

The logo for 'Think and Return' features the word 'Think' in a blue, italicized font above the word 'Return' in a black, bold font. A stylized figure is integrated into the letter 'i' of 'Think'. The text is set against a background of horizontal blue and yellow stripes.

# *Think and Return*

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# Learning Outcomes

- Learn the features of *Think & Return* as a developing practice.
- Learn the connections of *Think & Return* to researched practices and processes
- Learn what ‘value added’ is provided by *Think & Return* compared to traditional ‘Timeout’; ‘Take a Break’; ‘Re-Focus’; and Social Skills curriculum.
- Learn the early feedback from teachers piloting *Think & Return* in 4 elementary schools.

# Introducing a Systematic Classroom Prevention/ Early Response Strategy: *Think And Return*

- A Developing Practice
- Supportive, Insight-Promoting Classroom Tier 1 Strategy.
- Used in early response to concerning behaviors in order to prevent behavioral repetition or escalation.
- A *Non-Punitive* support rather than a consequence for misbehavior

# Principal Support

*“I am really proud of our third grade team. They have been open, flexible, and are spending time on Tier 1 interventions to set a great foundation for the rest of the year. We are particularly proud that we are helping in the development of Think & Return. It is a valuable tier 1 practice that allows for greater teacher-student relationships and greater behavioral understanding to take place.”*

Peter Durso, Principal

Nottingham West Elementary School

# Children Under Stress

“Children under stress seldom see connections among *what they feel, how they behave and how others respond*. Responses to stress tend to be ***behaviors fueled by feelings***, which then perpetuate conflict. Not only are most children unable to recognize feelings, they are often not able to talk about them.

Unless a student is able to do these two things, it is difficult for the student to make lasting change from behavior *driven by feelings*, to behavior *regulated by rational processes*.”

Nicholas Long, LSCI Institute

# Connections to Research-Validated Processes & Practices

- **RtI (Response to Intervention)**
  - Multi-tiered Social, Emotional and Academic Support
- **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)**
  - Systematized Prevention and Response
  - Use of school culture-developed expectations
  - Data-based decision-making
- **LSCI (Life Space Crisis Intervention)**
  - Insight-promoting process
  - Focus on self-control and awareness
  - Behavior is not only about the noticed event, but about the thoughts and feelings that occur prior
- **Function of Behavior**
  - Behavior occurs predictably and for identifiable reason (to gain or avoid)
- **Cognitive-Behavioral Theory**
  - Cognitive/Thinking strategies impact feelings and behavioral choices

# T&R 'Fit' with 4 Big Ideas of PBIS/ RtI

1. Systems and Practices for BOTH Prevention and Response
2. One Common System v. Many Systems
3. Multiple Tiers of Support for Common Outcomes
4. Data to Guide Decisions (at all tiers)



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# *Think & Return Value Added:*

## PBIS Features That Have Been Historically Difficult to Address with Fidelity

1. Common classroom prevention/early response strategy
2. Data gathering at early levels of behavioral concern
  1. Early support for students w/ low-level or internalizing behavior
  2. *ThinkSheet* data provides important student information
3. *Systematic* Tier 1 Teaching of:
  1. Pro-social behavior
  2. A common strategy/ common language to manage feelings/problems before they become 'bigger'
  3. A transferable, insight-promoting strategy that may be used in other settings and in the future
4. Connections to Admin Response & Tier 2 supports

# Today's Focus

While there are a number of T&R adaptations in development, today's focus is on its use as an elementary level *Tier 1 Classroom Prevention/Early Response* strategy.



**NOTICE  
CONCERNING BEHAVIOR**

Low Level Initial Response  
(Optional)  
(e.g. "3R"; signal for attention; validation)

Signal/Prompt for Use of ThinkSpot  
-OR-  
Activate Option for  
"Think" at student's desk (if applicable)

Student Shows Ready to 'Return'  
Teacher Signals to Return

**RETURN**

**Behavior Repeats  
Or  
Escalates**

Activate next steps on  
Classroom Response Continuum

Teacher check-in as applicable

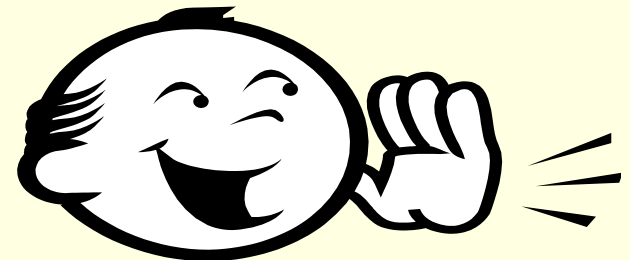
**Student Resumes  
with  
Sustained Pro-Social Behavior**

