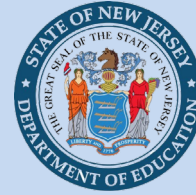




RUTGERS HEALTH

**The Boggs Center
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New Jersey
Department of Education
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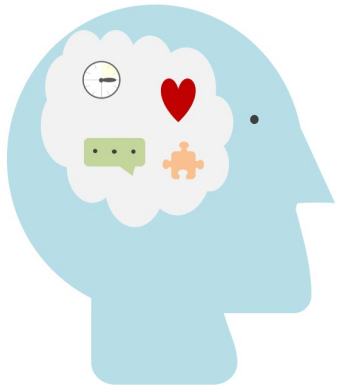
New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools

Funded by IDEA Part B 2024-2025

Behavior Specific Praise

www.pbsisnj.org

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to...



- ▶ Explain the difference between general and specific praise
- ▶ Name the three criteria for delivering behavior specific praise
- ▶ Provide examples of effort-oriented praise statements

Predictable

Consistency and stability in expectations allows students to anticipate what is expected of them across school locations

Positive

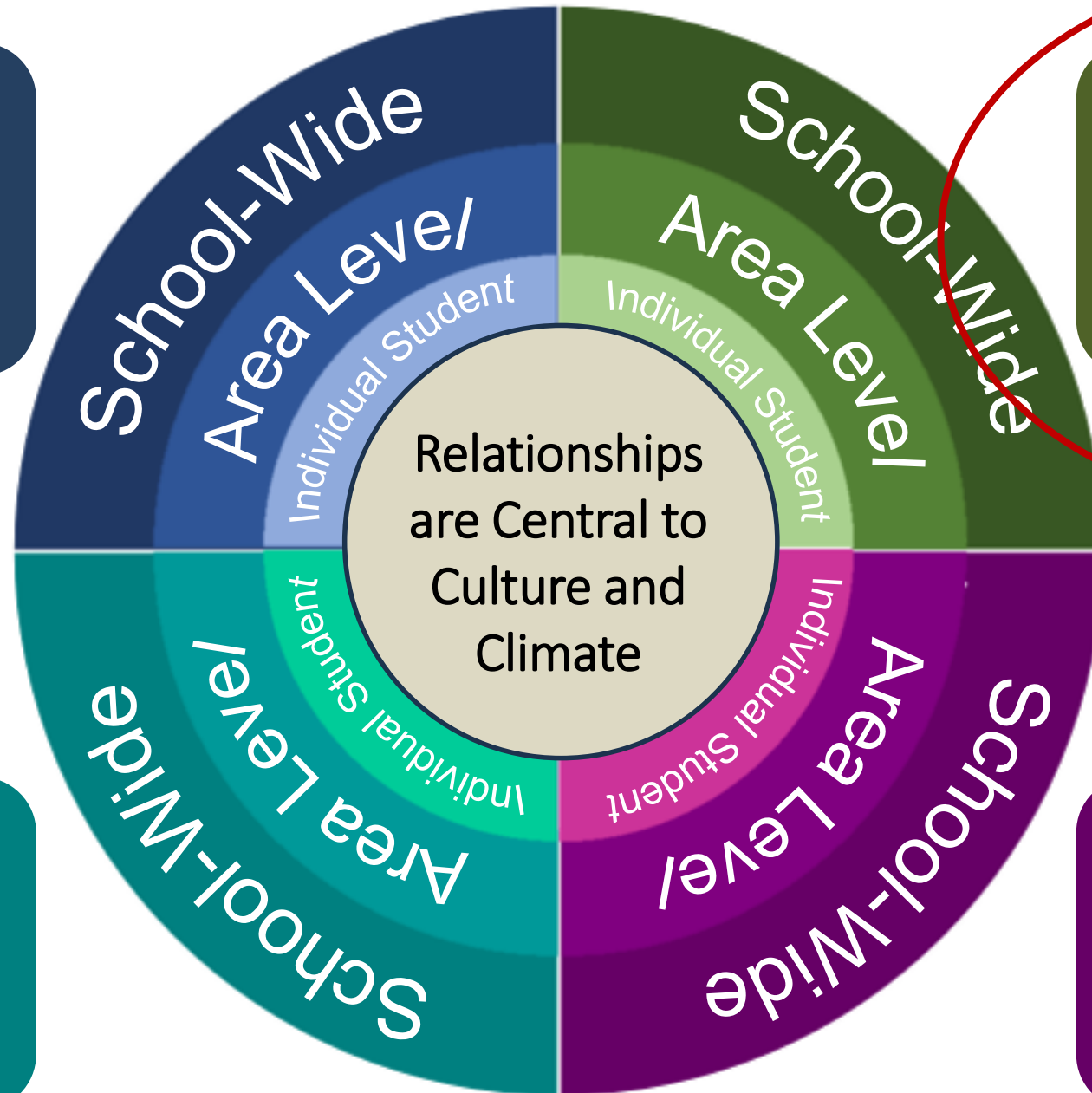
Interactions students receive from staff result in their feeling valued and connected to school

