



Building Blocks of Brain Development Supports and Interventions



Using the *Building Blocks of Brain Development* to
Support Students with Learning Disabilities

Peter Thompson, Ed.S., Ph.D.



Consideration of Terms

- The full and correct term is the *Building Blocks of Brain Development*© (BBBD)
- For this presentation, referred to many ways such as the BBBM or BBBD
- For this presentation, the BBBM or BBBD is used to describe brain function more than development





Module 1.2

BBBD: Supports and Interventions

Considerations and Cautions



Important Note

The information, concepts, and models provided in this presentation are intended to give practitioners a framework when conducting special education evaluations and employing interventions. It is emphasized that nothing in this presentation is meant to be directive or prescriptive.

Professionals are free to use some, or all of the information presented, but they are not required to do so in their practice. **Always consult with your special education director for clarity around district policies and expectations for special education evaluations.**



IMPORTANT 

Learning Outcomes

- Understand what makes for effective supports
- Understand critical considerations and perspectives on SLD and interventions
- Learn the important differences between interventions and accommodations



SLD: What Does It Feel Like?

Excellent video that describes what it is like to have a learning disability

<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/through-your-childs-eyes>



What's It's Like to have a Learning Disability

Through your
child's eyes

Pause (k)



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BBBD Guideposts Embrace the Gray

- The first guidepost is a reminder that the identification and interventions related to SLD is not an easy “black-and-white” process.
- Supports that work for one student may not be effective for another student (no one size fits all).
- Individualized supports, flexibility and professional judgment is key.



