School-Based Behavior Assessment: Considerations with Selecting Tools in RTI

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Purpose

- Review strengths and limitations of different school-based behavior methods within a multi-tiered model of assessment

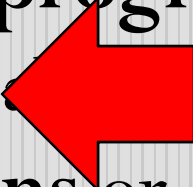# Why should we care about social behavior outcomes?

Educators indicate spending a disproportionate amount of time responding to significant behavior challenges presented by a small number of students (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2000)

1 in 5 children has mental

School discipline is a top concern by the American public (Rose & Gallup, 2005)

eral, 1999)
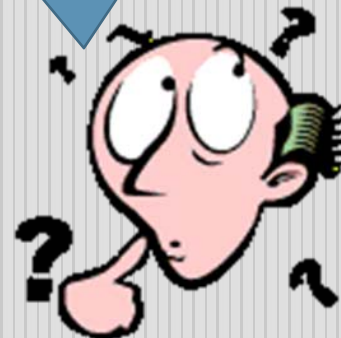
How do we design systems to support behavior success?

Response to Intervention (RTI)

- An **assessment and intervention process** for systematically **monitoring student progress** and **making data-based decisions** about the need for **instructional modifications** or **increasingly intensified services** (see www.rti4success.org).

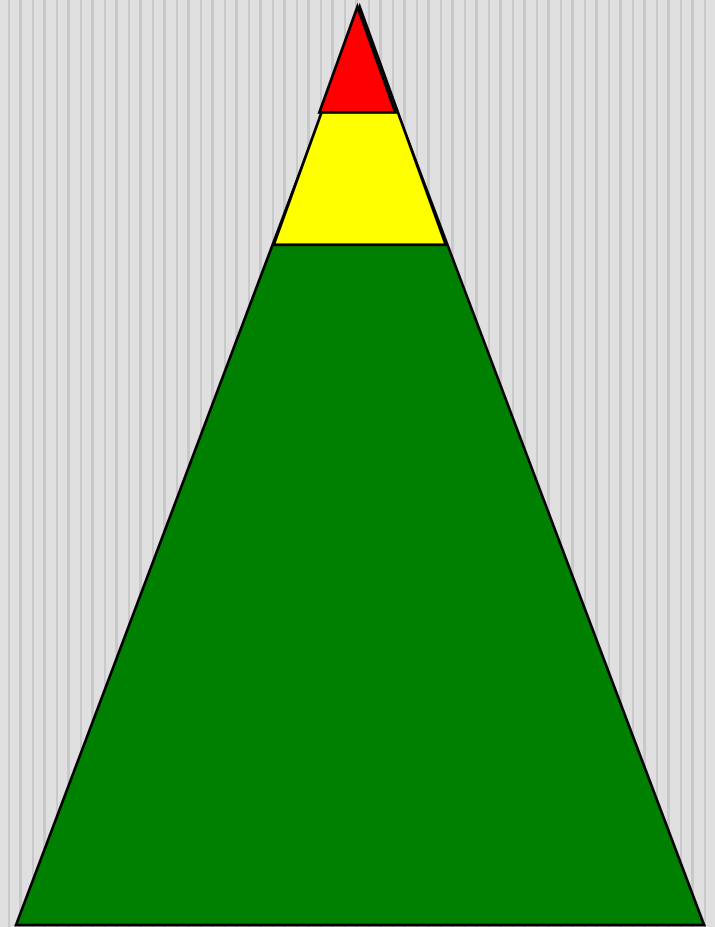# Original logic: Public health & disease prevention (Larson, 1994)

Tertiary (FEW)
Reduce complications, intensity, severity of current cases

Secondary (SOME)
Reduce **current** cases
of problem behavior

Primary (ALL)
Reduce **new** cases
of problem behavior

Examples of Positive **OUTCOMES** across Tiers within Domains of Social Behavior

- IEP or other student-specific behavior **goal related to acquisition** of appropriate social skills

- Student-specific behavior **goal related to decrease** in problem behavior

behavior of student body

- **Decreases** in number of students **referred for an evaluation** for behavior related disorders

Individual

Targeted

Universal
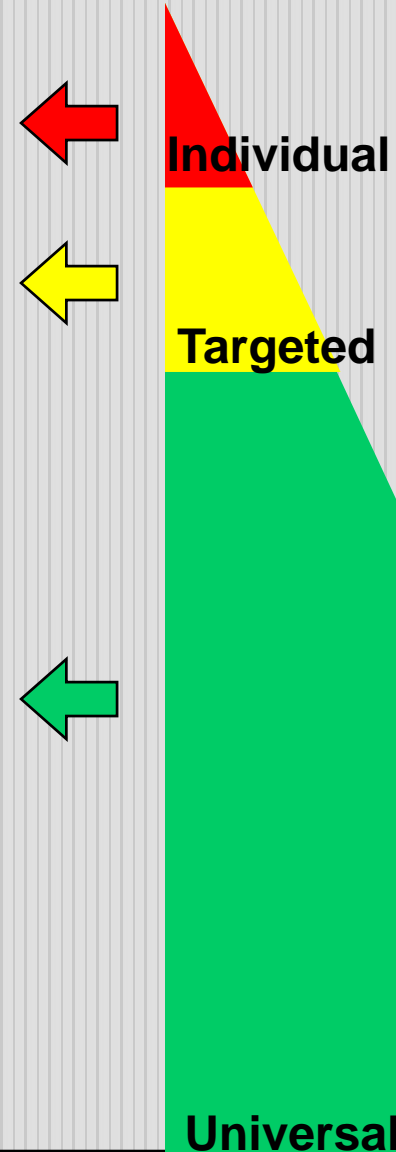
Great… So why can't we just implement good practices?