Teacher acknowledgement

Teacher check-in as applicable

# Noticing Concerning Behavior

- First step in *Think and Return* is to notice a concerning behavior.
  - *Externalizing Example: MINOR DISRUPTION: Behavior that causes an interruption in class activity or instruction (talking, humming, noise with materials, bothering others, distracting movement) that, if repeated, would make it difficult for teacher to teach or students to learn.*
  - *Internalizing Example: SOCIAL AVOIDANCE: Behavior that demonstrates an uncharacteristic reluctance to engage socially with peers during an academic or social activity*



# First Response Options

In response to an initial low-level concern, the teacher might use the *ThinkSpot* right away OR may apply a low-level response such as: *Signal for Attention* (to whole class or discreetly to student), or apply a *4R* response (Re-focus, Re-cue, Remind, Relationship), or use a *Validation Statement*.

- Example: Teacher says to whole class, “OK, everyone ‘Give me 5’.”
- Example (Reminder to Suzie): “Hi Suzie, remember that respectful in class means using a quiet voice – thanks.”
- Example (Validation to Jon): “I know it’s hard sometimes to get to work when you still have energy from recess.”



# If the Behavior Repeats: Activate Think & Return

- “Suzie, *‘Think & Return’*”
- “Suzie, *‘T&R’*”
- “Suzie, *‘Try the ThinkSpot’*”
- “Suzie”: Teacher uses non-verbal T &R signal
- Implementing with Fidelity requires an intentional non-punitive approach; using language and non-verbal communications that are supportive. Practice! Address:
  - Word Choice
  - Body language; facial expression
  - Tone of voice; voice inflection



# *T&R is a ‘nudge’ or a ‘support’; it is **not** a punishment*

- Many children have experienced punitive uses of ‘time-out’.
- The purpose of the *Think & Return* strategy is to give students a chance to gain self-control, not to punish.
- Teachers must avoid sending punitive messages (verbally or non-verbally) when *T&R* is used.
- Correct message is one of prevention and teaching how to take positive control.

# Non-Punitive



- ✓ Children should not experience humiliation or rejection.
- ✓ Intent is ultimately to promote student insight about the connection between behavior and feelings.
- ✓ Intent is to generalize a self-control strategy that students can use in other contexts and in the future.
- ✓ When the strategy is practiced systemically throughout the school, students should easily acclimate as they move from grade to grade; context to context.

## If More Language is Needed, Remind of the Purpose of the *'ThinkSpot'*

- “Jon, try the *ThinkSpot* to see if you can figure out what’s going on before it gets bigger or harder to handle.”
- “Try the *ThinkSpot*, so you can prevent things from heading downhill (or getting worse).”
- “Try a quick *'Think'* so you can deal with what’s going on.”
- “Try a quick *'Think'* so you can get control of things before things get control of you.”

# Teaching the Process:

## *Well-Practiced Prior to Implementation*

- First weeks of school is the best time to introduce.
- The introduction should involve dedicated instruction, modeling, and student practice.



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*“The timing was very, very good at the beginning of the year because it gave the kids a chance to relax, have a discussion, and normalize that we all have tougher times...everybody feels this way sometimes..... It created common ground.....they felt that it was okay to talk.*

*Just to promote discussion with the kids and get to know them in that way was so valuable.”*

