

The SPRINT (School Prevention, Review, and INtervention Team) Process

**A Blueprint for Establishing School-Based
Early Intervention Teams Focused on
Problem-Solving, Consultation, and Intervention**

Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D.

**Director, Project ACHIEVE
Director, Arkansas Department of Education
State Improvement Grant**

knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net

Introducing the SPRINT Process

SPRINT: S chool
 P revention,
 R eview, and
 IN tervention
 T eam

Really. . . Who are Your Special Education Student?

Academically:

- ◆ Have not yet learned and mastered needed skills (Student, Instruction, Curriculum)
- ◆ Are not able to learn and master skills as quickly as others (Other Students, Teacher, Curriculum)
- ◆ Have a limitation that needs to be circumvented, "neutralized," or accommodated such that learning and mastery occurs
- ◆ Motivation (Student, Teacher, Curriculum)
- ◆ Consistency (Student, Teacher, Curriculum)

Really... Who are Your Special Education Student?

Behaviorally:

- ◆ Have not yet learned and mastered needed skills (Student, Instruction, Curriculum)
- ◆ Are not able to learn and master skills as quickly as others (Other Students, Teacher, Curriculum)
- ◆ Have an "undesirable" skill/behavior that interferes with desirable skills or learning and mastery
- ◆ Have a limitation that needs to be circumvented, "neutralized," or accommodated such that learning and mastery occurs
- ◆ Motivation (Student, Teacher, Curriculum)
- ◆ Consistency (Student, Teacher, Curriculum)

What are the Goals of the SPRINT Process?

To address the needs of students experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties by:

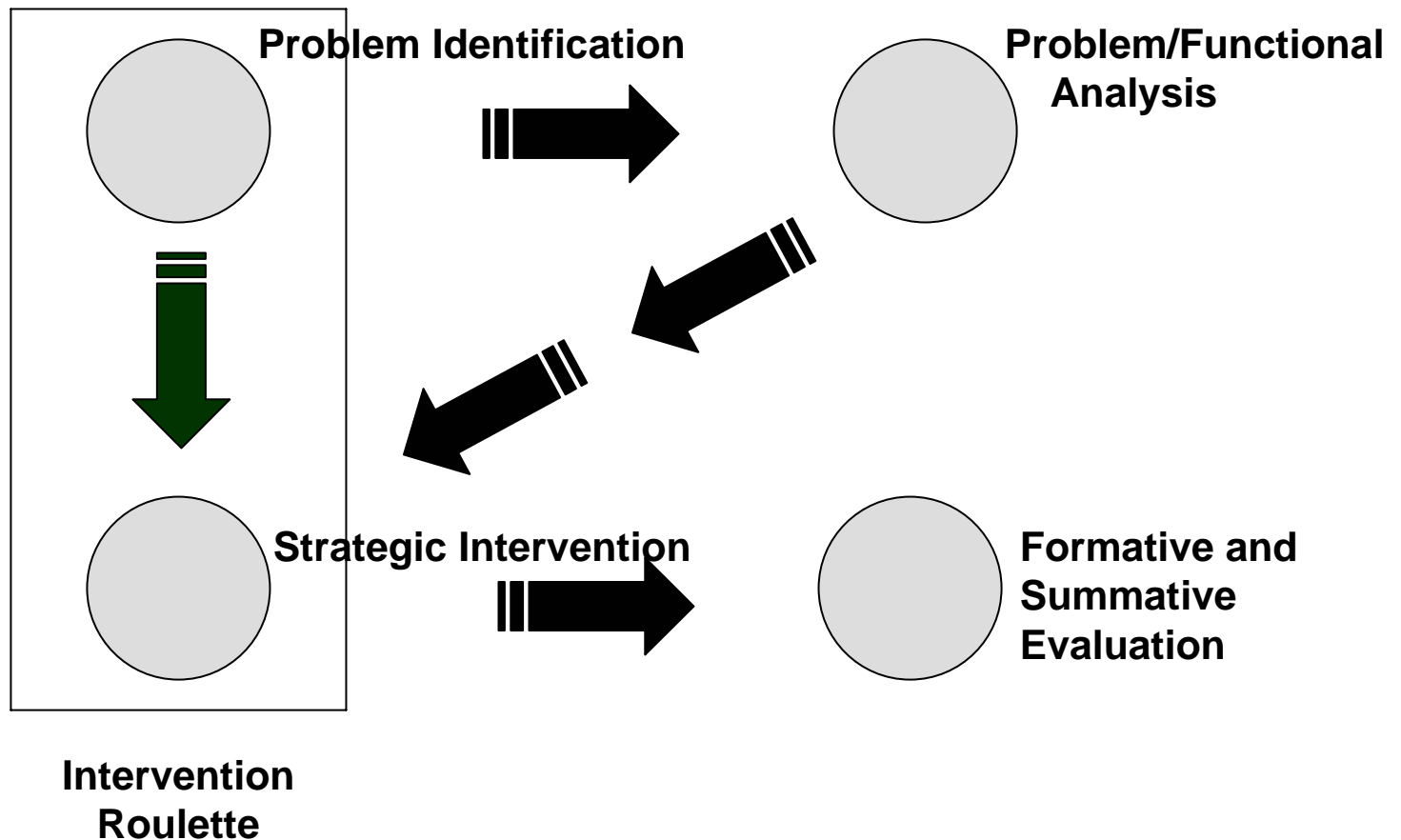
- ◆ Using a systematic problem-solving process that links functional assessment to evidence-based or research-based interventions.
- ◆ Consulting with classroom teachers so that the identified interventions are implemented with integrity and success.
- ◆ To establish assessment and intervention baselines in case more intensive interventions are needed later.
- ◆ To increase the knowledge and skills of all of the teachers and other professionals involved.