… but then, how will you know what you are doing is working?

- To make effective decisions about which practices are needed and then to evaluate the outcomes of those practices, you need **DATA**!

REVIEW: How can data be used?

Purposes of Assessment

- Screening
- Progress Monitoring
- Diagnosis
- Evaluation

Emphasized by the National Center on Response to Intervention

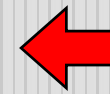# Examples of school-based DATA sources for social behavior

**ALL BELOW** plus functional assessment data

ALL BELOW plus…

- Norm-referenced comparison data

- More detailed profiles of students' strengths/weaknesses

- Formative data sources sensitive to incremental change
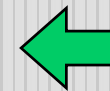
EFFICIENT, EXTANT SOURCES such as…
- Total number of office discipline referrals
- Number of students who are suspended or expelled
- Number students referred or found eligible for special education, particularly in the area of emotional disturbance

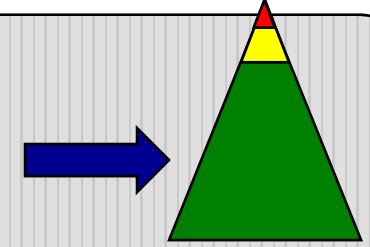**Individual**
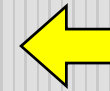
Targeted

Universal

Sources of School-Based Data on Social Behavior

- Extant data
- Standardized behavior rating scales
- Systematic direct observation
- Direct Behavior Rating

Currently dominate in clinic and research

Extant Data

- **Definition**:

  data sources that already exist within the setting

- **Examples**:

  - Office discipline referrals (ODRs)

  - Attendance and tardy records

  - Suspension/expulsion data

  - Special education data (e.g. referrals for emotional disturbance)

  - Data from existing behavior management plans (e.g. token economy)

FRMS Total Office Discipline Referrals
Sustained Impact

Pre

Post

Total ODRs (y-axis): 0, 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000

Academic Years (x-axis): 9?-95, 95-96, 96-97, 97-98, 98-99, 99-00, 00-01, 01-02, 02-03, 03-04, 04-05, 05-06
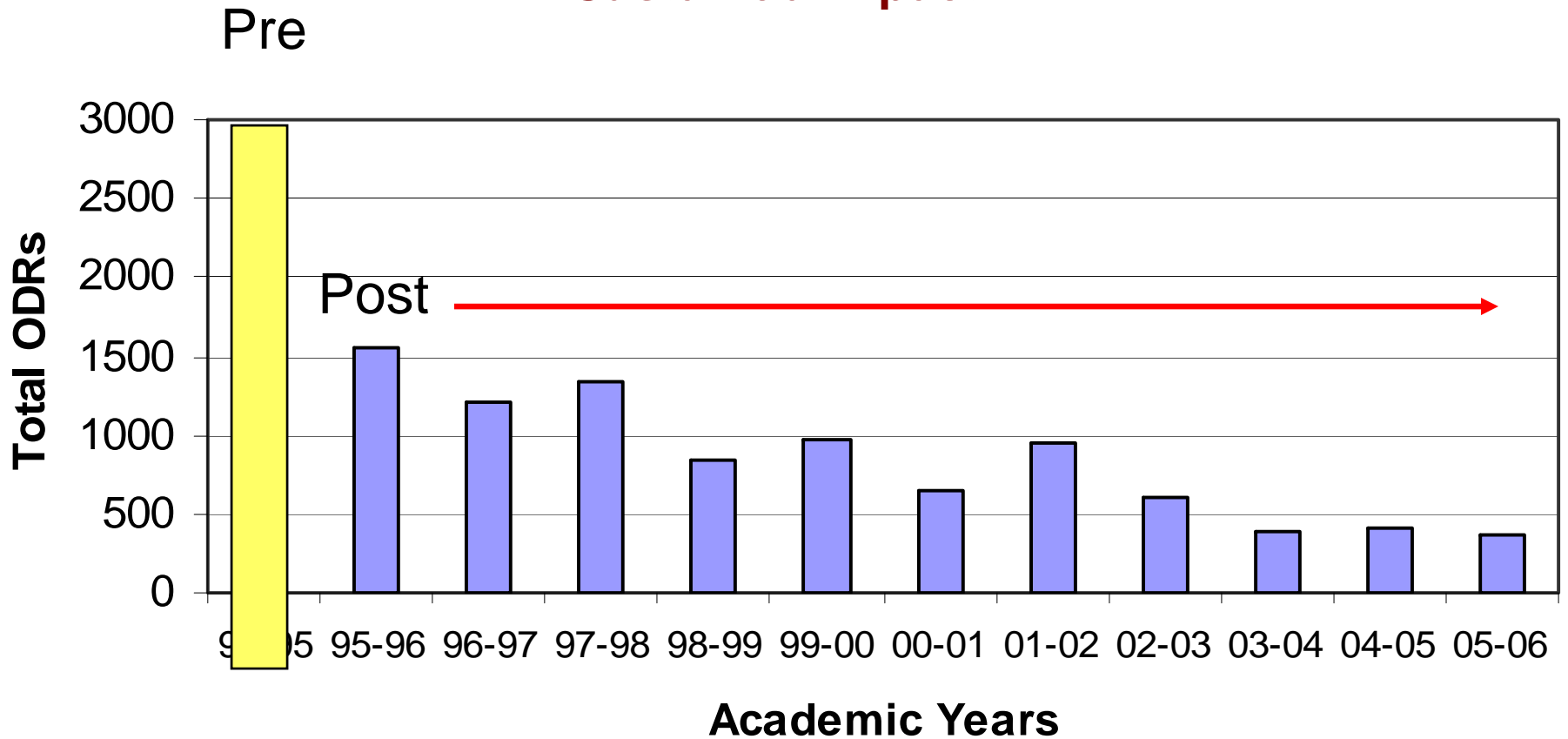
Benefits & Limitations of Extant Data

