

# Struggling learners & students with disabilities

Time for Change: Implementing a Plan to Improve Student Outcomes



# What do we want for Oklahoma's students?

Each student should have education and career goals that will prepare them to:

- experience fulfilling lives,
- actively participate as educated citizens, and
- thrive in a particularly competitive and global marketplace.

# What do we want for Oklahoma's students?

- Disengagement
- Leaving K-12 education unprepared for life, without:
  - Academic proficiency
  - Social skills
  - Civic responsibility
- “Good enough” attitude
- Perpetuating inequities



# How is that different for Oklahoma's students with disabilities?



Reading difficulty contributes to school failure, which increases the risk of absenteeism, dropping out, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

-Annie M. Casey Foundation

“It matters little what else they learn in elementary school if they do not learn to read at grade level.”

Fielding, L., Kerr, N., & Rosier, P. (2007)  
Annual growth for all students, catch-up growth for those who are behind  
Kennewick, WA: The New Foundation Press, Inc.

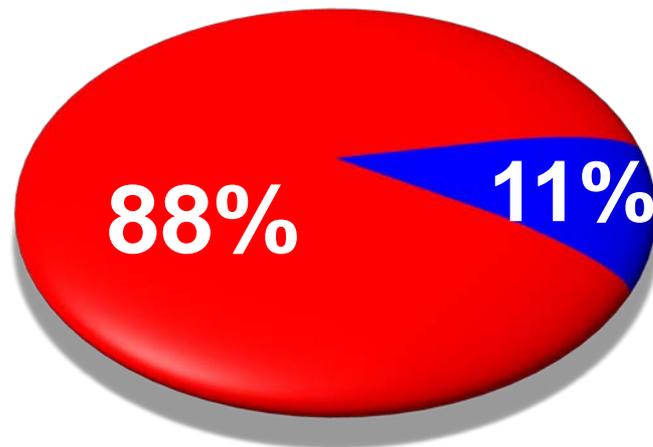
# Statistics

Poor readers at the end of first grade are at a very significant risk for long term academic difficulty.

- 88% probability of being a poor reader in fourth grade if you were a poor reader in the first grade.
- 87% probability of remaining an average reader in fourth grade, if you were an average reader in first grade. (Juel, 1988)

# Reading deficiencies, left unattended can have lifelong effects...

## 19 Year Old Dropouts by 3rd Grade Reading Scores



- Non Proficient Readers in 3rd grade
- Proficient Readers in 3rd grade

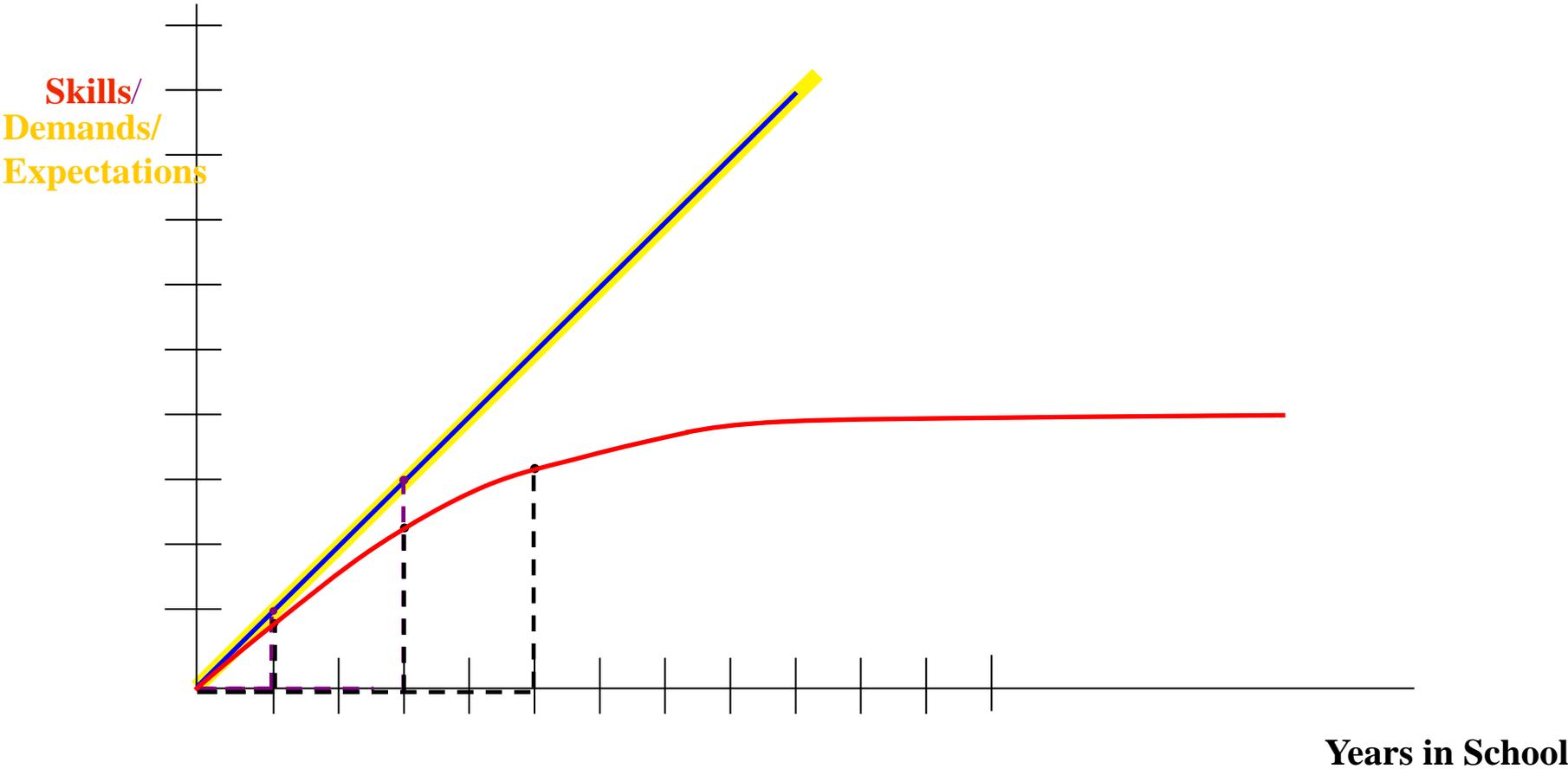
# The Double Jeopardy of Struggling Readers

