

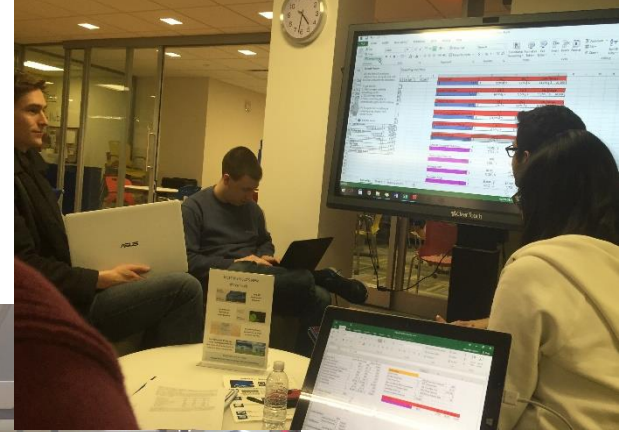
# **The Myth of Motivation and Advising the Underprepared Student**

**Understanding Students' "mindset"  
as it pertains to classroom learning.**

**Looking at strategies to reengage  
the disengaged student.**

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University at Buffalo**

# A little Information



Undergraduate  
Learning and  
Community Center

- Academic Support Centers
- Academic Probation Specialist
- Learning Skills Specialist, ILS
- Manager of the Learning and Community Center

# If you could only help motivate me!

## 1. My academic performance has been affected by the following reasons:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor time management                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Illness                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional/psychological issues           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor study habits                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of career or major focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too many class absences                | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/relationship concerns | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of motivation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juggling work and school               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation               | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient study time                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course difficulty                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning classes        | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of communication with instructors |   |   |

- Connected to no future focus
- Bored with classes
- Depression
- Parents chose college or major
- Imposter theory

# Simplified Overview

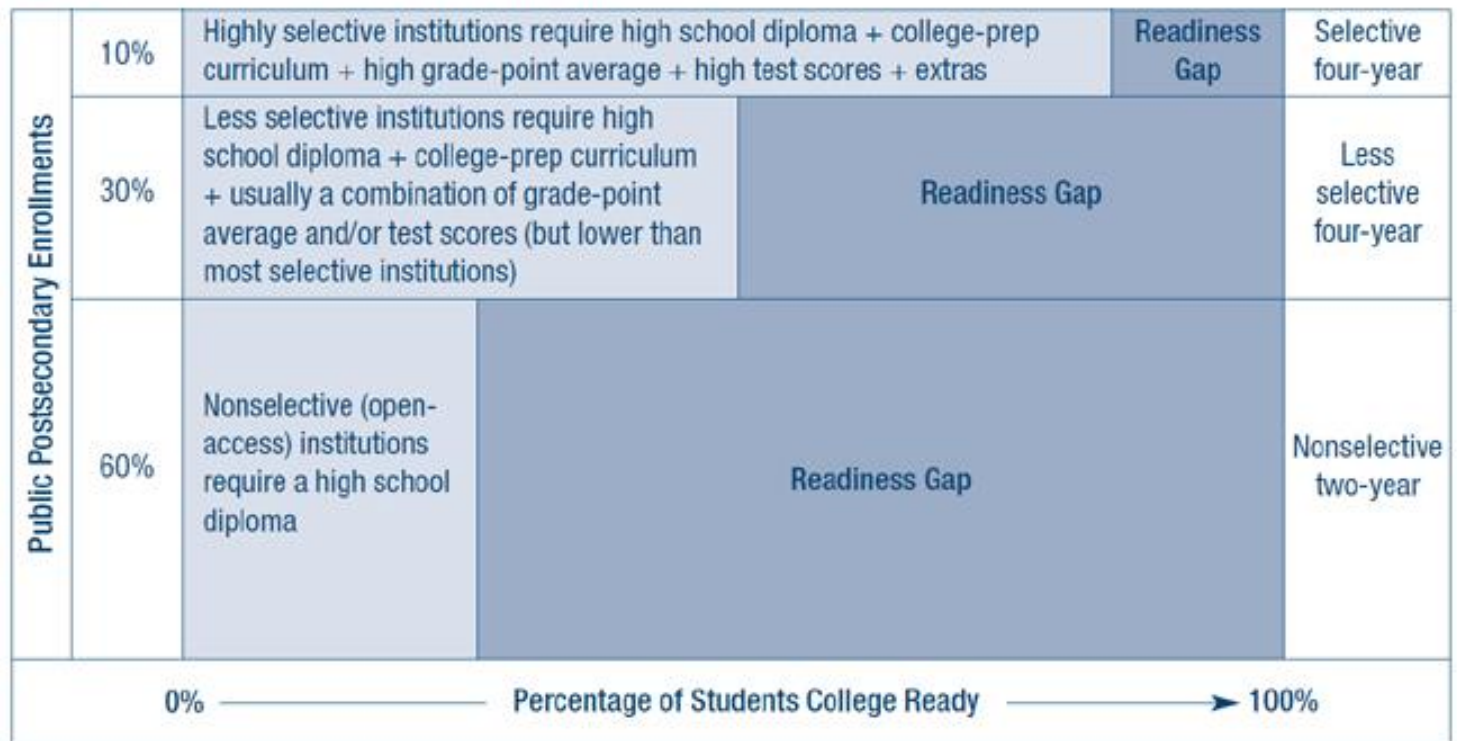
- Students underperform because they are experiencing social and or emotional problems
- Students avoid or do not follow through because they do not truly believe in themselves
- Students fail to perform because they lack foundational education skills or systems
- Some students just hit a bump in the road