- Complements other sources in providing contextually relevant information
- Source of progress monitoring information
- Less resource-intensive (data readily available!)

- Limited application within <u>prevention</u>
- Tough to establish and maintain consistent/ accurate use.
- Unknown psychometric adequacy
- Challenging to create a system for efficient organization and interpretation

Extant data – summary:

- *Screening* – yes, but may be limited in prevention/early intervention roles

- *Progress monitoring* – yes, but creating usable system for interpretation/presentation can be challenging

- *Diagnosis* – maybe, with regard to adding contextual relevance

- *Evaluation* – yes, relevance within the specific setting but limited with regard to norm comparisons

Behavior Rating Scales
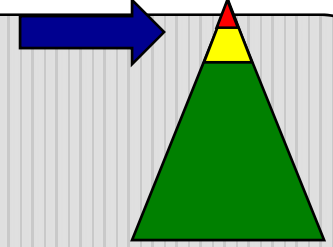
- **Definition**:

Tools that require an individual to rate the behavior of another based on past observation of that person's behaviors (Kratochwill, Sheridan, Carlson, & Lasecki, 1999).

- **Examples**:
  - Behavior Assessment System for Children – 2 (BASC-2)
  - Achenbach System of Emprically-Based Assessment (e.g. CBCL)
  - Conner's Rating Scales – 3
  - Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)

Example BASC-2 Score Profile

Summary Chart of TRS Scale Scores
Possible Problem Areas (Shaded Areas)
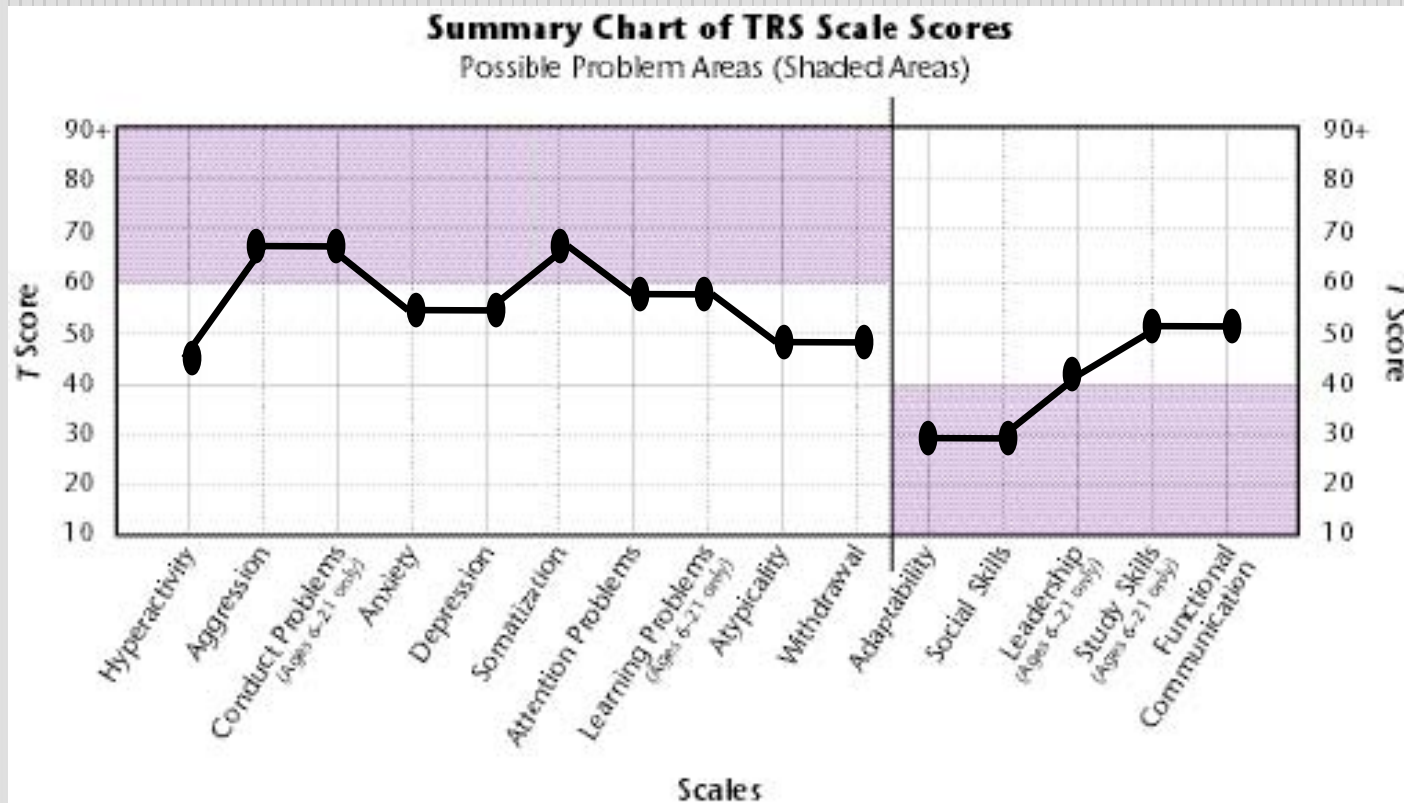
Typical Characteristics of Scales

