

# Response to Intervention Promises, Possibilities and Potential Problems

IRA - RTI Commission

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# What is Response to Intervention?

- ◆ **New (alternative) process for identifying specific learning disabilities**
- ◆ **Origins - President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002)**
  - **Children with LD should first be considered general education students;**
  - **Special education should embrace a model of prevention as opposed to failure.**

# IDEA (2004) and RTI

“...when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in section 602, a local educational agency shall NOT be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability [P.L. 108-446, 614(b)(6)(A)]

“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...” [P.L. 108-446, 614(b)(6)(B)]

# Important Facts about Law/Regulations

- ◆ What it does NOT include
  - RTI is not named as such
  - Models, programs, approaches (e.g., 3-tier model) intentionally not specified
  - Screening not mandated
- ◆ What it does include
  - Requires data-based documentation of what is done and repeated assessments at reasonable intervals
  - Scientific, research-based interventions

# National Surveys of State and District SPED Directors

- ◆ 100% of 44 responding states are implementing (28) or planning (16) on implementing RTI
- ◆ District respondents reported RTI implementation rose from 44% in 2007 to 60% in 2008
- ◆ 56% of implementing districts indicated RTI is “unified” effort between SPED and gen ed
- ◆ 71% of implementing districts use RTI for ALL students
- ◆ 67% of districts implementing in elementary school; 27% middle school; 16% HS; 61% plan to implement in middle school and 49% in HS

# 2009 IRA Survey

- ◆ 1300 respondents, predominantly teachers and literacy professionals
- ◆ 20% indicated that they did not know if their state mandates a framework or not
- ◆ >50% indicated their districts are “fully implementing”
- ◆ 58% agree “somewhat” or “strongly” that RTI has resulted in improvement in l/l instr and/or lrng

# IRA Survey: RTI Leadership

- ◆ 31% said leadership was shared btw gen and sped (compared to 56% in surveys of sped administrators)
- ◆ 257 (20%) respondents selected “other”
  - Responses indicated a combination of “administration” and “RTI/leadership teams”
  - Many of these indicated limited involvement of literacy professionals

# Special Ed or General Ed?

- ◆ SPED organizations describe RTI as general education initiative
- ◆ Confusion because RTI is authorized in SPED law and SPED funds can be used toward general ed initiatives for students who may be at risk for being identified LD
- ◆ Possible tension between identification and prevention

# Identification vs. Prevention

- ◆ RTI as Identification
  - Measurement problem
  - Emphasizes standardization
  
- ◆ RTI as Prevention
  - Instructional problem
  - Emphasizes responsive teaching