Empowering

The learning environment is supportive of student voice and choice to activate and direct their own learning experience

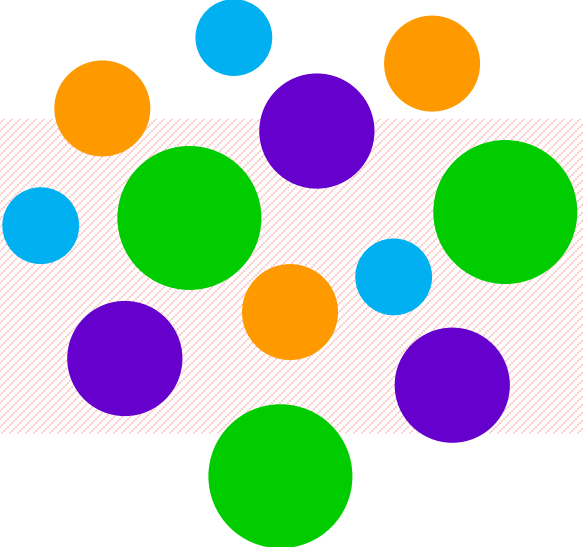
Present

Staff actively interrogate their own beliefs, perceptions, and unconscious biases to ensure that decision making is free from negative influence



Relationship Building

Opportunity:
Daily Interactions



Strategy:
4:1 Ratio



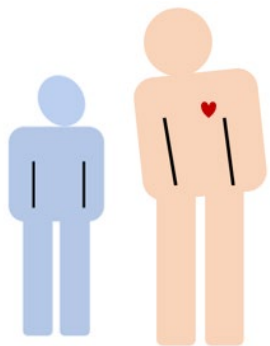
Outcome:
Relationship Building



Daily Interaction Opportunities

Different Types of Messages to Achieve the 4:1 Ratio

Relationship
Building
Exchanges



Instructional
Interactions



Help
& Comfort



Behavior Specific
Feedback



→Contributes to classroom climate (e.g., Caldarella et al. 2020 ; Drake & Nelson, 2021; Ennis et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2015; Monson, et al., 2020; Orr et al., 2020; Shuttleton, 2016; Wills et al., 2019)

→Associated with high rates of engagement and low rates of unwanted behavior (e.g., Caldarella et al. 2020; Drake & Nelson, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2015; Monson, et al., 2020; Orr et al., 2020; Shuttleton, 2016; Wills et al., 2019)

→Students across the age span want to experience praise from teachers (e.g., Burnett & Mandal, 2010; Llyod et al., 2023)



Praise Changes Brain Activity

The brain recognizes and responds to praise as something 'good'

Praise and social acceptance are associated with neural activity in areas of the brain responsible for social decision-making



(Bhanji & Delgado, 2013)