Children who are not reading proficiently in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are **4** times more likely to not graduate high school

Below basic readers are almost **6** times more likely than proficient readers to not finish high school on time

Poor Black and Hispanic students who are struggling readers are about **8** times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school

# The Performance Gap



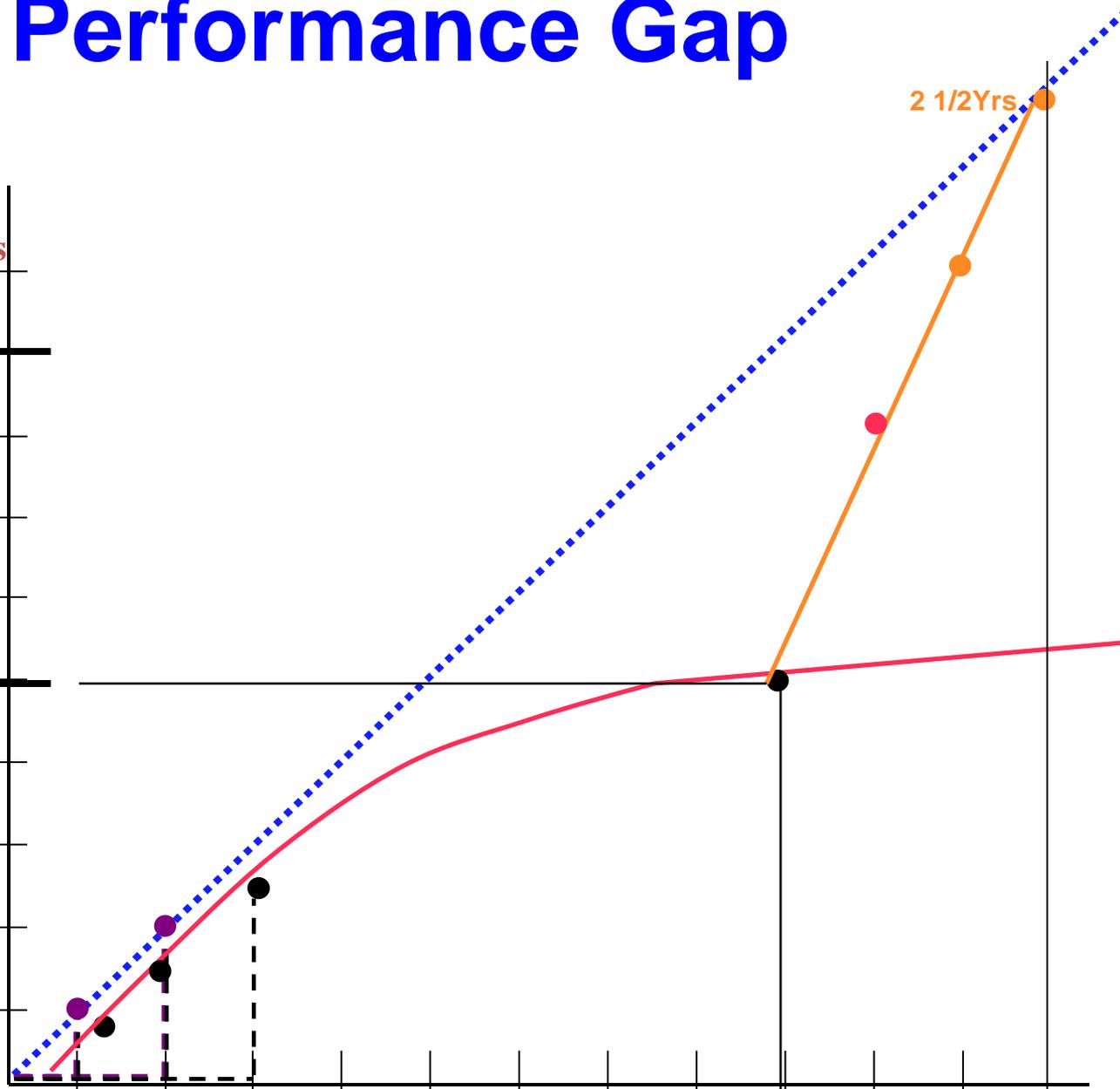
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# The Performance Gap

Skills and Demands/ Expectations

9 th

5 th



2 1/2 Yrs

9 th

Adapted from presentation given by: **Years in School**  
Don Deshler, NASDSE, 2015