- Ratings follow actual behavior occurrence, and typically involve **estimation** of behavior over an extended period (e.g., 1 month)

- Scale comprised of a series of items that **cluster** together under one or more scales.

- Standardized, norm-referenced behavior ratings scales provide a picture of student behavior in **comparison** to a standard.

  - Comparison across individuals can be useful to understand student behavior in relation to what is typically expected
  - Comparison within an individual but may be not be as useful

# Benefits & Limitations of Behavior Rating Scales

- May be most helpful in diagnostic assessment.
- Provide a common understanding of the specific behaviors that are indicative of a given cluster term.
- May also be suited for use in screening and evaluative assessment practices.

- May not be sensitive to incremental change.
- May be feasible only for occasional use given time/cost.
- Many clinically-focused (i.e., focus on problem rather than pro-social behavior).
- Do not directly assess behavior –rater bias may be present.

Behavior rating scales – summary:

- *Screening* – yes, but perhaps not in universal assessment

- *Progress monitoring* – not likely

- *Diagnosis* – yes, most common use within clinical settings

- *Evaluation* – maybe, if the period of time is sufficient and constructs measured are relevant

# Systematic Direct Observation
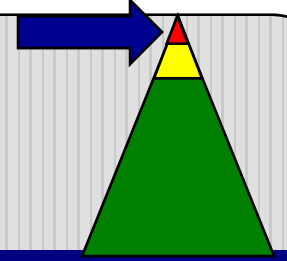
- **Definition**:

  data collected by an observer watching an environment/person for some period of time

- **Examples**:
  - Percentage of intervals observed to be actively engaged
  - Frequency of positive peer initiations throughout the day
  - Recording how long it takes to transition in the hallway (duration)

Dawn's Percentage of Off-Task Behavior in History Class
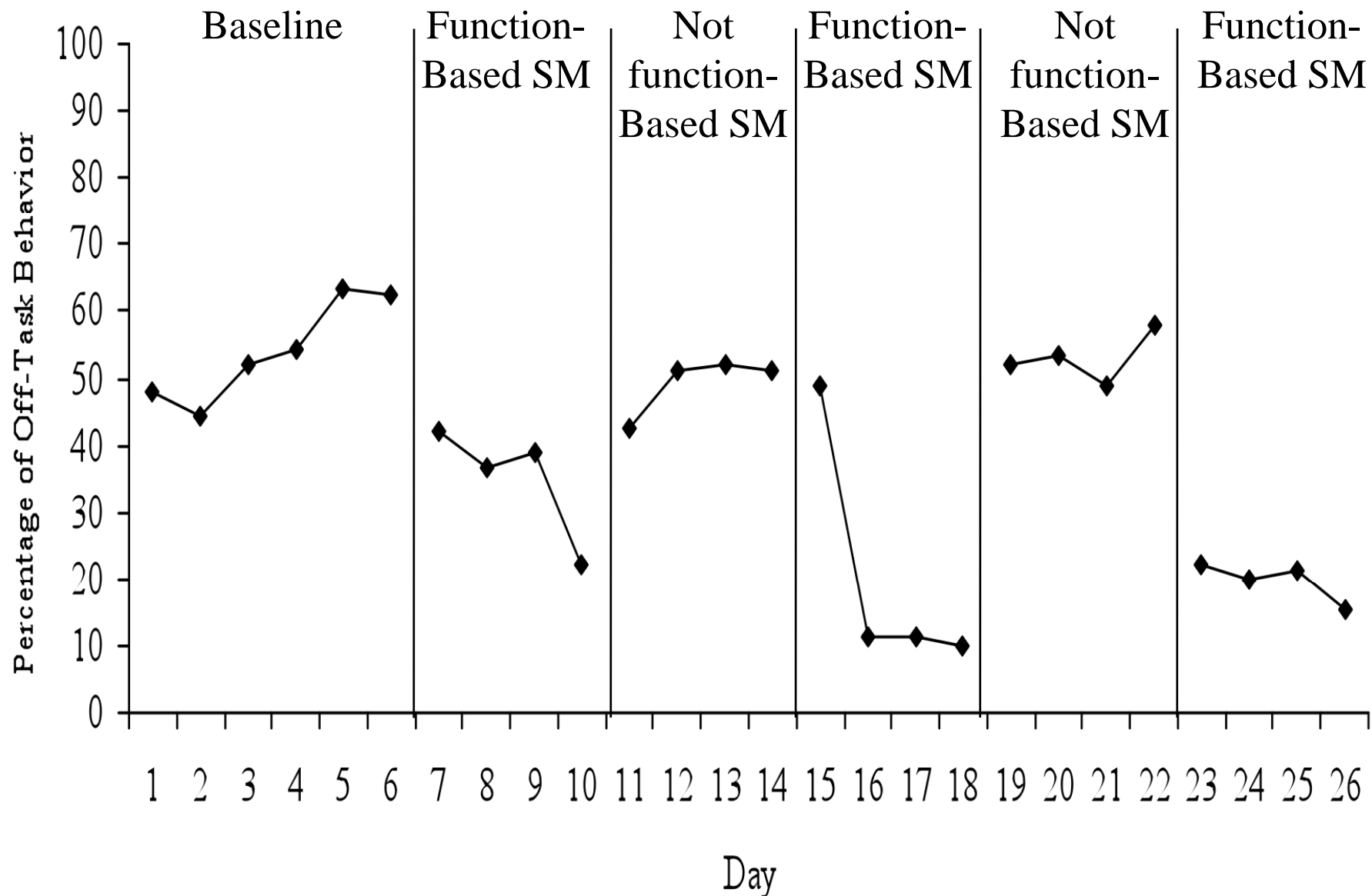
Benefits & Limitations of SDO