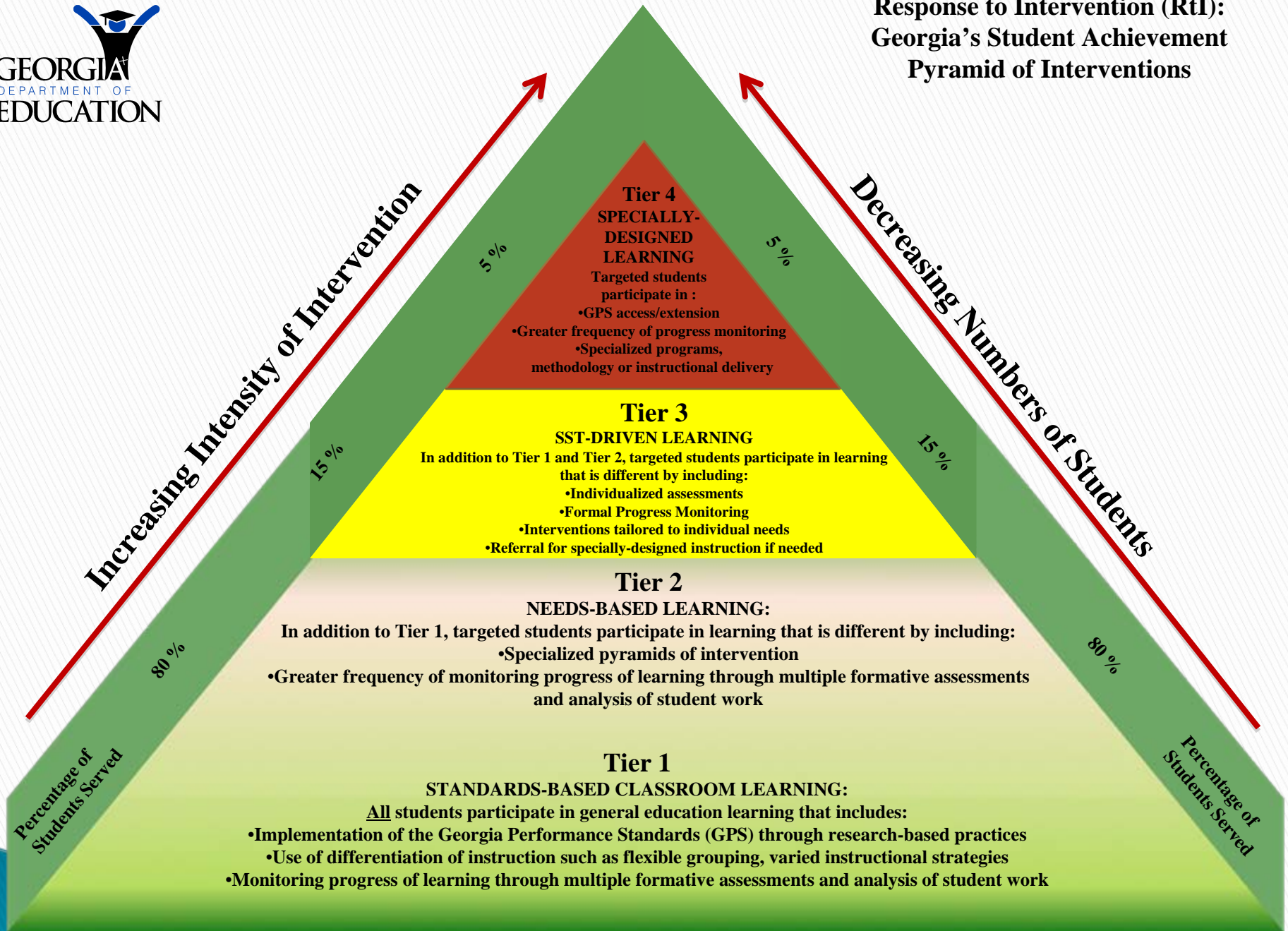
# Examples of RTI Approaches

- ◆ Approaches emphasizing standardization
  - Standard Protocol (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006)
  - Problem-solving (Marston et al., 2003)
- ◆ Approaches emphasizing responsive teaching
  - Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) (Vellutino & Scanlon, 2002)
  - Comprehensive Intervention (CIM) (Dorn, et al., 2006)

# Common RTI model

- ◆ Three tiers of instruction
  - Core curriculum/instruction that addresses needs of all students and all subgroups
  - Supplemental small group instruction for struggling learners
  - Intensive individual interventions for students who have not experienced success
- ◆ Three types of assessment
  - Screening
  - Progress monitoring
  - Diagnosis

**Response to Intervention (RtI):  
Georgia's Student Achievement  
Pyramid of Interventions**



# RTI: Roles & Responsibilities

- ◆ All school personnel need to play a number of important roles in using RTI to identify learners needs and provide needed instruction to all students
- ◆ Roles will require some fundamental changes in the way general education and special education engage in assessment and intervention activities



*New Roles to Response in Intervention: Creating Success for Schools and Children, 2006*

# IRA Perspective (General Ed/Prevention)

- ◆ RTI is a comprehensive, systemic approach to teaching and learning designed to address learning (problems) for *all* students through expert assessment and instruction that is appropriately differentiated and intensified.
- ◆ **Guiding Principles**

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- I. Instruction**
- II. Responsive Teaching and Differentiation**
- III. Assessment**
- IV. Systemic and Comprehensive**
- V. Collaboration**
- VI. Teacher Expertise**

# Instruction, Responsive Teaching, and Differentiation

- ◆ Principle 1--RTI is first and foremost intended to prevent learning problems by optimizing instruction.
- ◆ Principle 2--The RTI process emphasizes increasingly differentiated and intensified instruction/intervention
- ◆ **Join us for Webinar # 3** on Core Instruction: Tuesday, March 10, 2010 at 8 pm
  - Marge Lipson
  - Carol Connor
  - Karen Costello

# Principle 1: Core Classroom Instruction (Pts. 2 & 3)

- ◆ “A successful RTI process begins with the highest quality core instruction in the classroom—that is, instruction that encompasses all areas of language and literacy as part of a coherent curriculum that is developmentally appropriate....”
- ◆ “Evidence shows that effective classroom instruction can reduce substantially the number of students who are inappropriately classified as LD”

