

**Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention (RtI):  
Strategies to Maximize Student Progress**

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If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem.  
-Krishnamurti

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**Legislative Impact**

- Greatest impact of NCLB is on students with disabilities
  - SWD category moves special education students to same standard as gen ed
- Greatest impact of IDEIA 2004 is on general education
  - Requirements for early intervention and response to intervention impact general education first

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## Is It All About Reading? Yes!

- 52% of IDEA \$\$ go to LD Programs
- 70% +/- of special education “activities” (e.g., evaluations, staffings, IEPs) related to LD cases
- 94% of students in LD because of reading/language arts
- 46% of IDEA \$\$ go to improve reading
- Changes in LD Rules will affect the vast majority of special education “activities”

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## Implications

- Poor/lack of instruction must be ruled out
- Curricular access blocked by any of the following must be addressed
  - Attendance
  - Health
  - Mobility
- Sufficient exposure to and focus on the curriculum must occur
- Frequent, repeated assessment must be conducted

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## So What Is Special Education-Really?

- Characteristics AND Need (IDEA 04)
- Instructional and Related Services Necessary to Profit from Education
- Supplements General Education
  - Note: Does not supplant-particularly LD
  - “Unified” system of Education
- Funds (really??) Instructional and Related Services When Those Reach a Certain Level of Intensity
- What is “Special?” Intensity and Focus

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## Problem Solving

- A process that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to develop and evaluate intervention plans that improve significantly the school performance of students

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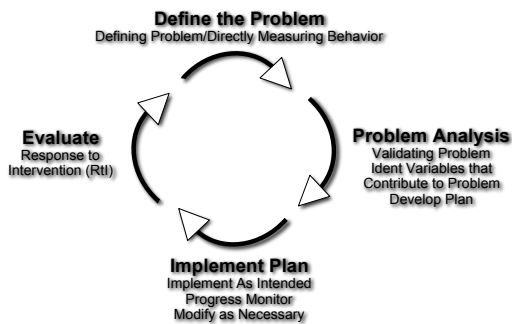
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## Problem Solving Process



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## Response to Intervention: How Well Are We Doing?

- A systematic and data-based method for determining the degree to which a student has responded to intervention.
- Determined solely through analyzing data
- Services should intensify for a student as the student response to intervention is below expectations.
- When the intensity of services exceed significantly those available through general education, then a student should be considered for special education funding.

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### Response to Intervention: How Well Are We Doing?

- What do we do when a student has been “placed” in special education but the student’s rate of progress has not changed significantly?
- This has significant implications for special education re-evaluations under the Rtl model.

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### Problem Solving

- Can be applied to the student, classroom, building, district, and problem levels
  - *Student*-academic and/or behavior problem
  - *Classroom*- discipline, returning homework
  - *Building*- bullying, attendance
  - *District*- over-/under-representation
  - *Problem*- problem common to students in building

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### Problem-Solving: What It Is and Is Not

- What it is...
  - A process designed to maximize student achievement
  - A method focused on outcomes
  - A method to ensure accountability and intervention evaluation
  - It is all about student progress, regardless of where or who that student is
- What it is not...
  - A way to avoid special education placements
  - A less expensive way of schooling

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## What Are the Barriers?

- It's a different way of doing business for some.
- It requires an expanded set of skills.
- Interventions are integrated, not done by team members or special educators only
- Student progress is ALL that matters, not a safe haven.
- It can focus on OUR weaknesses rather than the students.
- It requires good collaboration, communication and a common commitment to student success.

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## What Are the Benefits?

- Enhanced Student Performance
- Accountability
- Greater staff involvement
- Greater parent involvement
- Greater student involvement

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## Discrepancy/Child Study vs Problem Solving

- Focus on interventions (not test scores)
  - Low and high ability students respond equally well to phonemic awareness and phonics interventions.
- Assessment linked to developing and monitoring the effectiveness of interventions (not to diagnoses or categories)
- Balance between needs/resources (not strictly to eligibility)
- Change process (not a "fix")
- Student outcome-based, not placement-based (What students DO is important, not what students are CALLED)

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## Research and PSM/RtI

RtI and Traditional Discrepancy Comparison  
Amanda VanDenHeyden (2005)

	QUALIFY			Total
	Yes	No	Pending	
Poor RtI-Refer	15	2	4	21
Good RtI-Do Not Refer	9	15	1	25
Total	24	17	5	46

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## RtI: The Conceptual Model