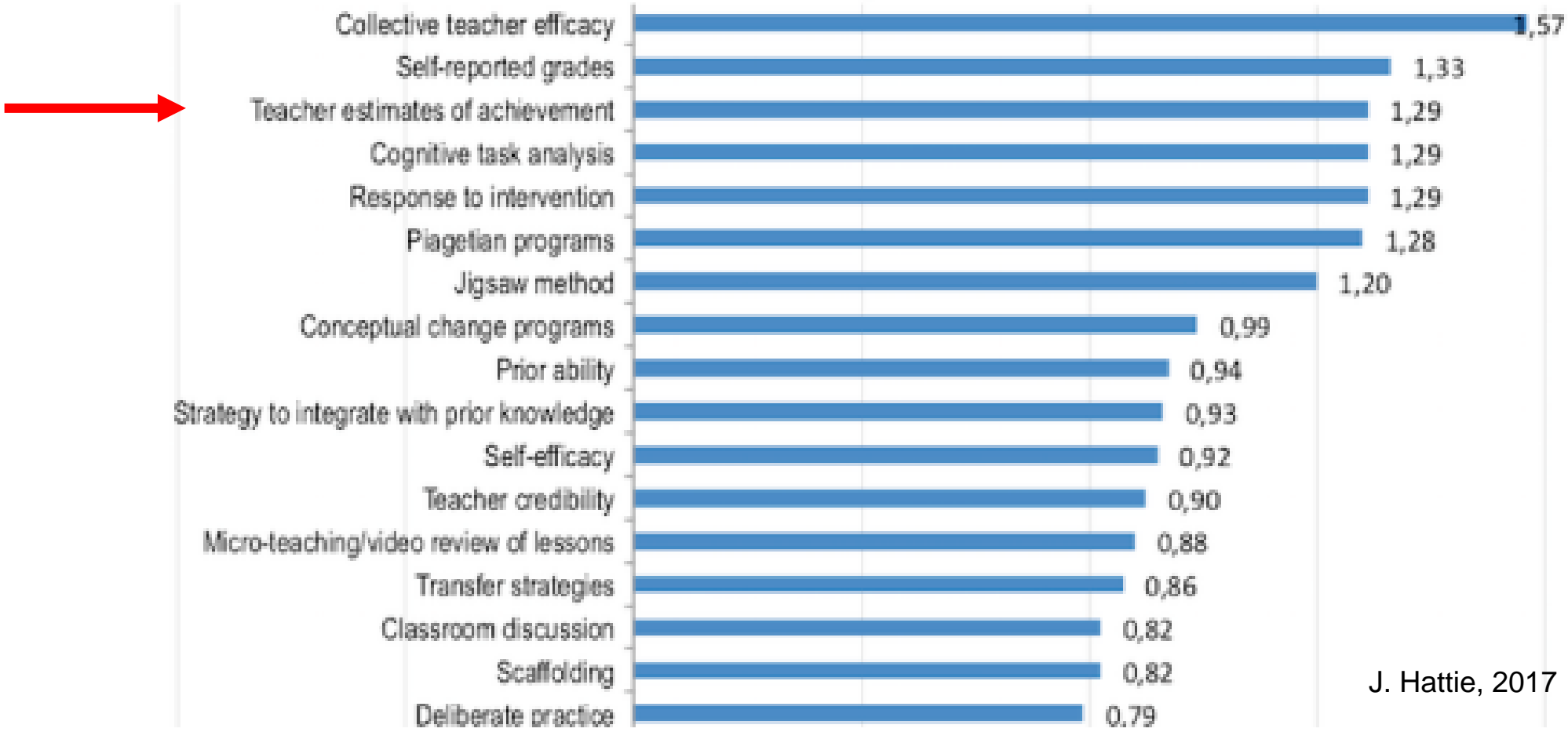


Important Considerations Significance of Your Approach

- All students can learn and benefit from education.
- SpEd teams should focus on dispelling myths about SLD. Teachers must teach new skills that will improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
- Keep high expectation, but remember “can’t vs. won’t”.
- SLD supports can improve a student’s life well beyond school and academics! Changing lives for the better.



The Importance of High Expectations!



J. Hattie, 2017



Important Consideration Your Role

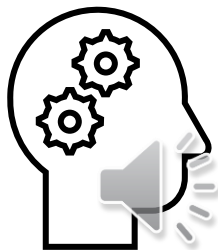
- Not to “cure” SLD, but to provide supports and targeted interventions that may moderate the disability
- Employ empirically based supports that are effective
- Provide access to the curriculum and teach new skills to the extent possible given the severity of the SLD
- Realistic goals based on specific needs



Important Considerations

Stay Positive, but Realistic

- A learning disability can't be cured; it is a neurological and lifelong issue. With the right support and interventions, SLDs can be moderated, but not completely “fixed”.
- Degrees of SLD—mild, moderate, severe
- *Double deficit* and the neural circuit



Cautions

- Quality and targeted vs. Quantity and General (Interventions—more are not necessarily better)
- Too many goals at one time
- Beware the Neuro-myths (Dr. Betts et al., 2019)
- Attitude/relationship impacts outcomes (Wentzel/Ramadi 2016)



Definitions: Interventions vs. Accommodations

Intervention

Based on student's needs, targeted, specifically designed instruction to improve a specific skill—(Maybe be limited based on severity of deficits.)

Accommodation

A change made to the teaching or testing procedures in order to provide a student with access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills---Does not change content (i.e. modification).



Intervention vs. Accommodation

- **Intervention**

- Building phonemic awareness skills
- Direct instruction for increasing math facts
- Build reading comprehension skills

- **Accommodation**

- Allow for extra time
- Allow use of calculator
- Allow for use of open notes during tests



Evidence Based: What Does it Mean?

- Theoretically plausible and empirically validated
- ESSA replaces phrase “scientifically based instruction” with “Evidence Based Interventions”
<https://www.wrightslaw.com/nclb/rbi.htm>
- Peer-reviewed publications
- Replicable Random Controlled Trials (RCTs) / Correlational Studies (equal to or greater than .50)
- Demonstrated practical effectiveness



Interventions and Accommodations

- **Research and Empirical Foundation-Key Resources**
 - **CDE Advisory List of Instructional Programming**
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/advisorylistofinstructionalprogramming2020>
- **National Center for Intensive Intervention**
<https://intensiveintervention.org/tools-charts/overview>
- **Understood.org Difference between Modifications and Accommodations**
<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/the-difference-between-accommodations-and-modifications>



Four Categories of Accommodations

- Based on student need to access the curriculum
- Documented effectiveness and student's use

