

WEBINAR SERIES

Guiding Principles: RTI Requires
Systemic, Comprehensive
Approaches in Collaborative
Contexts



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IRA Guidelines on RTI Principles #4 and 5

- RTI must be part of a **comprehensive, systemic approach** to language and literacy assessment and instruction that supports all preK-12 students and teachers.
- RTI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive **collaboration** among professionals with relevant expertise in language and literacy. Success also depends on strong and respectful partnerships among professionals, parents, and students.



Systemic Approaches

- RTI needs to be integrated within the context of a **coherent and consistent language and literacy curriculum** that guides **comprehensive instruction for all students**. Core instruction, indeed all instruction, must be continuously improved to increase its efficacy and mitigate the need for specialized interventions
- Join us for Webinar #3 on Core Instruction on Wednesday, March 10 at 8 pm EST

RTI IS NOT A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” APPROACH

Policy (and subsequent regulatory clarification) says that states and districts have the flexibility to establish models that reflect their own community's unique situation and available resources.



Systemic Approaches

- Specific approaches to RTI need to be appropriate for the particular school/district culture and take into account leadership, expertise, the diversity of the student population, and the available resources. Schools and districts should adopt an approach that best matches their needs and resources while still accomplishing the overall goals of RTI.

Taking Stock

- What are we trying to do/improve?
- What have we already begun/tried/initiated?
- What do teachers think is important about these efforts?
 - Where have they placed their energies?
 - What is working?

Assess the building blocks that already in place

- Practices
- Expertise
- Beliefs



Avoid Random Acts of School Improvement

- Identify your vision
- Create a community of professionals committed to that vision
- Make the linkages between and among the parts VERY explicit
- Be prepared to change/adapt

Situate RTI within the School Improvement Process

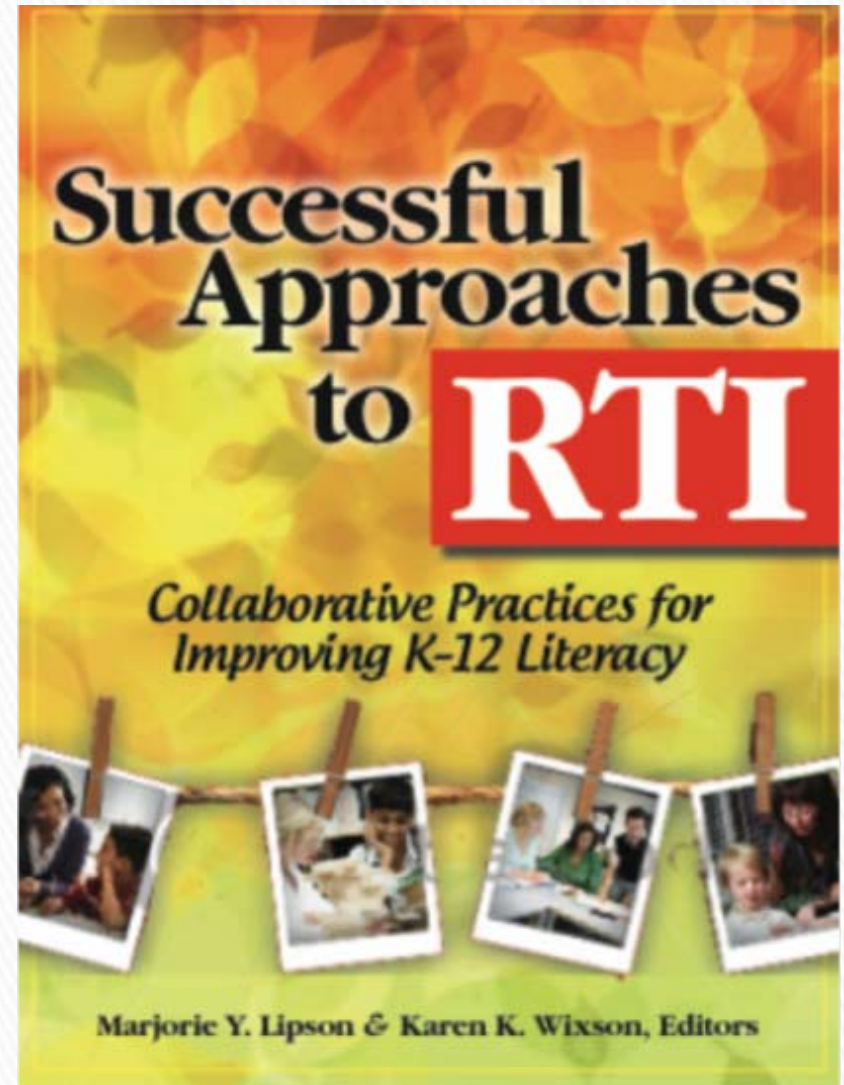
- Don't think of RTI as an add on
 - Involve all stakeholders
 - Make goals and implementation strategies for RTI part of the school improvement plan
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Unifying Initiatives with RTI