Behavior Specific Praise

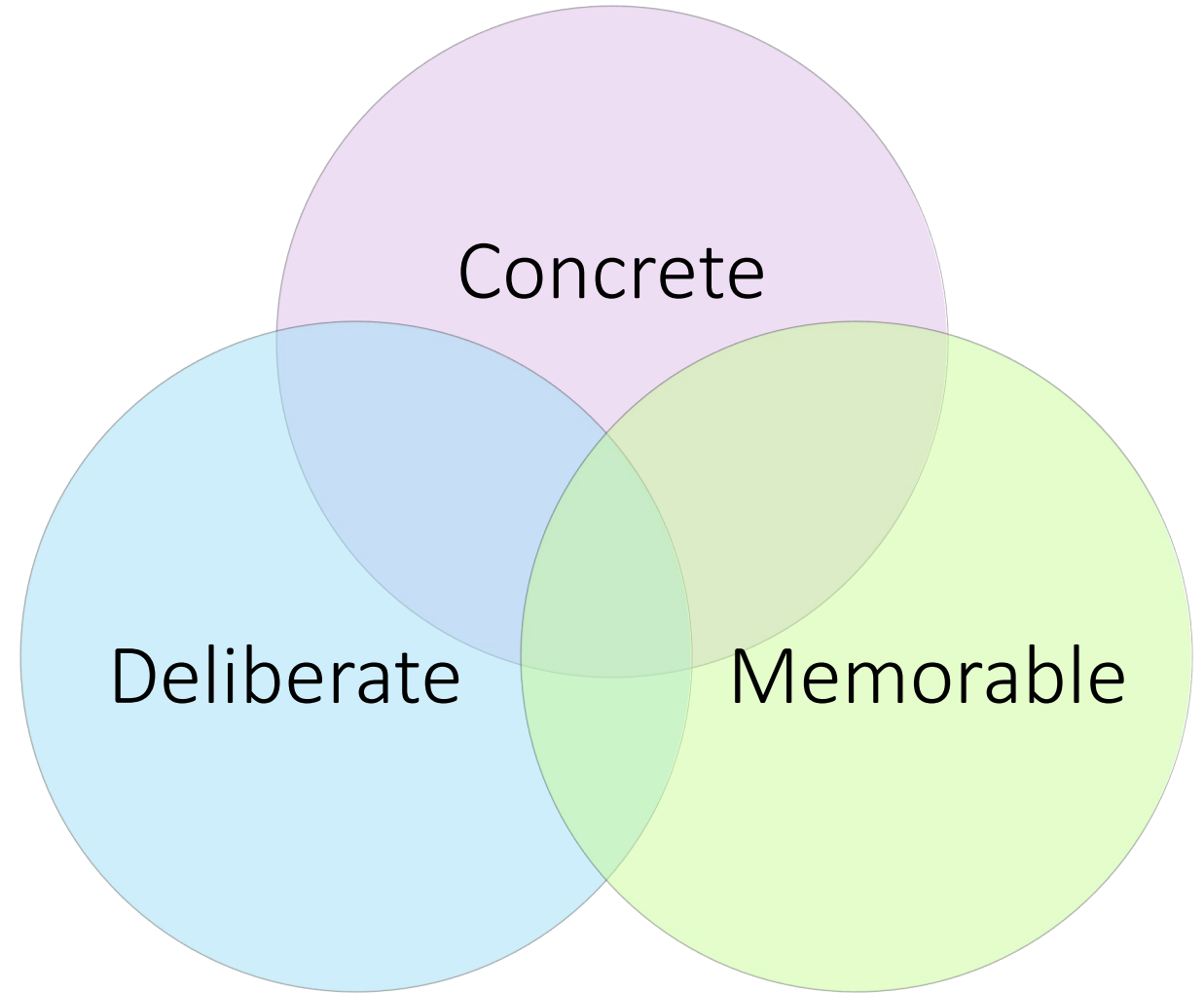
Short, descriptive statements that reinforce a specific action are more effective than redirections (Drake & Nelson, 2021):

- “Thank you for entering quietly”
- “I appreciate you’re getting started with your work”
- “I notice that you have all your materials ready”
- “I noticed how you stuck-with that problem to get to the solution.”



Delivering Behavior Specific Feedback

Maximize behavior specific praise by being:

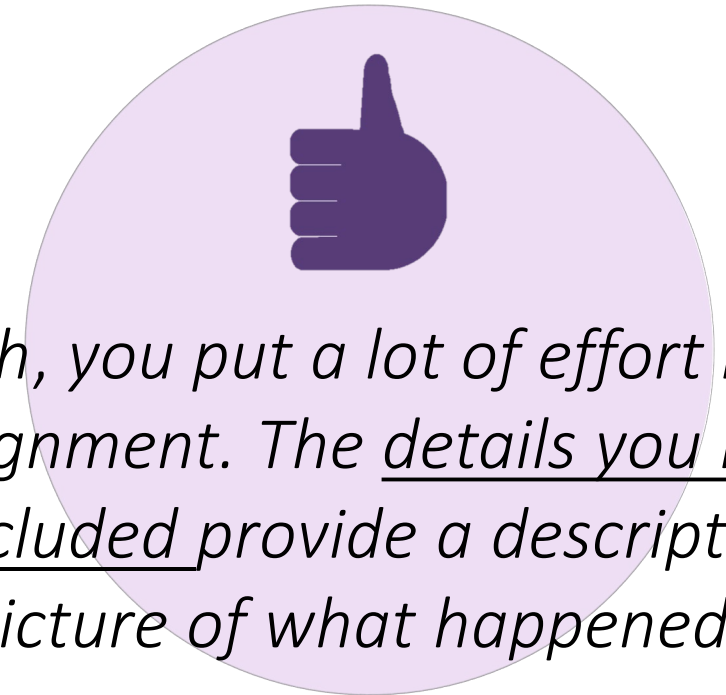


(e.g., Blaze et al., 2014; Brumelman, et al., 2014; Royer et al., 2019)