I. Presentation

II. Opportunities to Respond and Response Types

III. Setting and Environmental

IV. Timing and Scheduling



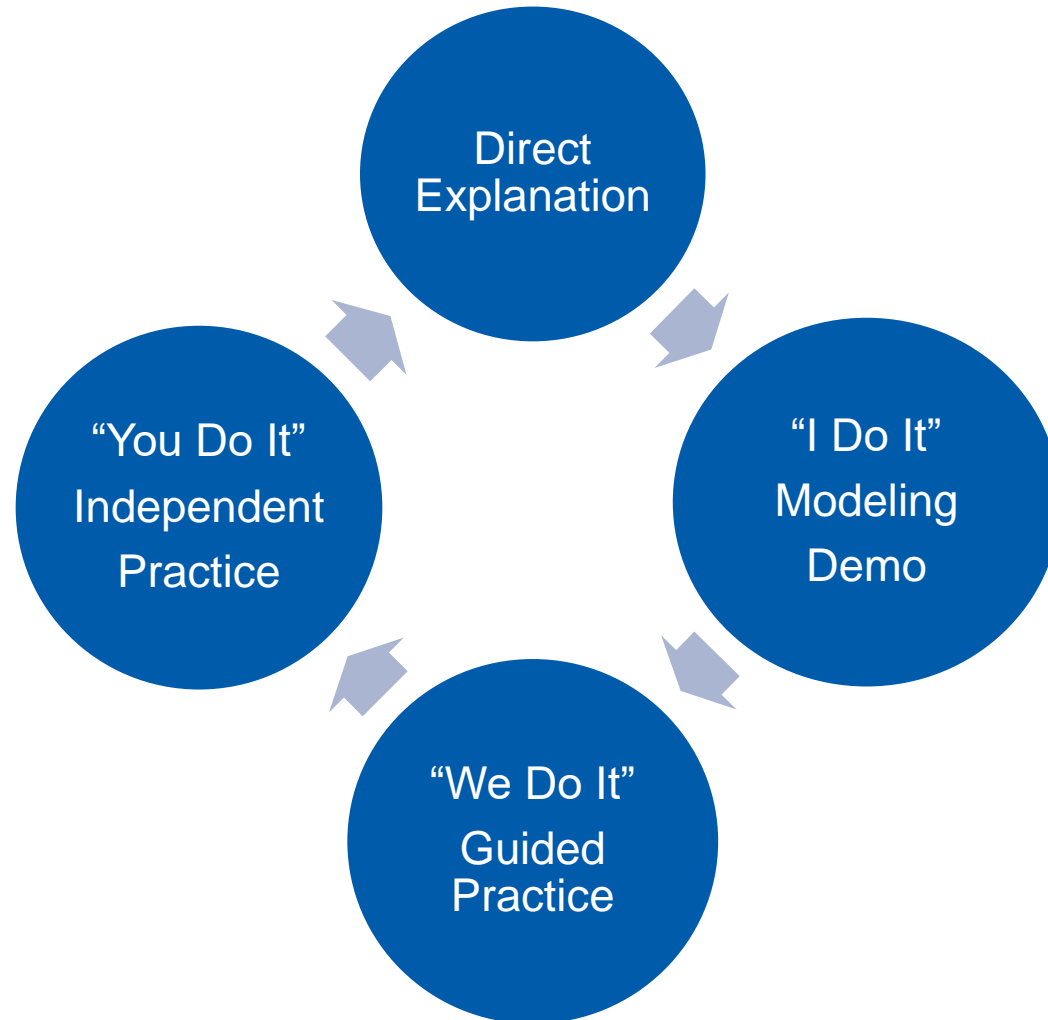
Mainstay Intervention

Direct and Explicit Instruction

- Long-standing research to support its use
- Not fancy or magic, but effective if employed with fidelity and consistently (critical)
- Repeated and emphasized throughout presentation series as each module can be a stand-alone lesson
- Anita Archer Video

