


## Why RTI is Not Spelled D-I-B-E-L-S

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## Agenda and objectives

- **Part 1:** What's the big deal- Why would schools want to use an RTI framework?
- **Part 2:** What are the essential elements of an RTI framework?
- **Part 3:** What are the purposes of assessment and how are these purposes relevant to an RTI framework?
- **Part 4:** Examples of how assessment data has been used to guide instructional decision making at three levels: Grade Level, Classroom and Individual Students




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## Agenda

- **Part 1:** What's the big deal? Why would schools want to use an RTI framework?



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## Response to Intervention (RTI) is a new name, but not a new idea

RTI is not a special education initiative—it must be owned by everyone: general, remedial and special educators

- The elements of RTI validate what we have always thought about good teaching and good schools (rigorous & defined curriculum, differentiated instruction, assessments used for decision-making, etc.)

An RTI framework pushes schools to be accountable for the learning of all students by systematically analyzing and aligning student need with instructional method





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## Response to Intervention and changes in legislation

- Under NCLB, all students must demonstrate proficiency in ELA and Math by 2014.
- When IDEA was amended in 2004, it allowed districts to use RTI for determining eligibility of students with learning disabilities.
- Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is dedicated to functional assessment and teaching behavior to all students

Some districts are using the elements of RTI to address these initiatives.




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## RTI Framework can support school improvement in two ways

- Continuous Improvement—in reading or math that has unacceptable percentages of students failing
- Special Education Eligibility—for determining eligibility for students with learning disabilities



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### Making the connection between Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and the fundamental principles of Response to Intervention (RTI)

**Current State – What is the problem?**

**Must be Data driven**  
 What do kids need to learn?  
 How will we know?  
 How do we respond when students have difficulty in learning?  
 How will we respond if a student already knows?

**Response to Intervention (RTI) is a framework with specific elements that can assist schools in achieving their vision**

**Desired State- What is our vision?**  
 Ensure that all kids can learn  
 Culture of collaboration  
 Focus on results

### Current State:

- Unaligned, nonsensical delivery systems (title-one, general education, special education)
- Low achievement- especially in lower poverty areas
- Over-representation of minorities in special education
- Poor growth when students with special education are compared with their non-disabled peers (AYP)
- Disproportionate numbers of high incident disabilities (LD, SLI) and inconsistencies from states to states, county to county, district to district
- Overly dependent system on student processing problems

**Current State** → **Desired State**

### Systemic Problems: Too many kids are failing

- NICHD research indicates that 20-30% of all children have trouble learning to read. Children who fail to become proficient in reading by the end of second grade will remain poor readers for the rest of their educational career.
- Nationally, 36% of students failed to demonstrate mastery of basic reading skills on the 4th grade (NEAP).
- SLD eligibility comprises 52% of all special education students nationally, a 300% increase since 1976-77. Yet, this has not always led to improvement in student achievement.
  - “Wait to Fail” model is too late, off target, unreliable, non-collaborative, and too expensive

### Things to consider...

- Most research & most frequent use of RTI is in areas of early intervention in reading, math, and behavior.
- Most RTI implementation has typically been done at the elementary level. Around the country, implementation is expanding to middle and high schools.
- At this point in time, RTI seems easier to use with processes that are skill-based such as decoding rather than with broader concepts such as comprehension because skills are easier to assess.
- If misused, RTI could lead to a narrowing of the curriculum to those things that are easily measured and taught in small, incremental steps

### Agenda

- **Part 2:** What are the principles and essential ingredients of an RTI framework?


### Principles of Response to Instruction

1. **Shared responsibility** for student achievement in which general and special educators collaborate and support one another across all tiers.
2. RTI is a **framework, not a program**. The ingredients can be combined in many ways so that implementation may look different in different buildings, even within the same district.
3. **Early Intervention** as soon as the student's performance indicates that they are “off track”.
4. **Problem-Solving** focused on curriculum, instructional, environment, and learner variables that can be controlled in contrast to student deficits.
5. Using school-wide and grade-level data to evaluate **instructional effectiveness**.