- Highly flexible
- Useful in progress monitoring
- Directness
- Standardized procedures
- Minimal cost for materials

- Potential reactivity
- Observer error/drift
- Limited feasibility re: training and intrusiveness
- Difficult to monitor low frequency behaviors
- Generalizability

Systematic Direct Observation– summary:

- *Screening* – not likely in universal assessment

- *Progress monitoring* – yes!

- *Diagnosis* – maybe, particularly if within FBA

- *Evaluation* – not likely

Direct Behavior Rating
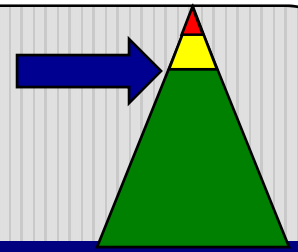
- **Definition**:

  A tool that involves a brief rating of a target behavior following a specified observation period (e.g. class activity)

- **Examples**:
  - Behavior Report Card
  - Home-School Note
  - Daily Progress Report
  - Good Behavior Note
  - Check-In Check-Out Card

Example: DBR-like Tool

The Behavior Reporter
On-Line Behavior Report Card Generator
A service of www.interventioncentral.org

Behavior Report Card

Student: _____   Date: _____

Teacher: _____   Classroom: _____

Directions: Review each of the Behavior Report Card items below. For each item, rate the degree to which the student showed the behavior or met the behavior goal.

The student focused his or her attention on teacher instructions, classroom lessons and assigned work.

Circle the degree to which the student met the behavioral goal:

1........2........3...|...4........5........6...|...7........8........9
Never/Seldom   Sometimes   Usually/Always

The student sat in class without fidgeting or squirming more than most peers.

Circle the degree to which the student met the behavioral goal:

1........2........3...|...4........5........6...|...7........8........9
Never/Seldom   Sometimes   Usually/Always

The student remembered academic instructions and directions without needing extra reminders.

Circle the degree to which the student met the behavioral goal:

1........2........3...|...4........5........6...|...7........8........9
Never/Seldom   Sometimes   Usually/Always

©2004

Example: DBR-like Tool

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Student _____ (specify behavior here) ☺ 😐 ☹					
Student _____ _____ (specify behavior here) ☺ 😐 ☹					
Student _____ (specify behavior here) ☺ 😐 ☹					
Student _____ (specify behavior here) ☺ 😐 ☹					

Example: Standard Form for Single-item DBR scales

DBR Form

Date: M T W Th F	Student: Rater:	Activity Description:

Observation Time: Start:_____ End: _____ ☐ Check if no observation today	Behavior Descriptions: **Academically engaged** is actively or passively participating in the classroom activity. For example: writing, raising his/her hand, answering a question, talking about a lesson, listening to the teacher, reading silently, or looking at instructional materials. **Disruptive Behavior** is student action that interrupts regular school or classroom activity. For example: out of his/her seat, fidgeting, playing with objects, acting aggressively, talking/yelling about things that are unrelated to classroom instruction. (If desired) **Optional Behavior** is

Directions: Place a slash (/) along the line that best reflects (a) <u>% of total time student was academically engaged</u> and (b) <u>% of total time or total # of times student exhibited disruptive behavior</u> during the observation period. If desired, an additional behavior may be included by providing a definition above and then rating on the "optional behavior" line.