- ✓ Intentionally look for reasons to provide students with affirming feedback
- ✓ Use with enough frequency to make a desired impact



- ✓ State the specific skill, action, or habit you want to reinforce
- ✓ Emphasize effort put in to achieving an outcome



"Elijah, you put a lot of effort in this assignment. The details you have included provide a descriptive picture of what happened."

General Praise

'Good job!'

'Great work!'

'Nice going!'

'Way to go!'

Behavior Specific Praise

✓ *"Your attention to details made this assignment strong."*

✓ *"The time you put into writing a second draft made a difference in your final paper."*

✓ *"Your effort to arrive on time is appreciated."*

✓ *"I've noticed how much effort you are putting toward being responsible."*

- ✓ Personally connect during the exchange
- ✓ Deliver ‘hype-free’ and genuine praise statements
- ✓ Stay present in the moment with the student



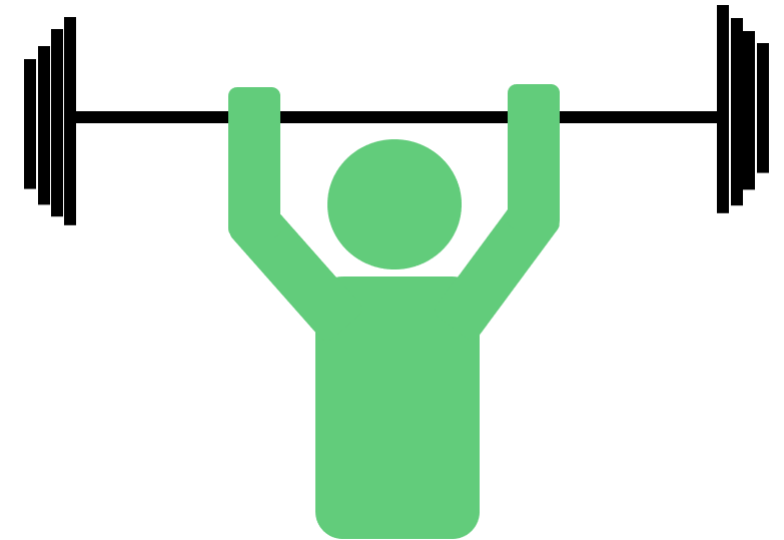
“Jamal, I noticed how quickly you started your work this morning.”

Behavior specific praise...

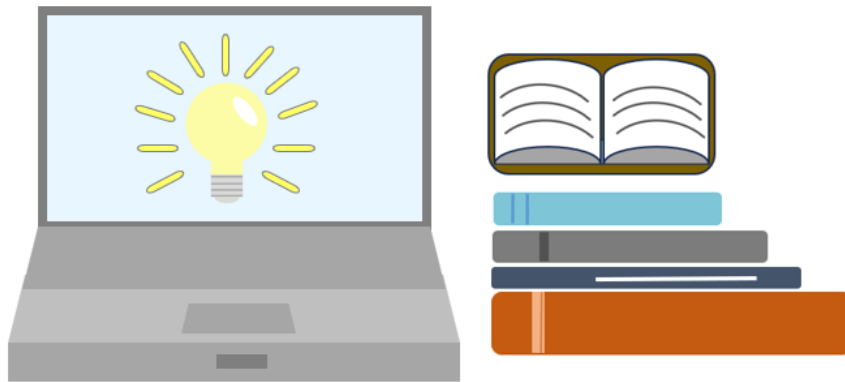
- ...is a high leverage practice
- ...reinforces the subject of the praise statement

Maximize the impact of praise by...

- ...focusing on *effort toward* achieving expectations
- ...using concrete statements
- ...conveying genuineness



Refer to the reference list
to learn more about
behavior specific praise



Achieving the 4:1 Ratio Related Readings and Research

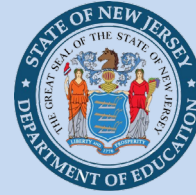
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