Shelby Moore, Classroom Teacher

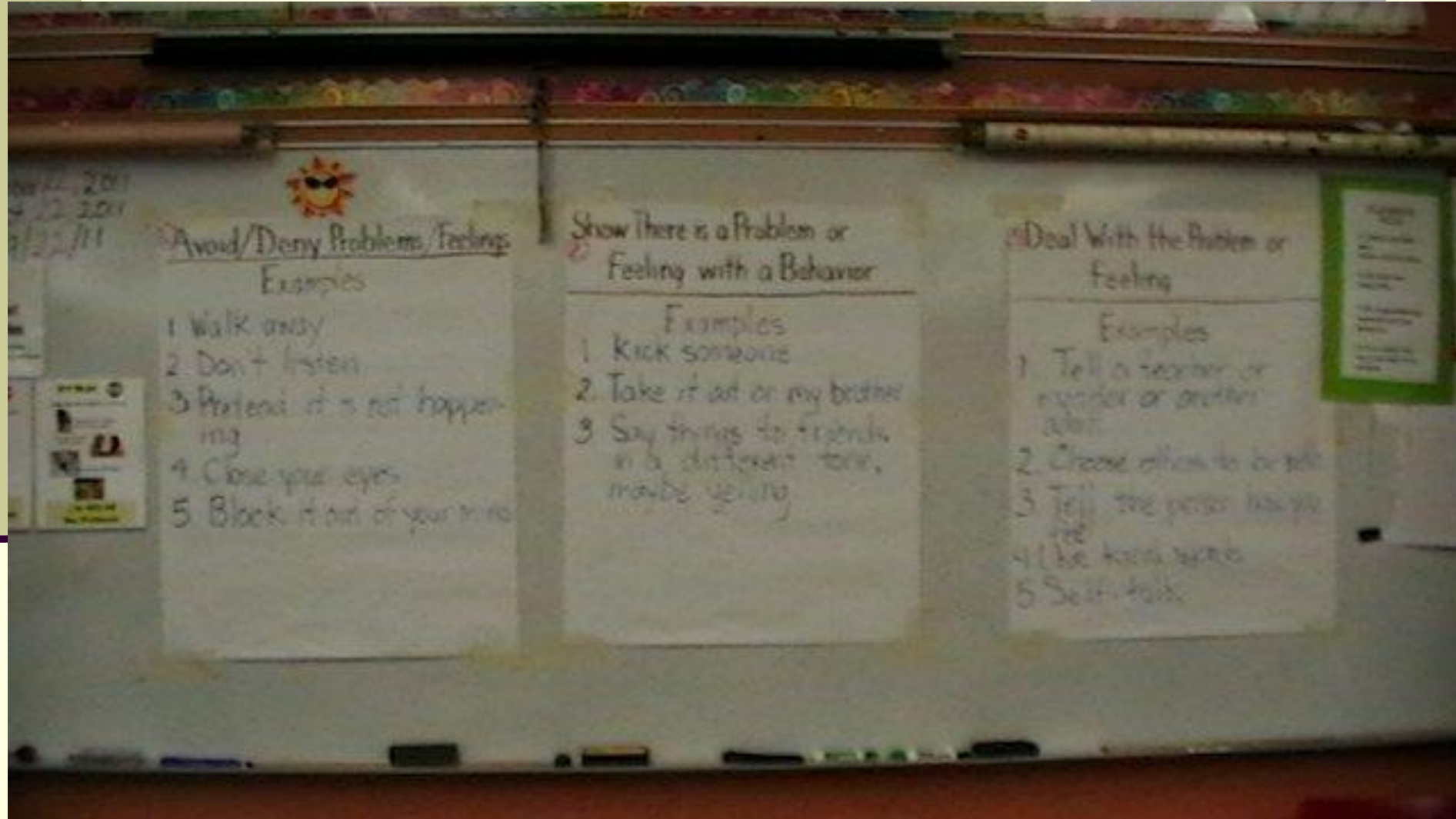
# 15 T & R Lessons

1. “Think & Return: What is it and when will it start”
2. “Normalizing problems and feelings”
3. “The Problem I Cause is not the Cause of the Problem”
4. “3 Ways People React to Their Problems and Feelings”
5. “I’ve got extra worries or stress today.”
6. “I am mad about something (or at someone).”
7. “Doing school work is frustrating.”
8. “I am really excited about something...It’s hard to focus.”
9. “My engine is running too fast... I have too much energy.”
10. “I didn’t get much sleep last night... I feel too tired to focus.”
11. “I don’t know what is bothering me today”
12. “Going to the ‘Think Spot’”
13. “What to do when you are at the ‘Think Spot’”
14. “Ready to Return”
15. “Returning from the ‘Think Spot’”

# General Ideas Lessons

1. “Think & Return: What is it and when will it start”
2. “Normalizing problems and feelings”
3. “The Problem I Cause is not the Cause of the Problem”
4. “3 Ways People React to Their Problems and Feelings”

# Lesson 4: 3 Ways to Respond to Problems or Feelings



- "A lot of the kids were able to express themselves without the teacher having to say....'*Give me a personal example.*' For instance, one student said as a general example, '*What if your dad and mom had a big fight the night before.*' As the teacher, you think this is something that may happen with this child -- he is comfortable expressing himself because he doesn't have to say '*It happened to me.*'

*Christine Robinson, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teacher*

# Teaching the Prompts on the *ThinkSheet*

5. “I’ve got extra worries or stress today.”
6. “I am mad about something (or at someone).”
7. “Doing school work is frustrating.”
8. “I am really excited about something...It’s hard to focus.”
9. “My engine is running too fast... I have too much energy.”
10. “I didn’t get much sleep last night... I feel too tired to focus.”
11. “I don’t know what is bothering me today”



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## ■ ThinkSheet

"Kids got a lot from realizing that things they are really excited about others might not be....and the goal is *always* to keep going ahead and focusing because you still have a job to do.