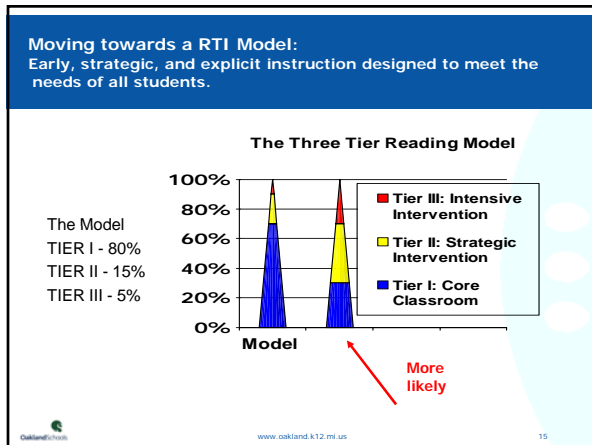
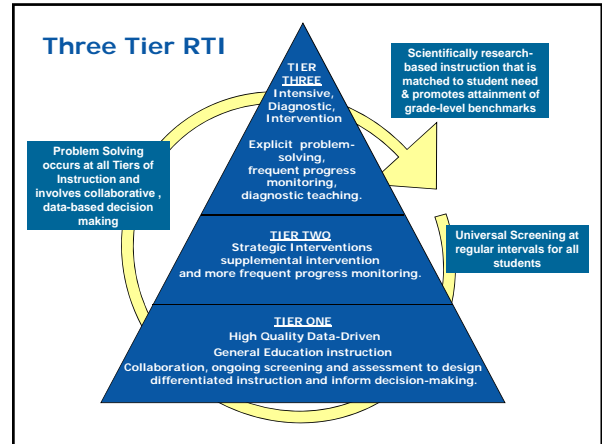
### ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF RTI:

- Multi-Tiered Continuum of Support (Models have 3-5 tiers)
- Universal Screening/Progress Monitoring for Slow Responders
- Problem-Solving Process: Implemented at grade level, small groups, individual students (see handout)
- Scientifically-Based Core Curriculum: Evaluation of the effectiveness of core curricula
- Research-based Interventions: Instructional strategies and supplemental interventions based on empirical research studies on effectiveness
- Professional Development: Ongoing and embedded to the school improvement plan and goals

Why RTI is not spelled D-I-B-E-L-S ... Screening/progress monitoring is only one of many essential ingredients



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### Agenda




- Part 3: What are the purposes of assessment and how are these purposes relevant to an RTI framework?




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### A Focus on Results:

#### WHO learned, WHAT by, HOW we taught it?




- Are ALL kids learning? Who is progressing satisfactory towards end of year benchmarks and who is not likely to achieve the goal?
- Are there big idea concepts that most students do not have securely in place?
- How fast or slowly are groups of kids learning?
- If we make instructional changes, would learning be accelerated?



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### What Kind of Data Do We Need?

- Data...
  - For different purposes (outcome, screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic)
  - For different big ideas of reading (phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)
  - For different levels of analysis (grade-level, classroom, small-group, individual)



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### Four Purposes of Assessment



- An effective, comprehensive reading program includes reading assessments to accomplish four different purposes
  - Outcome
  - Screening
  - Progress Monitoring
  - Diagnosis

*No one of these is ever enough to answer the question, "Who learned What by How we taught it?" !!!*

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### What about Formative & Summative Assessments?

- Formative Assessments may fulfill the following purposes:
  - Screening
  - Diagnostic
  - Progress Monitoring
- Summative Assessments fulfill the following purposes:
  - Outcome

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### Purpose of Assessment: Screening

- Determines who is at risk for reading difficulties and who may require supplemental instruction or intervention
- Research has determined valid cut scores
- Simple tasks that predict complex skills very well
- A form of formative assessment
- Valuable only if it leads to differentiated instruction

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### Purpose of Assessment: Progress Monitoring

- Determines whether students receiving interventions are making adequate progress
- Can not assume students are on track for improvement
- Just making progress is not enough- determines if students are accelerating in order to catch up
- Performed every few weeks, so need alternate forms of assessment

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### Prediction is critical to Prevention: Screening & Progress Monitoring Tools

- Reading trajectories are established early; Poor readers at the end of first grade are at very significant risk for long term academic difficulty (Juel, 1988)
- Measurement tools that help predict risk status for later academic outcomes are vital to ensure that resources are distributed appropriately
- Requirements for tools:
  - Efficient
  - Economical
  - Reliable
  - Familiar to children
  - Technically adequate
  - Sensitive to small change
    - Alternate forms



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### Early Literacy Implications

Why measure these skills or Big Ideas of Literacy?	
Phonemic Awareness	<b>Predictive of later reading acquisition...</b> When students start on track they stay on track...Conversely, once off track likely to stay off track
Alphabetic Principle	<b>Skills that can be directly taught</b> ...AND we can measure whether students learned the skills
Vocabulary	<b>Improved Outcomes for Success</b> Mastery of these skills improves reading outcomes for children
Fluency	
Comprehension	

Roland Good and Ruth Kaminski (2005)

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### Turn and Talk...

