International Reading Association Webinar Series on RTI
Guiding Principle #2:
Differentiating Instruction

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Overview

- Quick review of RTI and IRA RTI Principle #2

- Why should teachers differentiate

  o Brief review of the research

- Questions from the chat room

- Different ways to differentiate instruction

- Questions from the chat room

Background on RTI

- 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.

RTI Dual Aims

- RTI as Prevention
  - Instructional problem
  - Emphasizes responsive teaching

- RTI as Identification
  - Measurement problem
  - Emphasizes standardization

Guiding Principles

1. Instruction
2. Responsive Teaching & Differentiation
3. Assessment
4. Collaboration
5. Systemic & Comprehensive
6. Expertise

Principle #2
Responsive Teaching & Differentiation

- Evidence shows that small group and individualized instruction are effective:
  - For all students
  - In reducing the number of students at risk of becoming classified LD (cf. Scanlon et al. 2005)

- RTI is centrally about optimizing language and literacy instruction for students. This means that differentiated instruction, based on instructionally relevant assessment, is essential.

Effective Teachers Spend More Time in SMALL Group Instruction

- Most Effective **Teachers** ≈ 48 min.
- Moderately Effective **Teachers** ≈ 39 min.
- Least Effective **Teachers** ≈ 25 min.

Minutes of Small Group Instruction

Legend: Most Effective, Moderately Effective, Least
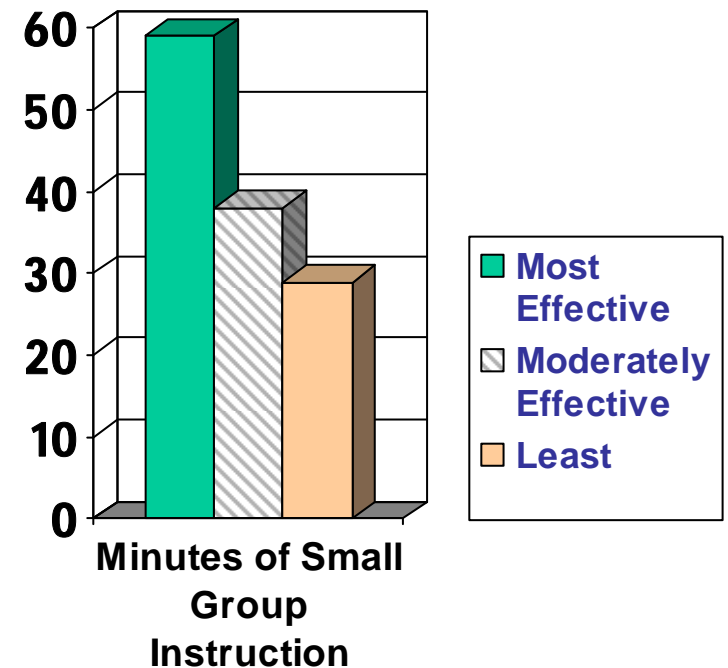
From *Effective Schools & Accomplished Teachers*, Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, CIERA,

Effective Teachers Spend Less Time in WHOLE Group Instruction

- Most Effective **Teachers** ≈ 25 min.

- Moderately Effective **Teachers** ≈ 29 min.

- Least Effective **Teachers** ≈ 48 min.

Minutes of Small Group Instruction

Legend: Most Effective, Moderately Effective, Least

Using Assessment to Inform Differentiation

o Test data

o Observation & conversation

o Student work

Speedy Librarian

Once upon a time there was a librarian named Lisa. She could put books away faster than anybody. One day she put books away and took them out again, so fast. The children said "slow down so we can have a chance to look at the books in the Library." So she slowed down for

Student Profiles

o Constellations of skills, strategies, dispositions, background knowledge, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, etc.

   o Conner, Morrison, & Katch, 2004; Catts, Hogan, & Fey, 2003; Conner Morrison & Petrella, 2004; Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000; Leach, Scarborough, & Rescorla 2003; Spear-Swerling, 2004; Valencia & Riddle-Buly, 2004)

Reader Profiles: An Example

	%	Word Id	Meaning	Fluency
Auto Wd Callers	18	++	- -	++
Strug Wd Callers	15	-	-	++
Wd Stumblers	17	-	+	-
Slow Comprehenders	24	+	++	-
Slow Wd Callers	17	+	-	-
Disabled Readers	9	- -	- -	- -

Moving from Assessment to Differentiated Instruction

Word Id	Comp.	Vocabulary	Fluency
Sandy	Tomas	Trang	Sandy
Trang	Trang	Joey	Martin
Jesse	Andrew		Andrew
	Jesse		Jesse

