

# IECA Fall Conference

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## Impact of Wilderness Therapy on Academic Success

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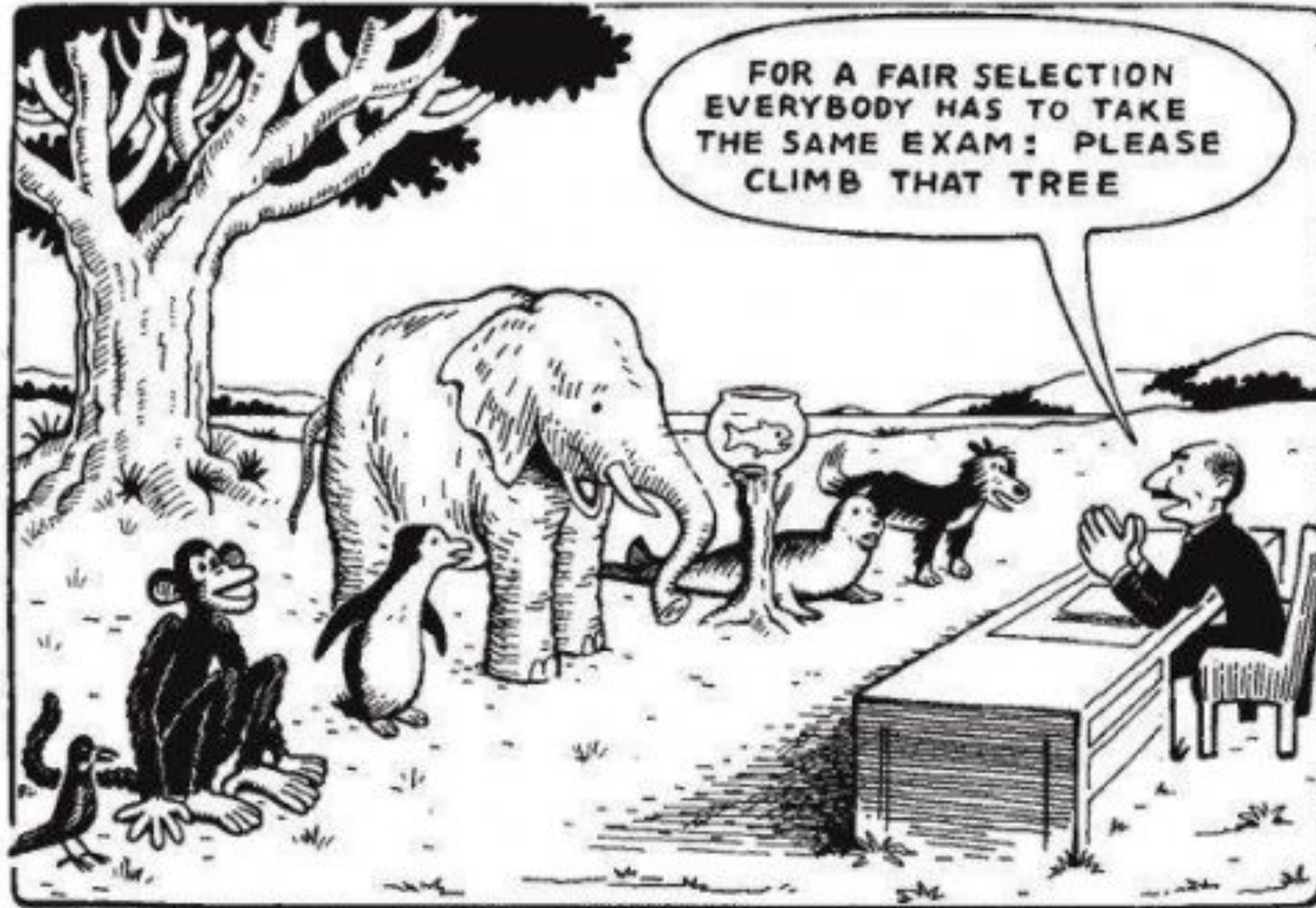
# Topics of Discussion