Academically Engaged

% of Total Time

```
0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
0%                   50%                      100%
Never               Sometimes                Always
```

Disruptive Behavior

Circle Type of Rating:
% of Total Time
or
# of Times

```
0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10+
0%                   50%                      100%
Never               Sometimes                Always
```

Optional Behavior

Circle Type of Rating:
% of Total Time
or
# of Times

```
0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10+
0%                   50%                      100%
Never               Sometimes                Always
```

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Download:
www.directbehaviorratings.com

What kinds of behaviors should be rated?

Academic Engagement	Actively or passively participating in the classroom activity.
Compliance	To initiate/complete a response to an adult request in a timely and socially acceptable manner.
Disruptive Behavior	A student action that interrupts regular school or classroom activity.

How do I use the DBR form?

1) Complete top portion of the form
   - ✓ Student's name, Date, Rating period(s)
   - ✓ Review behavior definitions and rating directions
2) Have the form ready for completion following each pre-identified activity period
   - ✓ e.g., Reading block, independent seat work
3) Immediately following the activity period, complete the ratings
   - ✓ Do not complete the rating if you aren't confident you directly observed the student for a sufficient amount of time

When rating, remember…

- Ratings should correspond to the proportion of time that you actually observed the student display the target behavior.
  - Complete immediately following the activity period.
  - Do not complete if you did not observe for a sufficient amount of time.
- When rating, each behavior should be considered independently of the other targets. **That is, total ratings across behaviors do not have to equal 100%**.
  - For example, a student may be engaged 50% of the time, and disruptive 20%. A student may also be engaged for 100% of the time, and disruptive for 10%.

Example DBR Data Profile

DBR Afternoon (11/13 to 1/8)
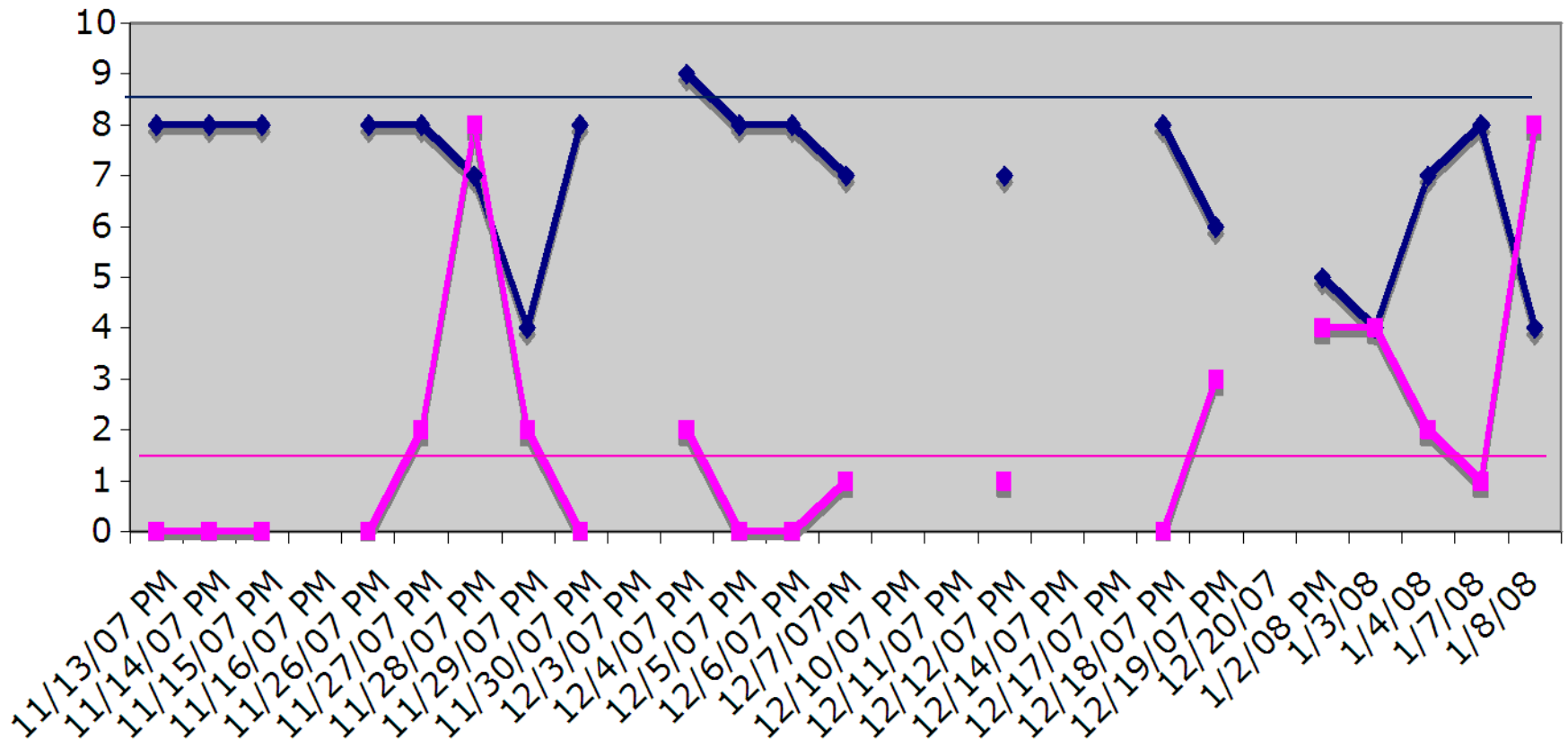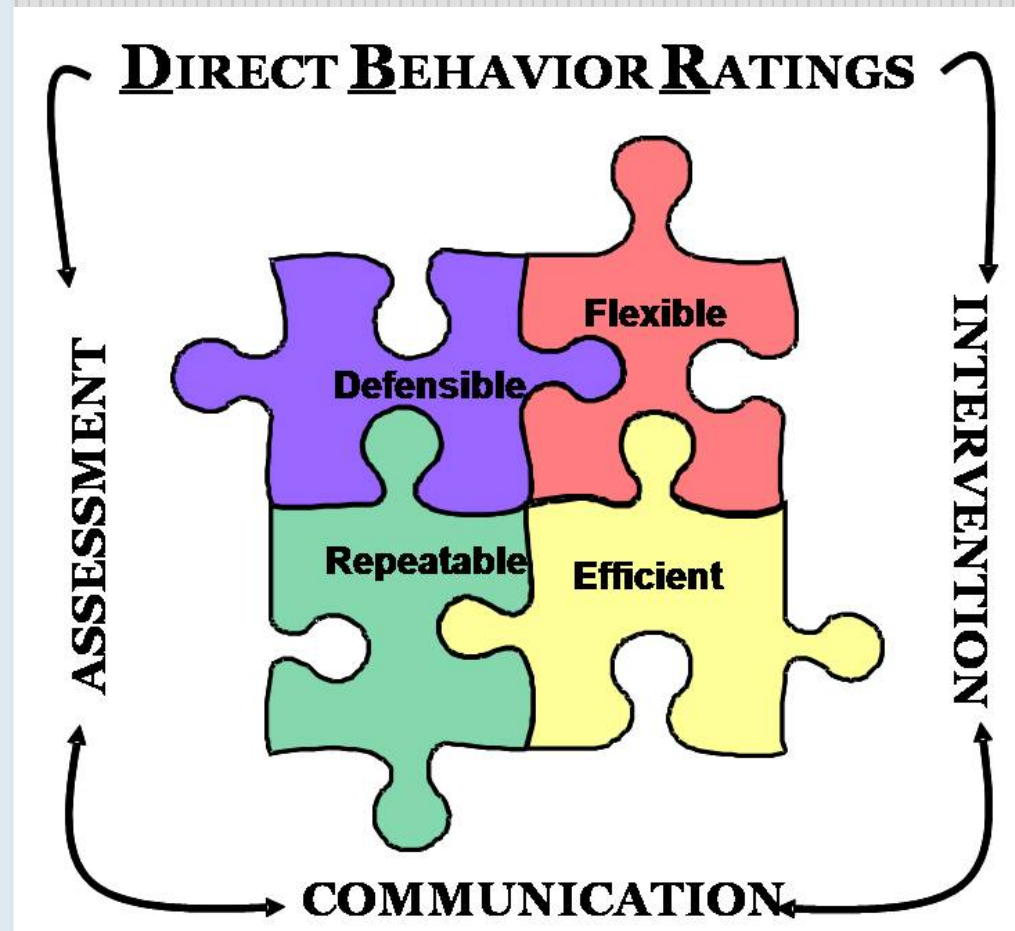
DBR Research Directions

