Supportive Physical Environments
Leveraging MTSS in the Classroom

Summer 2024

mimtsstac.org
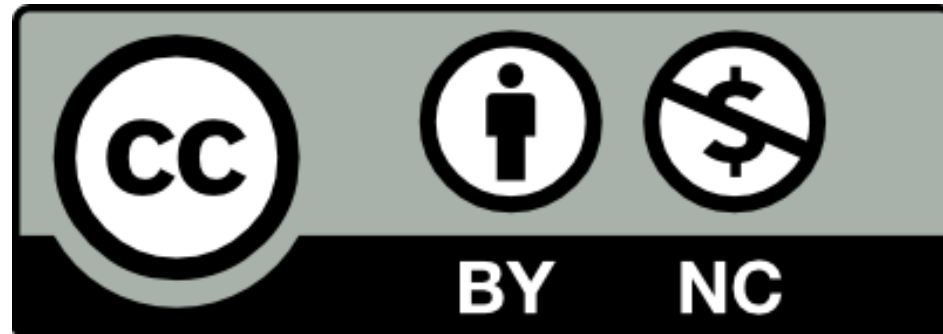
Acknowledgments

The content for this training day was developed based on the work of:

- National Center on PBIS

- CASEL

- Missouri PBIS

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Group Agreements

We are Responsible

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

We are Engaged

- Share "air time"
- Plan to participate in multiple ways
  - Chat, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, unmute
  - Ask questions

Training Effectiveness

- At the end of the session, you will be asked to provide feedback on today's training

- Results will be used to make improvements to professional learning and for reporting to TA Center stakeholders

- One of the feedback questions you will see is related to promoting and positively portraying diversity among educators and learners (e.g., focus on asset-based language, positive representation of multiple identities)

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Purpose

This training series supports teachers in developing classroom Social, Emotional, Behavioral (SEB) and instructional supports with a goal of improving student knowledge and skills related to maintaining positive relationships, managing emotions, and academic performance.

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Intended Outcomes

- Explore options for physical arrangement to improve safety and increase engagement

- Review types of visuals and how they can support social, emotional, and behavioral skill development

- Assess the needs of your classroom and what strategies would improve the overall physical environment

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Social, Emotional, Behavioral (SEB) Supports

Promote **well-being** and **mental health**:

- Social – how we interact

- Emotional – how we feel

- Behavioral – how we act

Moving beyond our previous ways of thinking about "classroom management"

(U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2021)