- Integrate with Core Instructional Programs and Activities in the District
  - Reading First, Early Intervention, Positive Behavior Support
- 3-4 Tiered Model of Service Delivery and Decision-Making
  - "Universal"--What all students get
  - "Supplemental"--additional focus and intensity
  - "Intensive"--modifying instructional strategies
  - "Extraordinary"-- highly specialized methods
- Problem-Solving
  - Can occur at any level
  - Increases in intensity across levels

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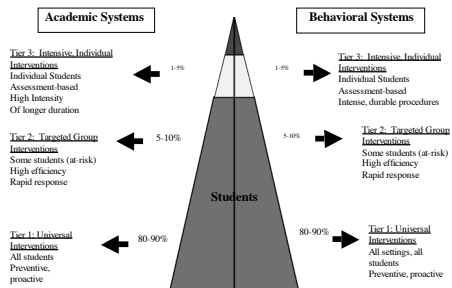
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### Three Tiered Model of School Supports




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### Integrating Problem-Solving into the Tiered Delivery System

- High probability hypotheses that address poor performance must be built into the tiers.
- Standard interventions that address these hypothesis must be available in all general education settings
- Progress monitoring methods must be incorporated into general education

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### Tiers or Levels

- Tier One- Examining “Universal” Interventions
- Questions:
  - How is this student doing compared to other students? *GAP analysis*
  - What percent of other students are achieving district benchmarks? *Effectiveness of instruction*
- Hypotheses
  - Ho: Has this student been exposed to an effective learning environment?
  - Ho: Has this student had access to an effective learning environment?

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### Tiers or Levels

- Tier One- Examining “Universal” Interventions
- Assessment:
  - AYP Data
  - State-wide assessments
  - District-wide assessments
  - Attendance data
  - Health data
- Interventions:
  - Improve quality of instruction to all students
  - Improve attendance

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### Tier 1: Example A

- 82% of Caucasian Students are achieving AYP in reading
- 20% of African American Students are achieving AYP in reading
- African American student is referred for “LD” for a “reading problem”
- Question: Is this student in an “effective instructional environment?”

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### Tier 1: Example B

- 85% of students in a 4th grade are achieving AYP
- Referred student has been in the school for 4 years and is 2 years below benchmark expectation
- Referred student has been absent an average of 55 days in the past 2 years.
- Question: Has this student been exposed to “effective instruction?”

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### Tier 1: Example C

- 90% of 3rd grade students are achieving AYP
- Referred student has been in this school since Kgn, has excellent attendance, no significant health history and has received a variety of interventions in reading
- Referred student performance is 50% of peers in reading and at grade level in math
- Question: Has this student been exposed to an “effective learning environment?”

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## Tiers or Levels

- Tier Two- Examining “Supplemental” Interventions
- Hypotheses:
  - Ho: Student requires additional time for direct instruction
  - Ho: Focus of the curriculum must narrow
- Assessment:
  - DIBELS, CBM, district assessments
- Interventions:
  - Increase AET (90-120-180)  
e.g., K-3 Academic Support Plan
  - Narrow focus to fewer, barrier skills
  - District Supplemental Curriculum

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## Characteristics of Tier 2 Interventions

- Available in general education settings
- Opportunity to increase exposure (academic engaged time) to curriculum
- Opportunity to narrow focus of the curriculum
- Sufficient time for interventions to have an effect (10-30 weeks)
- Often are “standardized” supplemental curriculum protocols

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## Tier 2: What is a “Good” Response to Intervention?

- Good Response
  - Gap is closing
  - Can extrapolate point at which target student will “come in range” of peers--even if this is long range
- Questionable Response
  - Rate at which gap is widening slows considerably, but gap is still widening
  - Gap stops widening but closure does not occur
- Poor Response
  - Gap continues to widen with no change in rate.

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## Tiers or Levels

- Tier Three: Examining “Intensive” Interventions
- Hypotheses: Focus on child-specific issues
- Assessment:
  - DIBELS, CBE, Diagnostic Assessments
- Interventions:
  - Address verified hypotheses

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## Characteristics of Tier 3 Interventions

- Developed from individualized student problem-solving
- Assumption is that more of the “problem” lies within the student
- Goal is to find successful interventions first
- Based on “intensity” of the interventions required for student success, determination is made about eligibility for special education.
- Should comprise 4-5% of student population
- Criteria for “Good” RtI is same as Tier 2

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<b>Example of Tier Level Interventions</b>			
<b>Reading</b>			
	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
Time	90	120	180
Curricular Focus	5 areas	Less than 5	2 or less
Curricular Breadth	Core	Core + Supplemental	Core + Supplemental + Intensive
Frequency of Progress Monitoring	Yearly or greater	Monthly or greater	Weekly

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### How Do We Increase Resources?