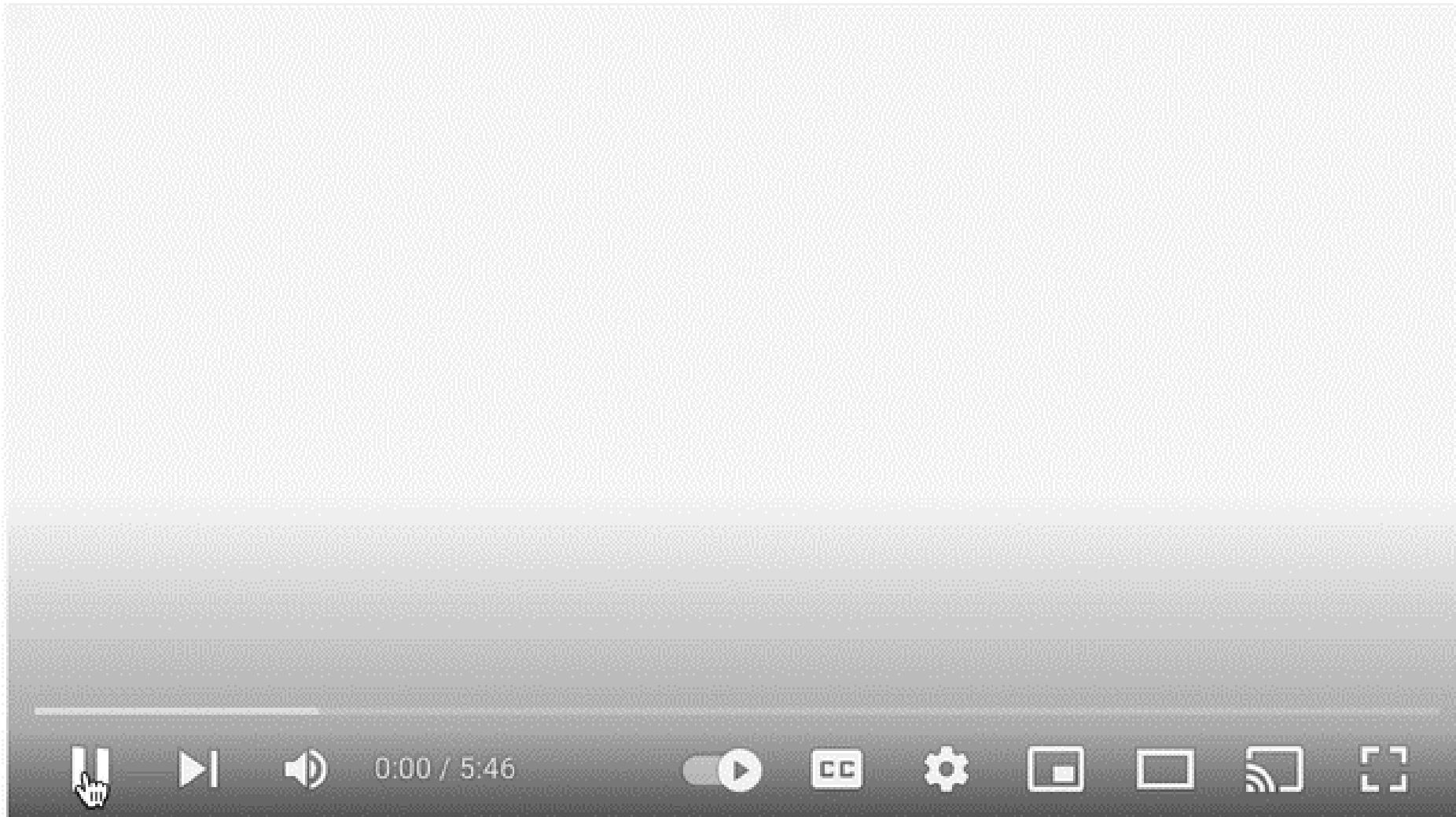


Direct Instruction



Why Explicit Instruction Works

Dr. Anita Archer



Summary

- Effective special education supports are predicated on specific student needs, use of empirically based interventions that have documented effectiveness, and flexibility to change supports when they are not working.
- It is important to remember that SLDs typically cannot be “cured,” and the primary focus should be on building skills and providing access the curriculum. Create goals that have real impact the student’s progress.
- Interventions build skills, while accommodations support access to the curriculum, but does not change the content.





Thank You For Listening End of Module 1.2



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