Key Points

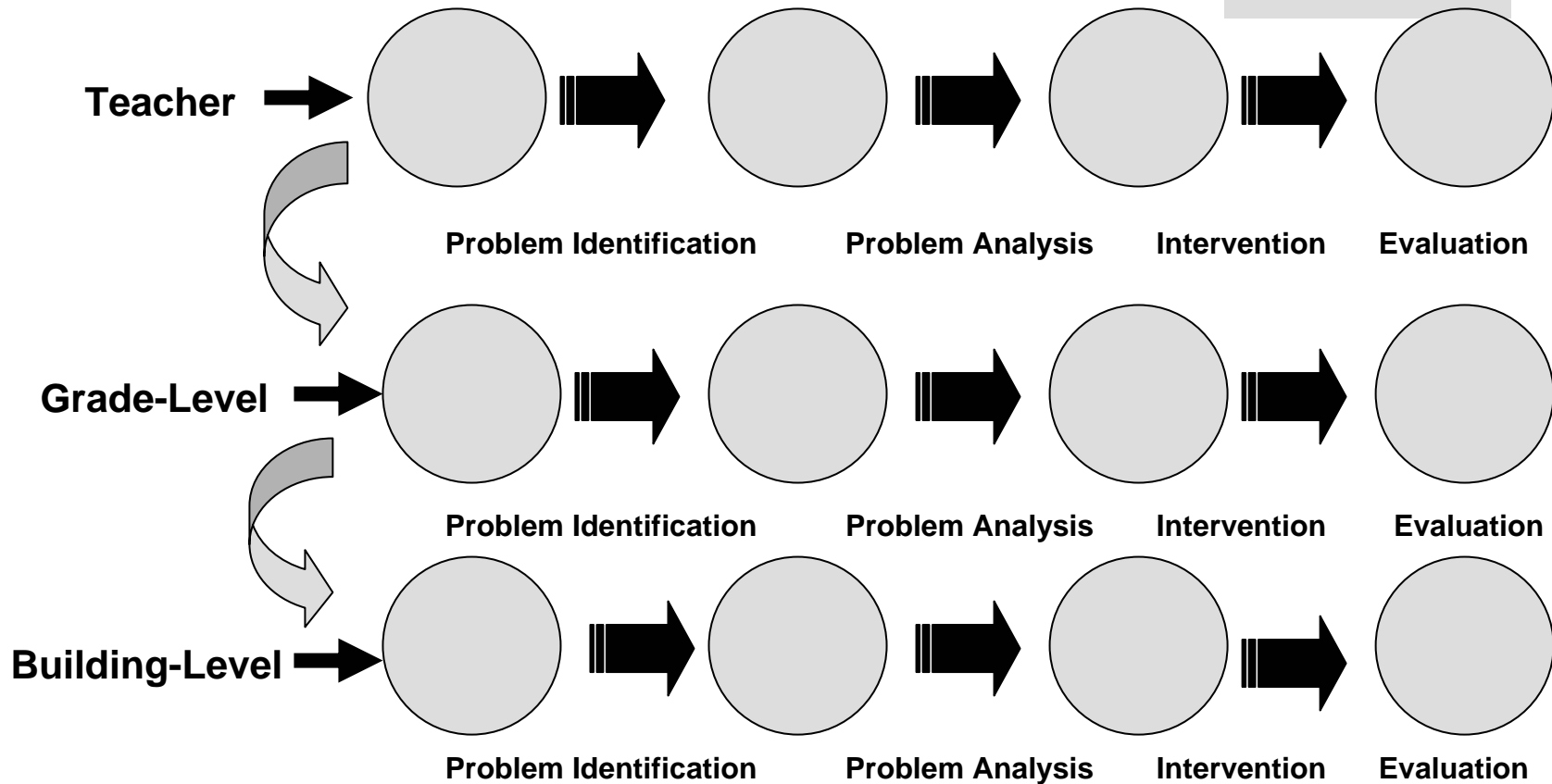
- ◆ SPRINT is available for any academic, behavioral, teacher or student concern
- ◆ Teachers, support staff, administrators, or parents can request a SPRINT Team consultation