- TIME in and FOCUS of the curriculum
- Focused Reading Interventions
  - K-3 Academic Support Plan
  - Middle School Rigorous Reading Requirements
  - Intensive Accelerated Classroom
- Reading First
- Early Intervention
  - DIBELS Screening
- Positive Behavior Support
- After School Programs
- Parent Involvement
- Professional Development for Teachers

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### Early Intervention

- School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS)
  - ESI-K
  - DIBELS
- Clearly Defined Developmental Standards for 3-5
- All Kindergarten Students screened with DIBELS in first 21 days of school

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2004 - 05  
Florida School Readiness Uniform  
Screening System Results  
ESI-K: Students with Valid Scores  
(N=175,806)



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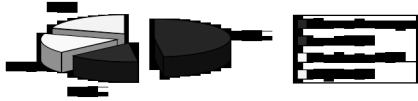
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**2004 - 05  
Florida School Readiness Uniform Screening  
System Results  
DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency: Students with Valid  
Scores  
(N=175,023)**




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**2004 - 05  
Florida School Readiness Uniform Screening  
System Results  
2004 DIBELS Initial Sounds Fluency: Students with  
Valid Scores  
(N=174,913)**




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**Rtl Format in Kindergarten**

- Identify 40% at moderate/high risk
- Re-assess 1 month later
  - Did levels of risk change?
- Re-assess 1 month later (November)
  - Did levels of risk change?
- Identify moderate/high risk students
- Increase AET
- Re-assess 1 month later
- Increase focus and intensity
- Continue progress monitoring
- Moderate/high risk at end of year
  - Use information to plan first grade intervention process
  - AIP development
  - Methods for significantly increased time and focus

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**Personnel Critical to Successful Implementation**

- District-Level Leaders
- Building Leaders
- Facilitator
- Teachers/Student Services
- Parents
- Students

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Where all think alike, no one thinks very much.  
-Walter Lippman

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**Role of District Leaders**

- Give “permission” for model
- Provide a vision for outcome-based service delivery
- Reinforce effective practices
- Expect accountability
- Provide tangible support for effort
  - Training
  - Coaching
  - Technology
  - Policies

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### **Role of the Principal**

- Sets vision for problem-solving process
- Supports development of expectations
- Responsible for allocation of resources
- Facilitates priority setting
- Ensures follow-up
- Supports program evaluation
- Monitors staff support/climate

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### **Role of the Facilitator**

- Ensures pre-meeting preparation
- Reviews steps in process and desired outcomes
- Facilitates movement through steps
- Facilitates consensus building
- Sets follow-up schedule/communication
- Creates evaluation criteria/protocol
- Ensures parent involvement

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### **Role of Participants**

- Review Request for Assistance forms prior to meeting
- Complete individual problem-solving
- Attitude of consensus building
- Understand data
- Research interventions for problem area

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### **Role of Parent**

- Review Request for Assistance form prior to meeting
- Complete individual problem solving
- Prioritize concerns
- Attitude of consensus building

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### **Student Involvement**

- Increases motivation of student
- Reduces teacher load
- Teaches self-responsibility

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### **Staff Support**

- Risk-free or risky environment?
- Expectations may be most important factor
- “Alternative” not “Less”

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## What is a “Team”? Facilitator’s Vision

- Agreement through CONSENSUS
- We agree to “try and see”
- No one person is an expert-a show maker or a show stopper
- People stay focused on common goal-Development of Effective Interventions
- Interpersonal conflicts do not affect outcome
- This is about “the student”
- We are seeking an significant improvement-not a cure
- Resources must be managed well
- Primary resource is “time”

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## Steps in the Problem- Solving Process

1. Identify replacement behavior
2. Determine expectation level
3. Develop hypotheses( brainstorming)
4. Develop predictions/assessment
5. Develop interventions in those areas for which data are available and hypotheses verified
6. Collect data for hypotheses not verified
7. Follow-up schedule and data sharing

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## The Case of Carlos

- Carlos is a 9 year old, 3rd grade student. He was retained in 3rd grade after achieving a Level 1 in reading on the FCAT. Carlos is bilingual, is the oldest of 6 children, and reads Spanish at the same level as English (beginning 2nd grade level). His fluency rate is 40 wpm and that of his peers is 80 wpm. His parents speak only Spanish. His teacher states that in the past 2 months, Carlos does not participate, completes little or no written work and has significant absences. His teacher wants Carlos to participate in verbal activities (reading, group instruction), improve his reading fluency and to complete 70% of his written assignments.