So it is not an excuse to blow off the day....but it's okay to get it out there, maybe tell someone, and then it's your job to move on with a positive attitude and get through the day."

Julie Torres, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher

# Using the *ThinkSpot*

12. “Going to the ‘Think Spot’”
13. “What to do when you are at the ‘Think Spot’”
14. “Ready to Return”
15. “Returning from the ‘Think Spot’”

"Even with acting out towards each other, they have begun to have a sense of empathy. They've begun to think differently about their peers; *they understand that something went on at home and that is why their friend snapped at them....or does not want to talk to them.*"

“A little girl came up to me and said, *'I think that so and so is sad today because'*.... and that let me go and talk to the boy who was upset.....so it's definitely teaching the kids about empathy.“

Christine Robinson, Teacher

*"Yesterday I got to observe a lesson and found infectious community-building going on. When one student brought something up...you could see the other student saying 'Oh!' because they could relate to it. This comfortability factor prompted more thinking without "I" statements. So they all felt connected and continued to bring up whatever they wanted which started the domino effect with more and more participation."*

Peter Durso, Principal

# At the *ThinkSpot*: Using the ‘*ThinkSheet*’

- The *ThinkSheet* provides prompts that encourage the student to think about why feelings or problems might be happening now:
  - ❑ “*I’ve got some extra worries or stress today*”
  - ❑ “*Doing school work is frustrating*”
  - ❑ “*I’m mad about something*”
  - ❑ “*My engine is running too fast.... Or too slow*”
  - ❑ “*I didn’t get much sleep last night... I feel too tired to focus*”
    - ❑ (FOR OLDER STUDENTS: BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD, SLEEP, SAFETY)
  - ❑ “*I’m really excited about something... It’s hard to focus*”
  - ❑ “*I am not sure what is bothering me today*”









# When at the *'Think Spot'*, the Job is to Show Readiness Thru Behavior

- Demonstrate the ready to *'Return'* behaviors:
  - Once you are aware of your feeling or problem and have a plan for how to deal with it (e.g., slow down your engine; calm down about your worries/frustration; decide to let it go till later; make a plan to talk to someone...), you then can show that you are ready to *'Return'* by your behavior.
- Students practice ready to *'Return'* behaviors.
- Have a behavior matrix at the *'ThinkSpot'* that displays the ready to *'Return'* behaviors (using school-wide expectation categories if applicable).



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# Demonstrating Readiness

Behavior	In The Think Spot:
Show you are a <b>KIND</b>	Smile
Show you are <b>RESPECTFUL</b>	Work Quietly
Show you are <b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	Use the ‘Think Spot Prompts’ to help you think about how to get ready to return
Show you are <b>SAFE</b>	Sit calmly

# Going to and from the ThinkSpot Lessons

- Demonstrate and practice *Going to* and *Returning from* the Think Spot.
  - Walking quietly without talking to anyone.
  - Walking steady and straight – not running, taking the long way, or moving slow like a turtle.
  - Walking with hands and feet to yourself.
- Discuss/ practice how others can be helpful to a classmate during *Think and Return*:
  - Leave the person alone
  - Go on with the classroom activity as usual
  - Welcome the classmate back when s/he returns
  - Do not bring it up later to tease him/her

# How do you know *T&R* is 'Not Working'

Examples of not working ('non-responsive) include:

- A child who uses the *ThinkSpot* over and over without making any improvement in behavior (determine criteria for frequency the strategy is used with no change).
- A child who becomes extremely distraught even with only one use of the strategy.
- A child who has lingering signs of resentment, withdrawal, or insecurity as a result of the strategy.

These are all signals that another strategy is needed for that particular child. In these cases, it is wise for teachers to seek help from colleagues, parents, teacher support teams, and counselors.

