Center on Teaching and Learning

Moving Research into Classrooms:

English Language Learners and RTI

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Overview

- Rationale
- Considerations at each tier
- Conclusion

The Promise: RTI

- Response to intervention (RTI) is the degree to which a student who has been identified as at-risk for academic or behavior problems by screening measures has benefited from intervention designed to reduce risk.

- Determining RTI requires:

  - Assessing students to determine risk
  - Providing intervention
  - On-going progress monitoring to ascertain response
  - Begins when children enter school

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The Promise

- Preventive
- Addresses the socio-cultural and instructional pieces of the exclusionary clause
  - cultural, social, and economic conditions; and inadequate instructional opportunities.

through the use of multi-tiered models and assessment.

In a multi-tier model instruction

- Begins early
- Includes instructional procedures that are responsive to students' needs
- Requires data on student performance
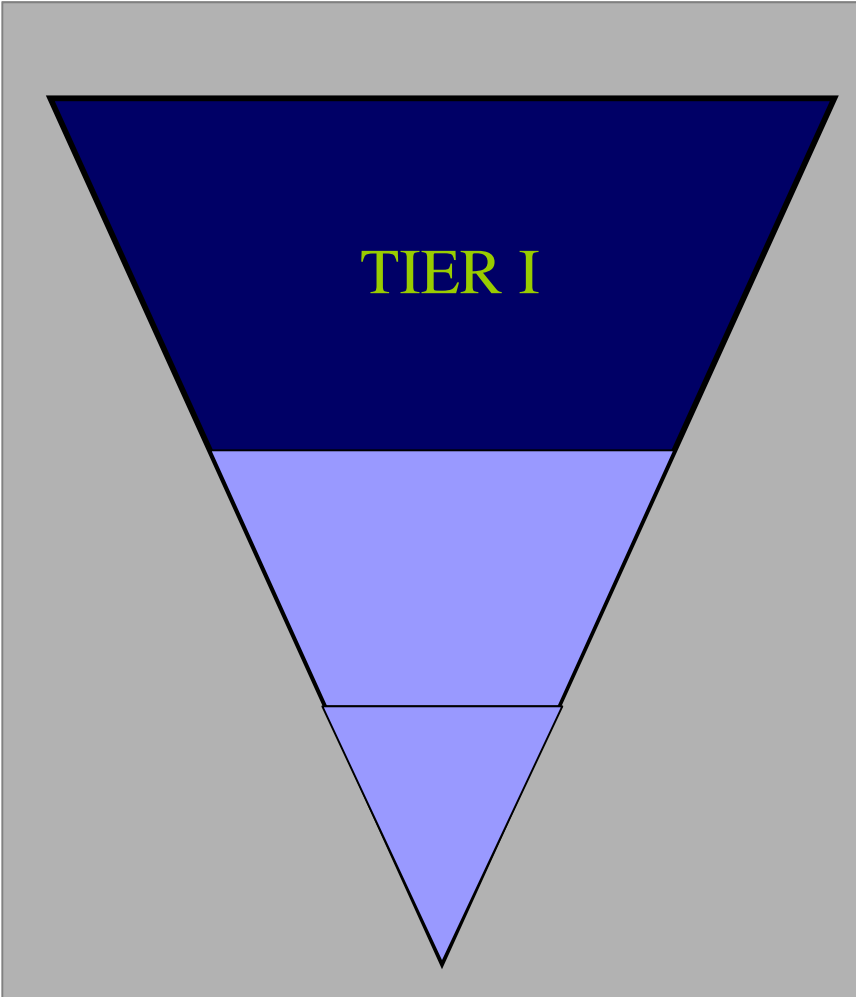- Includes procedures and criteria for providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction

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Where are we now?

- Due to the research that has been funded in the last 10 years
  - We know more about what constitutes effective instruction in early elementary
    - But research is still limited at the upper elementary and secondary levels.
  - We know more about what to do in core reading and supplemental interventions than Tier 3.

  (Francis et al. 2006)

TIER I: CORE CLASS INSTRUCTION

TIER I

Tier I is defined differently by experts.

Only common feature:

- Universal screening of all students

Other possible components:

- Ongoing professional development for classroom teachers on how to use research
- Differentiated instruction
- Progress monitoring of all students or of students "at risk" on a monthly or weekly basis
- High quality reading instruction
- Scientifically based reading instruction

Recommendation 1

Screen students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year.

Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.

– Level of Evidence: **Moderate**

Suggestions

- Create a building-level team to facilitate the implementation of universal screening and progress monitoring.

- Select a set of efficient screening measures that identify children at risk for poor reading outcomes with reasonable accuracy.

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Integrate RTI and the identification of ELLs

- Rather than have 2 parallel systems determine how the two will work together.