(Vellutino et al., 1996/1997)

# Research—Core Instruction

- ◆ Early literacy instruction that is balanced between phonics and more meaningful reading experiences has been shown to be more effective than instruction that focuses on one of these to the exclusion of the other (Mathes et al., 2005; Xue & Meisels, 2004)
- ◆ Reading growth does not proceed in a straight line—linear growth is only likely for relatively low level skills such as speeded word reading (Paris, 2005)

# **Principle 1: Scientific Research-based Instruction (Points 4 & 5)**

- ◆ The success of RTI depends on the classroom teacher's use of research-based practices.
- ◆ Research-based practices must not only provide information about “what works,” but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes.

# Scientific Research-based Instruction (conti).

- ◆ Research evidence frequently represents the effectiveness of an instructional practice on average, which suggests that some students benefited and others did not.
- ◆ Students have different needs and they may not respond similarly, even when research-based instruction occurs.
- ◆ No single approach to instruction or intervention can address the broad and varied goals and needs of all students, especially those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds

# RTI Is Not A “One Size Fits All” Approach



- ◆ None of the intervention programs studied were equally effective for all of the children studied. There may be individual characteristics of children that predispose them to more or less success with a particular program.
- ◆ It's clear we need to move away from a “one-size-fits-all” mentality and apply continuous assessment approaches that evaluate how well an instructional program is working with particular students. (Lyon et al., 2001)

# Principle 1: ELL (Point 2)

- ◆ “Instruction and assessment...must address the needs of all students, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.”
- ◆ **Join us for Webinar # 5** Thursday, April 15, 2010 at 6 pm EST
  - Karen Wixson
  - Janette Klingner
  - Nonie Lesaux

# ELL Research

- ◆ Most ELLs do not demonstrate significant reading difficulties in the primary grades; only a small percentage of ELLs struggle with acquiring accurate and automatic word reading skills (Lesaux, 2006)
- ◆ Yet, when the emphasis shifts from learning to read to reading to learn and text becomes central to the delivery of the curriculum and to overall academic success, they perform poorly on assessments of reading comprehension (Francis et al., 2006)

# ELL Research

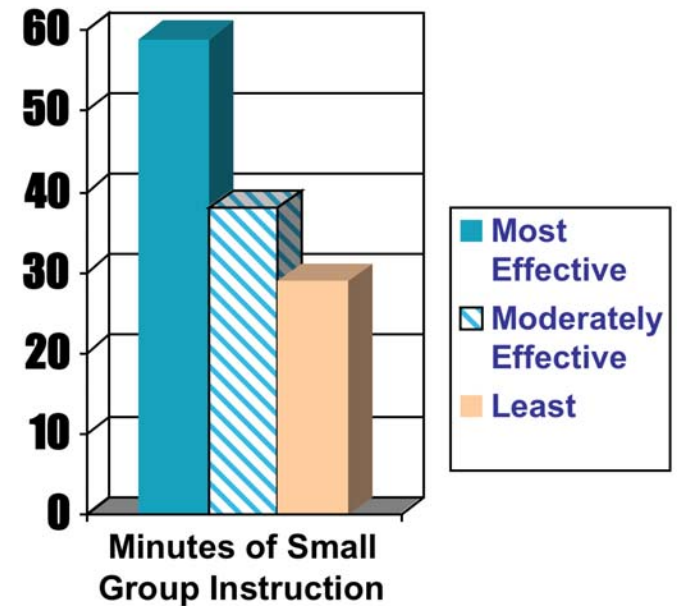
- ◆ Improved oral proficiency in English is not likely to remediate phonological difficulties, so delaying intervention is not advised (Francis et al., 2006)
- ◆ For improving vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, modifications of activities designed for general use (e.g., Guided Reading; Repeated Reading) are proving effective with ELLs (Denton et al., 2004)

# Principle 2 -- Differentiation

- ◆ RTI is centrally about optimizing language and literacy instruction for particular students. This means that differentiated instruction, based on instructionally relevant assessment, is essential.
- ◆ Evidence shows that small group and individualized instruction are effective in reducing the number of students at risk of becoming classified LD ( cf. Scanlon et al. 2005)
- ◆ **Join us for Webinar # 4** on Differentiating Instruction. Tuesday, March 23, 2010 at 8 pm
  - Sheila Valencia and Carol Connor