# Think & Return

As any other system-wide RtI strategy, T&R should be assessed for:

1. Implementation with fidelity
2. Effectiveness as a general usage strategy
  - *Is it working for enough students to include as a system-wide support in the Tier 1 behavioral support continuum?*
3. Effectiveness as an Individual Strategy
  - *Is it working for 'Jon'?*



# Think & Return

As any other system-wide RtI strategy:

If T&R is not working for a particular student, the use of T&R for that student should discontinue.

- Other supports considered
- Possible nomination for higher level (Tier 2 ) supports





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# Troubleshooting

# Avoid the Battle

Remember that *Think & Return* is a *support*, not a punishment. It is not intended to set up a power struggle and it is *not important* for the teacher to ‘win a battle’ if the student is non-compliant with the *Think & Return* process.

In other words, forcing, or coercing, a student into using *Think & Return* against their will defeats its intended purpose as a non-punitive, non-aversive support.

# Refusal to Move to the *ThinkSpot*

- If a student refuses to move to the *ThinkSpot*, stay calm.
  - The child may be trying to avoid humiliation (save face) or may be trying cast you in the role of a punishing adult – allowing him to justify an escalation of conflict
- Be a thermostat rather than thermometer (as student gets hotter, you cool down).
- Be a ‘See-Saw’: As he goes up emotionally, you go down.
- Calmly let him know it would be OK for him to do his *Think & Return* at his own seat today.
- If the student complies, praise his efforts (show him that attention is gained through positive behavior).
- If problem behavior persists or escalates, move to the next phase on the behavioral response continuum (abandon Think and Return for now).
- Either way, plan later to touch base with him privately about how to use the *ThinkSpot* next time.

# Avoid the “That’s a Warning” Trap

Be cautious of falling into ‘warning’ children that they are about to be asked to use the *ThinkSpot*.

This practice tends to set-up *Think & Return* as a punitive practice. Remember to use mild behavioral reminders as first response to concerning behavior, and then use a respectful approach when signaling a student to use the *ThinkSpot*.

# Student disrupts while moving to, or at, the *ThinkSpot*:

- If a child is disruptive on the way to, or at, the *ThinkSpot*, try ignoring the behavior – give him a chance to recover on his own.
- If the behavior persists, kindly/calmly prompt the student to use the *ThinkSpot* checklist and matrix as practiced.
  - Remind that the *ThinkSpot* is there to help him take control over (or deal with) whatever might be making it hard to focus today.
- Provide high praise if the student eventually complies and make sure to kindly touch base later about how to move to the *ThinkSpot* in a way that isn't preventing others from learning or the teacher teaching.

# Student continues or escalates concerning behavior after using the *ThinkSpot*:

- All classrooms should have a taught system of response to repeated and escalated behavioral concerns.
- *Think & Return* is a prevention support, designed as a strategy to preempt repeated and escalated behavior.
- Once the child engages in repeated or escalated behavior, the teacher should activate higher level response system strategies.
- While best for a school to establish a common system for classroom response to repeated or escalated concerning behavior, in lieu of such a school-wide strategy teachers should establish a clear and predictable continuum of responses to repeated and escalated behavior.
- This continuum should be utilized until the activation of a referral to a student support or administrative response system (e.g., an office referral for behavior that meets the criteria for ‘Major’).

# Teacher Errors to Avoid

- Skipping or short-changing *Lessons*.
  - *Lessons* may be combined for efficiency not at the cost of ill-preparing students to use the *ThinkSpot* effectively.
- Avoid ‘warning’ students that they will need to use the *ThinkSpot* if their behavior continues.
  - The message needs to be clear; the ‘*Think*’ process is not used to reflect on what I did wrong; rather, it is to figure out what is going on so I can be more in control and ‘deal’ with problems and feelings.
- Avoid using the *ThinkSpot* too late in the behavioral response process.
  - The dynamics that often result from waiting often includes a heightening of teacher frustration, and the conveying of the message that the *ThinkSpot* is used in response to rather than in the *prevention of* problematic behavior.

# Teacher Errors to Avoid

- Avoid using words like “Sent to” the *ThinkSpot* (i.e., “I am sending you to the *ThinkSpot*”).
  - Being ‘sent to’ implies an adult-controlled management strategy, whereas *Think & Return* provides an *opportunity* to stop, think and self-manage. If students perceive the *ThinkSpot* to be somewhere you are ‘sent’ when you are ‘bad’, the power and purpose of the process is lost.
- Avoid repeated use of the *ThinkSpot* for one behavioral sequence.
  - Teachers should be ready with a full response continuum for when the *ThinkSpot* is not working as a pre-emptive strategy and students repeat or escalate behavior after a ‘*Think*’.
- Avoid using the *ThinkSpot* for **ONLY** externalizing behaviors.
  - *Think & Return* it should also be used for behaviors that would not be thought of as ‘disciplinary’ behaviors. Behavioral concerns such as withdrawal, social avoidance, signs of sadness, signs of anxiety are all indicative of behaviors that could benefit from the use of the *Think & Return* process. Additionally, the teacher may get important information from the *ThinkSheet* that may spark essential conversations at a later time.