How we use wilderness to assess challenges and affect change in school or home environments:

- ▶ Assessing academic capability and underlying challenges
- ▶ Addressing social, emotional and behavioral issues
- ▶ Understanding executive functions and cognitive challenges
- ▶ Awareness building and self advocacy
- ▶ Social skills and self efficacy
- ▶ Transition



# Assessing academic capability



# Assessing academic capability

- ▶ Program curriculum
- ▶ Writing assignments and journaling
- ▶ Letter writing and transparency letter process
- ▶ Primitive living skills
- ▶ Fine and gross motor skills
- ▶ Physical education and body awareness
- ▶ Psychological and psychoeducational testing



Social, emotional and behavioral issues that get in the way of academic performance



# Social, emotional and behavioral issues that get in the way of academic performance

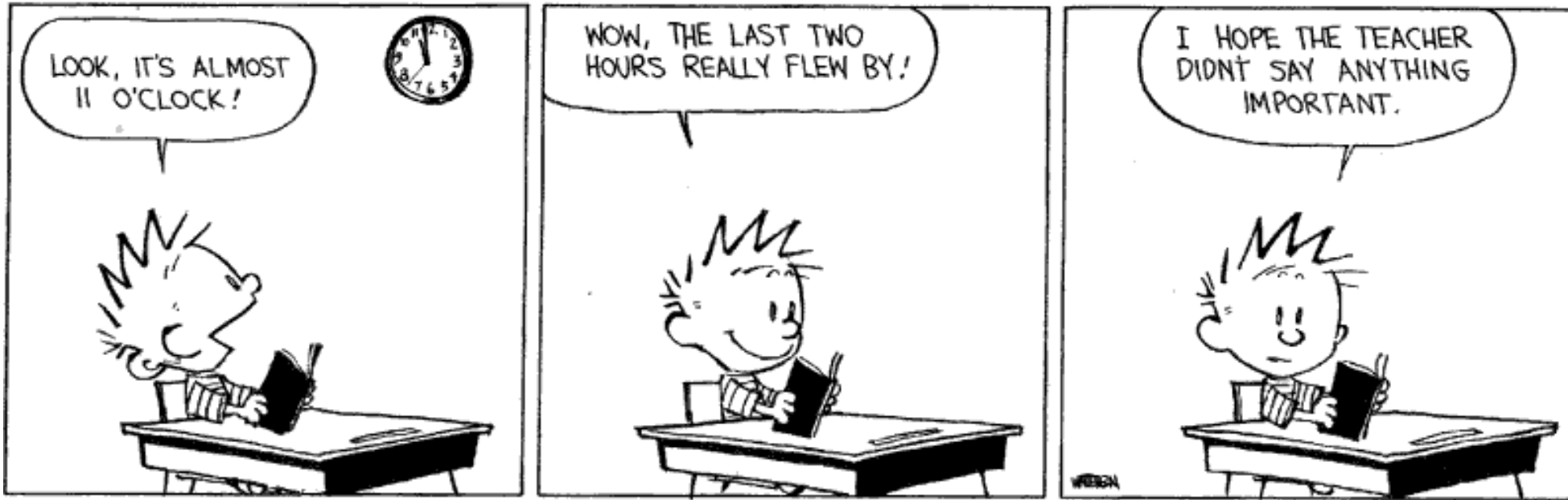
- ▶ Anxiety and trauma
- ▶ Mood Disorders
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Substance use
- ▶ Poor self care
- ▶ Oppositional defiance
- ▶ Relational issues
- ▶ Risky behaviors
- ▶ Executive Functioning issues
- ▶ Cognitive challenges

## Primary Goals:

- Assessment and intervention
- Overcoming obstacles, increasing frustration tolerance and developing resilience
- Building Self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy through experiential success
- Confronting self doubt & shame head on
- Emotional awareness, vulnerability and self advocacy



