

Selecting Evidence-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

Transcript – Part 2

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[Title Card] Selecting Evidenced-Based Practices Part Two (2)

[Logo] GA DOE (Georgia Department of Education)

[Logo] Graduate First and [Logo] SPDG (Georgia Special Education Professional Development Grant)

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Don't' Dropout...GraduateFirst [animation]

Welcome back to Selecting Evidenced Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes. This is Part Two (2) of a seven (7) part series. Again our learning targets for the entire seven (7) part series are: I can describe a process for determining the type of evidence-based practices or interventions necessary to improve outcomes for targeted students. And the second, I can access and utilize at least two electronic resources to aid in the selection of appropriate evidence-based practices and interventions.

So today, in part two (2), again we are focusing on the first learning target. I can describe a process for determining the type of evidence-based practices or interventions necessary to improve outcomes for targeted students. Now in Part One (1) the first question we asked was, “Who are our targeted students?” Once we have our group of 50, then we have to dig down into our data for each of our targeted students, to find out not just the What, because we are going to look for the What, What is the issue? Is the issue Attendance? Is the issue Academic Performance? Is the issue Behavior? Once we have figured out What the issue is for each student, then we have to figure out the Why.

So the first student we are going to look at is Hugo. And Hugo has a history of poor performance in English, social studies science and mathematics. So we look at that and say, the What of Hugo's problem is in all probability is academic performance. So now we start looking at the Why. Why isn't Hugo not performing Academically? And again the process that we use is by asking a series of questions. So the first question we ask of Hugo, is: Is Hugo not performing academically because he can't do the work? Or is Hugo not preformatting academically because he won't do the work. Two (2) different questions and the answers lead to two (2) different kinds of interventions. So let's say for the moment that Hugo is not performing well academically because Hugo can't do the work. When we look at academic performance, we also look at the stages of learning. Now in professional learning, that is, even has seven (7) parts but in this brief, we are talking a lot in generalities. And so I encourage you, once you start, to take a deeper look at lots of these topics. But when we are looking at learning stages overall, people tend to agree that there are three (3) stages of learning. The first stage of learning is Acquisition of Skills. I need to be able to preform academic skills in order to perform academically well over all. And then the second stage is in building fluency. So let's say I have a skill of decoding words. If I'm actually going to improve my reading then I have to build fluency. I have to be able to decode rapidly and fluently and make sense of entire sentences and entire paragraphs. So that is fluency. Then, the next is the application of skills. That's when not only do I have the skill, I can perform the skill fluently but I can apply that and transfer that into other content into specific tasks that I have to do that are academic tasks. So, let's take a look at literally how that looks in reading. I talked about decoding because in reading the skills are decoding skills. And I'm not going to go into them. I'm not going to talk about the different kinds of things we have to look at but teachers, who teach reading, know how we teach decoding. How to get kids to identify sounds, put those sounds into words, identify words and then next fluency. Reading those words fluently without making mistakes. So I pronounce them correctly. I have the right emphasis, my syllabication is correct. Then, once I can put these words together fluently and read them fluently, I start looking at comprehension, because comprehension is actually the goal of reading. But my ability to comprehend is predicated on my ability to decode and my ability to read words fluently. So these are the learning stages.

So the whole point of Hugo can't do the work is, I have to figure where Hugo's learning breaks down. So I might ask myself a question: If Hugo

cannot perform well in any of these areas: social studies science, mathematics, reading language arts, then why is it, what is Hugo's issue? Where does Hugo's learning break down? It could be that Hugo can't read. And because Hugo can't read he therefore also can't perform in social studies, can't perform in mathematics, cant perform in any of his subjects. It could also be that Hugo has a processing disability. And so the processing, even though Hugo mechanically can perform these various learning stages this processing difficulty is interfering with his ability to read, which is then impacting his success in all those topics. So what we have to figure out is what is Hugo's problem that is keeping from performing academically in all those areas. We know that he can't do the work, Why can't he do the work?

