



NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition



Secondary Response to Intervention

For an urban school in the western United States, Response to Intervention (RtI) provided an answer to questions of how to halt increasing course failure, systematize current practices in the school, and improve student achievement to facilitate passage of the state exit exam and college eligibility. They tailored the components of RtI to their setting, which produced a model that used multiple screening processes, three tiers of intervention, ongoing progress monitoring, and data based decision making.

- Screening included a review of class grades, state test scores, attendance, course failure, and progress monitoring measures at the end of each semester. Additionally, the Gray Oral Reading Tests (GORT) which were given to all students at the end of eight grade.
- Tier one incorporated explicit, research-based instruction for all students. Tier two consisted of interventions using explicit instruction for small groups of students who were performing at the same level. Tier three consisted of Lindamood-Bell Learning for students reading at a third-grade level or below, self-contained classroom for students with multiple behavior problems (i.e., referrals, suspensions), and allowed for credit recovery through evening high school that lasted 2.5 hours twice a week.
- Progress monitoring consisted of a core mathematics assessment every six weeks and common writing prompts during observations for all students. Tier two involved weekly progress monitoring in algebra and English. Finally, tier three reading was monitored via standardized assessments (e.g., GORT, Woodcock-Johnson Word Attack subtest) and daily data collection.
- Data were examined during monthly small learning community and department meetings to ensure progress and at the end of each semester to determine if students should enter or exit tiers. Additionally, algebra teachers monitored student progress for the first six weeks to ensure correct placement had occurred.

What is Response to Intervention?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a school-wide system of prevention that integrates assessment with intervention to maximize achievement of all students. As a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) focused on academic performance, RtI provides a framework to guide staff in their instructional decisions including identifying students who are at-risk for poor outcomes, selection of interventions, and adjustment of interventions. This framework is centered on four core components. The first is universal screening. This consists of brief assessment for all students minimally once per year via specific academic assessments or analysis of prior risk indicators. The second component is progress monitoring. Progress monitoring entails tracking at-risk student performance over time to (a) analyze responsiveness to instruction, (b) evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and (c) to create individualized interventions for students who are the least responsive. Third is a multi-level prevention system. A minimum of three levels of prevention is recommended. The primary level should consist of high quality core instruction that adheres to research-based principles of instruction and should be appropriate for the majority of students. Secondary prevention entails more targeted intervention(s) that have been

empirically validated and are applied with students who do not respond to primary prevention. Finally, the intensive, or tertiary, level involves individualized interventions of even greater intensity for students who do not respond to the secondary level. The fourth and final component of RtI is data-based decision making. Specifically, academic performance data gathered through screening and progress monitoring should drive decisions related to instruction, movement through the prevention levels, and disability identification where appropriate given state laws.

Why is Response to Intervention important?

Ensuring all youth, including youth with disabilities, graduate high school prepared to live independent, productive lives is the ultimate goal of high schools in the 21st century. Being prepared for post-school life means being college and career ready. Being college and career ready has been defined as “being prepared for postsecondary education without the need for remediation, which generally means that students have the academic background to do college-level work” (American Institutes for Research, 2013, p. 5). Students with disabilities are currently under performing when compared to students without disabilities and according to established benchmarks (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Therefore, in order to be college and career ready, they must be provided with the supports needed to improve their academic performance. The implementation of RtI in secondary schools is one promising practice to support youth with disabilities in developing appropriate skills to successfully complete high school and transition into post-school life.

How Does Research Support Response to Intervention?

A variety of research has been conducted on RtI at the secondary level including descriptive, qualitative, and experimental/quasi-experimental studies. Descriptive research has examined the perceived importance and availability of RtI intervention practices (Sansosti, Noltemeyer, & Goss, 2010). Additionally, qualitative research has been published examining stakeholder perceptions of factors facilitating and preventing successful RtI implementation (Sansosti, Goss, & Noltemeyer, 2011; Sansosti, Telzrow, & Noltemeyer, 2010) as well as depicting models for implementing RtI in secondary settings (Fisher & Frey, 2013). The descriptive and qualitative research suggests several themes for successful implementation including: (a) implementing quality core instruction; (b) using progress monitoring measures related to core competencies; (c) having secondary and tertiary levels supplement, not replace, core instruction; (d) dedicating resources to implementation, including quality professional development; (e) changing the culture to facilitate RtI implementation including educators, parents, and community members; and (f) the use of evidence- and research-based practices throughout.

Experimental and quasi-experimental studies have been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of secondary interventions (Faggella-Luby & Wardwell, 2011; Graves, Brandon, Duesbery, McIntosh, & Pyle, 2011; Vaughn et al., 2010) and the efficacy of secondary and intensive interventions (Pyle & Vaughn, 2012; Roberts, Vaughn, Fletcher, Stuebing, & Barth, 2013; Vaughn & Fletcher, 2012) on the academic performance of students who were at-risk for failure. These studies had mixed results with students receiving secondary and intensive levels of prevention generally outperforming those in comparison conditions, but not always achieving statistical significance. These studies suggest using RtI to guide intervention may be effective. However additional research is necessary to establish specific interventions and processes as evidence-

based in secondary settings.

Where Do You Find the Primary Source for Response to Intervention at the secondary level?

The Center on Response to Intervention offers many resources for RtI. Run by the American Institutes for Research, the Center on Response to Intervention provides support to states, districts, and schools with implementing RtI efforts. Additionally, the National Center on Intensive Intervention, funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, is a valuable resource for information on RtI. Their mission is to “build district and school capacity to support implementation of data-based individualization in reading, mathematics, and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs” (National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2015).

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