SEB Supports: Leveraging the PBIS and SEL Framework

(National Center on PBIS; CASEL)
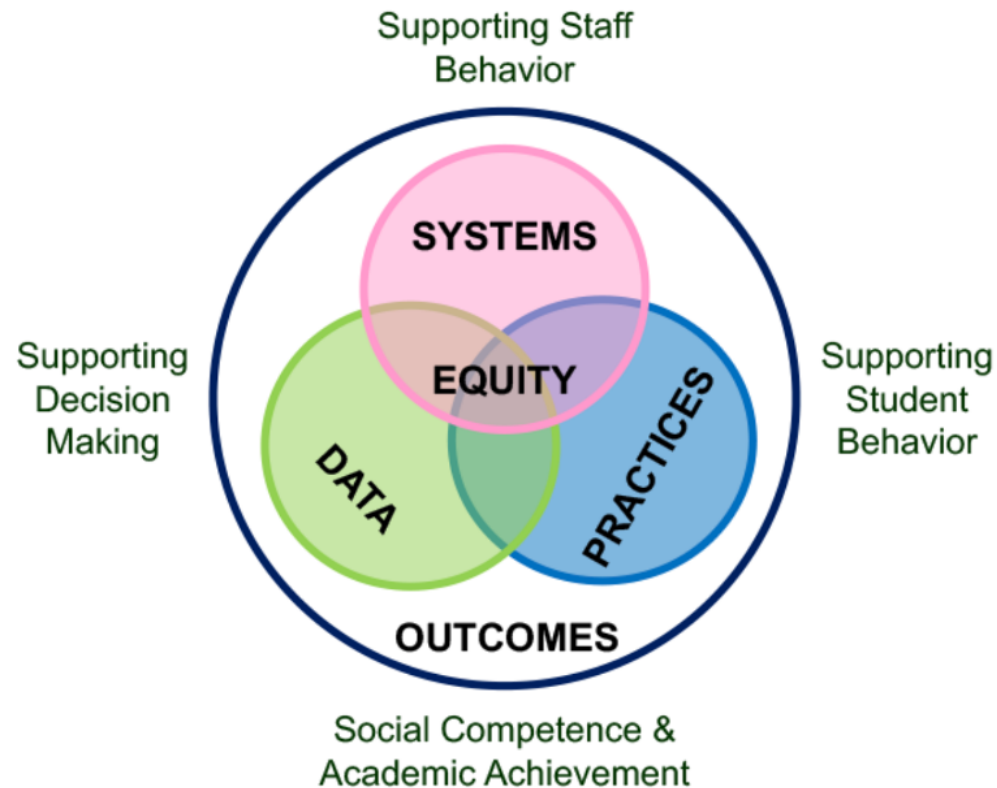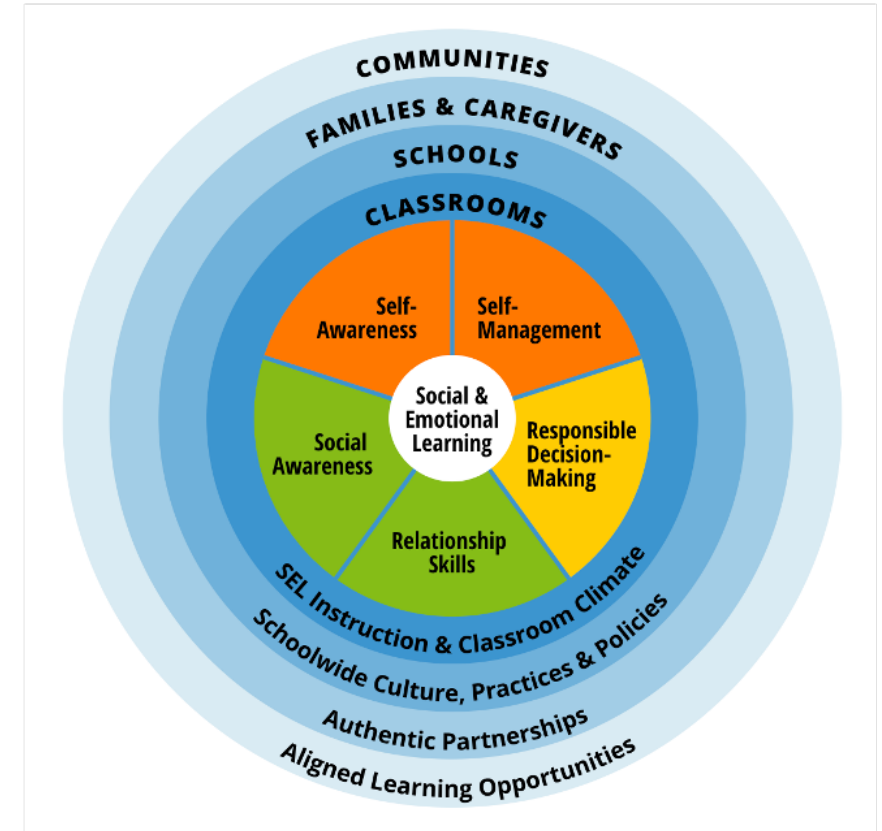
Getting Organized

- *Resource Guide for Classroom SEB Supports*
  - Examples
  - Resources
- *Classroom SEB and Instructional Practices Checklist*
  - Details the practices
  - Space to document your personal plan

Classroom SEB Supports Components

- Supportive Relationships
- **Supportive Environments**
- Engaging Instruction
- Clear Expectations
- Teaching SEB Skills
- Supporting Regulation
- Response Strategies

Research for Physical Arrangement

- Seating arrangements are important structural events/antecedents because manipulations of these are **naturalistic interventions** that may unobtrusively alter behavior positively

- The physical arrangement of the classroom has the potential to **encourage desirable behavior** or contribute to students' interfering behaviors

Wannarka, Ruhl, 2008

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Physical Environment Considerations

- Minimize crowding & distractions

- Easy to maintain proximity

- Transitions/movement

- Seating

- Design to prevent predictable behavior

Safe and Predictable Environments

Trauma-informed considerations

- Location of student desk (e.g., near the teacher's desk, visibility to the classroom or the door)

