



Webinar Synopsis
Response to Intervention:
Planning for Fidelity of Implementation
Presented by
Dr. Claudia Rinaldi
Senior Trainer and TA Associate
Education Development Center, Inc.

Response to Intervention (RTI): The Definition

RTI refers to the practice of using universal screening methodology to provide high quality, multi-tiered instruction and intervention matched to students' needs, while monitoring student progress frequently to make decisions about instructional methods. (Batsche, et al., 2005, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006, Sailor, 2010)

RTI: The History

RTI has a very rich history in two main areas of educational development and research:

1. 30 years of research in special education
2. 15 years in regular education

The research focuses on two areas:

- Curriculum based measures that can be used as quick indicators, a kind of "dip-stick," of how well students are achieving in literacy and math.
- Problem-solving teams that provide consultation and supports for regular education instruction; these problem solving teams formed the basis for what we now call Professional Learning Communities. Today, these Professional Learning Communities use the problem-solving model to think about what instructional interventions are needed to support **ALL students**, not just special education students or second language learners.

RTI has many names across the country. Here are just a few:

- Response to Intervention
- Response to Instruction
- Scientific Research Based Interventions
- RTI ² (for Instruction & intervention)
- Multi-Tiered System of Support

Whatever its name, RTI expects educators to not wait until children fail but instead, from the outset, to be thinking about how to serve the needs of students once those needs are identified.

Key Elements of RTI Success:

- It is important that the details regarding RTI are understood and that initiatives are not just re-named. Quite often, there is a tendency to say: “That sounds like the Student Support Team so now let’s just call it the RTI Team.” RTI requires a re-organization of the way things are done at the school. Educators must formulate new concepts for strategic intervention and monitoring.
- Implementation of RTI must be done with fidelity. It requires educators to think about a model that can be implemented on a daily basis with fidelity and integrity. RTI must engage everyone from the superintendent to operations staff, and include all academic personnel: teachers, paraprofessionals, and lunch monitors as well as parents.

Changes in the Paradigm

States, districts and schools must understand that RTI is not an add-on. It’s a reframing and restructuring such that educators identify and use practices that yield evidence of progress.

States, districts, and schools must:

- Develop a systems change mentality
- Change the way they are organized to create multi-disciplinary interventions
- Involve all stakeholders in adoption, change, and fidelity
- Develop preventive, and proactive ways of providing services to students based on data
- Realize that they can’t reframe if they don’t restructure
- Consider and implement cross-functional work in schools (example: taking paraprofessionals from one grade level that is doing well so they can serve students in a grade level that is not doing well)

The Role of the State in RTI

A State Department of Education role is to provide guiding principles and guidance documents for all stakeholders in RTI. The State should provide or identify model programs at the district and school level and include representation of all stakeholders in the RTI process. It must ensure accountability and be responsible for monitoring the implementation of RTI. This includes evaluating the fidelity of implementation at each school and district that, in turn, evaluates the progress of each student. The state should encourage the formation of teacher teams and school management teams at every school site so as to ensure success of implementation.

In order to reach the highest potential of RTI, comprehensive planning, collaboration, implementation, and systemic change, ideally, must include a rethinking of district goals and support, as well as the development of commitment among school leaders, teachers and staff. When one piece is missing the state may only see partial success. In the webinar Rinaldi shared several scenarios of potential outcomes of RTI implementation focusing on differential outcomes when one level of support is not present.

Potential Outcomes of RTI Implementation

Ideal comprehensive planning, collaboration, implementation and systemic change

District Goal + District Support + Schools Leader + Teacher & staff = Highest Potential

When district supports are not coordinated and systemic, Schools will be see partial success at the school level while the school leader is present – may not be sustainable over time

District Goal + ~~District Support~~ + School Leader + Teacher & Staff = Partial Potential

10

Potential Outcomes of RTI Implementation

Ideal comprehensive planning, collaboration, implementation and systemic change

District Goal + District Support + Schools Leader + Teacher & staff = Highest Potential

If school administrators does not buy-in to the potential of RTI, There will be no school structures to support RTI implementation, Fidelity and sustainability.