# Readiness Gap

Beyond the Rhetoric  
Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy

The Gap Between Enrolling in College and Being Ready for College

Figure 1: The Readiness Gap by Institutional Sector



[http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college\\_readiness/gap.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/gap.shtml)

# Underprepared Students Struggle with Motivation

Study shows 60-percent of college students unprepared for transition



<http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Study-shows-60-percent-of-college-students-unprepared-for-transition-332569972.html>

# Think of a Class that you enjoyed and experienced success



- List What it was about that class that allowed you to be successful.
- Was it because:
  - You liked the topic
  - You liked the teacher
  - You had some knowledge in the subject
  - You had some skills in the subject
  - Personal experience

# Think of a Class that you struggled in and did not enjoy



- List what prevented you from experiencing success in that class or prevented you from enjoying the class
- Was it :
  - You did not like the subject
  - You did not like the teacher
  - You had low or poor skills in the subject area
  - No personal experience to draw from
  - Created anxiety

# A look at Motivation

## Motivated



- I like it
- I am good at it
- I am interested in it
- The payoff is worth the discomfort
- The consequence is worse than the discomfort
- I feel good when I complete the goal/task
- **I can succeed**

## Not motivated



- I don't like it
- I am not good at it
- I am not interested in
- The anxiety is higher than the payoff
- I don't think about the consequence
- I feel bad about myself when I try to do the goal/task
- **I can't succeed**



# What's the Myth? What are we to do?

The MYTH:

Students tell me they need someone to motivate them...not true

Truth:

They either are uninterested or underprepared

The MYTH:

We can't motivate them...Partially not true

Truth:

Our job is not to motivate  
but educate them and that creates motivation!

# Timing of Foundational Skill Sets & Mastery Level Learning

Foundational Skills  
Are  
being  
formed



Micromanaging



Prompting



Monitoring

Independence

Managing

Coaching

Affirming

Early years:  
Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup>  
or 4<sup>th</sup> grade

Middle school  
years: 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>  
or 8<sup>th</sup> grade

High school  
years: 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>  
to 12<sup>th</sup> grade



**US!**  
**COLLEGE**  
**US!**

# Different Levels of Functioning



Which one are you?