The Strategic Problem Solving Process



The "Continuum of Consultation" Involving Teachers, and the Grade-Level and Building-Level SPRINT Teams



Problem-Solving within the SPRINT Process

- ◆ General Education Teachers engage in continuous and ongoing problem-solving to integrate curriculum and instruction to maximize student mastery. 
- ◆ General Education Teachers complete functional assessments and implement accommodations or interventions when students do not respond well to instruction (academically or behaviorally). 
- ◆ When students do not respond to classroom interventions, General Education Teachers ask their Grade-Level SPRINT Team for consultation, and additional interventions are implemented.

Problem-Solving within the SPRINT Process

- ◆ If students continue to not respond to classroom interventions, or a significant or extreme situation exists, General Education Teachers ask their multi-disciplinary Building-Level SPRINT Team for consultation, and intensive functional assessments are conducted and linked to interventions.
- ◆ At this time, the Building-Level SPRINT Team can consider the need for a 504 Assessment and 504 Plan.
- ◆ If students do not respond to classroom interventions at this point, the Building-Level SPRINT Team must consider the need for special education services under IDEA.



Consultation Goals for the Classroom Teacher

- ◆ Solve the current student situation
- ◆ Implement successful, strategic interventions
- ◆ Increase the intervention skill levels of those involved in the process
- ◆ Enhance the future problem-solving and intervention skills of those involved

Finding Consultants

- ◆ Every staff person is a potential consultant for someone else
- ◆ Schools need to systematically identify every staff person's skills
- ◆ Staff need to use the skills of every staff member



Composition of the Grade-Level SPRINT Team

- ◆ Every General Education Teacher at the specific grade level
- ◆ Support specialists assigned to the grade
- ◆ One member of the Building-level SPRINT Team
- ◆ Other Support specialists or consultants as needed (to help, on a case-by-case basis with specific student concerns)

Composition of the Building-Level SPRINT Team

- ◆ The "referring" General Education Teacher
- ◆ Administrator or Administrative-designee
- ◆ School-based Related Service professionals
- ◆ School-based Instructional Specialists/ consultants
- ◆ Other staff skilled in academic or behavioral interventions
- ◆ Other school-based specialists (e.g., nurse, computer-assisted learning specialist, school-based mental health specialist)

In Most Cases.....

- ◆ The Building-Level SPRINT Team (or a subset of it) functions as the Special Education "Eligibility & Placement" Team



Building-level SPRINT Team Membership Questions

- Who will be SPRINT Team leader?
- Who will maintain SPRINT Team records and referral logs?
- How will roles of team members be determined?
- How long will team members serve?

Scheduling Team Meetings

- ◆ Grade-level teams meet at least monthly for at least 45 minutes and (ideally) weekly during the day (if common planning time exists).
- ◆ Building-level teams meet weekly for at least 90 minutes.
- ◆ Meetings should be at a time when the referring teacher can attend.

More Scheduling....

- ◆ The best team meetings are scheduled on the same day per week (or month), during the work day, and when all team members have a common time free of interruptions.
- ◆ All meetings are posted on the school's monthly or year-long Master Calendar.

How does the SPRINT Process Work?

A Blueprint for the
SPRINT Problem-Solving,
Functional Assessment, and
Early Intervention
Process

