

Social-Emotional Learning in Diverse Communities

Meghan Singh, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Bilingual School Psychologist

MA Association of Special Education Administrators
Worcester, MA
October 19, 2018

Welcome!

I'm so excited you're here.

Who is Meghan Singh?

- Bilingual School Psychologist
 - Clark University, UMass Boston
- Certified in ESL
- Doctoral candidate at Northeastern University in Organizational Leadership
- In practice for 8 years,
 - Cambridge Public Schools since 2011
 - Trained in Boston Public Schools
- Graduate of Quincy Public Schools –
 - QPS went from a total of two Asian students when my mother attended (1982) to 48% Asian in 2003
- Conversational and assessment Spanish
- Introductory Mandarin
- Enough Hindi to order a good meal
- Enough Punjabi to get married



Overview

- Review of MTSS/Social Emotional Learning
- Common concerns and stumbling blocks for engagement in SEL with diverse communities
- Best Practices for Culturally Responsive SEL
- Question/Answer/Case Consult

Quick survey of the room:

- Who is here?
 - Urban/Suburban/Rural
 - District based/building based
 - K-12+, EI/Pre-K, K-5, 6-8, 9-12+, others?
- Thumbs up/thumbs down:
 - I understand social emotional learning
 - My school/district has an SEL plan in place
 - My school/district is open to discussing issues of diversity
 - I have specific questions I hope to get answered today