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**Facilitating the Process:  
Pre-Meeting**

- Review teacher request materials
- Ensure duplication and dissemination of materials-1week prior to meeting date
- Review upcoming process with teacher-answer questions
- Review data sources with teacher
- Select invitees
- Prepare for meeting

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**Facilitating the Meeting**

- Introductions
- Review Steps in the Process
- Re-State Vision/Purpose of Meeting
- Problem Identification
- Problem Analysis
- Plan Development
- Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation
- Follow-up

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**Replacement Behaviors**

- State specifically what you want the student to do
- Example: Be able to sound out the vowel sounds in CVCC words
- Example: Remain on-task for 7 minutes
- Example: Use words instead of fists when teased

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## Priority Setting

- Prioritize multiple replacement behaviors
- Criterion for prioritization- academic/behavioral/social stability
- Consensus

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## Setting Expectations- 4 Steps

- Current Level of Functioning
- Desired Level of Functioning
- First Intermediate Step
- Consensus

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## Expectations Example

- Third Grade 3.0
- Working at Mid-First Grade Level 1.5
- 1.5 years behind
- Rate of Progress
- .5/year
- Intervention Doubles Progress
- 1.0/year
- In three years (6th grade), student will be at.....
- 4.5
- How far behind?
- 1.5!!!
- Who's HAPPY with this one?

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**What Would We Want to Know/Do  
First?**

**Hint: Tier 1/Tier 2**

- Determine if the student was in an “effective” learning environment.
- Determine if there had been interrupted access to the curriculum (e.g., absences)
- Increase time and focus in weak areas.
- Monitor progress frequently and track rate of improvement.

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**Problem Analysis**

- Why is problem occurring? PBS link.
- Facilitate Problem Analysis
  - Skill vs performance
  - Hypotheses: Curriculum/Teacher/Peers/Classroom Env/Home-Community
  - Which ones supported by data?
  - Prioritize

Note: Specific Hypotheses Important-must lead to interventions.  
Reinforce data link

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The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.  
-Linus Pauling

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## Hypotheses

- Reasons why student is not able to do DESIRED behavior
- Categories: child, peers, teacher, curriculum, school env, home env
- Example: Carlos is not able to attend to task for 7 minutes because he lacks the private speech for self control.
- Example: Carlos is not able to attend to task for 7 minutes because his independent level is below the needed instructional level for the task.

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## Hypotheses

- Child
  - These are internal to child
  - Cognitive skills, social skills, academic skills, beliefs, attitudes, values, developmental issues

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## Hypotheses

- Peers
  - Peer pressure
  - Peer reinforcement/punishment
  - Peer beliefs, values
  - Bullying

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## Hypotheses

- Teacher
  - Supervision
  - Teaching style
  - Discipline style
  - Beliefs about child, family, etc.
  - Movement
  - Teacher Bx: fatigue, etc.

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## Hypotheses

- Curriculum
  - Too easy
  - Too difficult
  - Irrelevant
  - Format issues: cloze, matching, writing, fill in the blank, etc.

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## Hypotheses

- School/Classroom Environment
  - Seating
  - Noise
  - Movement
  - Rules
  - Schedule, or lack of one

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## Hypotheses

- Family/Home
  - Beliefs about school, levels of support
  - Values regarding behavior, goals
  - Parenting style
  - Family stress
  - Marital stress
  - Etc.

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## Assessment: How Do We Confirm Hypothesis?

- Review
- Interview
- Observe-progress monitoring
- Test-progress monitoring
- Self- monitoring, rating

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## Resources for Interventions

- TIME must be considered first
  - 330 minutes/day
  - 1650 minutes/week
  - This is your bank account to spend
  - Supplement, do not supplant
  - Fixed bank account --something has to give
  - Academic Engaged Time (AET)-predicts achievement better than ANY other factor
- IMMEDIATE RELIEF (PROXIMAL) for pressing/crisis needs
  - Increase supervision
  - Lower difficulty level of the task

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## Resources Con'd

- CORE interventions first
  - Increase focus
  - Increase intensity
  - More rehearsal
- SUPPLEMENTAL interventions next
  - Use of technology-computer assisted
  - Different method of instruction
  - Modifying core
- INTENSIVE interventions
  - Combination of time, focus, method
  - Direct tutoring, social skills training, anger control training
- EXTRAORDINARY interventions
  - Unique that will require special setting or equipment

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## Allocation of Resources

- Cannot do something different the same way
- Student- or problem-based problem solving
- Academic engaged time criterion
- All or some of the available resources

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