In order to find out we have to go through what's called screening. And there are all kinds of formal screening processes we can use, but there are also some informal screening tools that we can take a look at. We can have teachers collect some data on, where is it that Hugo's learning breaks down. I mean we can ask the language arts and English teacher to look at Hugo's reading. We can do a quick check with Hugo. I can get a paragraph, you know, a formal way of accessing Hugo's fluency and comprehension in reading. Formal means are available. We can do it through such things as AIMS Web, etc. that's just one example. But we can also do it informally. I can put a paragraph together in language arts on a social studies topic or science topic. And I could have Hugo read that to me and I can record how many times Hugo stumbles on an individual word. I could record Hugo's prosody in terms of, does he read a sentence with the right inflection and lifting up of his voice, and down of his voice, so that sentence makes sense. Does Hugo, after reading the paragraph, can he answer three simple questions about comprehension of the paragraph. So I can do that kind of informal screening, even if I don't have access to a formal screening tool. But I have to use some kind of screening to figure out where Hugo's learning breaks down. The reason is that comprehension strategies or interventions are very different from decoding strategies or interventions. If I have, if Hugo can't read because of decoding, then Hugo needs to go back and have tutoring, remediation, pull out instruction, so that he can gain those decoding skills. If Hugo can't comprehend, there is a whole other range of interventions that I need to use in order to improve Hugo's comprehension. And Fluency, believe it or not, regardless of whether we are talking about Language Arts fluency, Mathematics fluency, etc. The practice or intervention for fluency, is almost always additional practice. He can do it. He just can't do it with automaticity; he can't do it fast. So there's just more

and more practice. Independent practice, guided practice, focus practice, one on one, but more practice. Now I want to give you just one (1) example. I talked about formal screening tools and there is a website, response to intervention, and there is a screening tools chart. Basically, you can look at almost anything you want to identify or that you want to screen for and it will give you a list of age and grade appropriate, content appropriate problem or issue appropriate screening tools. The thing you want to understand with these kinds of formal screening tool is, most formal screening tools cost money. So, remember you can screen both formally and informally to determine the answer to who are our targeted students. And Hugo can't read, what is Hugo's issue, we are going to screen to find out.

I just want to kind of generalize this again with the three (3) stages of learning because in mathematics we still have acquisition of skills fluency, and application. And actual math facts and math skills and individual problem solving skills are the acquisition of skills and building up a fluency, is being able to solve these problems fluently. I can add, subtract, do multiplication, division, anything that I need to do. Apply an algorithm, I can do it fluently and I can do it really rapidly. I don't break down in the process of doing that, and then, the actual application of skills in that problem-solving arena. And when I say problem solving, that is determining, which of those math skills or math strategies do I need to use when. It's that ability of taking a word problem and figuring out from that word problem what the actual mathematical equation looks like. It's actually applying the actual math skills that I've learned and can do fluently into a kind of real world problem solving and the application and use of mathematics.

So, real quickly, what if Hugo's problem isn't that he can't do the work, but Hugo won't do the work. Hugo has the basic skills he needs. He can perform these skills fluently. And he can apply these skills in reading comprehension, or mathematical problem solving, regardless of whatever that skill is, but Hugo just won't do the work. Now what happens is we see that Hugo's reason, the reason Hugo is performing poorly academically is a Behavior issue. And that takes us in a whole different direction for Hugo, because now we have to start analyzing Hugo's behavior. So we're going to take a look at behavior with another student later. But just remember, Hugo's academic performance could be a behavior skill or it could be that Hugo does not have the skills the fluency or the ability to apply those skills in a real world situation.

So here's our learning target again: I can describe a process for determining the type of evidence-based practices or interventions necessary to improve outcomes for targeted students.

All we did today is to look at Hugo and Hugo's academic performance and really digging down and finding the root cause of why Hugo can't perform academically in different subject areas.

I'm Cynde Snider. This is my contact information. I hope you will join us for Part Three (3) of Selecting Evidence-Based Practices.

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