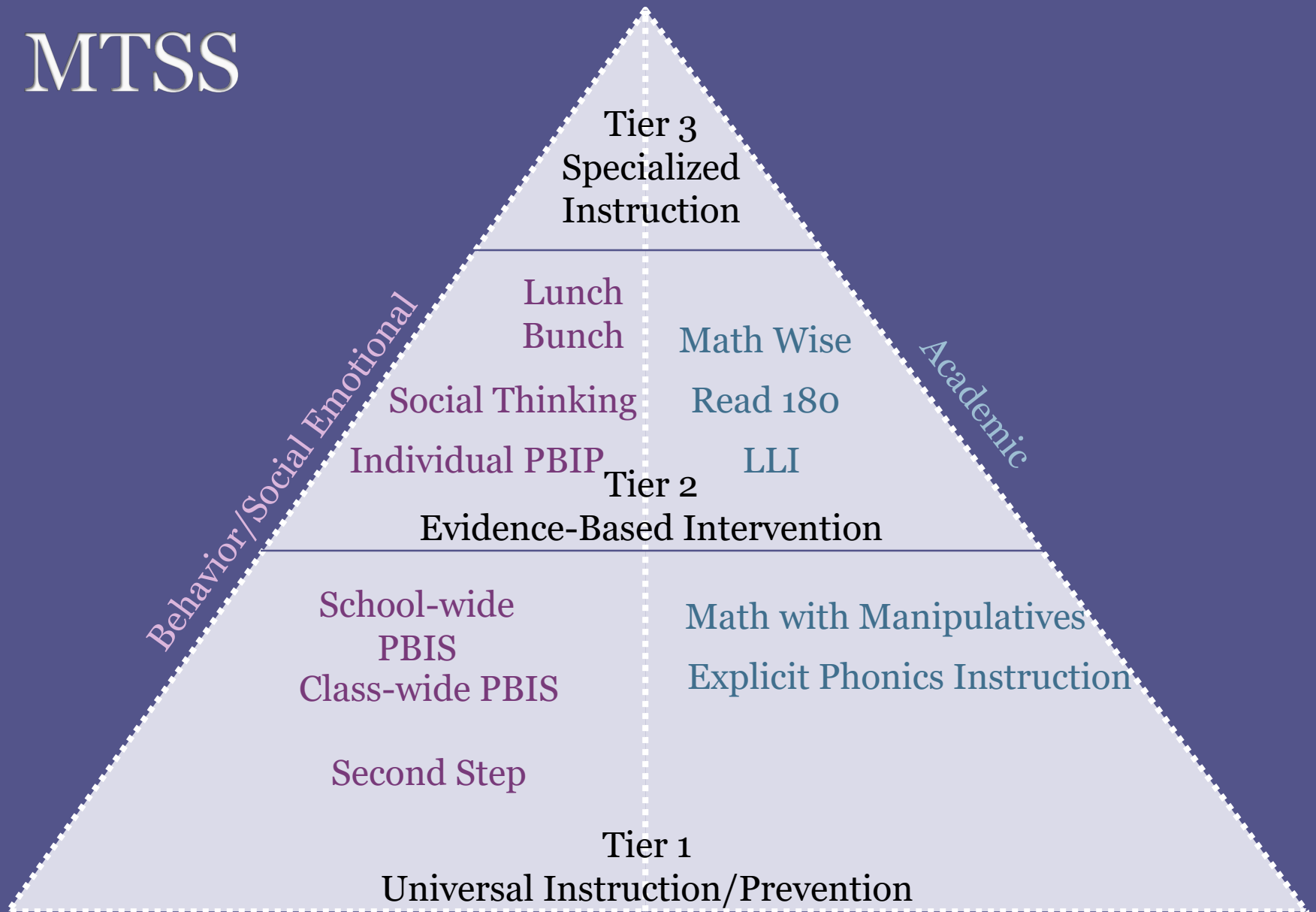
Key Terms

- ELL : English Language Learner
- L1/L2: L1 is the home language, L2 is English
- CLD : Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
- SEL : Social Emotional Learning
- Implicit Bias : Subconscious bias against a group imbued by cultural and personal exposure.
- PBIS : Positive Behavior Intervention Systems
- PBIP : Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (“behavior plan”)
- MTSS : Multi-Tiered Systems of Instruction
 - RtI : Response to Intervention

Working Definition of Diversity

- Diversity: any way a child is different from the modal student in your building or district. Including but not limited to:
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Culture
 - Socioeconomic status (SES)
 - Family composition
 - Language(s)
- While many students from diverse backgrounds have experienced trauma, it should not be assumed that all have.
- Consider use of the term **disenfranchised** students over terms like disadvantaged or high need, placing the onus on the systems of oppression not the person.

MTSS



School-Wide Cultural/Linguistic Considerations for MTSS

- How pervasive are issues of inequity in my school?
 - What are the trends in the data?
 - Can the data be disaggregated?
- Is one group of students differentially treated (e.g., office referrals, RtI/special education referrals) and why might that be?
- What universal supports are in place to address inequity in my school/district?
- Do these supports consider adaptations for culturally diverse groups?

(Boddapati, Oka, and Balaghi, 2014)

Individual Cultural/Linguistic Considerations for MTSS

- Has the student always had access to robust and consistent instruction, in L1 and/or L2?
- Has the student consistently been enrolled in school/what does school look like in their home country?
- What expectations for school behavior/attendance existed at the previous school?
- Were there any traumatic experiences in the immigration process? Extended family separations? With whom did the student live across their life?

Common concerns for SEL Implementation with Diverse Communities

- Staff ability to provide culturally responsive SEL opportunities
- The SEL curriculum is geared toward one population and doesn't reflect the needs of a diverse group.
- Seeing cultural behaviors as problem behaviors
- Marginalization of CLD students

Training Providers for CLD SEL

- Before we can engage students in robust social emotional learning we need to model it.
 - How are we treating each other? What is our professional culture, and how are we amplifying the diverse voices in our professional communities?
- We need to do the work to help students do the same.
 - Backpack of Privilege, Peggy McIntosh (1989, 2010)
 - Implicit Bias:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

How can I address issues for my community? 1

- Parents are your best allies to understand their culture
 - A comprehensive, culturally reflective interview is the best tool in your tool box to determine what social emotional needs exist in your building.
 - Use of translators, community members and relationships is critical.
 - Meet families where they are – literally and figuratively

How can I address issues for my community? 2

- Learn about the cultures that make up your community
 - Iceberg Theory of Cultural Competency (E.T. Hall)



<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/pptculture.pdf>

How can I address issues for my community? 3

- Bicultural/Third-Culture Issues
 - People can't be asked to choose a singular cultural identity
 - What support are you providing for Third Culture students
 - The translation/cultural explanations they are expected to provide for family
 - The code switching responsibilities they experience

In summary...

- Social Emotional Learning is a major building block for long-term student success.
- Educators must model SEL for students and address individual identity/bias as well as systemic inequity.
- Engage with families and community groups to determine their values and needs.
- Our focus is always the students, what skills they need, and how we can empower them.

Recommended Readings

- Rhodes, R. L., Ochoa, S. H., & Ortiz, S. O. (2005). *Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.
<https://www.guilford.com/books/Assessing-Culturally-and-Linguistically-Diverse-Students/Rhodes-Ochoa-Ortiz/9781593851415/authors>
- Roseberry-McKibbin, C. (2018). *Multicultural students with special language needs: Practical strategies for assessment and intervention*. Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates.
<https://acadcom.com/acawebsite/prodView.asp?idproduct=130>
- Read fiction and autobiography by people who represent people in your school community.

Contact information

Meghan Singh

Meghan.Singh.Eds@gmail.com

Cell: 617-645-4385

Twitter: @realMeghSingh

Citations

- Boddapati, S., Oka, E., & Balaghi, D. (2014, February). Cultural Competence and RtI: The Contributions of Critical Race Theory. Paper Presentation presented at the National Association of School Psychologists Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’ and ‘Some Notes for Facilitators.” *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and "Some Notes for Facilitators"*, National SEED Project Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, 2010, nationalseedproject.org/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack.