

Response to Intervention: Models, Methods, and Musings

Greg Roberts
April 13, 2010

Session Outcomes

- Increase your understanding of Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Learn about the latest research and best practices related to RTI at different grade levels and in different content areas

Key Resources

- Implementing Response to Intervention: Practices and Perspectives from Five Schools
- High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII)

RTI: Why

The 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) made response to intervention available as a practice for identifying students with learning disabilities.

- A State must adopt, consistent with 34 CFR 300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10).
- In addition, the criteria adopted by the State:
 - Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10);
 - Must permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; and
 - May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10).

Conceptualizing RTI

Allocating educational resources in ways that are efficient and effective:

- Enhancing instruction and improving student outcomes
- Means of identifying students with specific learning disabilities

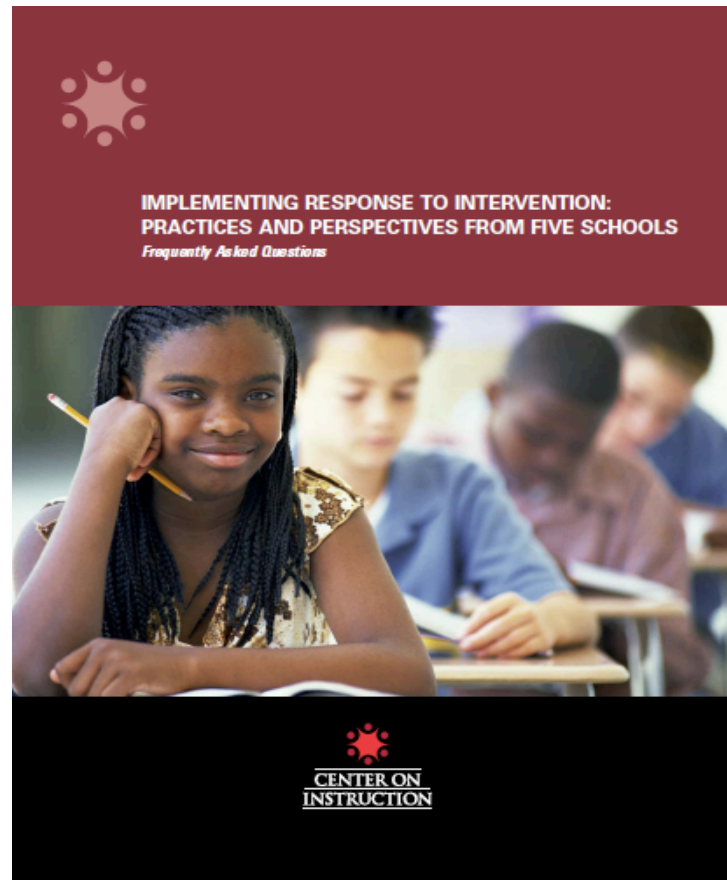
RTI Components

- Tier 1/Core curriculum
- Universal screening
- Tiered-interventions
- Progress monitoring
- Data-based decision making

RTI: Connections to Educators

- Integrates services between general and special education
- Avoids the “Wait to Fail” model (addressing misperceptions)
- Provides ongoing evidence of what’s working and what’s not working
- Identifies students needing additional support

Implementing Response to Intervention: Practices and Perspectives from Five Schools



<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>

Approach

- “What are other states, districts, and schools doing?”
- Worked with national experts on RTI implementation to identify schools and school districts that were working, in any capacity, on aspects of RTI.
- 15 sites participated in an hour-long phone interview.
- 5 sites were selected by a steering committee based on the evidence that the sites were implementing RTI in such a way that was consistent with the preponderance of research and that they represented settings where RTI might be particularly helpful (e.g., high poverty, high risk, high ELL, etc.)
- One-day site visits were conducted in the Spring of 2007.

Key Steps for Implementing RTI

Two main themes were evident across all five sites:

- Prior to implementation, all of the sites examined their current practices in order to determine which component of RTI were in place on their campuses and the degree to which those practices were effective.
- All of the schools began implementing RTI in phases; no site attempted a school-wide implementation of all elements of RTI simultaneously at the beginning of Year 1.

What kinds of professional development on RTI were offered to the staff?

- Most of the schools followed a “train the trainers” model
- Professional development occurs not only during days set aside for professional development but also during team meetings
- As the RTI implementation at each site has grown increasingly more sophisticated, the professional development has increasingly focused on specific practices

Who provides the interventions?

