RTI: AN INSTRUCTIONAL AND/OR ASSESSMENT TOOL?

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The Use of Response to Intervention to Inform Special Education Eligibility Decisions for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

Access the full paper at https://tinyurl.com/NJCLDRTI2020 or by scanning the QR code.
(B) Additional Authority. In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures described in paragraphs (2) and (3). (IDEA 2004 is in Title 20 of Section 1414, subsection b(6), [cited as 20 USC 1414(b)(6)])
LD Summit 2001
The History Behind RTI

• NJCLD members participated in this convening organized by the Office for Special Education Programming (OSEP).
• Possible changes to the IDEA were discussed.
• There was particular dissatisfaction with the Ability-Achievement Discrepancy model.
• Lyon and colleagues argued that early identification and prevention programs could reduce the number of students with reading problems and address overidentification.
• Several researchers proposed a problem-solving model which came to be known as Response to Intervention.
RTI is an example of a multi-tiered problem-solving framework

Typical RTI models have three tiers:

• Tier 1 students receive evidence-based core instruction, and universal screening of all students is in place to identify those who may need more intensive instruction or intervention.

• Tier 2 is designed to provide those students who are identified through universal screening (and, sometimes, other diagnostics) with supplemental intervention that is designed to target identified needs. These students are regularly monitored to ensure that they are making meaningful progress.

• Tier 3 more frequent student progress monitoring, and specialized intervention are applied.
RTI Improves Instruction

• NICHD demonstrated that well-designed instructional programs or approaches result in significant improvements for the majority of students with early reading problems.
• When implemented with fidelity, RTI is an important component of high-quality general education.
• However, fidelity of implementation and good decision making are the keys to successful implementation.
• Teachers must diligently and accurately monitor student progress.
RTI and Eligibility

• Some states and districts use data from RTI and other problem-solving approaches as the sole criteria for determining eligibility for special education.

• Available research and state-level guidance suggests that protocols for documenting the lack of response to scientific, research-based interventions are developed through state policy and often vary not only from state to state and from LEA to LEA, but also from professionals to professionals within LEA’s.

• Some states require additional testing or allow school districts to determine which additional measures they will use for LD identification.
RTI and SLD Definition

- *Specific learning disability* is defined as being neurobiological in origin and involves “psychological processing” deficits.

- An RTI model that is implemented as designed should be able to identify students who are not making adequate progress, even with intensive evidenced-based intervention.

- RTI will not identify the processing deficits that are contributing to the student’s failure to learn.
IDEA regulations
in conducting the evaluation, the public agency must—

1. Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent [. . . .];

2. Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and

3. Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.
RTI Research

• National Center for Education Statistics commissioned one national study on RTI for reading which was released in 2015.
  • Results showed that students who received interventions performed worse in reading than students who did not.
  • A significant finding was that many schools were not implementing RTI for teaching reading with the fidelity required to elicit the types of outcomes found in the research.
• The vast majority of research on RTI has focused on foundational reading skills.
• A more robust research base is needed for the application of RTI in the areas of mathematics, written expression, and even reading comprehension.
• More research is needed on specific populations, such as English language learners, to ensure that RTI is effective for all students.
RTI Limitations and Concerns

• RTI depends on the effectiveness of interventions and the ability of educators to...
  • deliver effective, evidence-based interventions with fidelity and
  • administer and interpret screening and progress-monitoring tools to accurately track progress.

• There is inconsistency with how RTI progress monitoring data are incorporated into a comprehensive evaluation.

• Timelines are a concern. The evaluation for special education must not be delayed or needlessly extended due to RTI.

• Students who are entering postsecondary settings from a high school that used RTI to make the IDEA eligibility determination may not have access to a comprehensive evaluation report that includes the psychoeducational assessments often necessary for services at this level.
Conclusion

• More research is needed to ensure that educators use evidence-based instruction and interventions with fidelity.

• Additional research is particularly important in determining the impact of RTI as an assessment method on the under- or over-identification of specific populations, such as English language learners and students of color, for special education services.

• Data from an RTI process should be part of the analysis, synthesis, and recommendations used for evaluation, identification, eligibility, and program planning.

• RTI data alone are insufficient for determining a student’s eligibility and for identification of a learning disability.
Panelists

**Teacher**
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**Psychologist**
Michelle Storie, Ph.D.

**Parent**
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Literacy Moms North Carolina

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Questions?
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https://tinyurl.com/NJCLD2022

*Certificates will be issued based on response in feedback form.