CAN'T START



CAN'T SUSTAIN



CAN'T COMPLETE



- No Academic Systems
- Poor Surface Learning skills

CAN START



CAN'T SUSTAIN



CAN'T COMPLETE



- Inconsistent Academic Systems
- Average Surface Learning Skills

CAN START



CAN SUSTAIN



CAN'T COMPLETE



- Some Academic Systems
- Poor Deep Learning Skills

CAN START



CAN SUSTAIN



CAN COMPLETE



- Weak academic systems
- middle Learning

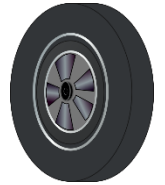
OWNING → IDENTIFYING → ORGANIZING → PRIORITIZING



# Unhealthy Habit Patterns

## VS

# Healthy Habit Patterns



Students with weak or poor Foundational Skills form self-defeating or unhealthy habit patterns:

- Withdraw Skip Class Miss Homework
- Catastrophe
- Blame/Deny
- Argumentative
- Early Exiting

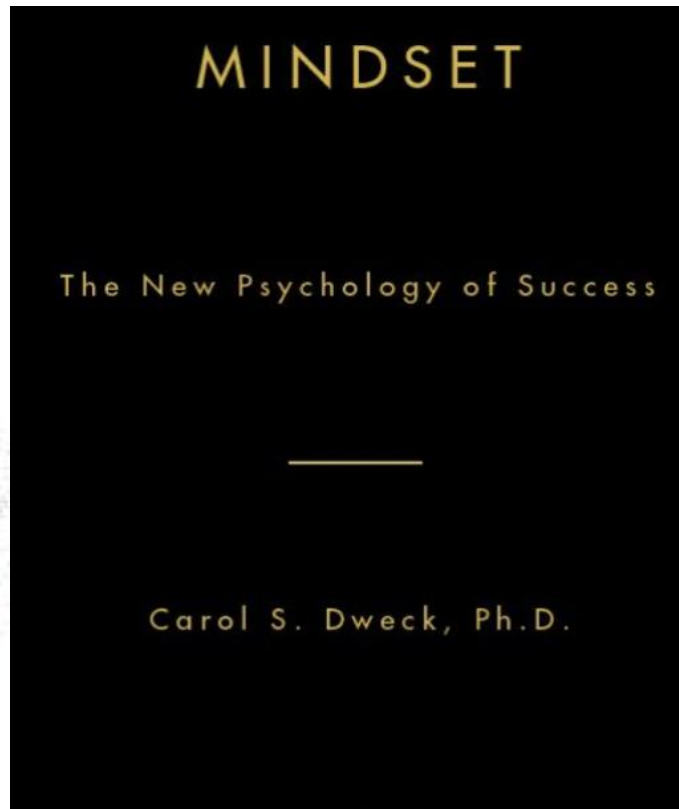
- Students with strong Foundational Skill Sets establish healthy habit patterns



- Staying on Task
- Adjust
- Complete

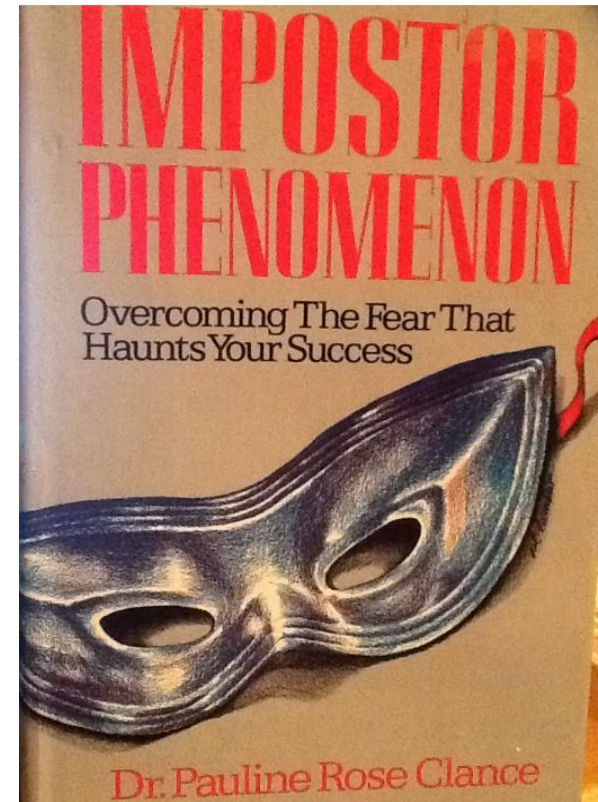


# Ways of Thinking



-Always trying to prove themselves

-Always trying to improve themselves



- Fraud Theory

- Imposter Syndrome

Unable to internalize accomplishments

**IT'S LUCK**



# Reaching the student

Poem: Autobiography

# Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

- There's a Hole in My Sidewalk By: Portia Nelson

I.