- Consider data in light of students language proficiency and their opportunities to learn.

- Consider the **norming sample** of assessments used.

- Consider **with whom** interventions have been validated.

Screening

- Students' oral language proficiency *alone* is not a valid predictor of reading success or failure but it is important to take it into account and it may have more of an impact as students get older.

- **Examine students' scores in relationship to established goals and language program.**

A Transition Plan

- Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that students have the skills to access to the same curriculum presented to native English speaking students.

- It is understood that transition is a *process*, not an event.

- Recognizing that, there is a clear plan and process for transitions:
  - -from native language to English instruction
  - -from ESL to English instruction

A Transition Plan

- For students receiving native language instruction, the plan reflects an understanding of:
  - the bi-directional influence of instruction in each language.
  - skills that transfer (positive and negative), and
  - skills that must be explicitly taught in each language

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An Exit Plan

- Exit is distinguished from transition and refers to the termination of special language program supports for ELLs.

- The re-classification of an ELL as "English proficient" indicates that the student is able to participate successfully in mainstream, all-English instructional programs.

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- Both transition and exit decisions are based on students' language proficiencies and achievement status, not simply on the basis of their age or grade.

Language of Screening Measures

- **Bilingual Education Program**
  - Use grade appropriate measures
    - That match the language of reading instruction, often native language, initially
    - In both the native language and English during the transition process
    - English when students are ready to exit and are no longer receiving reading instruction in the native language
- **English Immersion with ELD support**
  - Use grade appropriate measures in English

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Screening Tool Chart

- http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1091&Itemid=139

Suggestions

Use benchmarks or growth rates (or a combination of the two) to identify children at low, moderate, or high risk for developing reading difficulties.

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Benchmarks

- Benchmarks are necessary to set a goals for students.

- ELLs can meet benchmarks when provided appropriate instruction that supports language and literacy development.

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Recommendation 2

Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (tier 1).

– Level of Evidence: **Low**

Suggestions

- Provide training for teachers on how to collect and interpret student data on reading efficiently and reliably.

- Develop data-driven decision rules for providing differentiated instruction to students at varied reading proficiency levels for part of the day.

Examine students' scores in relationship to established goals and language program

Student: _____

Beginning of the Year Administration: First Grade

Beginning of the Year						
Assessment	Concept Assessed	Score	Decision Criteria	Established (√)	Emerging (√)	Deficit (√)
Screening 1	Letter Naming Fluency	25	≥ 37 = Established 37 > LNF < 24 = Emerging ≤ 24 = Deficit		√	
Screening 2	Nonsense Word Fluency	12	≥ 24 = Established 24 > NWF < 12 = Emerging ≤ 12 = Deficit			√
Screening 3	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	29	≥ 35 = Established 35 > PSF < 9 = Emerging ≤ 9 = Deficit		√	

Comments/Error Patterns: Problems w/vowel sounds on PA; mix up vowel sounds on NWF

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Jessica

- Received Spanish instruction in pre-k and k and is transitioning to English is 1st.

- On Spanish measures, she is in the established range.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Angela

- Received Spanish instruction in pre-k and k and is transitioning to English is 1st.

- On Spanish measures, she is in the emerging range.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Jose

- Is an ELL who has received English instruction since pre-k.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Assessment

- The key in an RTI approach is response.

- Are students learning?

- Are they able to learn?

Suggestions

Differentiate instruction - including varying time, content, and degree of support and scaffolding - based on students' assessed skills.

Core reading instruction that

- builds decoding skills,
- increases opportunities to develop vocabulary knowledge,
- teaches strategies and knowledge needed to comprehend and analyze text, and
- focuses on fluency instruction that includes increased exposure to vocabulary and print

is effective in improving student outcomes.

However,

- ELLs are more different than alike
  - There are greater differences in academic achievement between high and low performing ELLs than between ELLs and non-ELLs on NAEP scores (Center for Public Education, 2007).

For example,

- 130 cwpm at 3rd grade
  - High English proficiency 68%
  - Low English proficiency 29%

- 130 cwpm at 5th grade
  - High English proficiency 58%
  - Low English proficiency 19%

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Causes of Difficulties

- The majority of ELLs that struggle with reading, have difficulty with fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- Only a small percentage of ELLs have difficulty acquiring the foundational skills needed for accurate and automatic word reading.

Why?

- **Language skills play a significant role in reading** fluency; familiarity with syntax, morphology, and words and their meanings impact students' reading fluency and in turn comprehension.

- For ELLs, **working memory** may be further taxed by the fact that they may also be translating words read to their home language to access meaning.

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If ELLs are to succeed in school,

- they need explicit opportunities to hear, use, and practice using English in interactive, content-rich settings.

- Think about language and content not vocabulary.