- How do these efforts fit together?
- Eliminate/forget the jargon
- How will the knowledge/skills acquired in (an) earlier initiative be used in new efforts?
- Identify the common and/or complementary aspects of these efforts and **make them visible to everyone**

“GETTING STARTED”

- Take time and take care
- If you have already “started” – do you need to “re-start”?



Getting Started with RTI

1. Identify a collaborative leadership team

- Broad representation from district and school-level:
 - Administrators: principals; coordinators and experts in curriculum, instruction, assessment;
 - Special education administrators and leaders;
 - Title I, Reading Recovery and/or other literacy experts;
 - Allied professionals (SLP, etc.)
- Additional members can and should be added once there is a consensus about moving forward
 - Representative teacher leaders,
 - Parent advocates, etc.

Getting Started with RTI (continued)

2. Engage in self-assessment

- Consider Rtl from a systemic perspective
- Determine the need for change
 - Evaluate student performance, etc. Display and analyze data to determine strengths, areas for growth
 - Examine classroom literacy instruction/program
 - Consider what interventions are presently available
 - Identify what roles and responsibilities are required and determine present levels of expertise and commitment
- Develop vision for the expected outcomes
 - Study Rtl requirements (the law)
 - Become acquainted with the range of options and approaches
 - Establish goals
- (As needed) build collaborative partnerships

Getting Started with RTI (continued)

3. Develop action plan for RTI implementation

- Identify existing initiatives
 - What can/should be incorporated into any systemic plan for action?
 - What assets can you draw on?
- Identify and address concerns and barriers for implementation **in your context**
- Identify what will be required:
 - Resources, professional development, materials, assessment tools, infrastructure and/technology
 - Include time for planning and collaborating in the schedule
- Establish a timeline

Getting Started with RTI (continued)

4. Making Decisions

- Who will be involved in shaping interventions and in making decisions about students' response to instruction
- Identify the assessment system/components and create a set of guidelines for decision-making that include a focus on both prevention and identification
- Determine what professional development will be required for classroom teachers, literacy specialists, and special educators
- Establish benchmarks for monitoring students progress
- Decide how data will be collected, displayed, and discussed
- Establish procedures for making decisions about students movement from one level of support to another



Systemic Approaches

- Approaches to RTI must be sensitive to developmental differences in language and literacy among students at different ages and grades.
- Although many prevailing approaches to RTI focus on the early elementary grades, it is essential for teachers and support personnel at middle and secondary levels to provide their students with the language and literacy instruction they need to succeed in school and beyond.

**Join us for Webinar on RTI at the Secondary Level:
June 2 at 8pm EST**



Systemic Approaches

- A systemic approach to language and literacy learning within an RTI framework requires the **active participation and genuine collaboration of many professionals** including classroom teachers, reading specialists/literacy coaches, special educators, and school psychologists.

Collaborating Across Boundaries

- Distinct funding processes
 - Diverse regulatory systems
 - Different (perceived) missions
 - Differentiated professional communities
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IRA Guidelines on RTI Principles # 5


- “RTI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive **collaboration** among professionals with relevant expertise in language and literacy. Success also depends on strong and respectful partnerships among professionals, parents, and students.”



Collaboration

- Collaboration should be focused on the available evidence about the needs of students struggling in language and literacy.
- School-level decision-making teams (e.g. intervention teams, problem-solving teams, RTI teams) should include members with relevant expertise in language and literacy including second language learning.

