



Differentiated Instruction: Tiers Without Tears

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Response to Intervention (RTI) Defined:

- “RTI involves regularly assessing proficiency in a skill, determining which students are behind, providing help in small groups for those below benchmark, assessing regularly to monitor progress, and intensifying instruction for students whose progress is insufficient”—Susan Hall, *Create Your Implementation Blueprint*, RTI Action Network.
- 8 core principles of RTI, (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, NASDSE), *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation*, 2006:
 1. We can effectively teach all children.
 2. Intervene early.
 3. Use a multi-tier model of service delivery.
 4. Use a problem-solving model to make decisions within a multi-tier model.
 5. Use scientific, research-based validated intervention/instruction to the extent available.
 6. Monitor student progress to inform instruction.
 7. Use data to make decisions. A data-based decision regarding student response to intervention is central to RTI practices.
 8. Use assessment for 3 different purposes (screening, diagnosis, and progress monitoring).
- Relationship of RTI to special education:
 - IDEA 2004 permits the use of RTI, but doesn't require it.
 - States cannot require districts to use IQ test to identify students as LD.
 - States are encouraged to use RTI as a component of LD identification.
 - High degree of implementation by the states:
 - Spring/Summer 2007 survey of 44 states (*National Implementation of RTI: Research Summary*, Hoover, et al., on NASDSE website):
 - More than one-third of states report that they plan to use RTI, in part, as a replacement or supplement to the LD discrepancy model
 - 90% of states report that statewide training efforts are underway

What is the 3-Tier Reading Model?

- Publication from the University of Texas, UTCRLA
- There are 3 Tiers of instruction available for students, as needed
 - Tier I is core instruction;
 - Tiers II and III, in addition to core for below-benchmark students, and increase in intensity as student's data reflects lack of progress
 - In most states, special education is “Tier IV”—qualification process is different.

Website Resource on RTI:

- RTI Action Network: www.RTInetwork.org

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What level of Success is Possible? (example from a district in Florida)

- 8 Reading First schools in district of 38 elementary schools
- Implemented multi-tiered model of reading intervention K–2, districtwide, starting in 2004
- Improvement over the last 4 years, districtwide, in *DIBELS*[®] scores (18,000 K–3 students)

4-Year Change	% Students at Benchmark	% Students at Intensive
Grade 1	84% to 94%	4% to 1%
Grade 2	74% to 88%	8% to 4%
Grade 3	46% to 75%	26% to 9%

Implement RTI in Phases:

- 3 important RTI structures:
 - 2 scheduling structures (download samples at www.95percentgroup.com):
 - Revise school master schedule to add 30-minute intervention blocks to all implementation grades—stagger across the day.
 - Publish assessment calendar (3 benchmarks and at least 8 progress-monitoring periods per year).
 - Delivery model and organization of materials:
 - Decide on delivery model (“walk-to-intervention” model across the grade level or in classroom).
- Steps in the process of implementing Tiers II and III
 - Examine whether Tier I Core is enabling 70%–80% of students to reach benchmark; if not, improve the Core while implementing Tiers II and III.
 - Select assessment instruments:
 - Curriculum-based measure (CBM) (e.g., *DIBELS* or *AIMSweb*[®]) as universal screener
 - Diagnostic assessments: phonological awareness, phonics, and comprehension measures of skill mastery
 - Progress monitor with diagnostic assessment and/or with CBM, depending on focus skill of intervention group.
 - Data analysis and grouping techniques:
 - Avoid the “stoplight syndrome” of grouping from CBM instructional recommendation levels.
 - Instructional recommendation levels are a weighted average of several skills—can mask details of strengths and weaknesses.
 - Use analysis techniques to study CBM data to ascertain which skills are deficit—points to which diagnostic screener to give.
 - Examine errors to see patterns (download example of Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) Error Pattern Analysis Worksheet from www.95percentgroup.com).

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- Pinpoint skill deficit areas with diagnostic screener.
- Group by deficit skill area:
 - Place students in intervention groups based on diagnostic screener data.
 - Focus instruction on specific skill gaps, particularly for Tier II (Tier III is broader deficits).
- Provide focused intervention instruction:
 - Explicitly model with “I Do, We Do, You Do.”
 - Sequence instruction based on continuums of skills (PA and phonics).
 - Teach skills in a systematic manner that includes instructional routines.
- Monitor progress and engage in team problem-solving process:
 - Decisions about individual students:
 - Team meets to make decisions about students based on data.
 - Move students up to next skill group as mastery is demonstrated.
 - Graph progress monitoring data points for sufficient progress.
 - When rate of improvement is insufficient, use a team problem-solving approach to decide what to try next.
 - Data walls to track progress of grade levels
 - Intervention logs and tracking folders