



**PBSIS**

Helping Schools Build Systems of Support

# Providing Using Behavior Specific Feedback

**RUTGERS**

Robert Wood Johnson  
Medical School

**THE BOGGS CENTER**  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

*In Partnership with the*

**Office of Special Education**

**New Jersey Department of Education**



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# Learning Outcomes

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- Know the two types of behavior specific feedback
- Know the three features of delivering behavior specific feedback
- Increase the use of behavior specific feedback in daily routines with students



Operationalize Expectations

Teach Skills and Habits to Meet the Expectations

Use Instructional Scaffolds

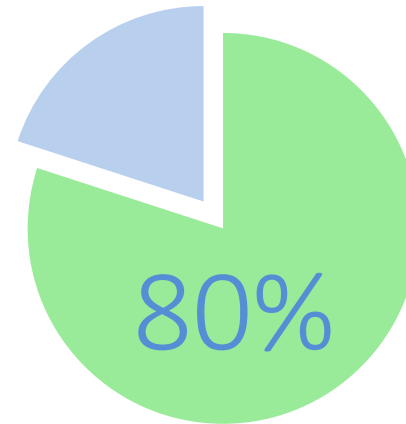
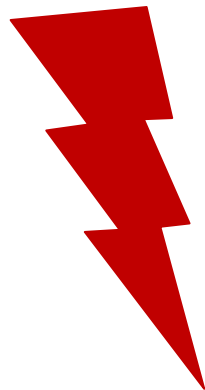
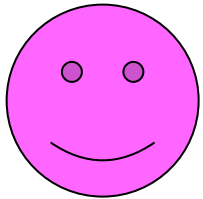
Preserve Dignity When Responding to Unwanted Behavior

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Sustainable Implementation  
Systems That Support



# 3 Ways to Think About the 4:1 Ratio

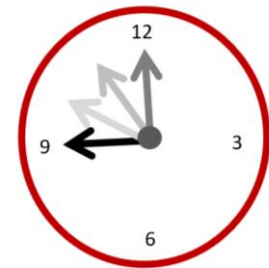


■ Positive ■ Negative

6 in every

15 minutes

(Gage & MacSuga, 2017)



# Expanding the Frame

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**Behavioral Theory**      Use reinforcement is to develop skills, habits, and routines

**Relational Health**      Create environments and routines that foster personal connections



# Expanding the Frame

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**Positive  
Psychology**

Emphasize effort over accomplishment

**Brain-Based  
Learning**

Engage the student in reflections about their use of skills, habits, and routines



# Types of Messages to Achieve the 4:1 Ratio

Behavior  
Specific  
Feedback

Growth Fostering Reflections

Behavior Specific Praise

Ticket & Point Delivery

Supportive  
Social  
Exchanges

Greetings

Personal Interests

Help, Support and Comfort



# Instructional Scaffolds

Instruction



Skills Applied in  
Daily Routines

Positive Greetings at the Door

4:1 Ratio

Pre-Correction

Active Supervision

Behavior Specific Feedback





# Behavior Specific Feedback

- An explicit statement or reflective prompt that describes the specific actions, skills or habits that the student demonstrated achieving or put effort toward achieving