Past:
• Establish recommended instrumentation and procedures

Present:
• Establish "training"
• Build web-based application
• Continue technical adequacy

Future:
• Investigate application in screening
• Examine utility in schools and beyond...
• Return to the assessment-intervention link

Benefits & Limitations of DBR

- Highly flexible
- Useful in progress monitoring
- Directness
- Potential for standardized procedures
- Minimal cost for materials

- Generalizability
- Rater bias is likely present
- Training requirements unknown
- Limited psychometric knowledge beyond DBR-SIS

Direct Behavior Rating – summary:

- *Screening* - maybe

- *Progress monitoring* - yes

- *Diagnosis* — maybe, particularly if within FBA

- *Evaluation* — not likely

REVIEW: Methods of Social Behavior Assesment

- Extant data
- Standardized behavior rating scales
- Systematic direct observation
- Direct Behavior Rating

WHICH TO USE? Consider…

Psychometric adequacy

Usability

Contextual relevance

Why do I need data?

At what level should the problem be solved?
(Primary, Secondary, Tertiary)

What is the purpose of assessment?
(Screening, Progress Monitoring, Evaluation, Diagnosis)

Which data do I need?

Which tools are best matched to assess the behavior of interest?

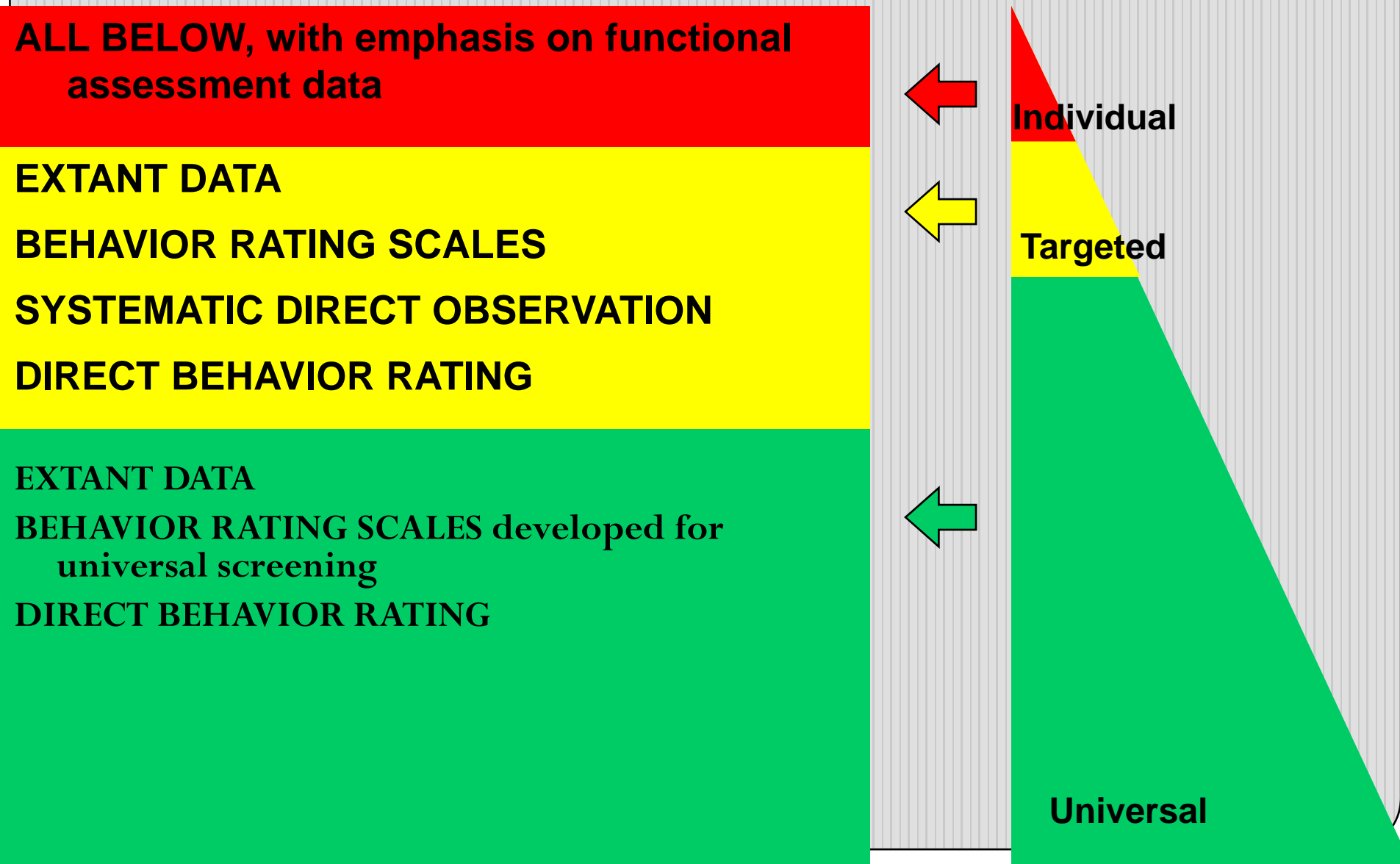*Contextual relevance*

What decisions will be made using these data?

Psychometric Adequacy

What resources are available to collect data?

Usability

Which tools can answer these questions?

Adapted from Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sugai, 2007

SUMMARY: Behavior Assessment Methods within RTI

ALL BELOW, with emphasis on functional assessment data

← **Individual**

EXTANT DATA

BEHAVIOR RATING SCALES

SYSTEMATIC DIRECT OBSERVATION

DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING

← **Targeted**

EXTANT DATA

BEHAVIOR RATING SCALES developed for universal screening

DIRECT BEHAVIOR RATING

←

Universal

Conclusion: Assessment Challenges in Domains of Social Behavior

- How do we develop school "buy-in" and capacity regarding roles in prevention related to social behavior and mental health?
  - How do we facilitate capacity for schools to include universal screening?
- How can schools integrate a common logic and language within the domains of social behavior?
- How do we forge new directions in the development and evaluate of assessments that are *technically adequate*, *contextually relevant*, and *usable* in schools?
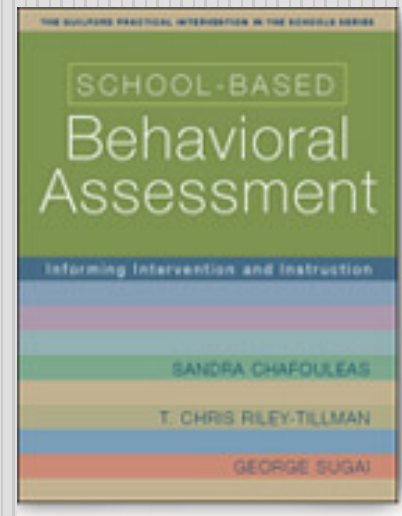
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Further information:
Chafouleas, S.M., Riley-Tillman,T.C., & Sugai, G.
(2007). *School-Based Behavioral Assessment:
Informing Instruction and Intervention*. New York:
Guilford.

Note. This presentation can be downloaded from
www.directbehaviorratings.com