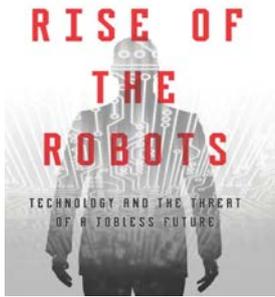
# STRATEGIES



# Strategy 1

Action items based today's demands for learning





# National Trends

- Agricultural → Industrial → Service economy  
(major disruption) → Technology
- Kiva robots will cut Amazon's order fulfillment costs by 40%
- Availability of standardized software and hardware building blocks

# Strategy 2

Demonstrate strong beliefs and attitudes about teaching students with disabilities

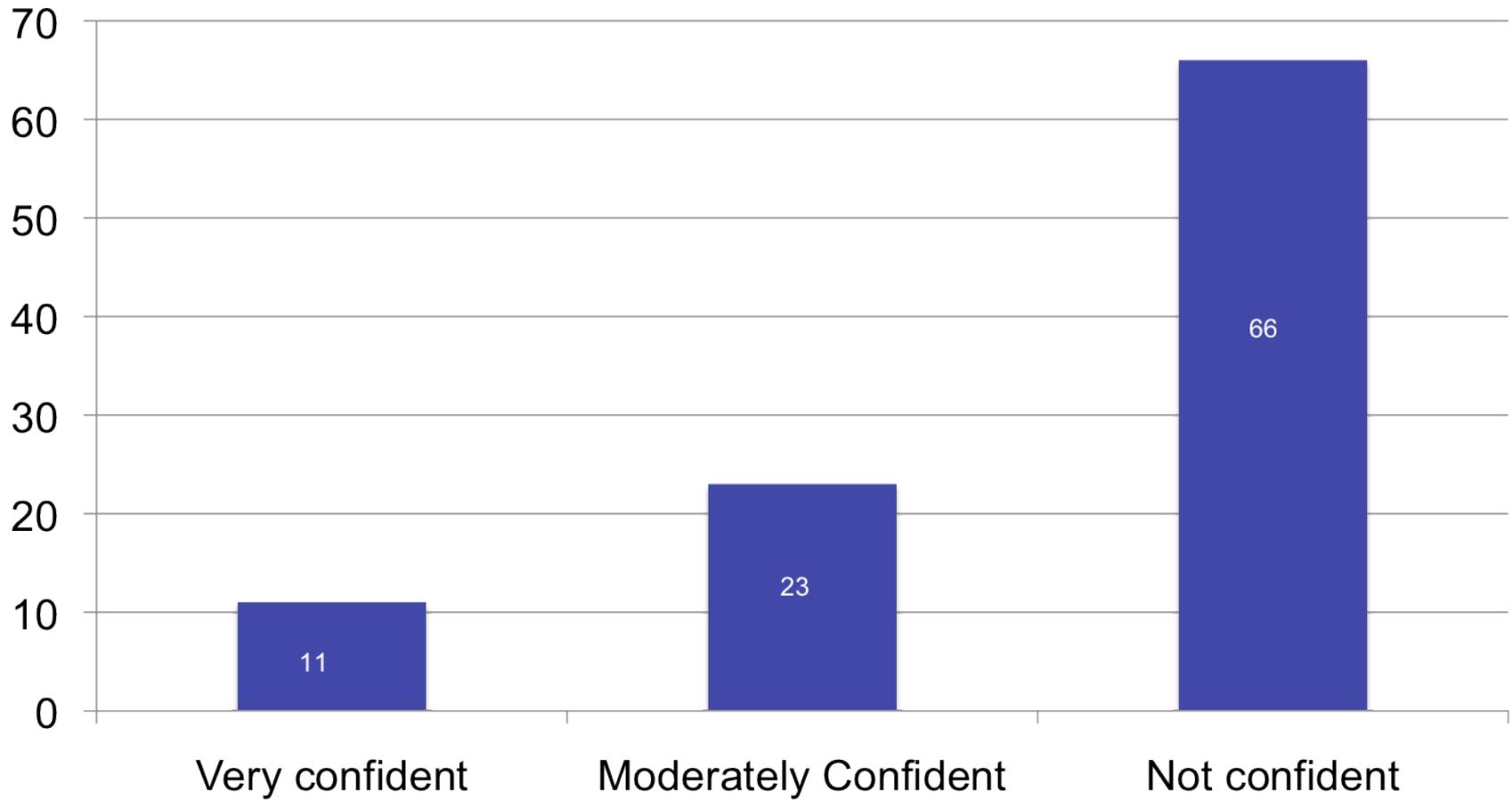


# Teacher's Explanations

Biggest barrier to struggling learner success

- Student attitudes
- Student poor work habits
- Low ability
- Poor attendance
- Parents

Given high quality instruction, how confident are you that struggling adolescent readers can read close to grade level?