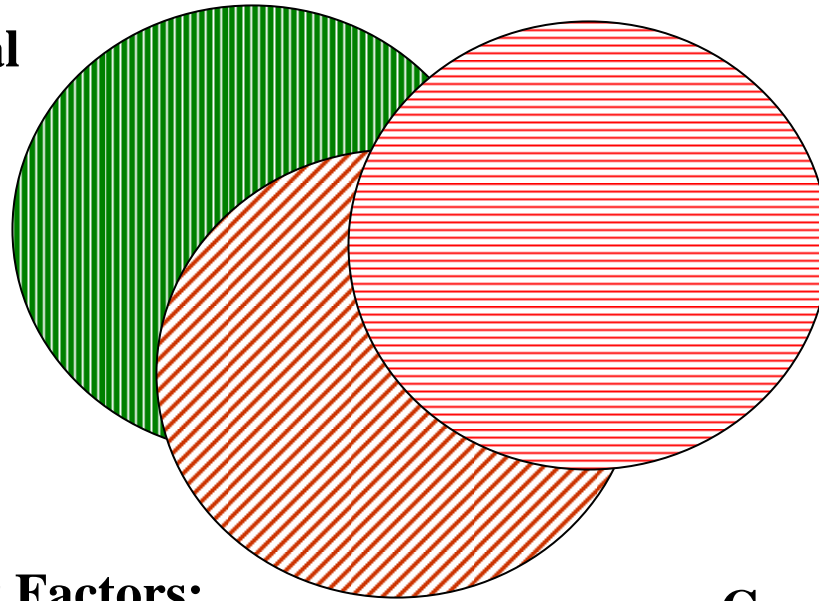
Fundamental Points...

- ◆ All SPRINT referrals are referrals for problem solving.
- ◆ Students are not referred. . .
Instructional environments are referred.
- ◆ The focus is on early intervention, not "waiting to fail."
- ◆ Coordinated & well-integrated resources are needed early on to maximize success.

Components of the Instructional Environment

Teacher-Instructional Factors:

Are teachers well-matched to their students and curricula?



Student Factors:

Are students prepared and “programmed” for success?

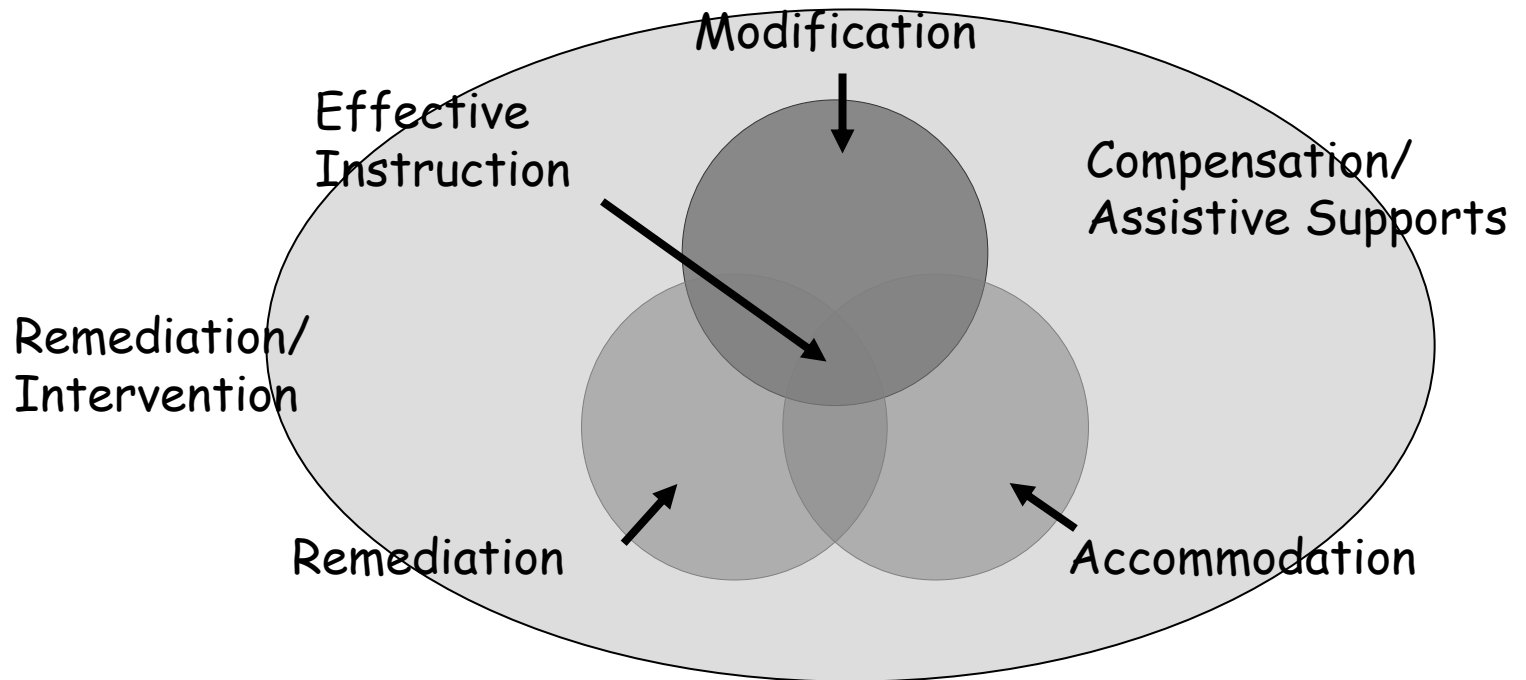
Curricular Factors:

Are curricula well-matched to students and teachers?

