Adaptations and Accommodations in the BTC Classroom
Indiana Building Thinking Classrooms 2023

We tend to see outliers as the representative of the norm. (Bell curve vs. the blade or hockey stick)

BTC is not classroom management, but we have to get good at it.

#1 When you see an outlier the first thing you need to do is pat yourself on the back. Take a look at what is going well and celebrate that. Look away from the problem and look for what's going right.

#2 Move the student from the blade to the shaft.

#3 Make adaptations for that student who lives on the blade.

The wanderer: Our instinct is to take it personally and meet it with opposition. Their meandering is more innocent than you think. "You've got eyes on this group. Watch this group for me and let me know how they're doing. Group 7 really needs my help." Repeat and modify on a daily basis. Come alongside.

Spectrum: Create predictability. It's more important than consistency. "This is always going to be your card. This will always be your whiteboard, but you'll always get one new partner each day." Within three weeks, that child will want to pick their own card. Don't do "othering." They want to be included. They don't want to be "othered."

Anxiety: When we put a label on a student, that student is not invariant. It's a state more so than a trait. Anxiety is context dependent. "Stand six feet back from your group. You're my spy. In five minutes, come and tell me what you've seen." Tell that student to try another five minutes. Next day is ten minutes.

Openly defiant: Use the 10x2 rule. It's a relationship with a person, not a student. You want to build relationships with students, stop trying to build relationships with students.

Cruelty: We have no tolerance for this behavior. Deal with it swiftly. Remove and find ways to integrate.

Lower-skill levels: Recognize that the student is "here" and has many holes. Rather than try to "clean up" the loss, preload the information. Prepare them ahead of time. Getting them ready so they can keep up is not effective but getting them ready to contribute is effective. Give them a sticky note to use during the task. Having these kids in their groups becomes an asset due to that sticky note.