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Instruction

- Needs to move beyond foundational skills
- Needs to move beyond vocabulary instruction
- Needs to focus on building concepts
- Needs to give students opportunities to convey ideas, understanding, and knowledge orally and in writing

Instruction

- To develop high levels of cognitive skills as well as the language associated with it,
  - students need language models that are comprehensible, and
  - opportunities to use language in the context of specific instructional activities.

Instruction

- Oral language skills provide students the opportunity to
  - communicate ideas, knowledge, and understanding.
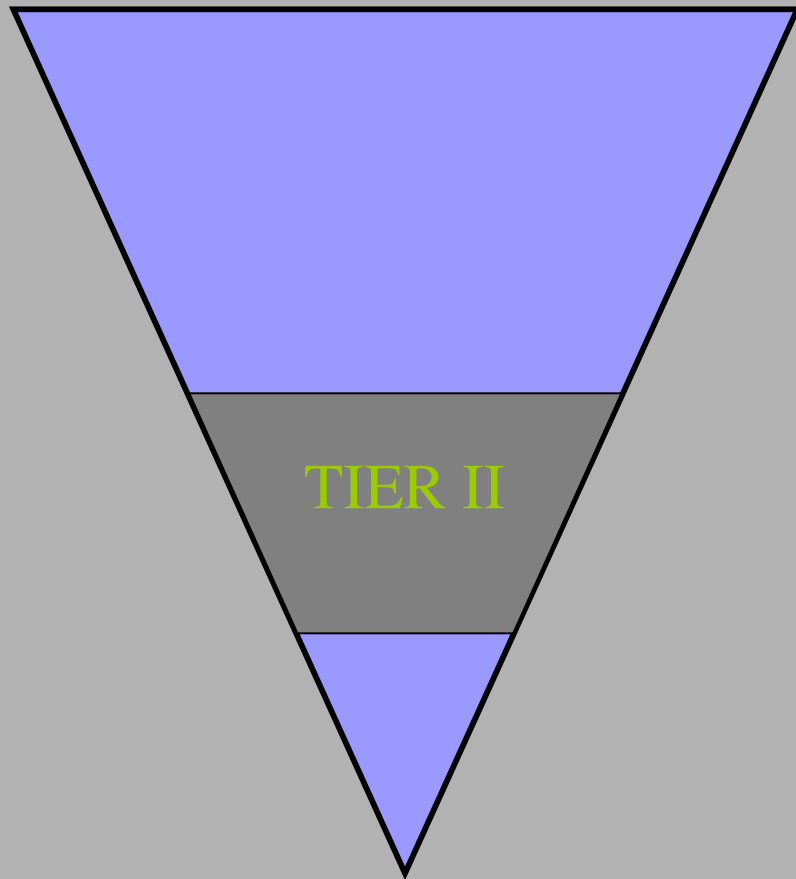
Instruction

- Reading and writing contribute to the development of disciplinary thinking when

  - students can use linguistic skills to interpret and infer meaning from oral and written language and

  - they can discern precise meaning and information from text.

Flexible grouping

- Increases opportunities for engagement in structured, academic talk.

- Provides independent reading opportunities that is purposeful.

- Provides peer-assisted learning opportunities.

TIER II: SMALL GROUP INTERVENTION

TIER II

- **Tier II is individual or small-group intervention in addition to the time allotted for core reading instruction.**

- **Tier II includes curriculum, strategies, and procedures designed to *supplement, enhance, and support* Tier I.**

- **Can backtrack and/or elaborate/reinforce classroom curriculum.**

Causes of Difficulties

- Can decode but are not fluent
  - **Lack language**
  - Lack automaticity
  - Have not had enough opportunity to practice
- Can decode and is fluent but does not comprehend
  - **Lack language**
  - **Lack content and background knowledge**
  - **Lack comprehension strategies**

For example,

- 130 cwpm at 3rd grade
  - 61% ELL
  - 75% Non-ELL & Low SES
  - 90% Non-ELL
- 130 cwpm at 5th grade
  - 48% ELL
  - 62% Non-ELL & Low SES
  - 82% Non-ELL

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Recommendation 3

Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically these groups meet between three to five times a week for 20-40 minutes (tier 2).

– Level of Evidence: **Strong**

Interventions are effective, if they

- provide additional, focused instruction.
- include the essential components for the students age/grade level.
- are provided in small groups.
- use assessments to plan instruction.

School Level

- 1. Align instruction across tiers in terms of language of instruction. For example if students are receiving home language literacy instruction at Tier 1 then Tier 2 instruction should also be in the home language.

- 2. Include assessments in the students' home language.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

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School Level

- 3. Before making placement decisions, including Tier 2 placement, evaluate data considering, language of instruction, length of time students has received instruction in the target language, and students' opportunity to learn.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Classroom Level

- 1. Group students homogenously for instruction using scores on literacy assessments not language. ELLs benefit from language models.