Taken from presentation given by:  
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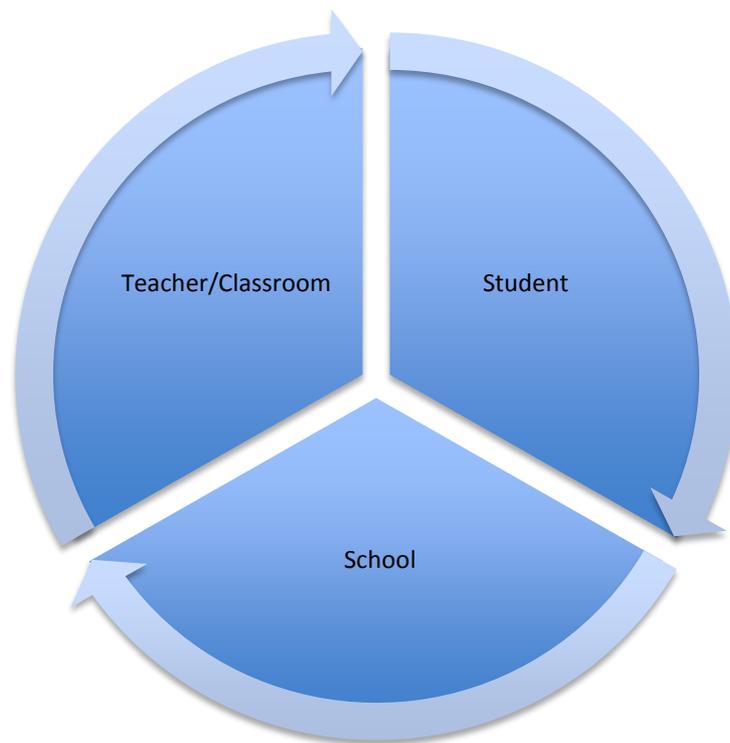
# Strategy 3

## Quality & Effective Instruction

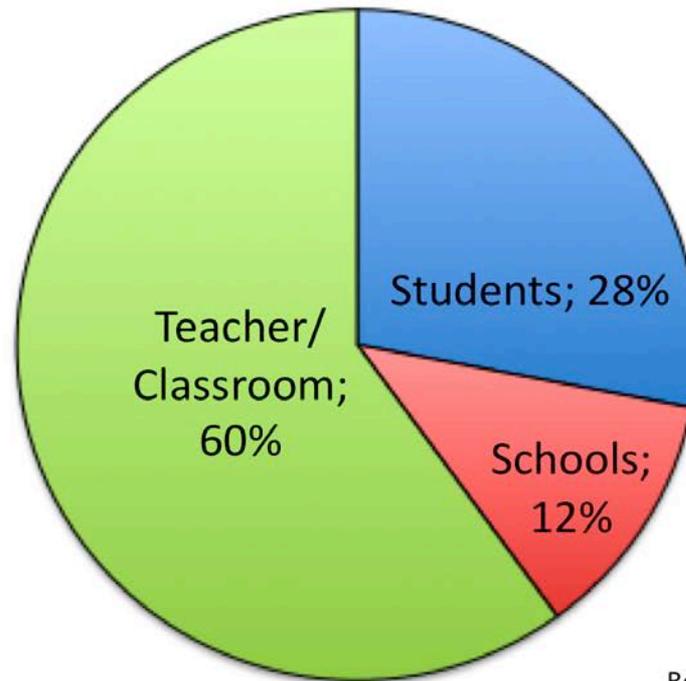


# Proportion of Variance in Student Reading Gain Scores

What do you think are the biggest contributors to student achievement gains?



# Proportion of Variance in Student Reading Gain Scores



Rowan, et. al., (2005)

# Direct Instruction + Strategy Instruction

## Direct Instruction

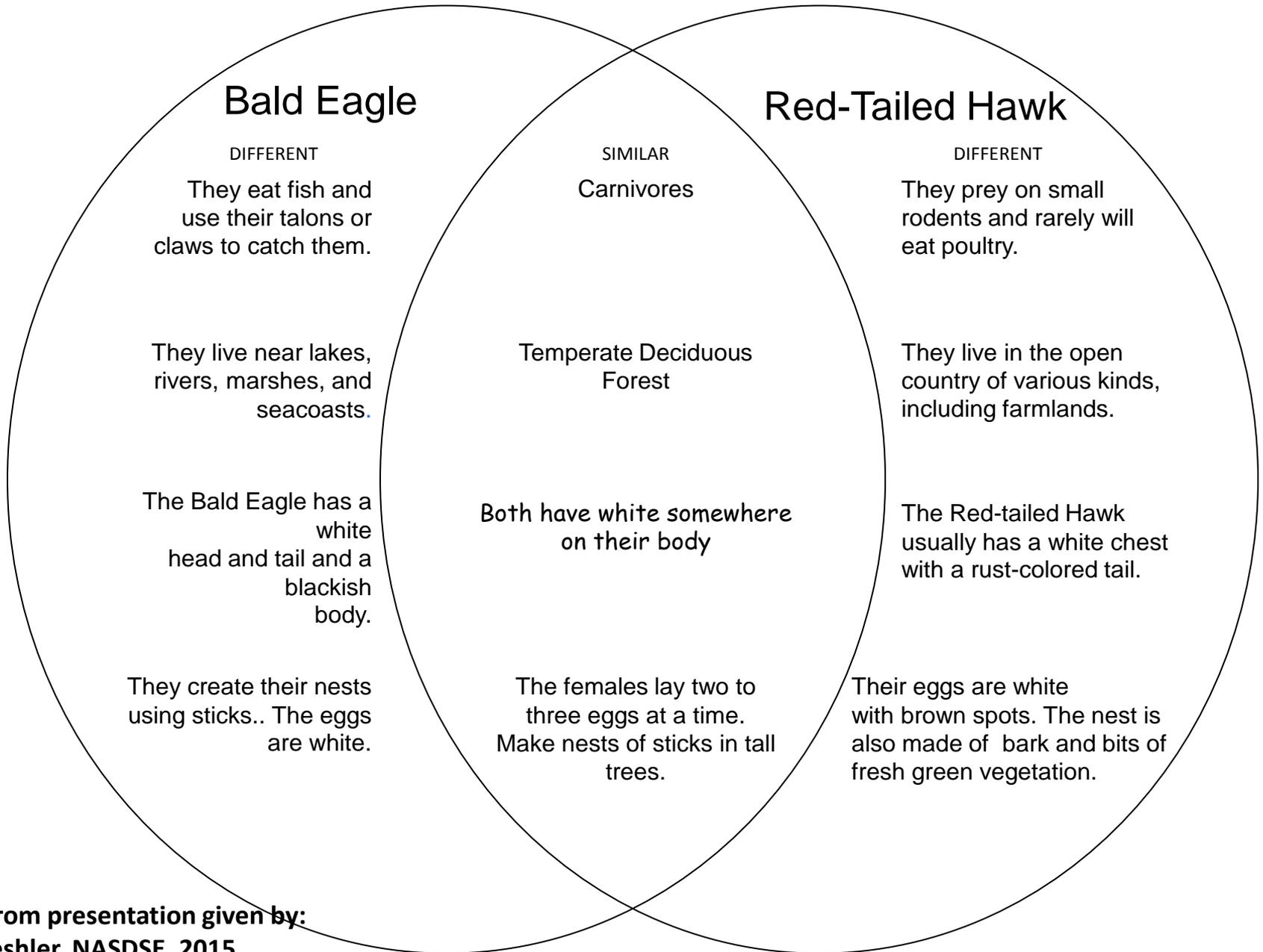
- *Small steps*
- *Probes*
- *Feedback*
- *Diagrams/pictures*
- *Independent practice*