Fundamental Points...cont.

- ◆ All interventions must be outcome-based.
- ◆ Interventions must be formatively evaluated to monitor progress over time.
- ◆ The ultimate goals of intervention:
 - Help students to master their academic skills and succeed in general education environment.
 - Help students to learn and master interpersonal and self-management skills.

A Continuum of Responses to Students' Challenges Relative to Learning and Achievement



A Continuum of Responses to Students' Challenges Relative to Learning and Achievement

Effective Instruction

Modification

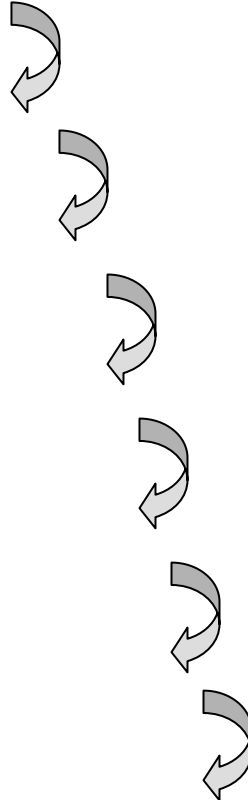
Remediation

Accommodations

Intervention

Assistive Supports

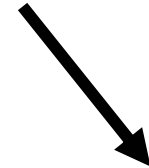
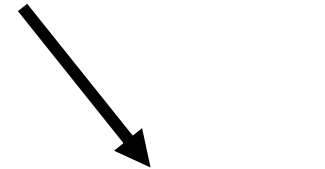
Compensation



General Education

with Consultation

with Intervention



Modifications vs. Accommodations

- ◆ Modifications change **CONTENT**
(Scope, depth, breadth, complexity).
- ◆ Accommodations change **CONDITIONS**;
They **DO NOT** change content.

Accommodation Examples

- ◆ Presentation
- ◆ Equipment and Materials
- ◆ Response
- ◆ Setting
- ◆ Timing/Scheduling

Accommodation Examples

- ◆ Presentation-

Large Print, Braille, Read aloud, Signing, Read/Clarification

- ◆ Equipment and Materials-

Magnification, Amplification, Templates, Special Furniture

- ◆ Response-

Computer, Tape recorder, Scribe, Write in test book

- ◆ Setting-

Individual, Small group, Carrel, Seat location/proximity

- ◆ Timing/Scheduling-

Extended time, Breaks, Multiple sessions, Optimal Time of the day

Accommodations vs. Interventions

- ◆ Accommodations are NOT the same as Interventions
- ◆ Accommodations:
 - help students compensate for learning processes that cannot be remediated.
 - do not change the specific nature of the student's area of weakness or disability.
 - minimize, eliminate, or circumvent the impact of a student's area of weakness or disability so the student can make academic and/or behavioral progress or demonstrate existing knowledge.

An Overview to the Problem Solving Process

- ◆ Clarify/define the problem
- ◆ Identify replacement behaviors
- ◆ Identify skill gap(s)
- ◆ Identify:
 - Relevant known information
 - Relevant unknown information
 - Irrelevant information

An Overview to the Problem Solving Process

- ◆ Generate & test hypotheses (using functional assessment) to explain why problem is occurring.
- ◆ Write a plan with evidence-based or research-based interventions linked to the validated hypotheses.
- ◆ Implement and evaluate the intervention and plan.

Step 1

- ◆ Prior to the SPRINT Team Meeting, the Referring Teacher Completes a Records Review:
 - Cumulative folder
 - Health & attendance information
 - Academic yearly progress
 - Discipline incidents
 - Special education files/folder
 - Special services/interventions

Beginning the SPRINT Team Meeting

- ◆ The Requesting Classroom Teacher presents the case guided by the Cumulative Folder Review form. (8 to 12 minutes without interruption)
- ◆ Other Team members share their information about the student/case
- ◆ The Team clarifies and defines the problem, identifying skill gaps and replacement behaviors.

Questions that Help Clarify and Define Student Problems

- ◆ When & where does it occur?
- ◆ How does it affect the student's learning?
- ◆ What do you want to change, what skills do you want to establish or increase, what skills do you want to decrease or eliminate?
- ◆ What has been tried to correct the problem?

Where is the Problem?