District Goal + District Support + ~~Schools Leader~~ + Teacher & Staff = Poor Potential

11

Potential Outcomes of RTI Implementation

Ideal comprehensive planning, collaboration, implementation and systemic change

District Goal + District Support + Schools Leader + Teacher & staff = Highest Potential

When teachers are not included in the planning, collaboration and systemic change TEACHER BUY-IN results in inconsistent Implementation & limited fidelity

District Goal + District Support + School Leader + ~~Teacher & staff~~ = Poor Potential

12

Rinaldi focused on the need for States and districts to engage teachers in implementing RTI and provide them with appropriate supports and professional development. Under the umbrella of RTI, teachers need to collaborate, co-design lessons, co-teach, and study data to determine students’ needs. This type of collaboration and systemic change happens slowly over time. Rinaldi shared an example of an RTI implementation that began from the top down and progressed over a three-year period. Information gathered from interviews with the teachers involved was shared to demonstrate how the teachers gradually took over responsibility for tiered instruction, prevention and intervention over the 3 year period:

Year 1 - Teachers were excited about the change yet tentative as to how change would happen (Greenfield et al., 2010).

Year 2 - The principal became less involved. Teachers understood the model and used data to determine how and what students were learning at any given point in time (Stuart et al., 2011).

Year 3 - The principal was not even mentioned in the interviews and teachers had taken total responsibility for tiered instruction, prevention and intervention (Rinaldi et al., forthcoming publication).

Structures That Support Fidelity of Implementation

The Teacher Service Team

- This team does problem-solving at the student level. Uses data at the student and classroom level from universal screener(s) and progress monitoring.
- Focus: Student level problem solving
- Membership: Facilitator, direct service providers (e.g., faculty, paraprofessionals, partner site-based staff)
- May eventually need assistance from the School Management Group (see below).

The School Management Group

- This team uses school level data to problem-solve support structures and professional development needs. Assists the teacher service teams in their problem solving, as needed.
- Focus: Fidelity of implementation and school progress.
- Membership: Principal/Headmaster, all Service Team Facilitators, RTI Site Leader, external partner leadership.

The District Cross Functional Support Team

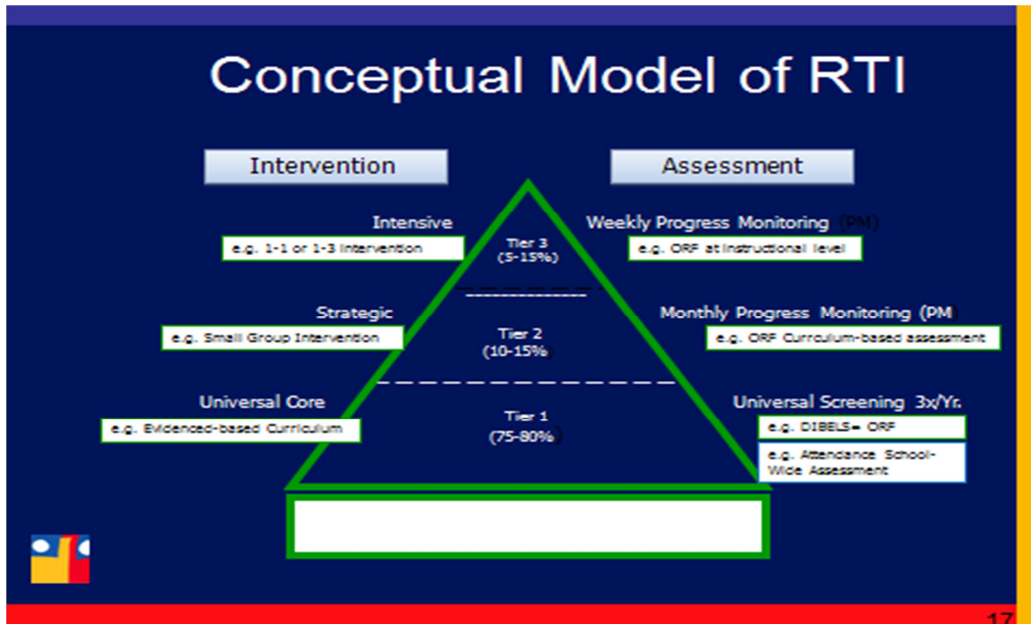
- This team uses data at the district level to problem solve.
- Focus: Fidelity of implementation of curriculum & service.
- Membership: Cross functional representatives from departments of the district and as well as representation of the schools.