## Strategy Instruction

- *Clear Explanations*
- *Teacher models*
- *Reminders to use strategies*
- *Step-by-step prompts*
- *Review the learning process*

\* Swanson, H.L. (1999). Instructional components that predict treatment outcomes for students with LD: Support for a combined strategy and direct instruction model. Learning Disability Research and Practice, 14(3), 129-140.

# Many visual tools are poorly designed



# Same information (word-for-word) *plus semantic prompts*

|         | Bald Eagle  |  | Red-Tailed Hawk  |
|---------|---|--|--|
| Food    | DIFFERENT<br>They eat fish and use their talons or claws to catch them. | SIMILAR<br>Carnivores  | DIFFERENT<br>They prey on small rodents and rarely will eat poultry.                                     |
| Habitat | They live near lakes, rivers, marshes, and seacoasts.                   | Temperate Deciduous Forest   | They live in the open country of various kinds, including farmlands.                                     |
| Color   | The Bald Eagle has a white head and tail and a blackish body.           | Both have white somewhere on their body  | The Red-tailed Hawk usually has a white chest with a rust-colored tail.                                  |
| Nests   | They create their nests using sticks.. The eggs are white.              | The females lay two to three eggs at a time. Make nests of sticks in tall trees. | Their eggs are white with brown spots. The nest is also made of bark and bits of fresh green vegetation. |

Note the clarity that adding subtopics adds to the visual

# Strategy 4

## Staff roles and responsibilities

A graphic with a green background. At the top, the words "Teaching Standards" are written in a white, cursive font. Below the title, there is a list of four numbered items. To the left of the list, there is a photograph of a red apple sitting on top of a stack of three books. The books are stacked horizontally, with the top book's cover visible and the others showing their spines.

*Teaching Standards*

1. Teachers are required to give grade appropriate homework and test frequently.
2. Teachers must return properly corrected homework within 3-5 days of completion.
3. Teachers must return properly corrected tests within 3-5 days after given.
4. Teachers must notify parents with failing, or potentially failing students.



You want  
me to do  
what?

In addition to being responsible for Oklahoma Teaching Standards, special educators are also responsible for Professional Standards such as CEC



- Maintaining challenging expectations to develop the highest possible learning outcomes
- Exercising professional judgement to benefit students with disabilities
- Promoting meaningful inclusion
- Using evidence, data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice



New! Standards for Professional Preparation



Ethical Principles & Practice Standards

# General Education (Content Expert)

- Understand literacy demands
- Implement UDL principles
- Use routines
- Explicitly teach key vocabulary
- Multiple models of how to apply content-specific strategies

# Special Education (Skills/strategies expert)

- Understand literacy demands
- Teach strategies that align with content & future realities
- Teach strategies to mastery
- Ensure generalization to content classes & future realities

“Students with disabilities spend the majority of the school day in the general education classroom.”