Academics

- Literacy: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association/phonics, decoding/fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
- Mathematics: numeration, calculation, application
- Language arts
- Science, social studies

Where is the Problem?

◆ Behaviors

- Increasing or establishing new behaviors
- Decreasing or eliminating inappropriate behaviors
- Teaching attention & engagement skills
- Teaching social, self-management & self-control skills
- Addressing externalizing behavior (anger, acting out, aggression)
- Addressing internalizing behavior (anxiety, withdrawal, depression)
- Increasing student motivation
- Peer engagement & management skills

Identifying Replacement Behaviors

- ◆ Replacement behaviors describe desired skills or outcomes
- ◆ Replacement behaviors cannot be described using "not," "stop," or "don't"
- ◆ Replacement behaviors must be:
 - Observable
 - Measurable
 - Attainable/realistic

Analyzing Available Information

- ◆ Identify “relevant known,” “relevant unknown,” & “irrelevant” information
 - Relevant known: document & keep
 - Relevant unknown: assign member to collect/find information w/in specified time frame; suspend problem solving process if too much information is “relevant & unknown”
 - Irrelevant information: do not allow it to bias or interfere w/the problem-solving process

The SPRINT Team Meeting Continues

- ◆ “Relevant Known,” “Relevant Unknown,” and “Irrelevant” information is categorized.
 - When there are too many “Relevant Unknowns”- Assign individuals to gather the information; Schedule a time to reconvene the Team
 - When most information is “Relevant and Known”- Assign a SPRINT Consultant to work with the Teacher on functional assessment/intervention activities;
- ◆ Decide when the Team needs to review/receive updates on the case (Between 2 to 6 weeks).

Step 2

Determine the gap between current and expected student levels of functioning

- Define current level of functioning & skills mastered
- Define desired level of functioning
- Identify realistic short-term goal(s)
- Determine team consensus in above areas

Step 3

Develop hypotheses explaining WHY the problem situation or gap exists

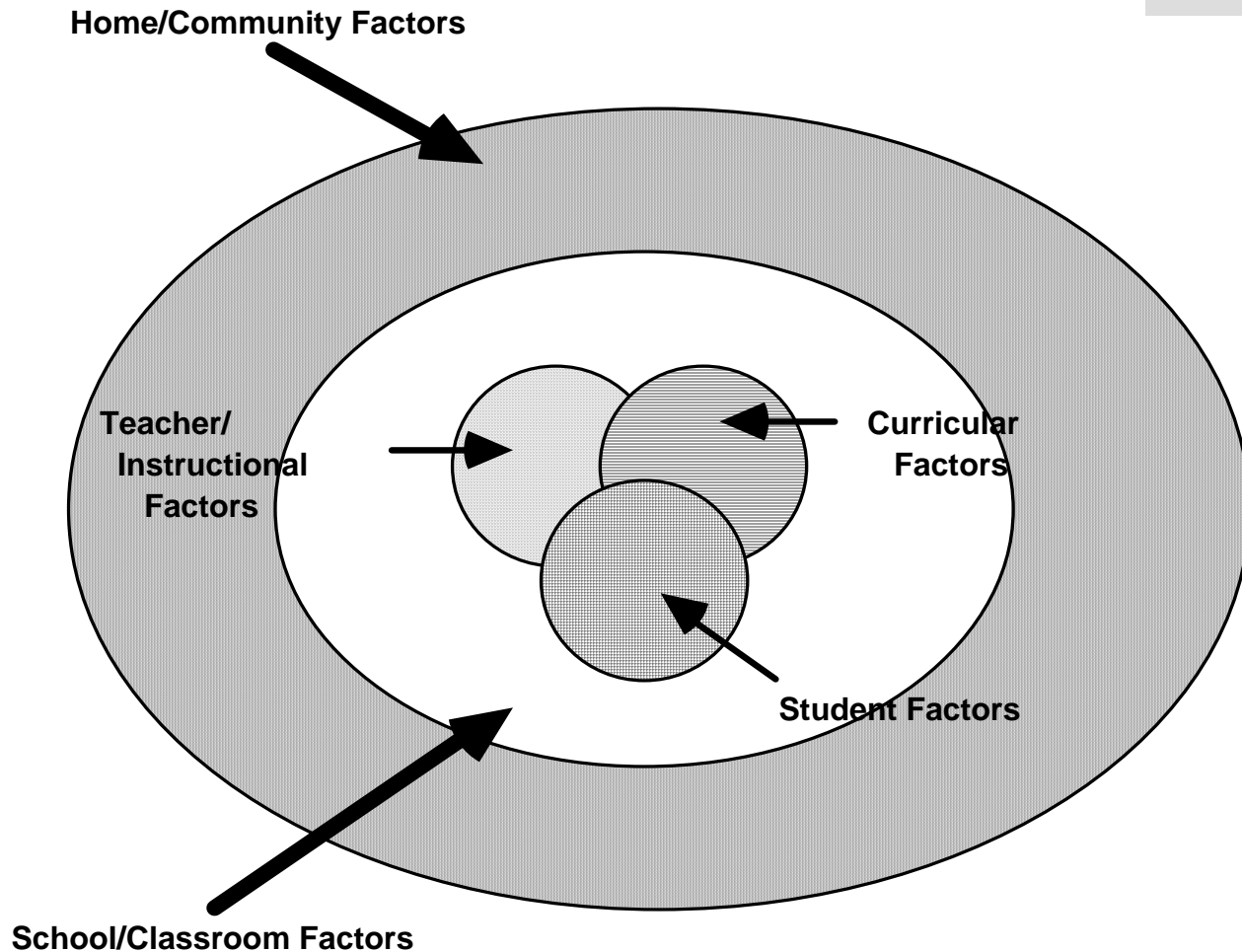
- ◆ Possible hypothesis domains:
 - Teacher/instruction
 - Curriculum
 - Student
 - Classroom/peers
 - School/district
 - Home/community