# Lessons in Development

- Booster Lessons to re-visit the ideas of taught lessons
- Orienting new students to Think and Return
- “Using the *ThinkSpot* on your own”
- “Using a *ThinkSheet* at your seat”
- “Proactive AM Meeting”
- “Self-Talk” (how people use self-talk to regulate)
- “Mind-reading” (when children behave based on their thoughts of what others are thinking)
- “Discounting the positive” (when we ignore positive feedback and only notice the negative)
- “Fixating” (when we can’t let go of something)

# Using Supplemental Literature

- *Using the supplemental literature shows children that the problems they face during their day are similar to those of the characters and they provide teachers with an opportunity to explain the different ways to deal with those problems and how the characters could have acted differently. These are books common in many classrooms so that they can choose to read to reflect while refreshing the lessons and referring back to during a hard day.”*

Tiffany Moore, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Nottingham W. ES

# Building a Library of Supplemental Literature!

Examples from teachers at Nottingham West Elementary School in Hudson,  
NH

*“Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day”* by Judith Viorst (explanation on last night’s email)

*“She Did It!”* By Jennifer Ericsson – this book discusses blaming another person for doing something. Used with Lesson 3 “The Problem I Cause if not the Cause of the Problem”

*“Miss Nelson is Missing”* by James Marshall – the substitute teacher has the students doing a lot of work. Used with Lesson 7 “Doing School work is Frustrating”

*“The Berenstain Bears and The Truth”* by Stan and Jan Berenstain – the bears keep telling lies during the story and have a hard time telling the truth. Used with Lesson 4 “3 Ways People React to their Problems or Feelings.”

*“A Quiet Place”* by Douglas Wood – discusses different quiet places and how they make you feel. Asks “what does your quiet place look like?” at the end. Used with Lesson 1 “Think and Return: What is it and when will it start”



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# Example of Connecting Literature

## "Alexander and the Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" by Judith Viorst

I read this Alexander story as a booster to the use of the *ThinkSpot*. The story discusses a boy, Alexander, who has "terrible" things happen all day and how each one makes him upset and how they "ruin" his day. The story is good for students to hear because many times one thing can ruin a student's day. We talked about how each one thing effected Alexander and how it affected his day. We talked about if this has ever happened to any of the students and how it affected their day. We also talked about how one comment, a look, or action can affect another person's day. It helped continue to build that sense of community and respect for each other in my class. I finally tied it back to the *ThinkSpot* Sheets and how going to the *ThinkSpot* and using the sheet can help us move past that small one thing so it doesn't snowball into many things and ruin our day. The students really enjoyed the book and talking about how it may happen in school or in their own lives.

I am confident that the Think Spot has had a positive impact in my classroom and I love using it. It is something I will continue to use.

Tiffany Landry

# Adaptations in Development

- Middle school classroom process (pilot fall, 2011)
- Administrative response protocol:
  - Adaptable to all education levels
  - Alternative to typical administrative response model
  - Tier 1 Student Support Center process
- *PBIS/RtI*: Multi-tiered support to achieve a common outcome:
  - Tier 1 teaching encourages pro-social behavior and independent implementation.
    - Lessons adaptable to AM meeting process
    - Lessons adaptable for use in Advisory (Advisory curriculum)
  - Tier 2 targeted group teaching curriculum; admin response protocol, student support center protocol.
  - Tier 3: Individual behavior plans utilize insight-promoting features.
- Alternative program adaptations (all education levels):
  - Private ('out-of-district') alternative programs
  - Inclusion-based student support programs

# If Time Allows

- Let's do a Lesson together:

“The Problem I cause is not the Cause of the Problem”

# For More Information

## *Contact Eric Mann:*

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Look for spring practice review and training day at  
SERESC in Bedford, NH: Spring, 2012.

Those interested in receiving notification of the  
practice review and training day, please provide  
name, school and e-mail address.

Schools with high interest in piloting school-wide or  
grade level implementation, contact Eric Mann.