- The sites varied in the personnel used to implement interventions, with staff capacity, scheduling, and student need being the major factors influencing schools' decisions.
- At most of the schools, reading specialists and/or special education teachers administer the most intense interventions (Tiers III or IV).

When do interventions occur?

- Scheduling was a significant challenge for all of the sites.
- Creativity was repeatedly mentioned as necessary to successfully schedule interventions.
- Interventions are scheduled for the same time periods to permit easy transition.

What role, if any, does RTI play in special education eligibility decisions?

All sites follow their state and/or district guidelines in terms of making special education eligibility decisions.

What challenges do the sites report having in implementing RTI?

- Along with scheduling, teacher buy-in was identified as a key challenge.
- 4 out of the 5 schools reported that teacher support for RTI increased as the students began making progress.

What are the perceived benefits of implementing RTI?

- All of the sites reported that RTI has enabled them to better serve all of their students.
- Increased collaboration among teachers was also noted.
- “RTI has allowed all students to benefit from all teachers.”

What type of support do the districts provide?

All sites received support from their district offices in the form of “permission” to implement flexible schedules and realign teacher roles within an RTI framework.

What funds (local, state, or federal) are being used to implement RTI?

Implementing RTI Using Title I, Title III, and CEIS Funds

Key Issues for Decision-makers



U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/rtifiles/edlite-rti.html>

Reflections

- All sites implemented RTI in phases. For schools and districts beginning implementation, this might mean introducing and “mastering” one RTI element at a time, implementing RTI in one grade level at a time, or, at the district level, piloting RTI in one school before implementing more widely.
- The sites all relied on “creative” scheduling and flexible use of funds and teachers to implement RTI. Consider realigning teachers and other staff’s responsibilities to fit within a RTI framework. RTI implementation will require some tough choices.

High School Tiered Interventions Initiative

- Collaboration among three national technical assistance centers
 - Center on Instruction (Special Education Strand)
 - National Center on Response to Intervention
 - National High School Center
- Includes Technical Advisory Group of national RTI experts
- Goal is to enhance the understanding of how tiered intervention models are emerging in high schools

Goal of High School Tiered Interventions Initiative

To enhance the understanding of emerging tiered intervention models in high schools

Approach

- Identified high schools implementing tiered interventions based on recommendations from RCCs, RRCs & SEAs
- Contacted 51 high schools
- Interviewed 20 high school administrators
- Convened Technical Advisory Group
- Conducted 8 site visits

Themes to Date

- Elementary RTI framework does not necessarily translate into high school RTI
- Purpose of high school RTI drives framework components
- Unique features of high school RTI

Contrasting Current Understanding

Elementary School RTI

- Purpose
 - Prevention
 - Early Intervention
 - Assist LD Identification
- Outcome
 - Helping students achieve
 - Appropriate identification

High School RTI

- Purpose
 - Prevention
 - Supplemental Support
 - Content Recovery
- Outcome
 - Graduate
 - Pass core courses/ exams

Unique Features of RTI in High School: Staff Roles

- Who provides the additional interventions?
How to do you plan to support this new role for staff?
- How do special education and/or behavioral specialists support the framework?
- If RTI is implemented in more than one content area, how will you support content teachers into becoming more than “teachers of content?”

Unique Features of RTI in High School: Structure

- How do you create a master schedule that allows:
 - Student access to tiered supports
 - Time for teachers to collaborate
 - Time for teachers to discuss data
 - Movement between tiers for students
- Are there any obstacles given your current infrastructure?
- What modifications are needed to school calendar?
 - To allow movement within same semester
 - To allow students access to additional interventions as needed

Unique Features of RTI in High School: Student Involvement

- How will students be involved in the RTI framework?
- What role does the student play in determining movement between tiers?

Unique Features of RTI in High School: Culture

- How do you intend to change the school culture to meet the needs of all students?
- How do you intend to change the culture to support all students?
- How will you support teachers in designating time to collaboratively make data-based decisions?

Unique Features of RTI in High School: Graduation Requirements

- What impact will additional tiered interventions have on graduation requirements?
- What credit will students receive for the intervention classes?

Additional Musings

- RTI implementation is a dynamic process.
- Do what works.
- Use data to guide implementation.
- If a practice appears to be increasing students' scores over time, keep doing it. If not, change it.

For More Information

- Center on Instruction
www.centeroninstruction.org
- National High School Center
www.betterhighschools.org
- National Center on RTI
www.rti4success.org