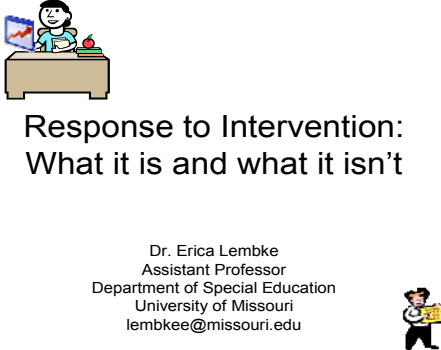


Response to Intervention: What it is and what it isn't

Dr. Erika Lembke



Response to Intervention:
What it is and what it isn't

Dr. Erika Lembke
Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education
University of Missouri
lembkee@missouri.edu

What is Response to Intervention?

- A model or structure that districts can adopt to enhance instructional effectiveness through the use of evidence-based practice and systematic data collection
- Under federal and state guidelines, districts can adopt an Rtl model to aid in enhancing instruction and identifying students with learning disabilities

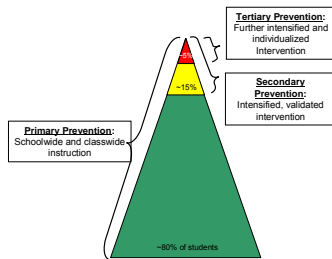
Why was Rtl adopted?

- Criticisms of the IQ-Achievement discrepancy for identifying students for learning disabilities
 - Wait to fail model
 - Overlap of IQ and Achievement
 - Increase in the number of students with learning disabilities
 - Identification due to classroom-based factors

RTI: Two important pieces

- Using the model to identify students with learning disabilities
- Using the model to provide effective, evidence-based instruction to all students
 - Ongoing data collection of instructional effectiveness

Example of a tiered model of instruction



Basics of RTI—Primary Prevention (Tier 1)

- All students screened to determine which students are suspected to be at risk.
- Students suspected to be at risk remain in primary prevention, with progress monitoring.
- Progress monitoring
 - Disconfirms risk. These responsive students remain in primary prevention OR
 - Confirms risk. These unresponsive students move to secondary prevention.



Basics of RTI—Secondary Prevention (Tier 2)

- Research-based tutoring
- Provided in small groups either by the general education teacher or specialists
- With monthly or weekly progress monitoring
- At end of tutoring trial, progress monitoring indicates students were
 - Responsive to Tier 2 tutoring. These responsive students return to primary prevention, but progress monitoring continues OR
 - Unresponsive to Tier 2 tutoring. These unresponsive students move to tertiary prevention (could be special education).



Basics of RTI—Tertiary Prevention (Tier 3)

- More intensive intervention OR Special education services
- With weekly progress monitoring
- Progress monitoring is used to
 - Design Individualized instructional programs OR
 - Set Individualized education program (IEP) goals
 - Monitor student response
 - When progress monitoring indicates the student achieves benchmark performance, in some districts, the student exits special education or Tier 3 (i.e., returns to primary or secondary prevention), with ongoing progress monitoring.



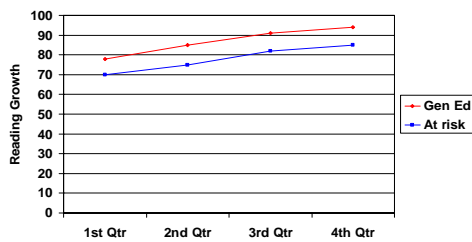
RTI: Two important pieces

- Using the model to identify students with learning disabilities
- Using the model to provide effective, evidence-based instruction to all students
 - Ongoing data collection of instructional effectiveness

Advantages of RTI for use in eligibility decision-making

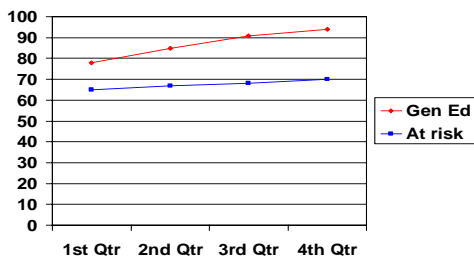
- Students identified as LD only after not responding to effective instruction
 - Poor instructional quality is ruled out as explanation for poor student performance
- Unresponsiveness is operationalized as a dual discrepancy
 - Student performs substantially below level demonstrated by peers AND demonstrates a learning rate substantially below peers.
- Students provided intervention early
 - Not waiting for students to fail
- Student assessment data inform teachers about appropriate instruction
 - Data help improve teacher instruction

How is our at-risk student doing?



Level lower, but rate okay

How is our at-risk student doing?