- Safe space to relax

- Predictable ways to move throughout the classroom

(Scott, 2018; The National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network, 2017)
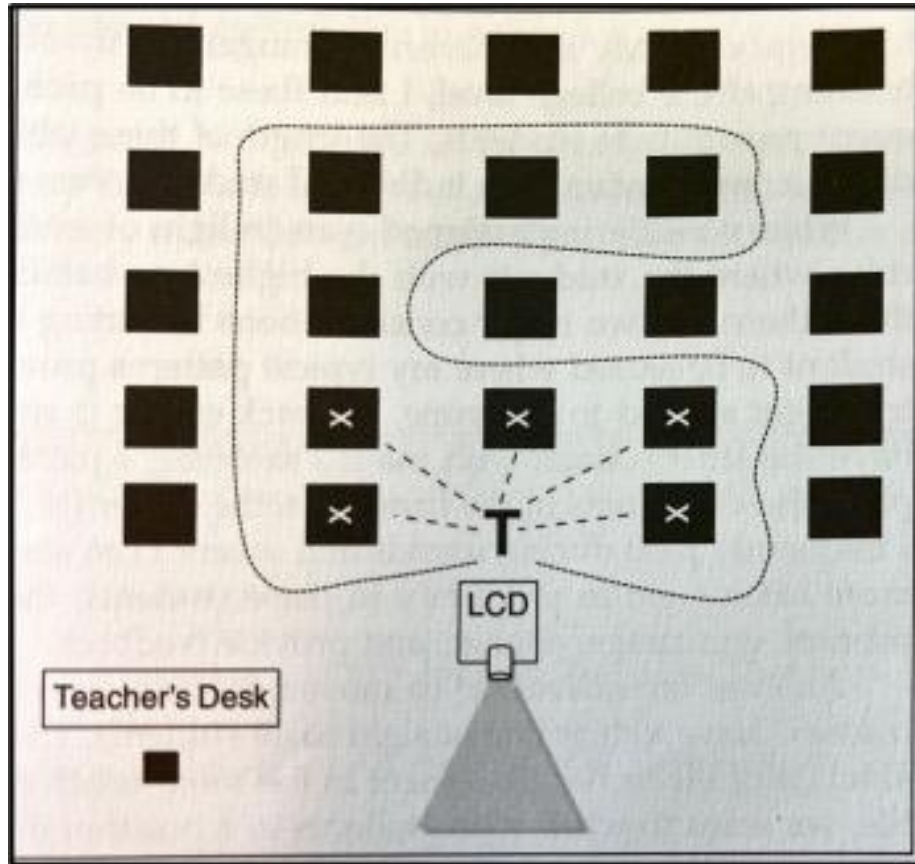
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Round Tables or Clusters

(Scott, 2017; p.89)
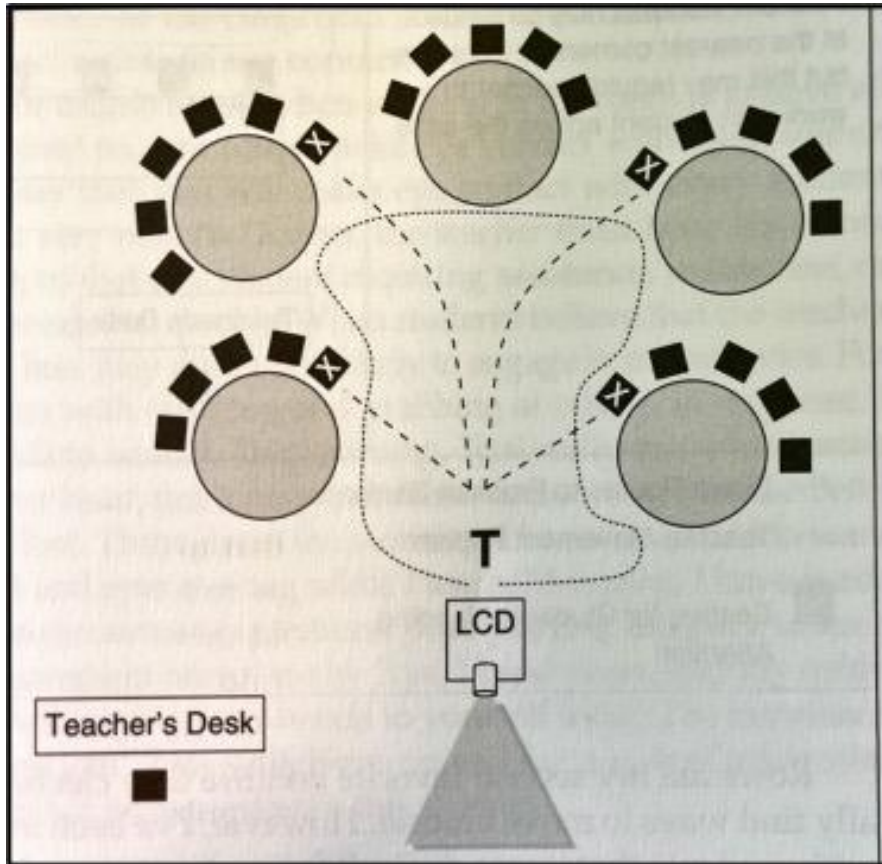
- Teacher can be at every table or cluster with the least actual movement