I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I am lost...I am helpless.

It takes forever to find my way out.



II

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I am in the same place.

But, it isn't my fault.



# Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

© There's a Hole in My Sidewalk By: Portia Nelson

III

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it there.

I still fall in. It's a habit.

My eyes are wide open.

I know where I am.

It is my fault. I get out immediately.

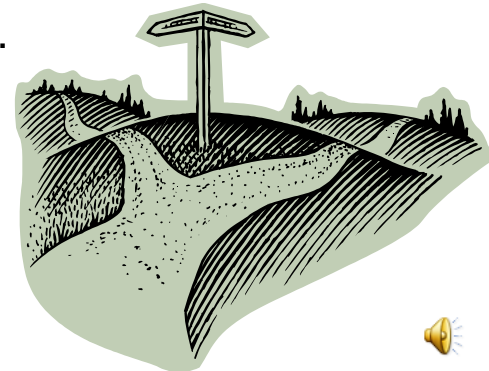
IV

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.



# STEPS 4 Foundational Skill Sets

## What's Your Plan?

 **IDENTIFY**

What do I have to do?

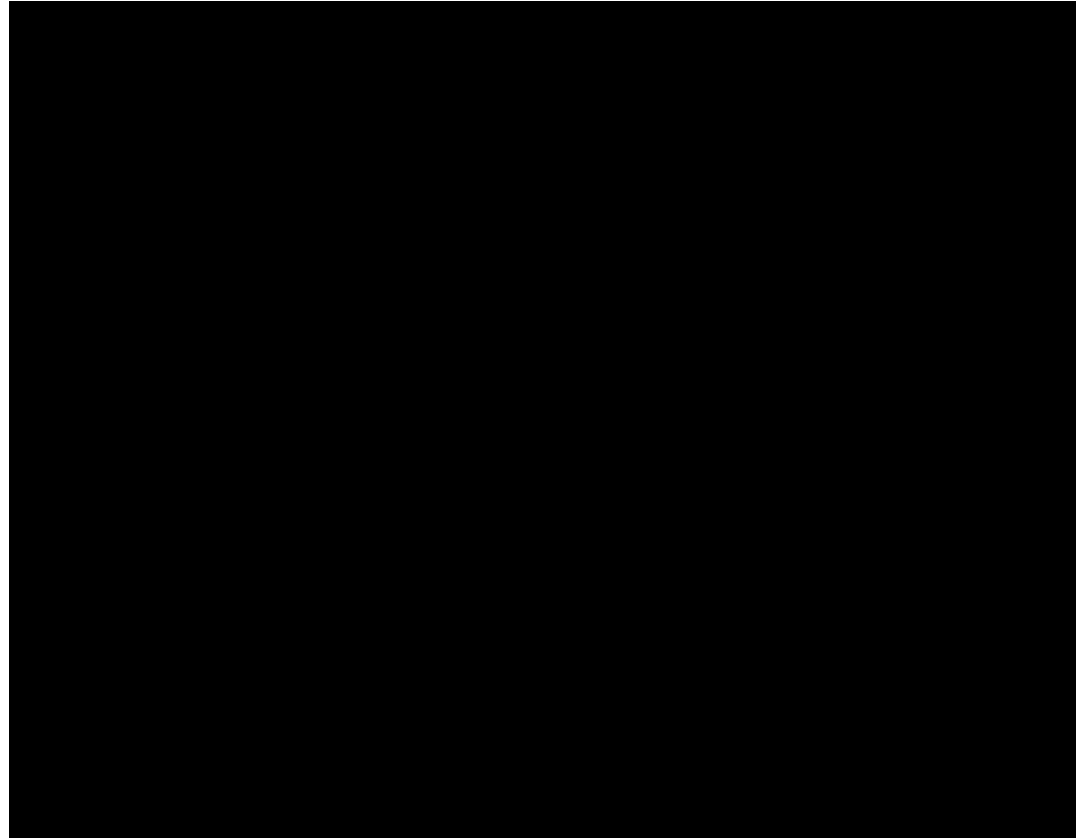
 **ORGANIZE**

What do I need to do it?

