for correct responding

Study showed when independent work was set at "easy" (90% correct responding) versus difficult (less than 70% correct) found **more desirable behavior and less**

**problem behavior.**

(DePaepe et al 1996)





- There exists a clear relationship between

# Academic difficulty & Problem Behavior

# Implication

If we carefully attend to instruction we may not only find that:

a. Students learn more  
but also

a. Problem behavior is reduced





# ~ No Child Left Behind ~

The stated purpose of NCLB is to  
“Close the achievement gap  
between disadvantaged and  
minority students and their peers”

# Perspective-General Education

Academic Achievement has become a major focus of concern

- School reform
- School improvement plans

Characteristics of effective schools

# Systemic Components: Two Prominent Sources

 Learning First Alliance

[www.learningfirst.org](http://www.learningfirst.org)

2. Just For The Kids

[www.just4kids.org](http://www.just4kids.org)

# Learning First Alliance

(Togneri & Anderson , 2003)

- Founded in 1997,
- A permanent partnership of leading national education organizations working together to improve student learning.
- Many “talked the talk”
- Found only isolated islands of excellence

# Learning First Report

- This report showed that five high poverty school districts significantly raised student achievement by focusing on district wide strategies to improve instruction.

- For example, in one district in 1994, 65 percent of African American students met minimum expectations compared with 84% of white students, by 2002 the percent of African American students meeting minimum requirements had risen to 94% compared to 96% whites.

# Emerging Model

Significant Study: Learning First Alliance

*Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts do to Improve Instruction and Achievement Schools*

~Togneri & Anderson, 2003~



# Key Findings

Two Key Variables For Improving School Achievement:

1. Developing a supportive infrastructure at district level
2. Addressing effective instruction

# Developing a Supportive Infrastructure at District Level



## ~Seven Findings~

1. Districts had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions.
2. Districts put in place a systemwide approach to improving instruction.
3. Districts instilled visions that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement.

4. Districts made decisions based on data, not instinct.
5. Districts adopted new approaches to professional development.
6. Districts redefined leadership roles.
7. Districts committed to sustaining reform over the long haul.

~Togneri & Anderson, 2003, pp 5-8.~

# Key Influences on Student Learning

## Review of Research

THE WALLACE FOUNDATION (2004)

Kenneth Leithwood


Karen Seashore Louis


Stephen Anderson

Kyla Wahistrom

**“The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of the total school effects” (p.5)**

# Leadership Effects on Learning

 Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school (p.5)

 Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most (p.5)

"Once upon a time the classroom teacher was required to provide school buildings, pupils, books, materials, and instruction. Since those primitive days, there has developed a department of school activity called administration, whose primary function is to provide everything which will improve classroom teaching."

~ *W.W. Charters (1918)*

(Fraser, 2005, p.438)

# Principal as Instructional Leader

Powerful Tool:

## CLASSROOM WALK THROUGHS



# Classroom Walk-Through...

A tool designed to increase the dialogue on instruction leading to improving instruction and student achievement





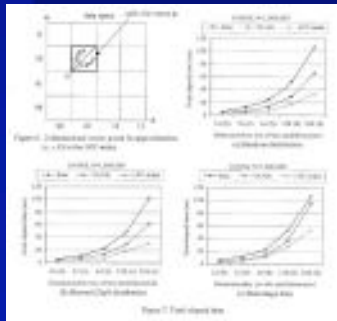
A focused classroom visit  
for a brief period of time  
followed by  
reflection with the teacher



# Classroom Walk-Through...



A way to talk  
with teachers  
about improvement  
in teaching and learning.



# Classroom Walk-Through...

A tool to maximize the administrator's time in the classroom.





**“The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of the total school effects” (Wallace Foundation, p.5)**

# Principal's Time

## Where

- Office area
- Hallways/Grounds
- Off campus
- In classrooms

## Time Spent

- 65 %
- 17%
- 11%
- **7%**

Howell (1981), Morris (1981), Kmetz & Willower (1982), Stronge (1988);  
Frase (2005).

# Critical Components Supporting Instruction

1. A vision focused on student learning and instructional improvement.
2. System wide curricula that:
  - connect to state standards,
  - are coherent across grade levels
  - provide teachers with clear expectations what to teach

# Addressing Effective Instruction



“ In all districts, regardless of the catalyst, leaders came to the same conclusion:

To improve student achievement, they need to emphasize a key factor within their control- *Improving instruction*”

~Togneri & Anderson, 2003, p11.~

# Emerging Model

Significant Study: Learning First Alliance

*Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts do to Improve Instruction and Achievement Schools*

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# Emerging model

Two Key Variables For Improving School Achievement:

1. Developing a supportive infrastructure at district level
2. Addressing effective instruction

# Developing a Supportive Infrastructure at District Level



## ~Seven Findings~

1. Districts had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions.
2. Districts put in place a systemwide approach to improving instruction.
3. Districts instilled visions that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement.