The District Team

- Determines policy at the chief academic and assistant superintendent levels to support the other teams.

The important thing to remember regarding all of the above is that the student is the center of attention. Through universal screening, progress monitoring, and intervention, school personnel strategically address the student's needs.

Logistics of Implementation and Assessment of RTI



Tier 1: In the model, 75 – 100% of the students should be in Tier 1 because they are responding successfully to quality core instruction. They are monitored through universal screening at least three times a year.

Tier 2: Students in Tier 2 should represent only 10-15% of the student population. Students in this group should receive both instruction in Tier 1 and intervention in Tier 2, usually in small groups of 1- 6. Progress monitoring for these students should occur monthly.

Tier 3: Students in Tier 3 should represent only 5-15% of the student population. Students receiving Tier 3 interventions should be provided with intensive support usually in one on one settings and assessment of their progress should be conducted weekly. Students in Tier 3 get three passes at the core curriculum, in essence accepting it in Tier 1, reviewing it in Tier 2 and filling in the gaps in Tier 3.

Comparing Tiers

What's different?	What's the same?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of assessments for progress monitoring • Focus on priority skills and learning targets • Number and nature of target students • Dosage, frequency, duration, time of support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Common Core State Standards • Evidence-based practices and interventions • Interventions provided by the most-skilled person available

RTI Implementation Assumptions

- Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 represent broad fluid categories
- All student populations can be represented in each tier
- You label the NEED and not the child
- Students are not referred to Special Education unless they fail to respond to all levels of tiered intervention
- Tiered intervention continues despite eligibility for special education

Matching Intervention to Students' Needs: Things to Consider

Time	Size	Logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dosage (10 min. up to 60 min.): Start with the least to the most• Frequency (once a week up to daily)• Duration (8 weeks up to 20 weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group (1:1 up to 1:6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus• Personnel• Location• Occurrence

Determining Tiers

In elementary schools, tiers are dependent usually on reading and math cut scores from curriculum-based measures (for example DIBELS). In middle and high school, RTI can take different forms. One way of organizing interventions at the secondary level is according to grade level performance, attendance, office discipline referrals, or state testing. For example, Tier 1 instruction is available for all student; Tier 2 instruction and intervention is additional for students lagging behind but above 4th or 5th grade reading level; and Tier 3 intervention is for students performing below the 4th or 5th grade reading level.

Structures and Configurations of RTI

- RTI is the priority when developing the school schedule and human support.
- RTI is a school-wide initiative
- Blocked classes with additional time for intervention, enrichment and reinforcement.
- Emphasis on differentiated instruction.
- Linguistically and cultural appropriate instruction for English Language Learners

Importance of Self-Assessment to Ensure Fidelity: Two Examples

- Use a self-assessment tool at the school level: e.g., The Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation developed by the Florida PS/RTI Statewide Project (<http://floridarti.usf.edu>).
- Maintain a record of problem solving and progress monitoring for individual students receiving Tier 2 and 3 supports.

References

Greenfield, R., Rinaldi, C., Proctor, P., & Cardarelli, A. (2010). Teachers' perceptions of RTI reform in an urban elementary school: A consensual qualitative analysis. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 21*(2), 47-63.

Stuart, S.K., Rinaldi, C., & Higgins A, O (2011). Agents of change: Voices of teachers on response to intervention. *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 7*(2), pp. 53-73.

Rinaldi, C., Higgings, A.O., & Stuart, S. K. Educators' three-year perceptions of an RTI reform effort in an urban elementary school. Manuscript forthcoming in the *Journal of Education (Boston University)*

Information from this presentation has been compiled from resources from the National Center for Response to Intervention and the RTI Action Network.