# Strategy 5

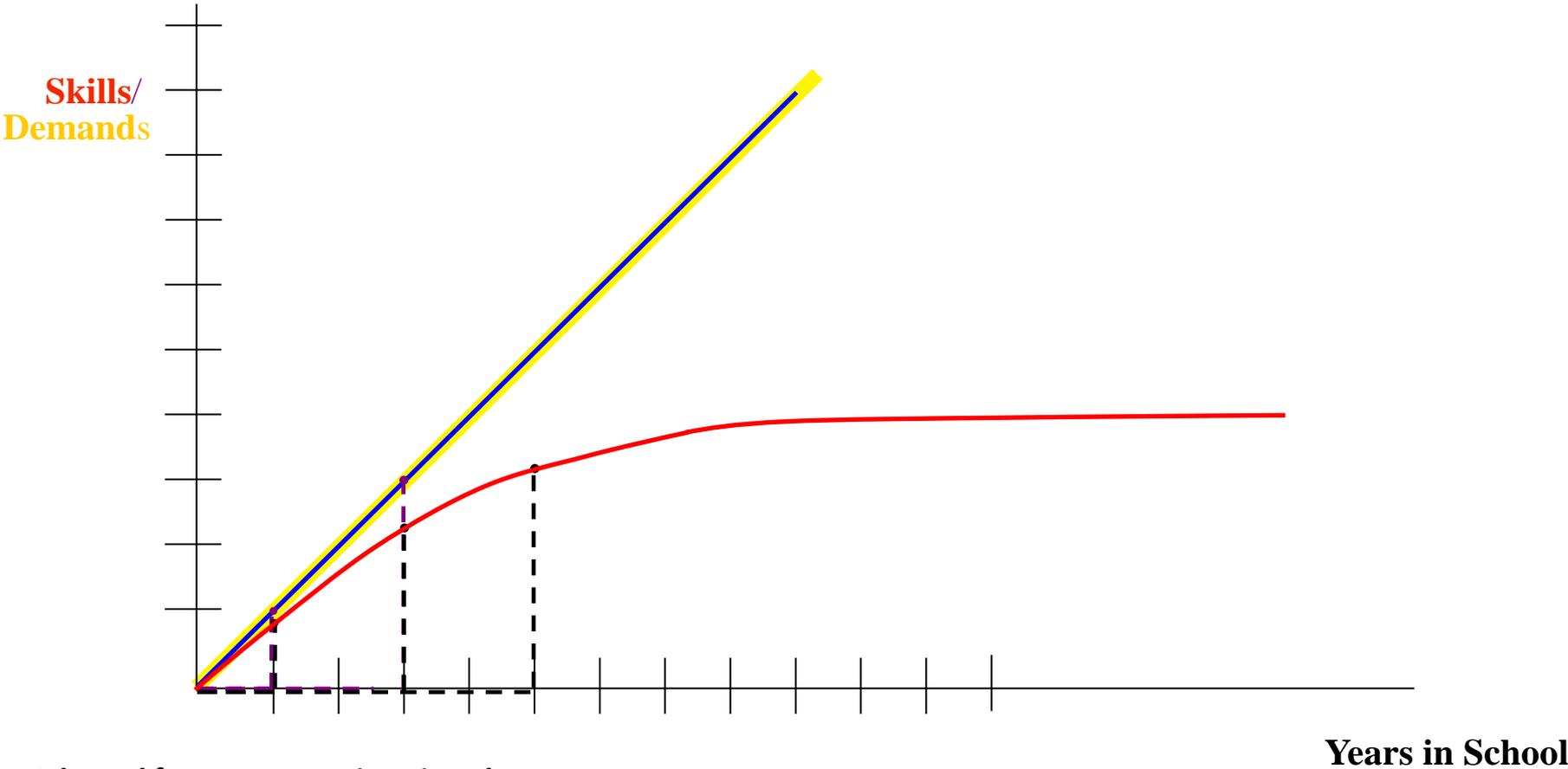
## Build capacity

The **only way** the needle moves is through an **integrated, school-wide approach** in which **everyone owns** part of the problem and **believes** big changes in achievement can happen

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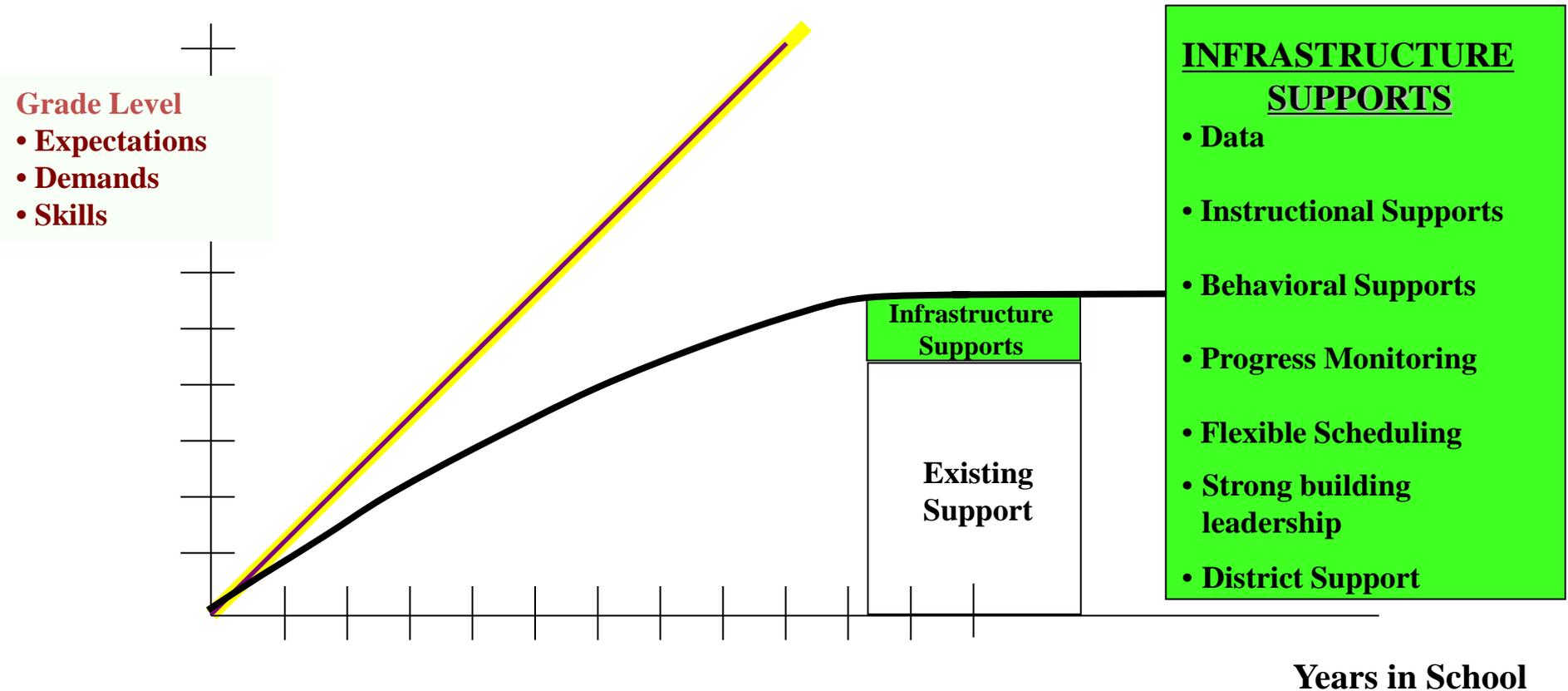
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# The Performance Gap