 **PRIORITIZE**

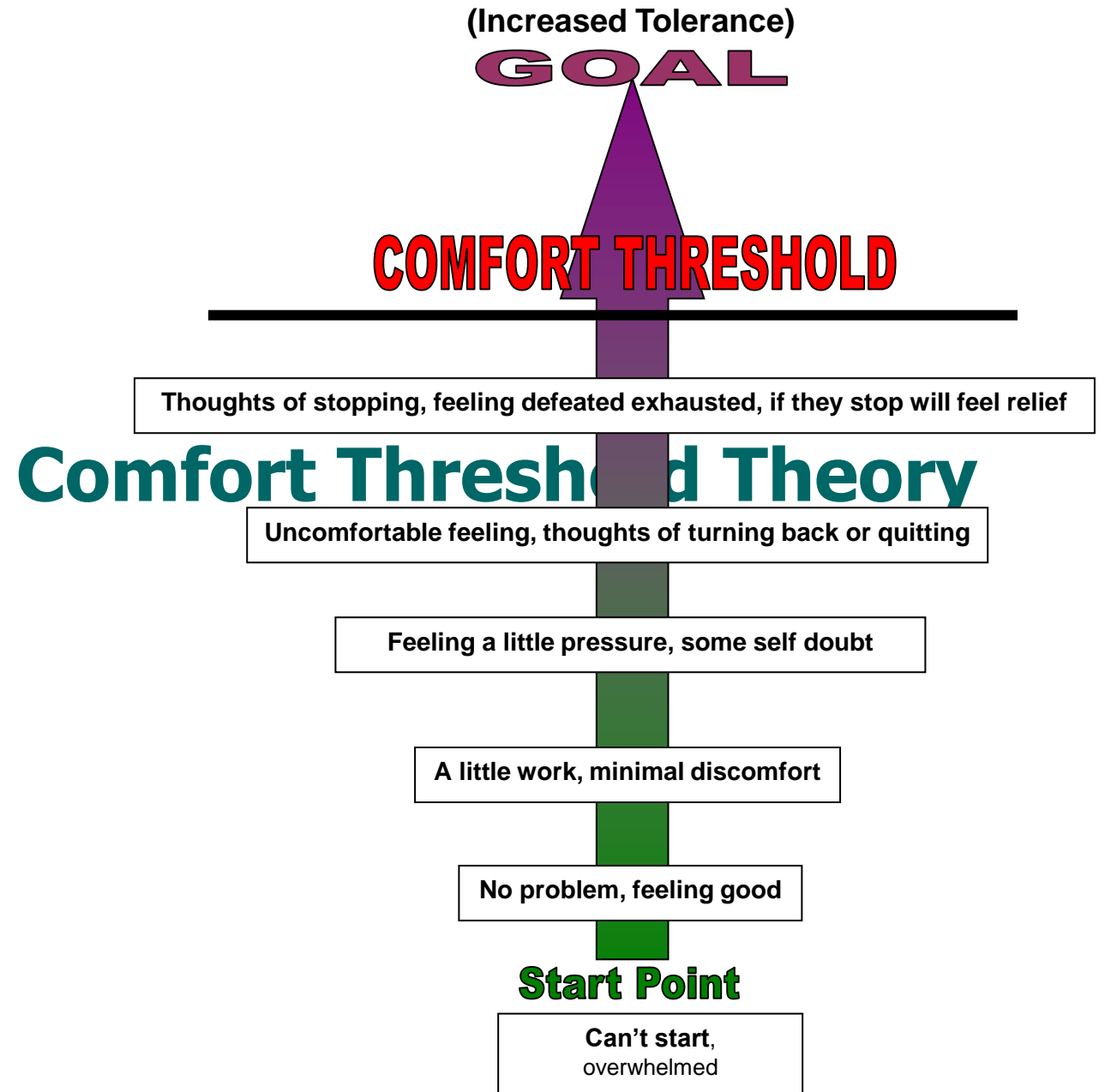
When do I need to get it done?