- Outcome
- Diagnostic
- Screening
- Progress Monitoring

- Do you favor one type of assessment over another?
- Do you have reliable tools in all big ideas of reading?

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### An Example: Analyzing Data at the Student Level

TASK	Oral Reading	Oral Reading
TOOL	MLPP: Running records of oral reading	DIBELS: Oral reading fluency probes
LEVEL	Individual Student	Individual Student
PURPOSE	Diagnostic assessment for individualized instructional planning	Screening assessment to compare individual student performance to end of year expectations ("temperature taking")
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find individual's instructional level using materials tailored to student</li> <li>• Identifies strengths and weaknesses for teaching</li> <li>• Focus is on knowledge and accuracy of skills</li> <li>• Performance comparisons are within the individual student</li> <li>• Materials most often authentic text or leveled books and are chosen based on proximal zone of instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference student's skills relative to end of year goals</li> <li>• Identifies whether student is "on track" or "off track" for meeting end of the year goals</li> <li>• Focus is on accuracy and automaticity of skills</li> <li>• Measures are repeated over time</li> <li>• Performance compared to local norms and researched-based end of year benchmarks</li> <li>• Materials chosen based on end of year goals (one yardstick to compare all students)</li> </ul>

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### Agenda



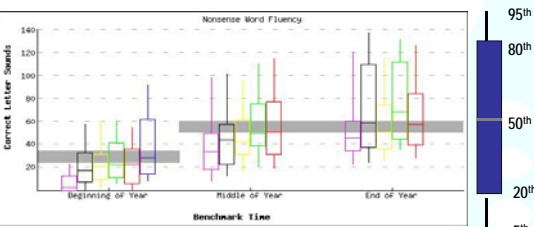
- Part 4: How has assessment data been used in a pilot project to guide instructional decision making at different levels?

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### Teams analyze data at many levels to guide instructional decision making:

Level of Analysis	What we can Learn
<b>1) Grade Level View</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we learn about our core instructional program?</li> <li>• Who is learning? Who is slow to respond? In what proportions?</li> <li>• What is working well?</li> </ul>
<b>2) Classroom Level View</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Diagnostic</li> <li>• Progress Monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there classrooms with greater needs?</li> <li>• What are the components of my ELA block and are we meeting the needs of all kids?</li> <li>• Who is making growth and who is not?</li> </ul>
<b>3) Small groups and individuals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Diagnostic</li> <li>• Progress Monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is responding? Who is not?</li> <li>• Is there a performance or a skills problem?</li> <li>• Do we have the right intervention or strategy, at the right time, for the right need, at the right level of intensity (Torgesen, 1998)?</li> <li>• How much is this student responding compared to the average response in the group or the class mean?</li> <li>• Are students likely to reach the goal without making further changes?</li> </ul>


**Purpose:** Box plot is a quick, overall view of grade level student performance in relation to the benchmark goal. 90% student scores are captured on one graph.



What can be learned from this multiyear box plot? Are we making a difference, and if so, where?

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### Grade Level Histogram: Quick view of the distribution of student performance on PSF according to risk



**Benchmark Goal:** The benchmark goal is for all children to have established phonemic awareness skills of 35 to 45 on Phoneme Segmentation Fluency by the end of kindergarten or the beginning of First Grade.

**Emerging Status:** In the beginning of First Grade, students should have 35-45 sounds per minute on Phoneme Segmentation Fluency.

- **24% (0-15) At-Risk**  
Students scoring 0 to 15 sounds per minute on Phoneme Segmentation Fluency in the beginning of First Grade have emerging phonemic awareness skills. Students with emerging phonemic awareness skills are not fluent and dependent on their knowledge of the sound structure of English to be successful in learning the alphabetic principle. They are likely to achieve the next benchmark goal if provided with effective alphabetic principle instruction. For students who have established Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, assessment and instructional focus should shift to other areas to ensure adequate growth.
- **44% (16-30) Reemergence**  
Students scoring between 16 and 30 sounds per minute on Phoneme Segmentation Fluency in the beginning of First Grade have emerging phonemic awareness skills. Students with emerging phonemic awareness skills are not fluent and dependent on their knowledge of the sound structure of English. Students scoring in this range in the beginning of First Grade need additional instructional support in phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle to achieve the next benchmark goal. Progress toward benchmark goals should be monitored at least monthly.
- **24% (31-45) At-Risk**

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### Instructional Decision Making forces teams to ask, "Who learned What by How we taught it?"