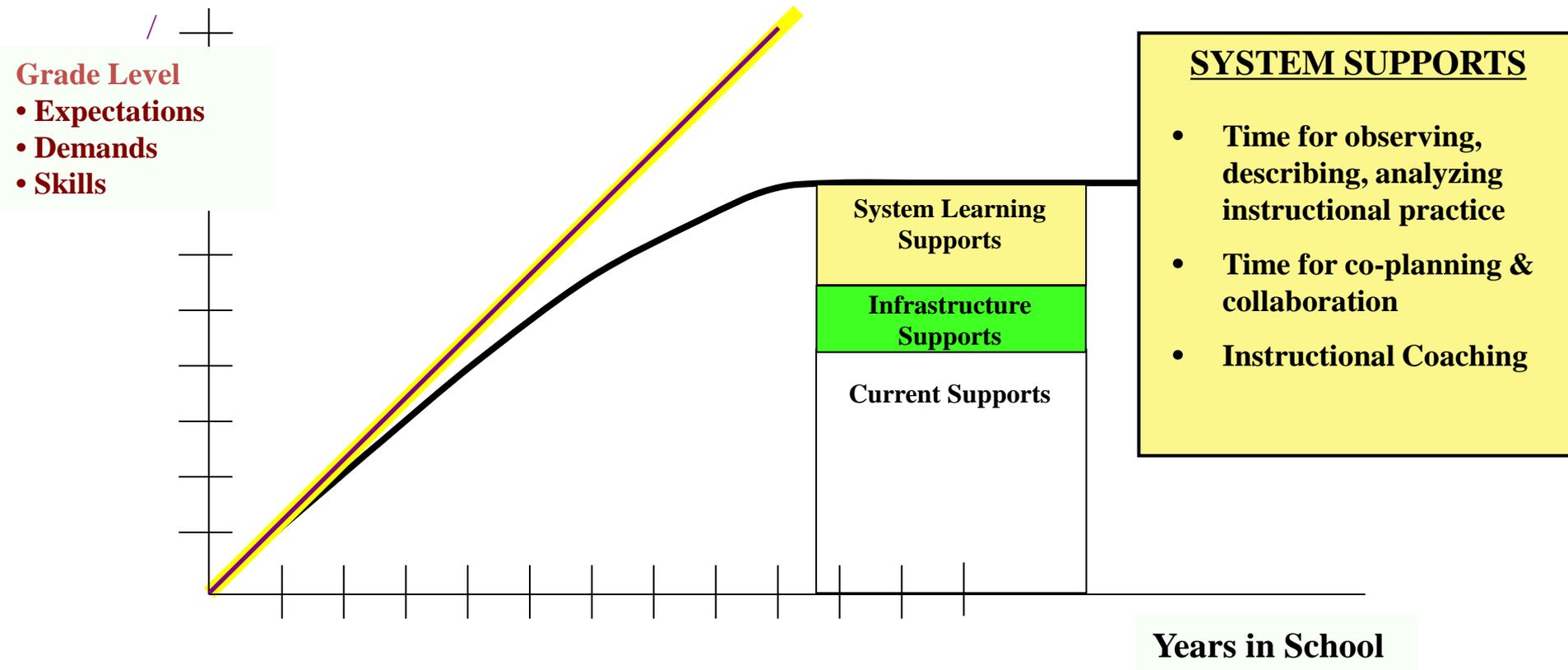
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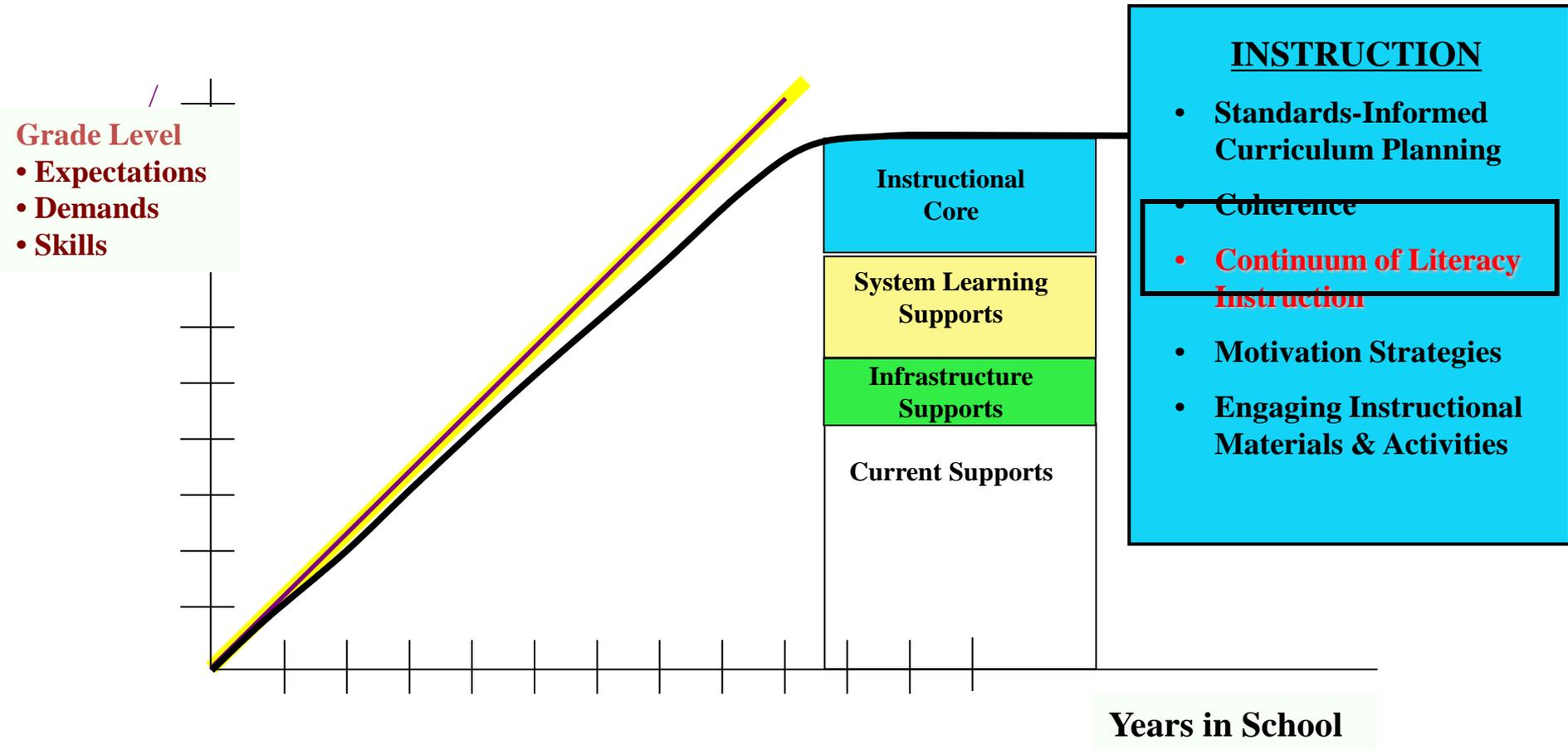