Level lower and rate slower—not okay

Critical elements that districts need in place to effectively implement RtI

1. Well-functioning, school-based problem-solving teams
2. School wide screening and progress monitoring system
 - Needs to be technically adequate (Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is one example)
3. Systematic analysis of school-wide data
 - Utilize decision-making rules
4. Examine current core academic programs
 - Are these programs meeting the needs of the majority of the students?

Critical elements that districts need in place to effectively implement RtI, cont.

5. Identify evidence-based interventions for Tiers 2 and 3 and a schedule for implementation of the tiered interventions
 - a) Determine how fidelity of treatment for Tiers 1-3 will be assessed
6. Monitor the progress of students in Tiers 2 and 3 on a frequent basis
 - Setting goals
 - Collecting data
 - Implementing data decision rules
 - Making changes in instruction

How is RtI being conceptualized in schools?

- Tiered model of instruction and intervention
- Research-based core programs and interventions
- School-wide screening data to identify students at-risk
- Frequent progress monitoring to examine the on-going performance of students at-risk

What RtI is and isn't



RtI is not just a special education initiative

– Because RtI became part of federal and state law through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, tendency is to view RtI within the realm of Special Education

- RtI is...
 - A collaborative, whole-school effort
 - Key components of RtI are grounded in general education practice, curriculum, and intervention

(some content modified from: East, B. (2006). Myths about RtI implementation. www.nasdse.org.)

RtI is not just for learning disabilities eligibility decision-making

- RtI is...
 - A model that can be used for eligibility decision-making if all of the other pieces (screening, progress monitoring, problem-solving teams, etc.) have been put into place

Rtl is not just a prereferral intervention mechanism

- Rtl is...
 - Primarily a school-wide mechanism or model or framework or process for improving instruction for all students including those that are gifted, those that are average, and those that are struggling.
 - And certainly, the information gained from Rtl can be used as part of the prereferral process for a student that is under consideration for referral.

Rtl is not a checklist or “quick fix”



- Rtl is...
 - A multi-component process that needs to be implemented slowly and with fidelity. It make take years, rather than days or months, to effectively put all components into place. That is one reason why districts need to start NOW!
 - Rtl requires buy in from all stakeholders including general and special education teachers, administrators, specialists, parents, and students

Rtl is not going to work in a district without some effort and support for change

- Rtl is...
 - A model that utilizes effective and research-based elements and schools should be willing to explore the possibility of moving away from the status quo to see positive growth.
 - Even at the secondary level, where we know less about Rtl, school staff can be confident that basic Rtl components will enhance what they're already doing.
 - Rtl will take some time to learn and implement, but you will be enhancing instructional effectiveness for all students along the way

Rtl is not just using screening and progress monitoring

- Rtl is...
 - Collecting student performance and progress data that is reliable and valid and then USING the data for instructional decision-making

Where are we in the Rtl process?

- In Missouri...
 - Numerous schools and district using technically adequate systems of schoolwide screening and progress monitoring
 - Some schools are using the Rtl model for eligibility decision-making
 - More prevalent at the elementary level, although some districts are implementing at the middle school level
 - Very little is known about how Rtl functions at the high school level
 - Most schools are implementing in reading first, with math, written expression, and other content areas to follow
 - DESE has created a website with Rtl information, including MO state guidelines:
<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Rtlpg.html>



ACTION PLAN

How is your school/district currently interpreting the RTI process?

- What is the understanding of general educators regarding the RTI process? Special educators? Parents? Other stakeholders?
- What are common misconceptions about the RTI process right now?
- How are you seeking and finding information on RTI?
- What are your goals for RTI implementation for the rest of this school year? For next year? 3 years from now?
- What goals can you set for yourself for individual students? For small groups? For entire classes or



Assessing district implementation or planned implementation of key RtI components

- RTI Implementation Tool (Mellard and McKnight (2006), nrclid.org)
- What *does* RTI implementation look like in your school?
- What *will* RTI implementation look like in your school?
- Determine the status of your school for each practice
 - ✓ if the practice is implemented
 - If the practice is being developed, 1—high priority, 2—medium priority, 3—low priority

RTI implementation tool

- Categories
 - School-wide screening
 - Tiered intervention practices
 - All tiers
 - Tier 1
 - Tier 2 and beyond
 - Special education
 - Collaboration
 - Fidelity of implementation
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Parent Involvement
 - RTI and SLD determination



Resources for more information...

- RtI resources on the DESE website: <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Rtlpg.html>
- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring: www.studentprogress.org
- National Center on Response to Intervention: www.rti4success.org