The **WHAT** of teaching:  
Structured set of learning outcomes or tasks, standards, & skills thought to prepare students to succeed in reading.  
**WHAT** students should know as they proceed through school.  
Incorporates national, state, county and district standards.

The **HOW** of teaching:  
The things that a teacher does to help students learn the WHAT.  
Materials used, classroom systems and teaching methods to accomplish the WHAT.



### Activity: The answer to literacy difficulties is not in the data!

#### Grade Level Data Scenario:

- Baker Elementary school has 1.5 years of *grade level data* that suggests weaknesses in phoneme segmentation fluency in kindergarten and in first grade.

At your table, please list five questions that you have about the WHAT or HOW of teaching?



### Activity: Grade Level Questions and Adjustments

#### What are we teaching

- What components of literacy instruction are we teaching daily across the grade level?
- Are the components aligned with Benchmarks?
- Is there adequate coverage of big ideas? Is there something missing?
- Is there a purpose and connection for students?
- Is there a Scope and Sequence or my instruction responsive in nature?

#### How we are Teaching

- How much time is allocated to the big ideas concepts?
- Is there enough Modeling/Demonstration?
- Is there enough feedback to the students?
- How much time is allocated to student practice?



### How to start? Three stages

#### Build Consensus-Is this what you need?

- Secure administrative approval and support
- Seek out like minded colleagues
- Understand your current data trends and needs
  - What do kids need to learn?
  - How will we know? How do we respond when students have difficulty in learning? How will we respond if a student already knows?

#### Build Infrastructure

- Give everyone on the team a role.
- How can teacher's collaborate? How can interventionists collaborate? Build time and spaces. Prioritize initiatives. Get the right people in the right places.
- Judiciously select screening tools/progress monitoring tools or develop tools and local norms. What do we already have? What do we need?

#### Implementation

- Have a clear professional development plan for the building and for individuals. Get efficient. What skills does the staff need? Align PD plan with skill building.
- Summarize, analyze & report results to stakeholders.



### Final Thoughts

- The answers to improving student achievement is not in your data.
- The data should drive questions about who is LEARNING and what changes need to be made to the WHAT, HOW and WHO.
- Holding ourselves accountable for student learning is the big idea-it will require changes in perspective, roles, and philosophical shifts.
- Do not get caught up in endless debates about teaching practices...It just keeps you eye off the ball...
- Focus on results. Be willing to explore changes if you are not achieving the desired results.

See handouts for additional references



### HANDOUTS



### Response to intervention Resources

- Curriculum-Based Measurement
  - <http://www.edformation.com/> - Mark Shinn
  - <http://www.interventioncentral.org/> - Jim Wright
  - <http://www.studentprogress.org/> - National Center on Progress Monitoring
- Screening and Progress Monitoring Tools
  - <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/> - Roland Good and Ruth Kaminski
  - <http://www.aimsweb.com/> - Aims Web
- Reading Instruction
  - <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.htm> (NRP Report)
  - <http://www.SOPRISWEST.COM/> - LETRS: Louisa Moats
- Response to Intervention
  - <http://www.nrcld.org/html/symposium2003/index.html> - National Research Center on Learning Disabilities
  - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/> - RTI Action Network
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (2005). [Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation](#)
- University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency (2005). [Introduction to the 3-Tier Reading Model: Reducing reading disabilities for kindergarten through third grade students](#) (3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

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### IDEA 2004

(5) Special Rule for eligibility determination: A child shall not be determined a child with a disability if the determinant factor is...

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction as defined in ESE
- Lack of instruction in math
- Limited English proficiency

(6) Specific Learning Disabilities

- ... the LEA shall not be required to take into consideration whether the child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability...
- ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY - In determining whether the child has a specific learning disability, the LEA may use a process which determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention

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### What's in Your Matrix?

	Outcome	Screening	Progress Monitoring	Diagnostic
Phonological Awareness				
Alphabetic Principle				
Accuracy/Fluency				
Vocabulary				
Comprehension				

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### Building Infrastructure: Establishing a problem solving process

- Identify and Clarify the Problem**  
(Screening & Diagnostic Assessments)
  - What is the problem defined in measurable terms?
- Analyze the Problem**
  - Why does it exist?
  - Identify variables that contribute to the problem.
  - Develop a hypothesis.
- Develop & Implement a Plan**  
(Goal Setting & Planning)
  - What can be done?
  - Carry out the intervention and monitor progress.
- Evaluate Student Response**  
(Progress Monitoring & Outcome Assessments)
  - Did it work?
  - What is next?
  - Monitor and adjust the plan.



Adapted from Tilly, Reshley, and Grimes. Disability Determination in Problem Solving Systems