TOPIC: TWO APPROACHES TO RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

WHAT IS IT?

RTI is an instructional approach that provides early intervening services to struggling students and that can be used to identify students who have learning disabilities. Two common options for implementing RTI are available.
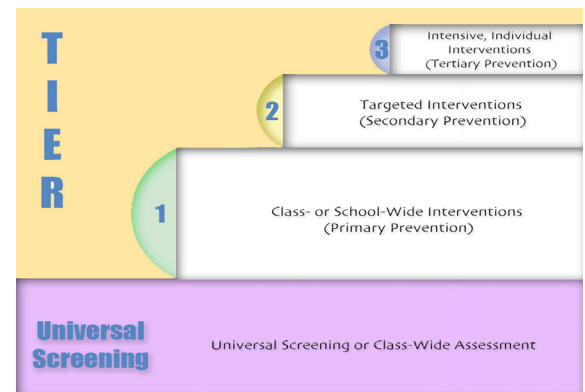
The **problem solving approach** uses interventions, selected by a team, that target each student's individual needs. This approach has been used in schools for more than two decades.	The **standard treatment protocol approach** uses one consistent intervention, selected by the school, that can address multiple students' needs. This approach is supported by a strong research base.

KEY IDEAS

🌸 The components of RTI are very similar for both approaches. These features are highlighted in the diagram to the right:

- Universal screening: Assessment for all students
- Tier 1: Primary prevention for all students
- Tier 2: Secondary prevention that provides more targeted interventions for struggling students
- Tier 3: Tertiary prevention that includes intensive, individualized interventions for students in need of more concentrated support

🌸 Ongoing support and professional development are crucial for both RTI options:

- The quality of the instruction or intervention in the problem solving approach is dependent on the level of team members' skills, knowledge, and training.
- With proper training, paraprofessionals and tutors also can provide interventions in the standard treatment protocol approach, thus increasing the number of trained personnel.

🌸 The table on the following page compares the two approaches. The primary difference occurs in Tier 2.

Comparison of RTI Approaches

	Problem Solving	**Standard Treatment Protocol**
Universal screening	Class-wide assessment/universal screening is administered to identify students who are potentially struggling.	
Tier 1	All students receive high-quality instruction. Frequent progress monitoring is conducted to assess struggling students' performance levels and rates of improvement.	
Tier 2	Students whose progress in Tier 1 is not adequate receive additional support. 1. A team makes instructional decisions based on an individual student's performance. The team identifies the academic problem; determines its cause; and then develops, implements, and evaluates a plan to address the problem. 2. Students are presented with a variety of interventions, based on their unique needs and performance data. 3. Interventions are flexible and individualized to meet a student's needs.	Students whose progress in Tier 1 is not adequate receive additional support. 1. The person delivering the intervention makes instructional decisions following a standard protocol. 2. Students with similar needs are presented with one standard, research-validated intervention. 3. The intervention is delivered in a predetermined format that may address multiple skill sets. This allows for greater quality control (i.e., treatment fidelity is easier to monitor given the ease of implementing a single intervention).
Tier 3	Students whose progress is still insufficient in Tier 2 may receive even more intensive intervention. Depending on a state's or district's policies, some students may qualify for special education services based on their progress monitoring data. In some states or districts, they may receive either an abbreviated or comprehensive evaluation for the identification of a learning disability.	

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Articles

Fuchs, D., Mock, D., Morgan, P.L., & Young, C.L. (2003). Responsiveness to intervention: Definitions, evidence, and implications for the learning disabilities construct. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 18*(3), 157-171.

Marston, D., Muyskens, P., Lau, M., & Canter, A. (2003). Problem-solving model for decision making with high-incidence disabilities: The Minneapolis experience. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 18*(3), 187-200.

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005, June). NJCLD position paper: Responsiveness to intervention and learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 28*(4), 249-260.

Books

Batsche, G., Elliott, J., Graden, J.L., Grimes, J., Kovaleski, J.F., Prasse, D., et al. (2005). *Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

In addition to background and general information on RTI, this handbook includes policy and professional development considerations to help guide personnel in schools, districts, and states as they begin to implement the RTI approach.

Bradley, R., Danielson, L., & Hallahan, D.P. (Eds.). (2002). *Identification of learning disabilities: Research to practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

This book provides in-depth and detailed information on the identification of learning disabilities, including historical perspectives and the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy models, and has several chapters devoted to Response to Intervention.

Online Resources

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, The. (2005). *Responsiveness to intervention in the SLD determination process*. U.S. Department of Education [Online]. Retrieved May 19, 2006, from http://osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/ta_responsiveness_intervention.asp

The article provides an overview of the concepts involved with Response to Intervention (RTI). In addition to introductory explanations, the article provides models and hypothetical examples of how RTI could be implemented in schools. Also important, the article covers the topic of identifying students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) and the role of RTI in that process.

Please visit the IRIS Center's module RTI (Part 1): An Overview (http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01_overview/chalcycle.htm) for further information.