- Teacher can make a beeline to any table or cluster very quickly and easily

- Students who need more support can be seated at the inside end seat to make direct approaches easy
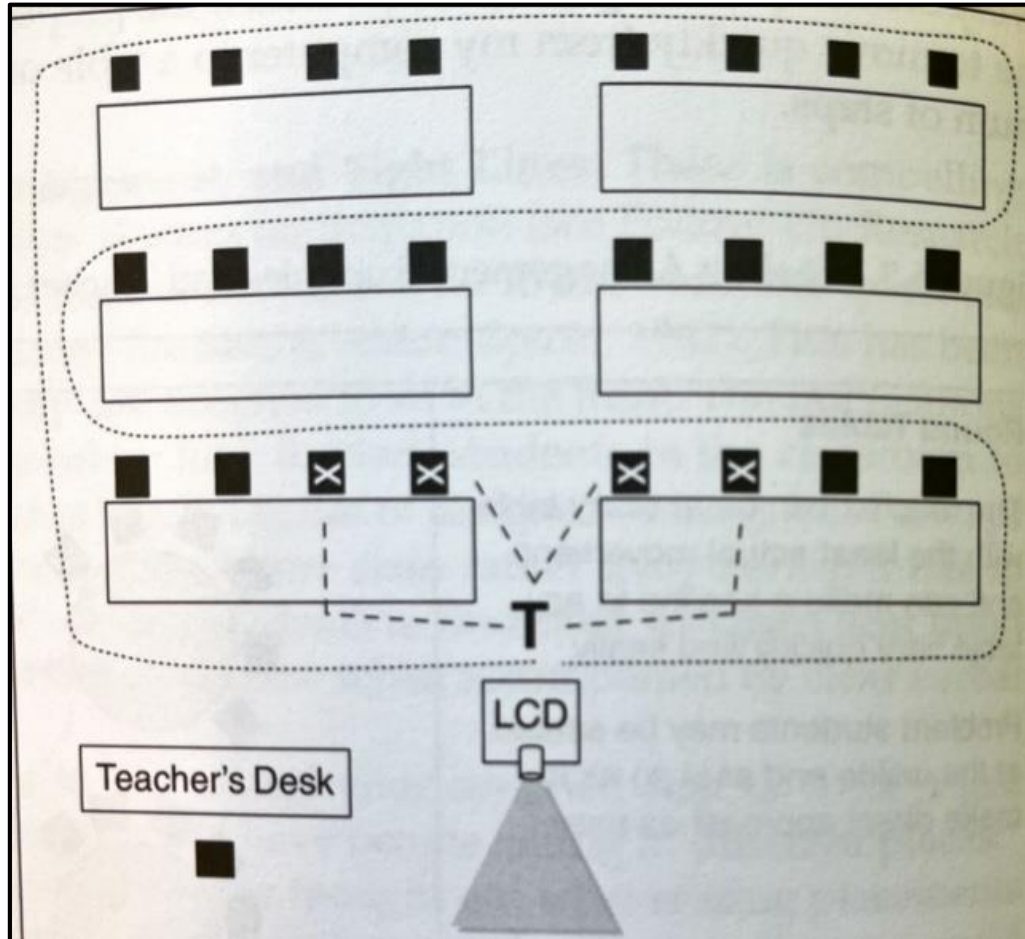
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Rows

(Scott, 2017; p.89)

- Requires more teacher movement

- Teacher can move horizontally across desks as well as vertically

- Select specific seats for students who need more support – in the front where the teacher makes rounds and has easy access for a direct routine during instruction
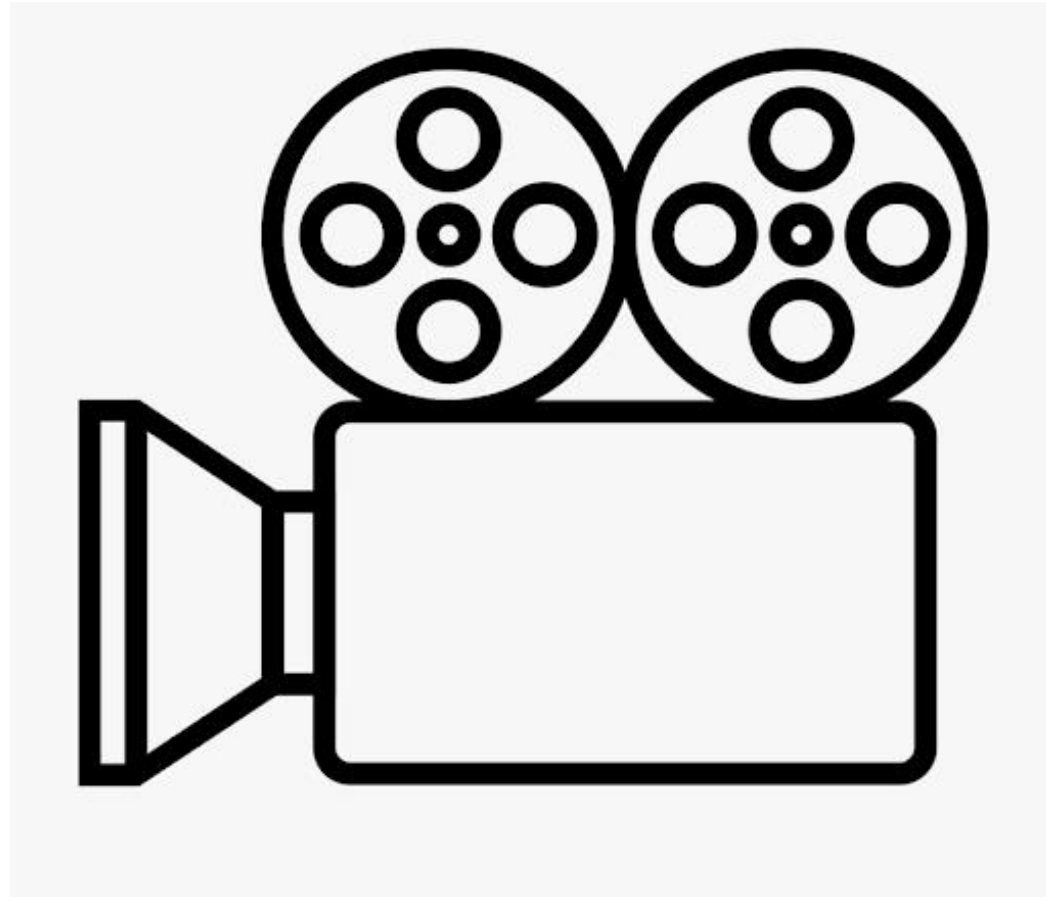
Long Tables