# Effective Teachers Spend More Time in SMALL Group Instruction

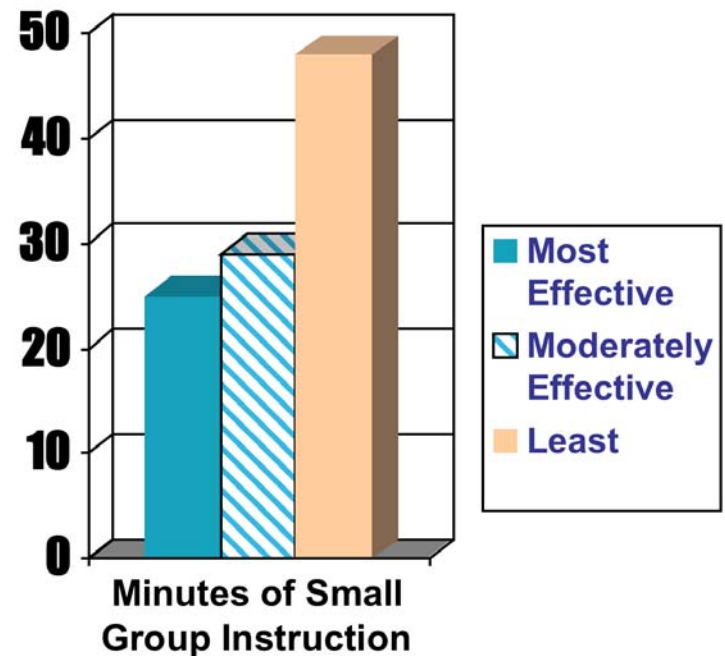
- ◆ Most Effective Teachers  $\approx$  48 min.
- ◆ Moderately Effective Teachers  $\approx$  39 min.
- ◆ Least Effective Teachers  $\approx$  25 min.



*From Effective Schools & Accomplished Teachers, Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, CIERA,*

# Effective Teachers Spend Less Time in WHOLE Group Instruction

- ◆ Most Effective Teachers ≈ 25 min.
- ◆ Moderately Effective Teachers ≈ 29 min.
- ◆ Least Effective Teachers ≈ 48 min.



From *Effective Schools & Accomplished Teachers*,  
Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, CIERA,

# Research—Differentiated Instruction

- ◆ Key Factors in relation to student strengths and weaknesses
  - Code vs. Meaning based
  - Teacher/child managed vs. child managed
  - Change in emphasis/delivery over school year
- ◆ Providing precise amounts and types of instruction over school year and in response to students' changing needs is associated with stronger student reading outcomes
  - (Connor et al., 2009)

## Principle 2: Differentiation (Point 2)

- ◆ “Instructional and materials selection must derive from specific student-teacher interactions and not be constrained by packaged programs.”
- ◆ Years of research demonstrate that student outcomes are more dependent on what teachers do than the programs they use (Nye et al., 2004)—

# Principle 3: Assessment

An RTI approach demands assessment that can *inform instruction meaningfully*

(Point 3):

Multiple purposes for assessment should be clearly identified and appropriate tools and techniques employed. Not all available tools and techniques are appropriate for all purposes.

- ◆ Join us for Webinar #6 on Assessment in Early April: TBA

# Research--Assessment

- ◆ Cloze/Maze tasks of comprehension evaluate comp at word, phrase, and sentence level, but not beyond (Shanahan et al., 1982)
- ◆ For ELLs, text-reading fluency is NOT a reliable predictor of reading comprehension (Crosson & Lesaux, in press)

# Research--Screening

- ◆ Scores from large-scale tests can mask important individual differences that call for dramatically different interventions (Buly & Valencia, 2004)
- ◆ 6 distinctive profiles for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who failed the state reading test
- ◆ More than 50% of the students who failed were **strong** in word identification. They had needs in comprehension, not in phonics.