- 2. Provide instruction that teaches all reading components systematically, that is, they provide a foundation and build skills and knowledge gradually.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Classroom Level

- 3. Use routines with explicit language that include modeling, guided practice, group practice, and individual practice. For example, a teacher would model what the students is expected to do, "I will first say each sound and then I will read the word." This is followed with practice.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Language Considerations

- 1. Include opportunities to use language in the context of instruction. For example, ask students to discuss an answer with a partner prior to sharing with the class.

- 2. Read books to students to expose them to higher levels of language.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

Language Considerations

- 3. Teach vocabulary at different levels-for example, show pictures of common objects, demonstrate actions. Teach academic vocabulary deeply. For example, give students the definition, examples and non-examples, and opportunities to use the words.

(Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009)

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Recommendation 4

Monitor the progress of tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a tier 3 intervention plan.

– Level of Evidence: **Low**

Suggestions

Monitor progress of tier 2 students on a regular basis using grade appropriate measures. Monitoring of progress should occur at least eight times during the school year.

While providing tier 2 instruction, use progress monitoring data to identify students needing additional instruction.

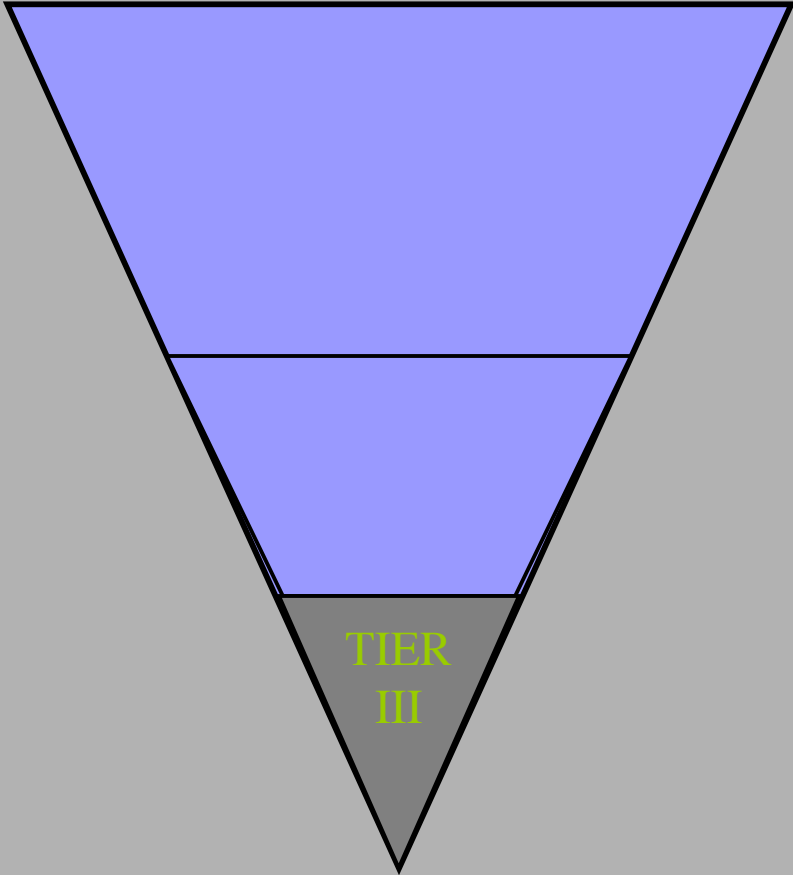Consider using progress monitoring data to regroup tier 2 students approximately every six weeks.

Ensure the the measures are appropriate for the population.

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Progress Monitoring Tool Chart

- http://www.rti4success.org/chart/progressMonitoring/progressmonitoringtoolschart.htm

TIER III: INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

- Tier III is specifically designed and customized individual or small-group reading instruction that is extended beyond the time allocated for Tier I and Tier II.

NOTE: Some states/districts use 3 tiers and other states use 4 tiers.

TIER III

Recommendation 5

Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in tier 2 small group instruction (tier 3).

– Level of Evidence: **Low**

Suggestions

- Implement concentrated instruction that is focused on a small but targeted set of reading skills.

- Schedule multiple and extended instructional sessions daily.

- Include opportunities for extensive practice and high quality feedback with one-on-one instruction.

- Plan and individualize tier 3 instruction using input from a school-based RtI team.

- Ensure that tier 3 students master a reading skill or strategy before moving on.

- **Ensure that ELLs are developing English proficiency.**

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Benefits

- Preventive approach
- Assessment is used to inform instruction
- Instruction is focused on critical components
- Serves as a means for gauging efficacy of instruction

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