- Requires more teacher movement

- Restrictive of movement – teachers must make large circling routes to see every student

- Seat students who need more support nearest corners or front row

- May require teacher to work with student across the table

(Scott, 2017; p.90)

Physical Arrangement: Dr. Terrance Scott

Activity 1

- Review the *Checklist for Evaluating the Physical Organization of the Classroom*

- Answer Yes or No based on your own classroom or one that you support

- Identify 1 or 2 priorities for improving the physical environment

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Benefits of Using Visuals

- Improve understanding of content and directions

- Teach and prompt school-wide & classroom expectations and routines

- Promote safe & predictable environments

- Support time management and organization

- Make associations between pieces of information

- Support language development

- Create independence and engagement with academic, social, and functional skills

- Assist with working memory

- Teach and support social interaction and social competency

- Support trauma-informed practices; reduce anxiety

- Decrease questions

- And many more!

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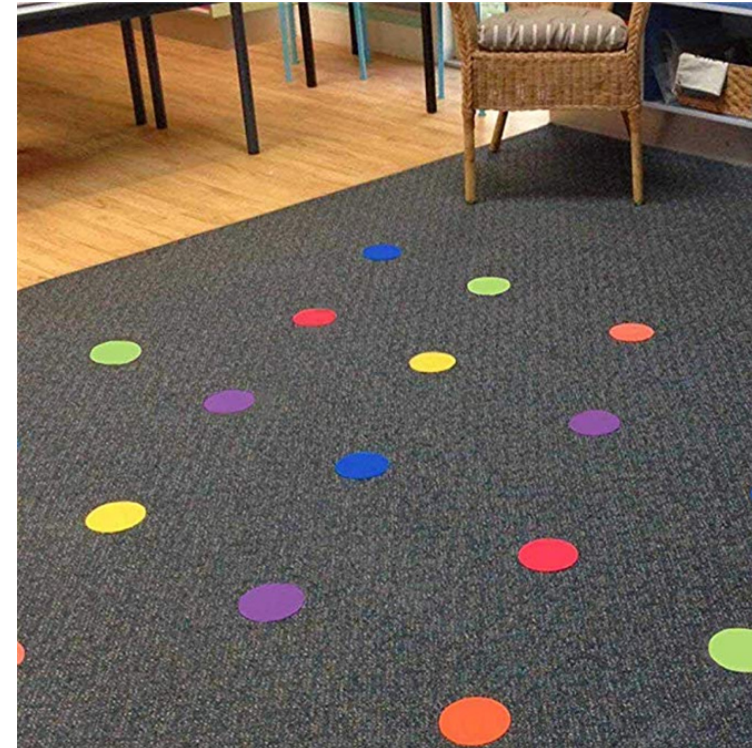
Research-Based Reasons for Visual Supports

- When we present information verbally, the words are only available for a brief moment and then "disappear"; when presented visually, the information is available for as long as students need it

- Visuals grab and hold attention better than auditory information for most people

- Retention of information increases dramatically when using visuals

- The visual cortex is the only part of the brain not impacted in students with autism (Stoner et al., 2014)