# Executive Functioning and Cognitive Challenges



# Executive Functioning and Cognitive Challenges

- ▶ Behavior Regulation
  - ▶ Inhibition of thoughts and actions
  - ▶ Flexibility in shifting problem-solving sets
  - ▶ Modulation of emotional responses
  - ▶ Self-monitoring ones actions
- ▶ Metacognitive problem solving
  - ▶ Initiate activity and generate problem-solving ideas
  - ▶ Sustaining working memory
  - ▶ Planning and organization of problem solving approaches
  - ▶ Organization of materials and environment
  - ▶ Monitoring of success and failure in problem solving
- ▶ Cognitive challenges
  - ▶ IQ Splits
  - ▶ ADHD
  - ▶ Learning differences
  - ▶ Autism spectrum





# Awareness building and self-advocacy

## *Savage Chickens*

by Doug Savage



[www.savagechickens.com](http://www.savagechickens.com)



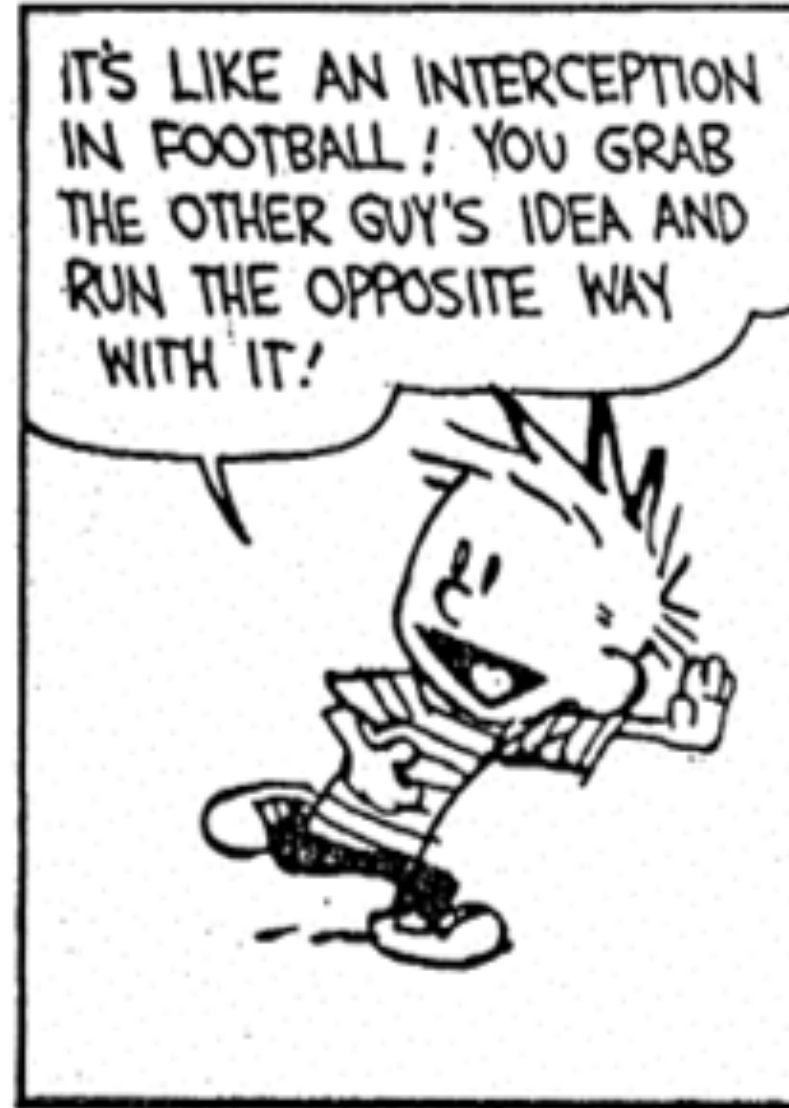
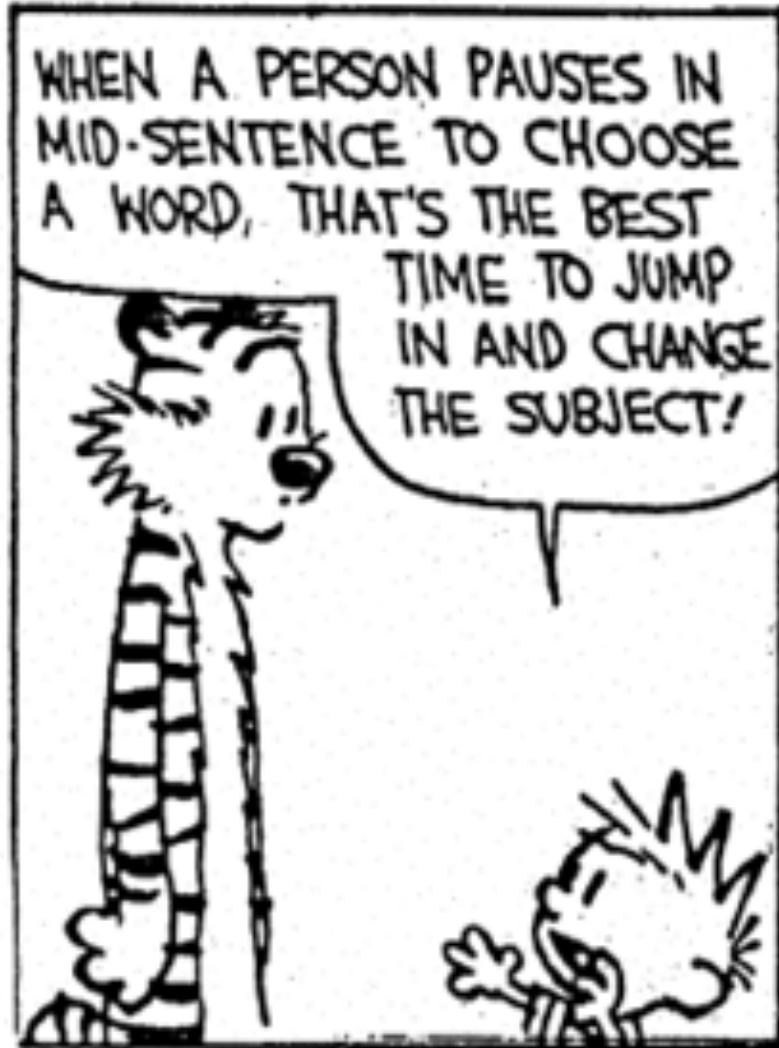
# Awareness building and self-advocacy