Big Ideas

- Each professional has a unique set of contributions based on professional preparation and experience.
 - Different perspectives are useful in addressing complex problems.
 - Professionals should provide “value added” to the RTI initiative and should be deployed judiciously.
 - Collaboration is a key in designing and implementing roles wisely.
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Collaboration

- Reading Specialists/Literacy Coaches should provide leadership in every aspect of an RTI process--planning, assessment, provision of more intensified instruction and support, and making decisions about next steps.
- These individuals must embody the knowledge, skills, and dispositions detailed for Reading Specialists in the IRA Standards (2003, 2010).



Collaboration


- Collaboration should increase, not reduce, the **coherence** of the instructional offerings experienced by struggling readers. There must be **congruence** between core language and literacy instruction and interventions.
- This requires a **shared vision** and common goals for language and literacy instruction and assessment, adequate **time** for communication and coordinated **planning** among general educator and specialist teachers, and **integrated professional development**.

Collaborations

- Involving parents and students and engaging them in a collaborative manner is critical to successful implementation. Initiating and strengthening collaborations among school, home, and communities, particularly in urban and rural areas, provides the basis for support and reinforcement of students' learning.



OPPORTUNITIES IN RTI

- All students receive effective reading instruction in the general classroom
 - Reading teachers collaborate in promoting best practice reading instruction
 - School-wide reform based on good reading instruction
 - Move to close achievement gap
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Successful Schools Depend on A Responsive and Responsible School Community

- Everyone is working toward a shared vision and faculty have common goals(s)
- Open and productive communication and collaboration among faculty
- Genuine and mutual respect among staff
- Teachers believe that all children can learn
- Data-driven communication
- Teachers have autonomy in classroom decisions-making
- Responsive to community needs

Source: Lipson et al., 2004; Mosenthel et al., 2004

Language is the Linchpin

- All stakeholders keep in mind the goal: Students who are fluent and independent in reading, writing, speaking and listening...

- Within your school/work group, can you come to agree on some shared language even if you approach literacy from different philosophical perspectives?
 - *Brainstorm Ideas:* **What terms come to mind when you think of RTI?**
 - *Work toward shared understanding:* **What terms might get in the way of our collaborating?**
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Our Language Collaboration

(Ehren, B., Laster, B., & Watts-Taffe, S. (2009))

- Use this tool to start the conversation about terms that require shared understanding among professionals engaged in RTI.
- The terms provided are ones likely to have different meanings for different people; however this tool will be most effective if the **collaborators themselves generate the terms to discuss**---terms that at least one collaborator feels uncomfortable with or wants clarified.

Our Language Collaboration

(Ehren, B., Laster, B., & Watts-Taffe, S., 2009)


Terms	What is the understanding of each collaborator regarding the meaning of this term?	What is our agreed upon meaning?*
Response to Intervention		
Core Curriculum		
Intervention		
[Instructional] Supports		
Fidelity		

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

- “Educators are committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve.
- PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.”

—*DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2006)*

Potential Problems and Pitfalls

- Insufficient Available Expertise
 - Misunderstandings among Collaborative Partners
 - Implementation Problems
 - There is no historical legacy of collaboration
 - Scheduling time to collaborate can be a real challenge
 - Preparing people to engage in collaborative consultation may be an even greater one
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**Systemic
and
Comprehensive**



RTI Requires Top-Down and Bottom-Up Action



- Districts have to walk the line between providing a cohesive framework for RTI, including support for schools and allowing flexibility to address individual school needs.
- Schools can't wait for districts to do the work. They have to examine their assets and use them as building blocks to move forward.

Comprehensive, Aligned Instructional System

- **Align Instructional Systems with Systems to Support Instruction**
 - Instructional Systems include standards, strategies, curriculum, assessment & data, professional development, specialized instructional programs
 - Support Systems include accountability, planning, personnel, use of funds, special programs, etc.
- **Align District-level Systems with Site-level Systems**
 - Balance common and cohesive systems with flexibility at the school level.