Nelson, Reed, & Walling (1976); Stokes (2002); Gutierrez (2014); Kouyoumdjian (2012)
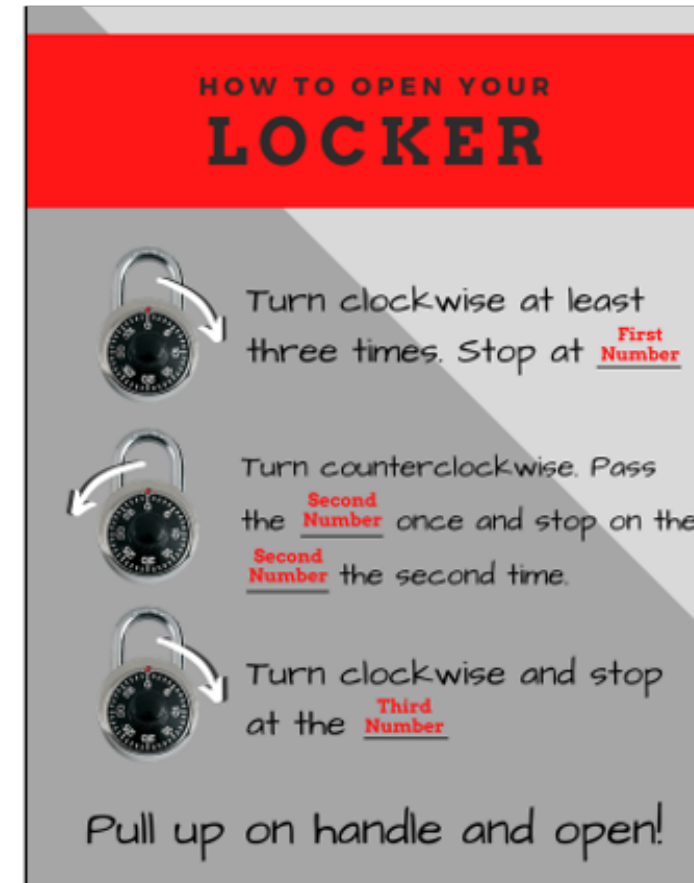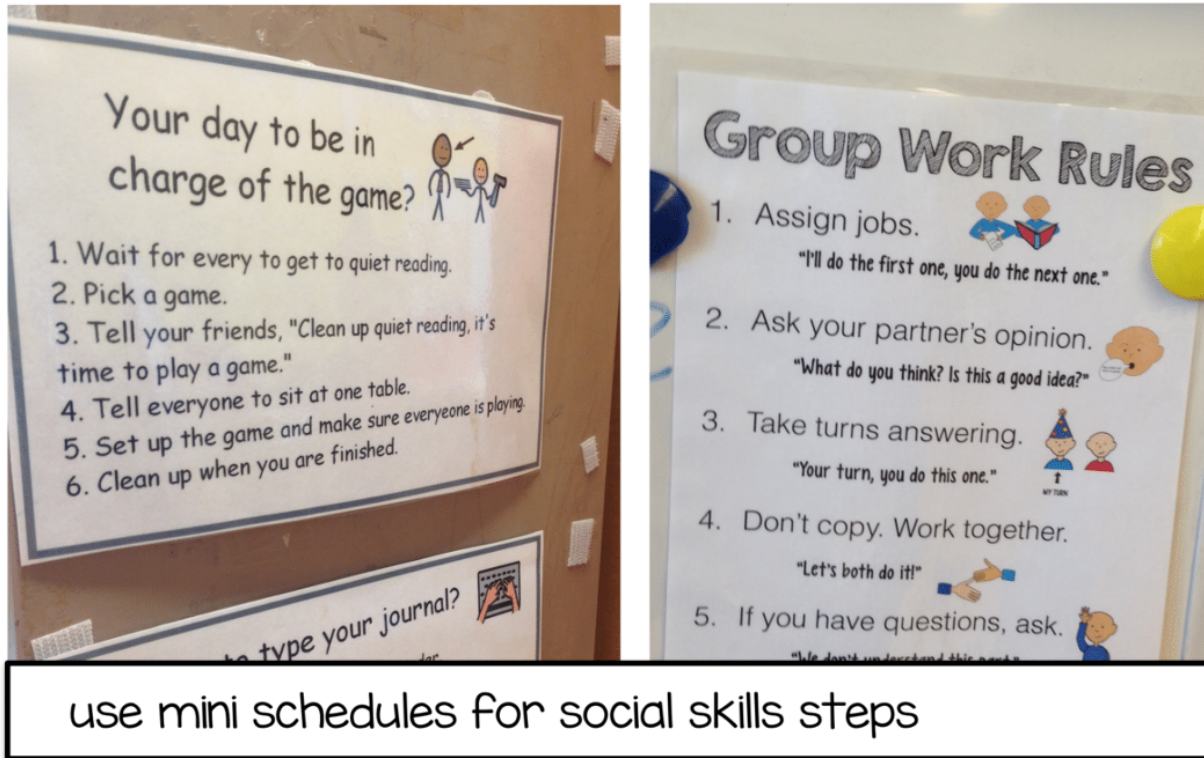
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Daily Schedules Increase Predictability
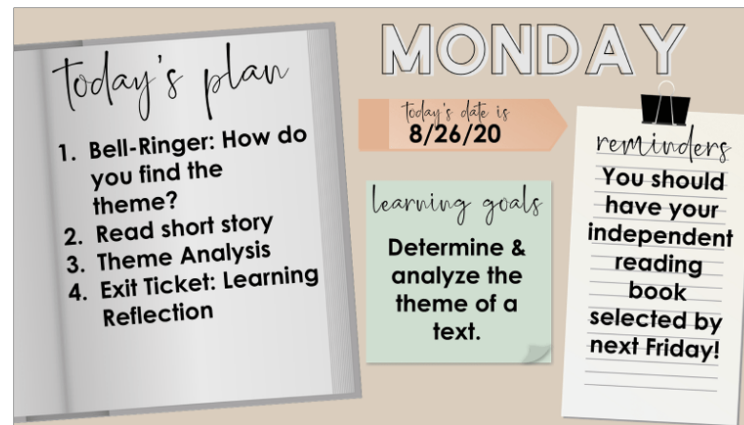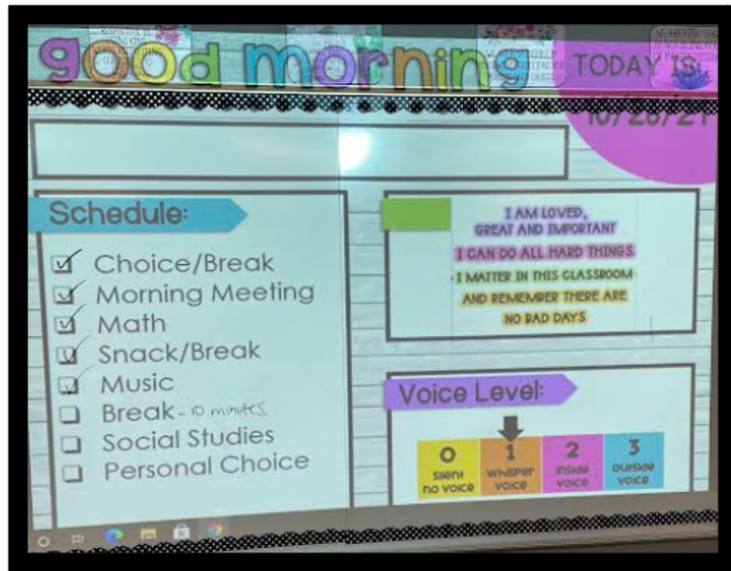
Increasing Structure in the Environment