- ▶ Accountability and personal responsibility
- ▶ Pattern identification and exhaustion
- ▶ Needs assessment and holding up the mirror
- ▶ Developing communication skills and emotional expression
- ▶ Understanding and advocating for needs
- ▶ Tuning in to affect on others
- ▶ Providing scaffolding and support



# Social skills and self efficacy

## CALVIN AND HOBBS *B*



# Social skills and self efficacy

- ▶ Creating a safe emotional space and healthy peer culture
- ▶ Developing and practicing empathy
- ▶ Understanding social cues
- ▶ Advocating for and internalizing in-the-moment feedback
- ▶ Giving and receiving constructive criticism
- ▶ Identifying needs in relationship to others
- ▶ Self-confidence and self compassion



# Transition

- ▶ Integration and transliteration of successes
- ▶ Transition portfolio
- ▶ Waves of success and regression



# Thank You!

For a copy of this presentation, please visit:  
[www.truenorthwilderness.com/handouts](http://www.truenorthwilderness.com/handouts)

## Contact us!

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Please fill out the evaluation form after this session—your feedback helps IECA plan future conferences.



# Research links:

[http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15326985EP3702\\_4](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15326985EP3702_4)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12704/full>

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09297049.2015.1063595>

[http://journals.lww.com/clinicalpain/Abstract/2017/01000/Pain\\_is\\_Associated\\_With\\_Poorer\\_Grades,\\_Reduced.6.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/clinicalpain/Abstract/2017/01000/Pain_is_Associated_With_Poorer_Grades,_Reduced.6.aspx)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12864/full>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sode.12217/full>