4. Districts made decisions based on data, not instinct.
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# Addressing Effective Instruction

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To improve student achievement, they need to emphasize a key factor within their control- *Improving instruction*”

~Togneri & Anderson, 2003, p11.~

~ Wallace Foundation~ 75%

# Critical Components Supporting Instruction

1. Curricula that:
  - connect to state standards,
  - are coherent across grade levels
  - provide teachers with clear expectations what to teach
  - Is well designed

## 2. Assessment that:

- Informs instructional practices
- Hold schools accountable for results
- Monitors progress
- Provides for accountability
- Check for:
  - a. Understanding
  - b. On track
  - c. Mastery

# 3. Key Instructional Practices that enable:

- Strong start (1<sup>st</sup> 7 minutes rule)
- Opportunities for all to respond early
- Opportunities for all to respond correctly
- Continuous assessment and feedback
- Awareness of pre-requisite skills
- Teaching to mastery
- Appropriate placement
- At least 70% success rate new learning
- 90-100% success rate for ind. work

# Three Conclusions:

1. Need to move from Islands of Excellence to standard Districts of Excellence in the pursuit of academic achievement then...

## 2. We need to sharpen our:

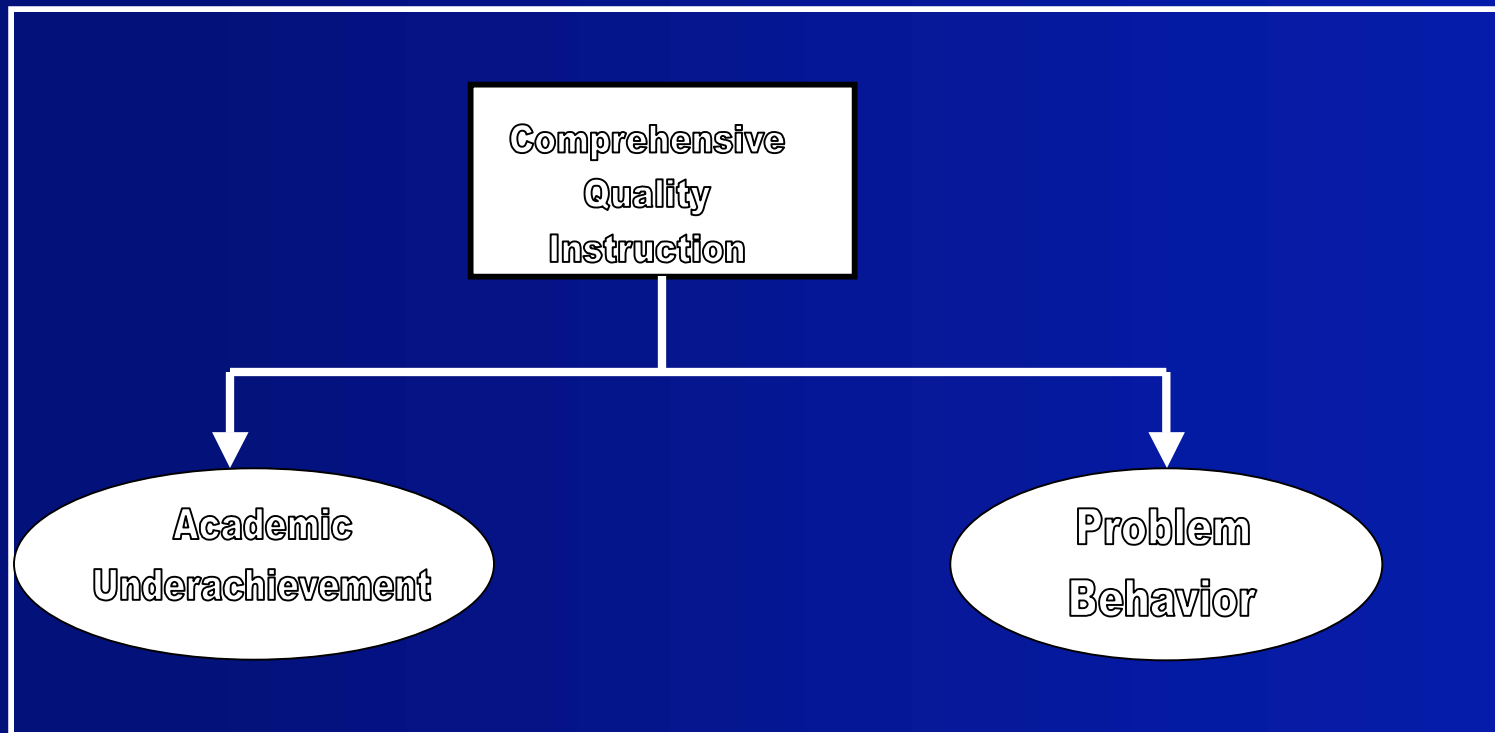
- A. Supportive Infrastructure at District Level for instruction and learning
- B. Active Instructional Leadership from the Principal
- C. Quality Instruction at the Classroom Level

### 3. Opening Question

**“Academic Underachievement & Problem Behavior:  
A Case of the Chicken and the Egg or...?”**



# My answer is "or..."



# It can be done

## It's Time



Thank you

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[www.behaviorassociates.org](http://www.behaviorassociates.org)

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