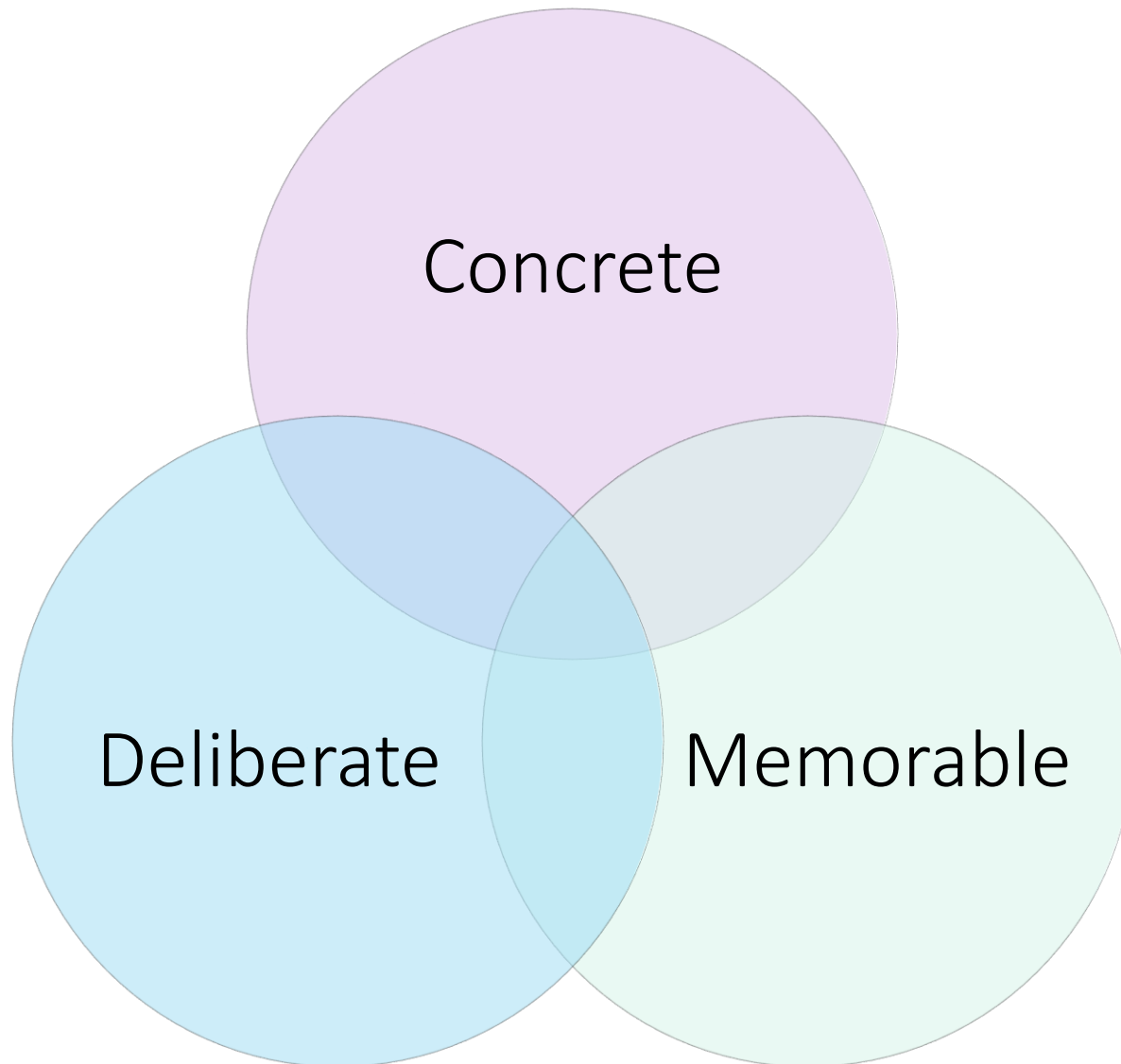
# Behavior Specific Feedback

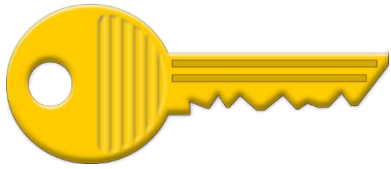
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- Research suggests praise is more effective than reprimands at decreasing future occurrences of disruptive behavior and increasing rates of student engagement (e.g., Drake & Nelson, 2021)
- Research evidence provides us with guidance to maximize the impact of providing behavior specific feedback (e.g., Blaze et al., 2014; Brumelman, et al., 2014; Royer et al., 2019)



# Delivering Behavior Specific Feedback



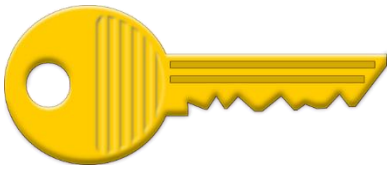


# Be DELIBERATE

*“Maria, thank you for raising your hand. What is your hypothesis?”*

- ✓ Intentionally look for reasons to provide students with affirming feedback
- ✓ Use with enough frequency to make a desired impact