# Facing the Giants



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnltwV7PlaY>

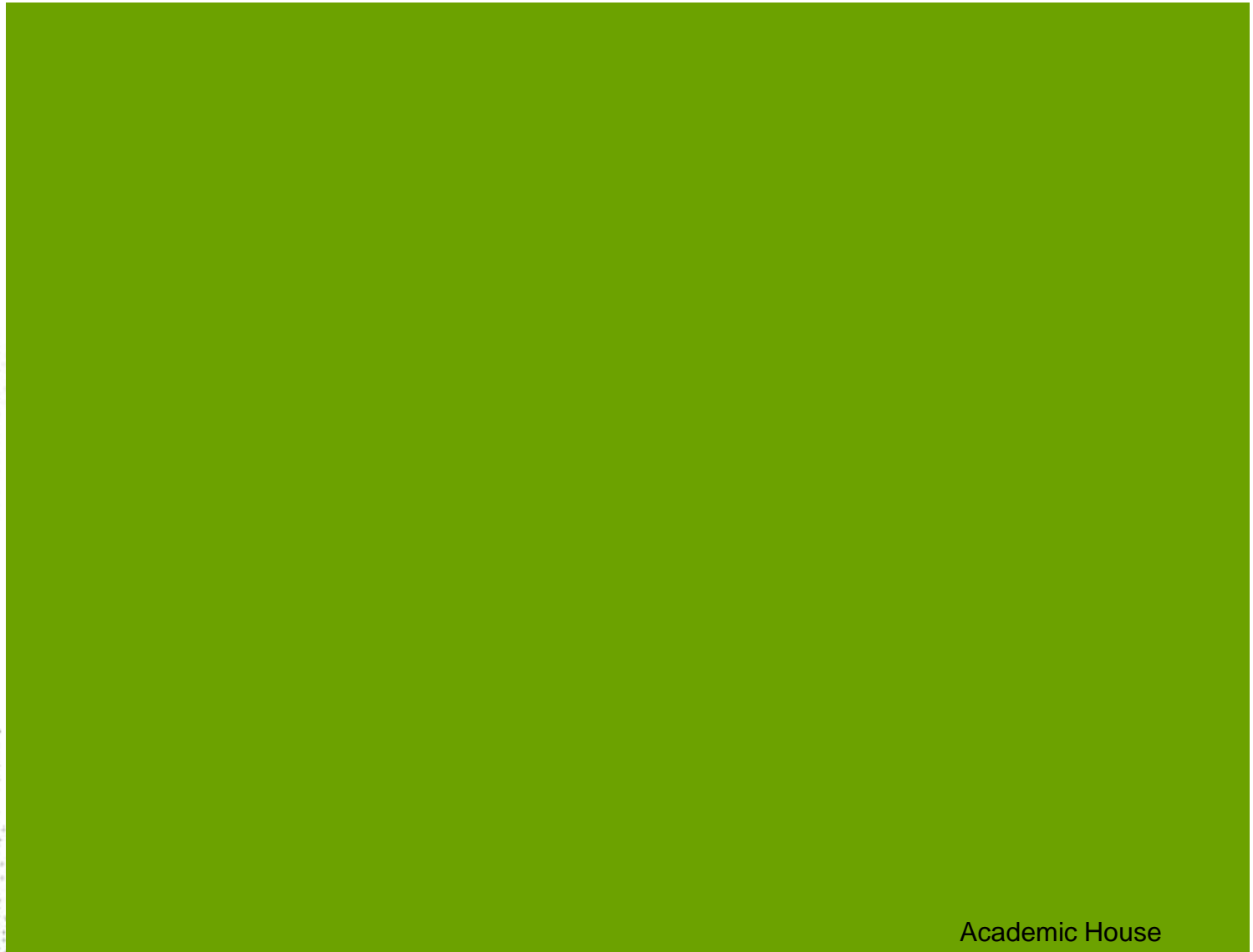
Pushed past threshold, met goal, feels relief with energy and potential for the threshold to rise



# Grades

# VS

# Behaviors



# Conclusion

- Every student is different as to why they are not performing
- Raising the comfort threshold and building tolerance supports academic growth
- Knowing when to make something a non-negotiable
- Getting students engage in other support systems
- Working with students to have a plan

## **What's Your Plan?**



### **IDENTIFY**

**What do I have to do?**



### **ORGANIZE**

**What do I need to do it?**



### **PRIORITIZE**

**When do I need to get it done?**

**THANK YOU!!**