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# The Performance Gap



# The Performance Gap



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# High Expectations and Beliefs

Inclusion in grade level core content, assessment, and graduation requirements.

Leadership  
IEP Team Decisions  
Partnerships and Collaboration  
Preservice and Inservice Professional Learning  
Active Engagement of All School Personnel  
Data Driven Decision Making  
Evidence-Based Practices  
Fiscal Support

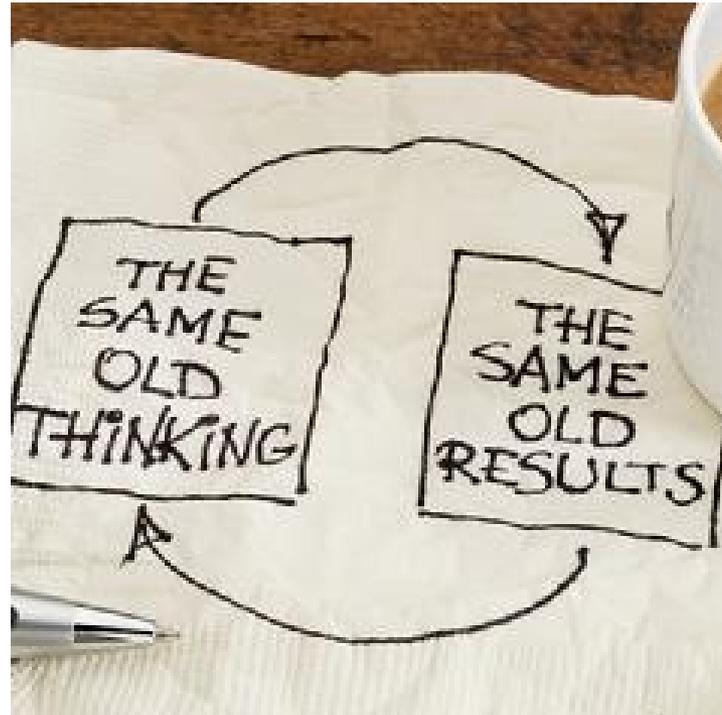
Content and pedagogy to provide effective instruction through UDL and evidence-based interventions.

Infrastructure, Scale, Fidelity

## Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction

## Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings

# Lessons Learned



When feeling overwhelmed or unknowledgeable, people revert back to what is know and comfortable. Who will carry the charge for change for students with disabilities?

# Time to Reflect

- Do you & your stakeholders believe that each and every student can learn when demands are met?
- Are your policies and actions reflecting this belief?
- Is quality instruction happening for SWDs?
- Have roles and responsibilities been compromised?
- How will you leverage your stakeholders?  
(Everyone owns the problem – different parts of the problem)