# Research--Screening

- ◆ Scores on oral reading fluency (WCPM) do not reliably predict comprehension beyond 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (Valencia et al., in press)
- ◆ Approximately 20-40% of grade 2, 4, and 6 students identified as “low risk” on DIBELs scored at or below 50th percentile on a norm-referenced test (NRT)
- ◆ 30% of students in grade 6 who scored “at risk” scored at or above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on NRT

## Grade 4 Profiles

H & T %ile	CWPM	Acc (%)	Rate wpm)	Exp (1-4)	Comp (%)	NRT nce	Dibels
<b>&gt;75</b>	151	89	169	3	58	70	<b>Low risk</b>
	147	99	142	4	25	48	<b>Low risk</b>
<b>50-74</b>	118	94	126	2	33	42	<b>Low risk</b>
	128	93	137	3	100	64	<b>Low risk</b>
<b>25-49</b>	93	93	97	2	92	45	<b>Some risk</b>
	97	96	99	3	33	36	<b>Some risk</b>
<b>0-24</b>	88	94	94	2	92	66	<b>At risk</b>
	45	96	47	1	33	31	<b>At risk</b>

# Research—Progress Monitoring

- ◆ No consistent evidence that frequent indicators offer any advantage over longer-term—at least for predicting who is at risk of longer-term problems and thus selecting for intervention (Jenkins et al., 2007; Schatschneider et al., 2008)
- ◆ Use of frequent indicators (ORF) did not enhance prediction accuracy beyond that of using a single end of year measure—calling into question the idea that growth on these measures can predict ultimate outcomes

# Collaborative, Systemic Approaches

**Principle 4**--RTI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among professionals with relevant expertise. Success also depends on strong and respectful partnerships among professionals, parents, and students.

**Principle 5**--RTI must be part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to assessment and instruction and should provide support for all students (k-12)

- ◆ **Join us for Webinar #2** on Collaborative, Systemic Approaches: Wednesday, February 24 at 8pm EST
  - Marge Lipson, Barbara Ehren, and Barbara Laster

# What Research Says

- ◆ Pairing effective supplementary instruction with appropriate classroom lessons produces better gains than classroom reading alone (Mathes et al., 2005)
- ◆ Consistency in literacy instruction is related to better student outcomes (Mosenthal, Lipson et al., 2004)
- ◆ Although collaboration between intervention and classroom teachers is rare, it is associated with stronger reading outcomes (Borman et al., 2001)

# Principle 6: Expertise

“All students have the right to receive instruction from well-prepared teachers who keep up to date and supplemental instruction from professionals specifically prepared in the areas they are teaching.”

Student success depends on teachers and support personnel who are well prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in a variety of settings.

◆ **Join us for Webinar #7 on Expertise: TBA**

# Research—Teachers' Core Instruction

- ◆ The impact of the teacher is the single most powerful variable in explaining student reading achievement (Nye et al. 2004)
- ◆ Effective teachers
  - Connect lessons to student experiences
  - Foster motivation for learning specific content
  - Help students work toward more complicated understandings
  - Diagnose difficulties in learning
  - Provide a wide array of learning opportunities matched to students needs and interests
  - (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Pressley, 2002)

# Research—Teacher Expertise

- ◆ Effects of effective/ineffective teachers on students reading achievement are cumulative (Bembry et al, 1998)
  - The greater the number of effective teachers students had over 3 years, the higher the students' achievement
  - Students taught by consistently ineffective teachers scored in 29<sup>th</sup> percentile compared with those taught by consistently effective teachers who scored in 70<sup>th</sup> percentile

# Research—Intervention Teachers

- ◆ Research on the effects that para-professionals have on student achievement is, at best, mixed (Allington, 2009)
- ◆ Paraprofessionals can enhance student reading achievement with substantial PD and with lessons developed and supervised by reading professionals
- ◆ However, the gains are still smaller than those produced by credentialed reading professionals



# MEETING THE CHALLENGE

## **(Reading) Teachers will need to be:**

- ◆ Teachers and Interventionists in the RTI process
- ◆ Partners with other professionals on the team
- ◆ Working systemically to:
  - ensure the comprehensiveness and coherence of core instruction,
  - share responsibility for meeting the needs of all learners,
  - make decisions about how instructional approaches are selected, designed, implemented,
  - assess and evaluate student performance and progress,
  - rethink how students are identified for specialized instruction.

# **Using the Principles and the Research to Improve Literacy Instruction and Achievement**

# Using the Principles

- ◆ Start with good first (core) instruction
  - Developmentally appropriate
  - Accessible to all students
  - Use evidence-based practices, but examine the impact on specific students
- ◆ Use data to inform instruction and engage in data-based conversations with colleagues to make decisions
  - Ensure the meaningfulness of the data
  - Try to avoid both too little and too much assessment
- ◆ Provide responsive teaching and optimize instruction for particular students by differentiating
- ◆ Work systemically
  - Ensure consistency and coherence
  - Collaborate

# Possible RTI Approach