Prevent Behavior by Breaking Down Difficult Tasks/Activities

Your day to be in charge of the game?

1. Wait for every to get to quiet reading.
2. Pick a game.
3. Tell your friends, "Clean up quiet reading, it's time to play a game."
4. Tell everyone to sit at one table.
5. Set up the game and make sure everyeone is playing.
6. Clean up when you are finished.

type your journal?

use mini schedules for social skills steps

Group Work Rules

1. Assign jobs.
   "I'll do the first one, you do the next one."

2. Ask your partner's opinion.
   "What do you think? Is this a good idea?"

3. Take turns answering.
   "Your turn, you do this one."

4. Don't copy. Work together.
   "Let's both do it!"

5. If you have questions, ask.

HOW TO OPEN YOUR
LOCKER

Turn clockwise at least three times. Stop at First Number

Turn counterclockwise. Pass the Second Number once and stop on the Second Number the second time.

Turn clockwise and stop at the Third Number

Pull up on handle and open!

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Routines Increase Predictability
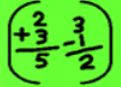
Prevent Behavior By Assisting with Transitions
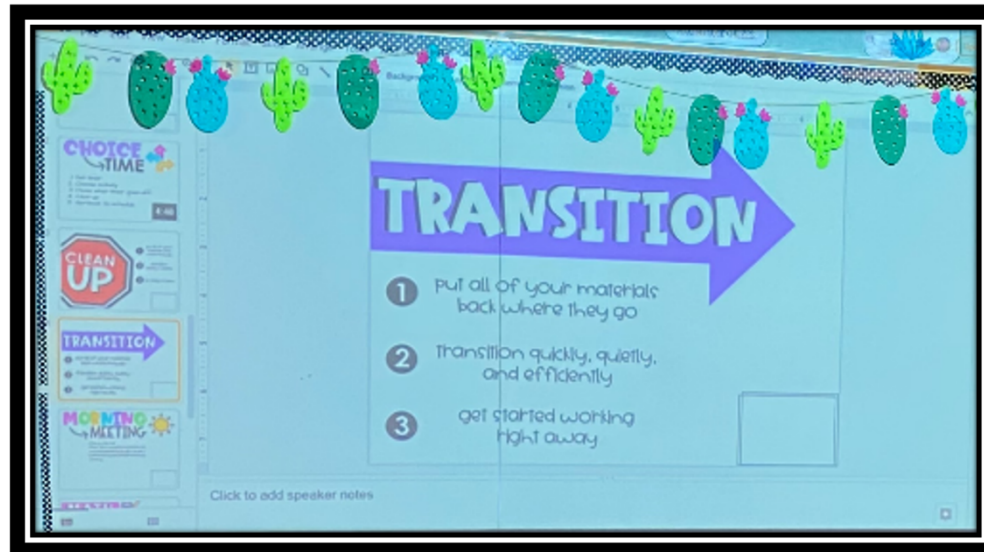
Visuals to Support Staff