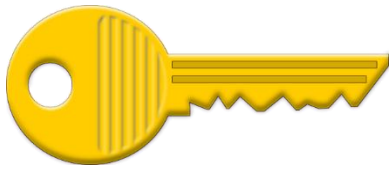


# Be CONCRETE

*“Elijah, you put a lot of effort in this assignment. The details you have included provide a descriptive picture of what happened.”*

- ✓ State the specific skill, action, or habit you want to reinforce
- ✓ Emphasize effort put in to achieving an outcome





# Be MEMORABLE

*“Jamal, I noticed how quickly you got started with your work this morning.”*

- ✓ Personally connect during the exchange
- ✓ Deliver ‘hype-free’ and genuine praise statements
- ✓ Stay present in the moment with the student



# Ways to Provide Behavior Specific Feedback

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- Growth fostering reflections
- Behavior Specific praise
- Teachable moments



# Behavior Specific Growth Fostering Reflections

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- Descriptive statements or questions that reinforce student actions through reflection prompts and discussion about a specific skill or habit





# Behavior Specific Growth Fostering Reflections

- *I noticed that that you helped Mikala pick up her things when they fell. What prompted you to help her? How did helping her make you feel?*
- *What did you do that helped you to achieve an A on this assignment? What was it about using that strategy that helped you?'*
- *“Let’s look at the rubric for ‘time to start work’. Which of these do you think best reflects how you did today?”*



# Behavior Specific Praise (BSP)

- Short, descriptive statements that reinforce a specific action:
  - *“Thank you for entering quietly”*
  - *“I appreciate your getting started with your work”*
  - *“I notice that you have all of your materials out and ready”*
  - *“I noticed how you stuck-with that problem to get to the solution.”*



# Teachable Moments

- Teachable moments reframe redirections to leverage incidental opportunities to introduce a new expectation or review a previously taught expectation to develop fluency



# Using Teachable Moments

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- When using teachable moments frame feedback positively to emphasize what you want students to do
  - Positively framed does not mean ‘*sugar coating*’ problems
  - We always must be honest with the student about their performance



# Coach a 'Next-Time Plan

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- *“What is one thing you can do next time?”*
- *“The next time the assignment frustrates you, try....”*
- *“Is there something I can do to help you remember to....?”*



# Example: Class-Wide Teachable Moment

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- *“So many wonderful contributions today! I want to make sure I hear them all. Can anyone remind me what we do when we want to make contribution? “That’s right LeDerek, we raise our and wait to be called” This way we won’t miss anyone’s contribution”*
- *“I like how Jose has his hand raised, Kelvin has his hand raised, Marissa has her hand raised. Kelvin, what would you like to share today?”*



# Example: Individual Student

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- *“Isabel, let’s do a quick refresher how to get help if you are having difficulty with the assignment.*
- *First review the problems and identify ‘can do’ and ‘need help’ items.*
- *Next, when you are ready raise your hand to let me know you need help*
- *While you are waiting, work on the ‘can do’ items until I come over”*



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# Main Points





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- An explicit statement or reflective prompt that describes the specific actions, skills or habits that the student demonstrated achieving or put effort toward achieving
- To delivery behavior specific feedback effectively
  - Be deliberate
  - Be concrete
  - Be memorable



# Personal Reflections

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- What were some of the most interesting discoveries I made while using Behavior Specific Feedback?
  - About using behavior specific feedback?
  - About myself?
  - About my students?



# For Additional Learning

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- Considerations for delivering praise
- Three ways to praise effectively



# References

- Ennis, R. P., Royer, D. J., Lane, K. L., & Dunlap, K. D. (2020). Behavior-specific praise in preK–12 settings: Mapping the 50 year knowledge base. *Behavioral Disorders, 45*(3), 131–147.
- Floress, M. T., & Jenkins, L. N. (2015). A preliminary investigation of kindergarten teachers' use of praise in general education classrooms. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 59*(4), 253–262.
- Moore, T. C., Maggin, D. M., Thompson, K. M., Gordon, J. R., Daniels, S., & Lang, L. E. (2019). Evidence review for teacher praise to improve students' classroom behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 21*(1), 3–18.