Step 3

The Format for Hypotheses:

"The student is _____
(specify the challenge) **BECAUSE**
_____. (specify your
hypothesis to explain the challenge)"

The Interdependent Components of Student Learning, Behavior, and Achievement



Causal vs. Correlational "Whys"

The Causal "Whys":

Student
Teacher/Instruction
Curriculum

The Correlational "Whys":

Classroom/Peers
School/District
Home/Community

Step 4

Test/validate hypotheses by conducting functional assessments

- ◆ Identify data needed
- ◆ Identify individuals to conduct assessments
- ◆ Four methods of assessment (RIOT):
 - Review
 - interview
 - Observe
 - Test

Step 4...cont.

- ◆ Assess only in areas that provide information to test hypotheses
- ◆ Assessments must be:
 - Reliable
 - Valid
 - Documented (multi-setting, multi-instrument, multi-respondent assessments are best)

Functional Assessment: Developing Predictions

Developing Predictions to Test Hypotheses:

- ◆ Prediction statements set up a situation whereby the hypothesis and its converse are both evaluated. That is, it is necessary to demonstrate that the referral concern exists when our hypothesis is true, and it is also necessary to demonstrate that the concern does not exist in the absence of our explanation for the referral problem.
- ◆ Prediction statements do not use labels to explain academic or behavioral problems.

Functional Assessment: Developing Predictions

Developing Positive Predictions to Test Hypotheses:

- ◆ "When (If) . . . (the hypothesized reason for the referral concern occurs),
- ◆ Then . . . (the referral concern will be exhibited).

Functional Assessment: Developing Predictions

Developing Converse Predictions to Test Hypotheses:

- ◆ "When (If) . . . (the hypothesized reason for the referral concern DOES NOT occur),
- ◆ Then . . . (the referral concern will NOT be exhibited).

Assessing Hypotheses through Predictions

Generating Data-Based Questions:

- ◆ When Jason receives academic work that he cannot do, then he wanders around the classroom.
- ◆ When Jason receives academic work that he can do, then he does not wander around the classroom and stays in his seat.

- ◆ QUESTIONS:
 1. Does Jason receive academic work that he can do? (Yes or No)
 2. Does he stay in his seat or wander around?

Assessing Hypotheses through Predictions

- ◆ QUESTIONS:

1. Does Jason receive academic work that he can do? (Yes or No)
2. Does he stay in his seat or wander around?

- ◆ ASSESSMENTS APPROACHES?

- ◆ DECISION BOX 

Does he sit
or wander?

SIT

WANDER

Can he do the work?

	YES	NO
SIT	X	
WANDER		X

Assessing Hypotheses through Predictions

Generating Data-Based Questions:

- ◆ When Jason receives three-step directions and an advanced organizer, then he completes the directions successfully.
- ◆ When Jason receives more than a three-step direction and/or doesn't receive an advanced organizer, then he completes fewer than the directions necessary successfully.

- ◆ QUESTIONS:
 1. Does Jason receive three-step directions? (Yes or No)
 2. Does Jason receive an advanced organizer? (Yes or No)
 3. Does he complete the directions successfully? (Yes or No)

Assessing Hypotheses through Predictions

- ◆ QUESTIONS:

1. Does Jason receive three-step directions? (Y or N)
2. Does Jason receive an advanced organizer? (Y or N)
3. Does he complete the directions successfully? (Y or N)

- ◆ ASSESSMENTS APPROACHES?