See McPeak & Trygg, 2007 (p. 5)

http://www.stupski.org/documents/Secondary_Literacy_Instruction_Intervention_Guide.pdf

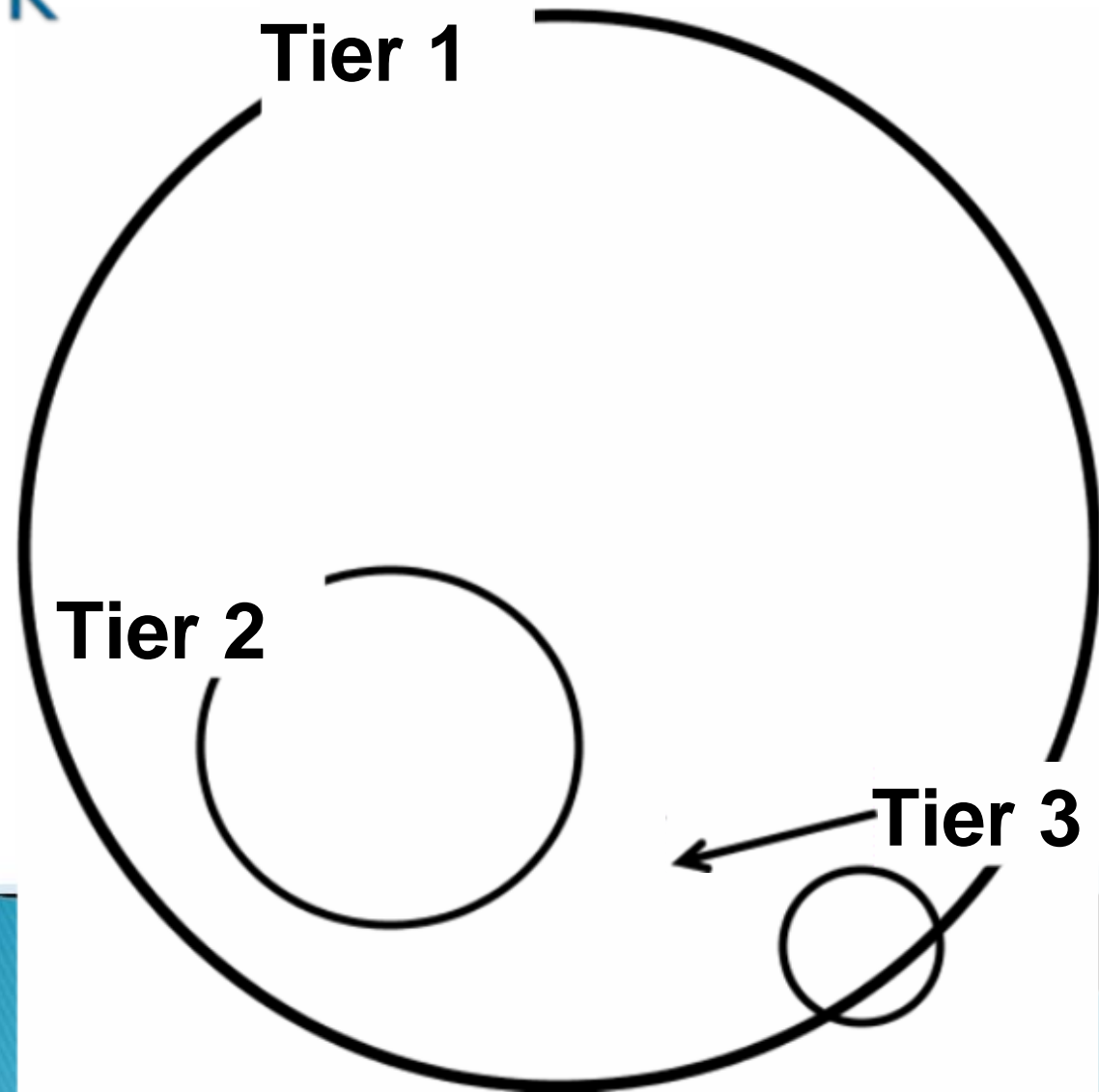
RTI: A Schoolwide Effort

- What makes RTI a focused initiative is the **systematization** of good assessment and instructional practices, not just pockets of excellence within a school.