MY OTR Goal:
3 Per Minute

Say Something
Write Something
Do Something

| Choral Response | White Board | Turn and Talk |
| Quick Write | Thumbs Up/Down | Online Survey |

⭐ **Correction Card**

How to give help to the Reader

When the Reader makes a mistake or is stuck on a word for 4 seconds:

Coach: "Check it!"

Reader: "I need some help."
Coach: "That word is _____. What word?"
Reader: Says the word correctly.
Coach: "Good. Read the sentence again."
Reader: Re-reads the sentence.

Reader: Says the word correctly.
Coach: "Good. Read the sentence again."
Reader: Re-reads the sentence.

(Adapted from Peer Assisted Learning Strategies: Reading Methods for Grades 2-6, by D. Fuchs, L. Fuchs, D. Simmons, and P. Mathes, 2008, p. 179.)

5 positive interactions
negative interaction **1**

Beyond Just Posting The Visual

- **Teach:** Teach and model what is on the visual

- **Review:** Review to keep it "visible"

- **Provide:** Provide individualized support if needed

- **Positive Feedback:** Positive feedback when they attend to and display the skill on the visual

- **Reteaching:** Reference the visual when reteaching is needed

- **Reference:** When independence is possible, simply reference the visual for support

How Do I Know If Visuals or More Visuals Are Needed?

If your class, some students, or individual students are:

- having difficulty learning something, e.g., academic tasks, social understanding, behavioral expectations, routines

- not as independent as peers

- not engaged or not as engaged as peers

- displaying unwanted behavior

- asking multiple and repeated questions

Ask yourself: How could I use a visual strategy to teach, prompt, and support students?

Activity 2

Choose one scenario:

- Difficulty learning something

- Not as independent as peers

- Not engaged or not as engaged as peers

- Displaying unwanted behavior

- Asking multiple and repeated questions

What type of visual might help?

- Schedule

- Environment

- Task break-down

- Checklist

- Transition

- Staff Reminder

Monitoring Impact

- Behavior Incidents or Office Referrals

- Time on task

- Time between transitions

- Anecdotal

Activity 3

Reflect and Plan:

- Teachers:
  - Consider your context (i.e., teaching style, student population, your current practices)
  - What actions do you want to take with:
    - Physical Arrangement
    - Visuals
- Coaches/Administrators:
  - What can you do to support teachers with improving physical arrangement or visuals in the classroom?

Closing Review

Share in the chat:

- One thing to STOP
- One thing to CONTINUE
- One thing to START
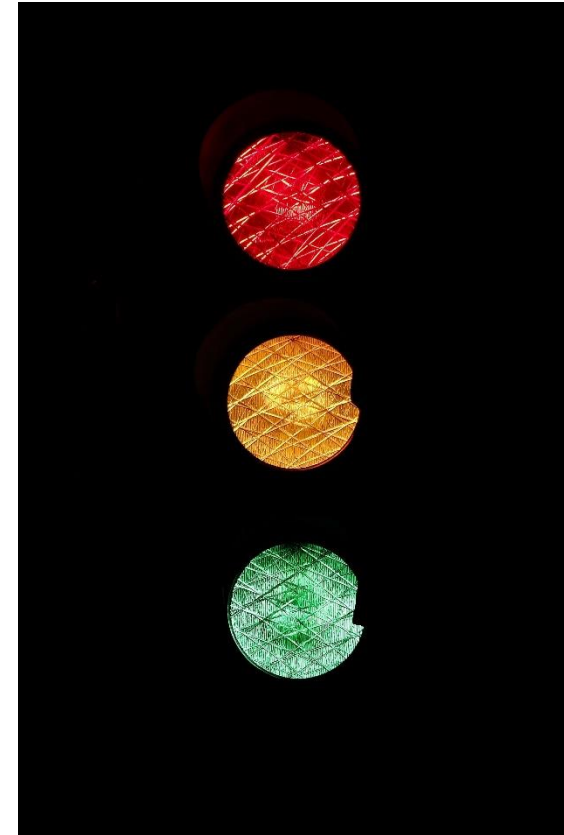
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