- ◆ DECISION BOX



Does he complete the directions?

YES

NO

Three-step Direction and Advanced Organizer?

YES

NO

X	
	X

Step 5

Identify & prepare to implement interventions that are directly linked to validated/verified hypotheses

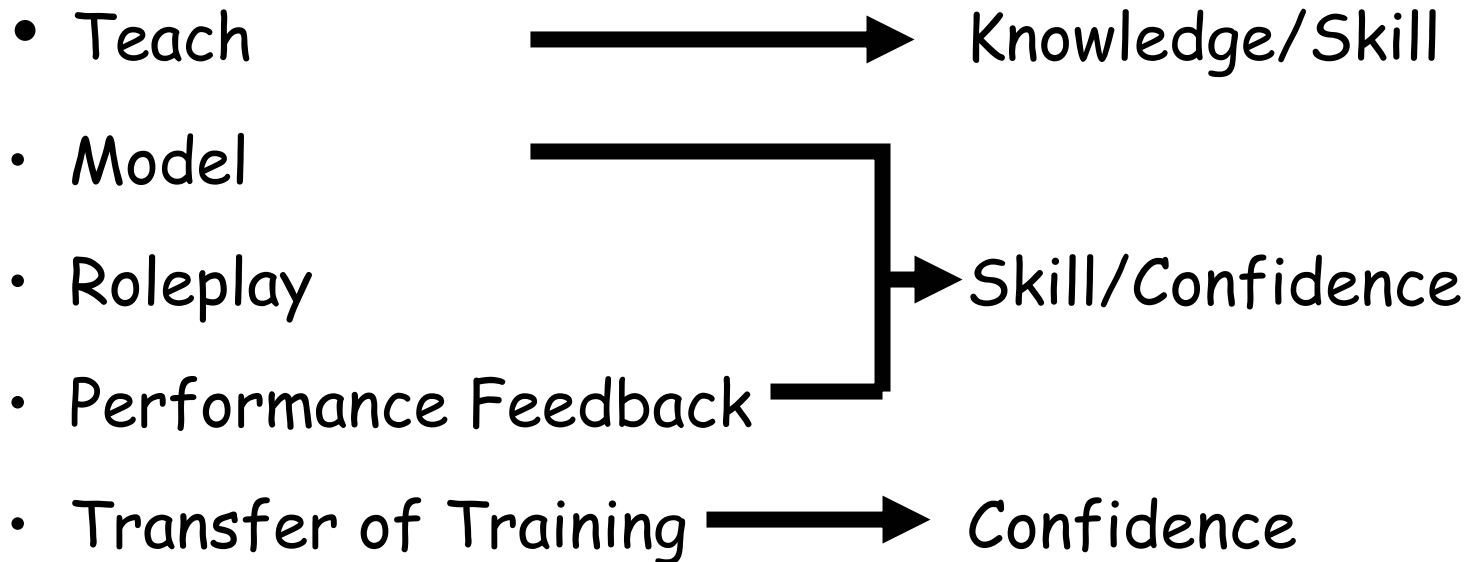
- ◆ Intervention Plans should identify:
 - Short-term outcomes
 - Long-term outcomes



Step 5...cont.

- Implementation steps & needed resources
- Time frame needed before outcomes will be seen
- How implementation integrity & outcomes will be evaluated

Training Teachers for Intervention Implementation



Step 6

Implementing Interventions

- ◆ Interventions should:
 - Be acceptable & realistic
 - Produce meaningful results
 - Be taught to teachers & students before implementation
 - Be implemented with integrity
 - Be useful for other students

Step 7

Program Evaluation: Basic Assumptions

- Reveals how well an intervention program works or does not work
- Motivates those who implement program
- Based on "continuous progress" model
- Helps determine when goals have been reached or when new goals need to be set
- Helps maintain realistic expectations for success & determines why success has been attained

Evaluation & Follow-Up...cont.

- ◆ Interventions may be found to be:
 - Successful
 - Successful but needing additional implementation time
 - Approaching success but needing fine tuning
 - Not successful but not harmful
 - Not successful & harmful

Follow-Up

- ◆ The SPRINT Team and Teacher should meet periodically as interventions are implemented and outcomes measured.
- ◆ The SPRINT process can be terminated when success has been maintained for an appropriate period of time.

For more information

*See the Arkansas School Improvement Grant
Website at*

<http://acc.k12.ar.us/sig/>

Click the link for

Technical Assistance Papers

select article

[Functional Assessment and Data-based Problem Solving](#)