RTI Has to Involve Integration of Tiers

- Development of individual tiers cannot be the only focus.
- How tiers are interrelated and how students move among tiers are important considerations.

Alternative View of a Three-Tiered Framework



Ehren, Ehren & Proly (2009)

RTI is Dependent on New and Expanded Roles of Professionals


- RTI will require changes in the ways that general, compensatory and special education professionals engage in assessment and intervention to provide effective instruction for all students.
- Support personnel may serve in different ways.




Roles and Responsibilities

- What **roles and responsibilities** will various key personnel play?
 - The classroom teacher
 - The reading specialist
 - The special education teacher
 - The ELL teacher
 - The speech-language pathologist
 - The school psychologist
 - The administrator(s)

RTI IS NOT “OWNED” BY ANY ONE PROFESSION

- RTI works across general and special education for an integrated system guided by student data.
 - Research based instruction and intervention by qualified personnel address student’s individual difficulties.
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Roles and Responsibilities

- **Systemic Issues**
 - How does RTI mesh with our scope of work?
 - How do RTI related activities fit with our existing schedules?
 - Where do we find the time?
 - What resources will be provided?
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RTI AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS

- Assess student responses to good first instruction within the classroom.
- Adapt instruction within the core reading program as opposed to creating totally new programs.
- Use multiple strategies to promote learning.

**Differentiated
Instruction**

In Meeting the Challenge, Reading Teachers Will:

- Adopt a systemic approach to
 - Instruction
 - How core instruction is selected, designed, and implemented
 - How student performance is assessed
 - How students are identified for specialized
 - How decisions are made

Special Partnerships: Language-Focused Professionals

- **Reading Specialists**
- **Speech-Language Pathologists**
- **Teachers of English Language Learners**
- A special partnership based on mutual understanding of the nature of language and literacy
- Unique contributions blended on behalf of students, especially those who struggle



Systemic Approaches

- Given the critical role that language development plays in literacy learning, professionals with specialized language-related expertise such as speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and teachers of English language learners may be particularly helpful in addressing students' language difficulties.

Unique Contributions

Reading Specialists	Speech-Language Pathologists	ELL Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of scope and sequence of literacy development• Analysis of systemic areas of student need• Identification of appropriate instructional strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of language underpinnings of literacy skills and strategies• Analysis of language difficulties encountered by many struggling readers and writers• Scaffolded instruction based on identification of language strengths and areas of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of second language features affecting reading and writing acquisition• Analysis of English language acquisition• Second language acquisition techniques across literacy processes



Systemic Approaches

- On-going and embedded professional development is necessary for all educators involved in the RTI process. Professional development should be context-specific and provided by professional developers with appropriate preparation and skill to support school and district personnel.
- Professional expertise is essential to the improvement of language and literacy learning in general as well as within the context of RTI

Join us for Webinar #7 on Expertise:
May 18 at 8pm

Putting Systems in Place Takes Time and Effort

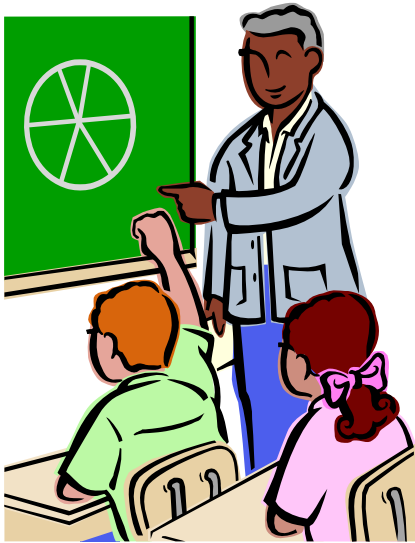
- “Rome wasn’t built in a day”
- “You can’t hurry love”

Understand Phases of Adoption

- Exploration
- Planning
- Implementation
- Sustained Use



The Purpose of RTI and The Measure of Its Success



Students get what they need when they need it.



Students get what they need when they need it.

Students get what they need when they need it.

References
IRA Webinar Series
#2: Systemic and Collaborative Approaches

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