Student Work: An Example

Name _Austen_
Date _feb 4, 1992_

Selection _How Spider Got a thin waist_
Number of pages _Six_

1. What do you think this reading will be about?

   ~~How you retell a st~~

2. What do you already know about the topic?

   Spiders

3. Retell the story as if you were telling it to a friend who hasn't read it.

   Spider with lazy

4. How accurate was your prediction?

5. What surprised you in the story?

Formative Assessment

- Use assessment to directly inform instructional decisions and implementation

- Align assessment with instructional focus

- Use multiple indicators of student performance

- Frequency of assessment will depend on the child and the skill assessed

Matching Instruction with Profile: A Mismatch
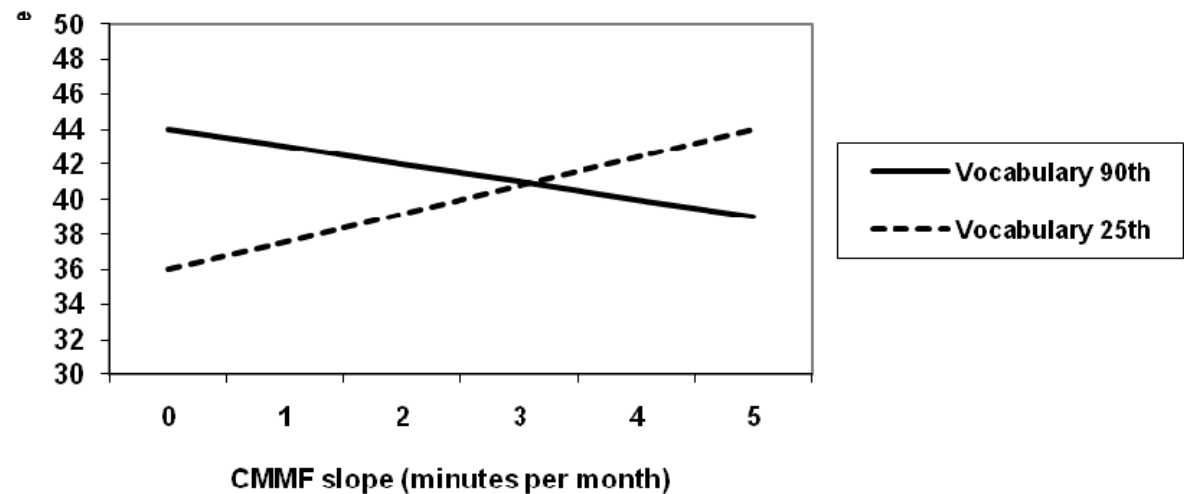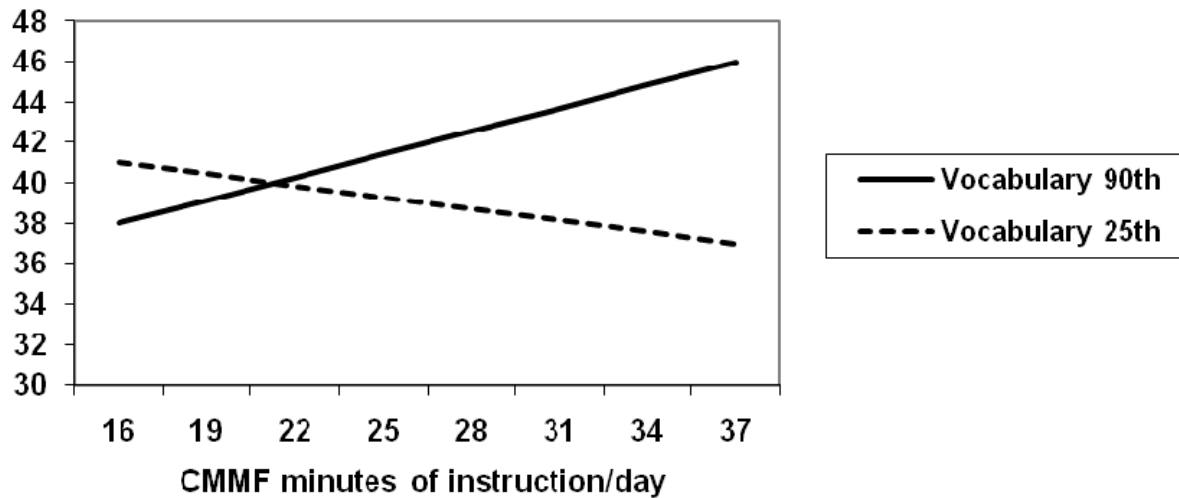
Case Study Changing Needs Over Time
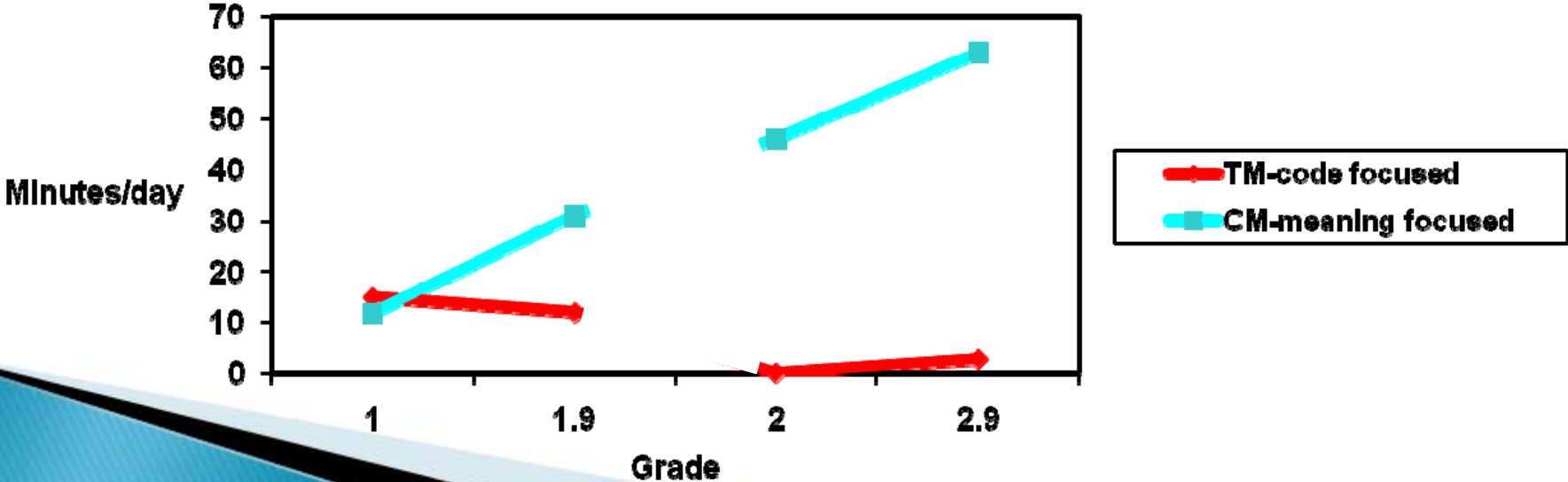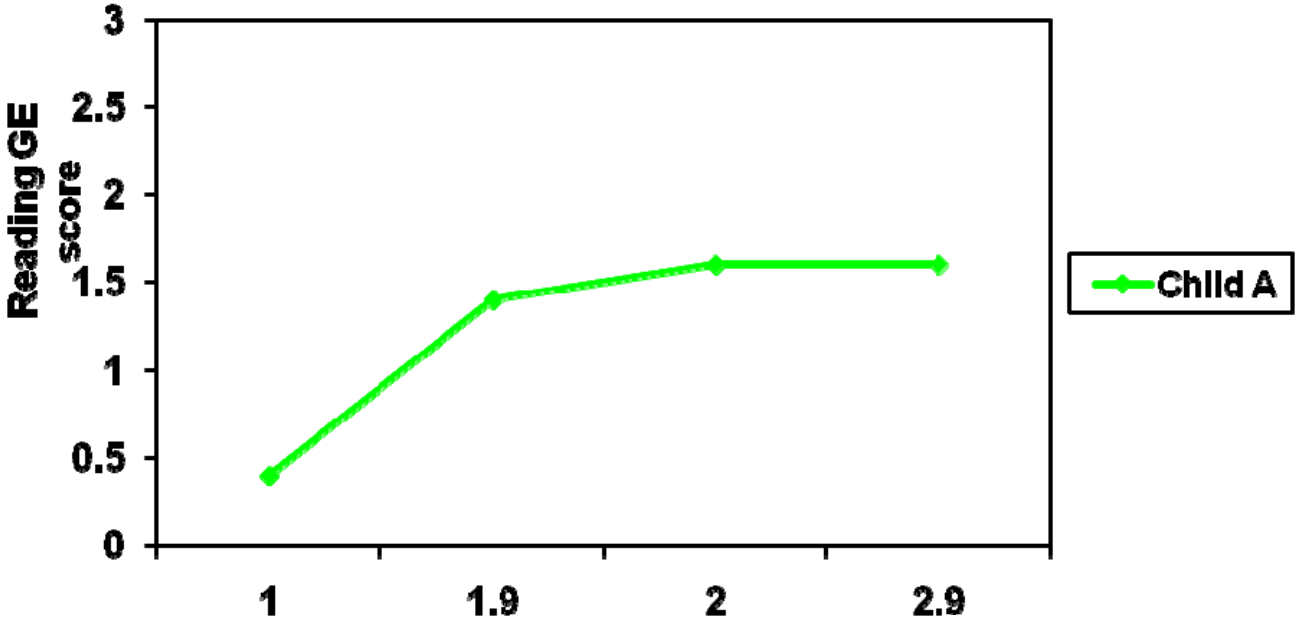
Matching Instruction to Constellations of Skills – Distance from Recommendations
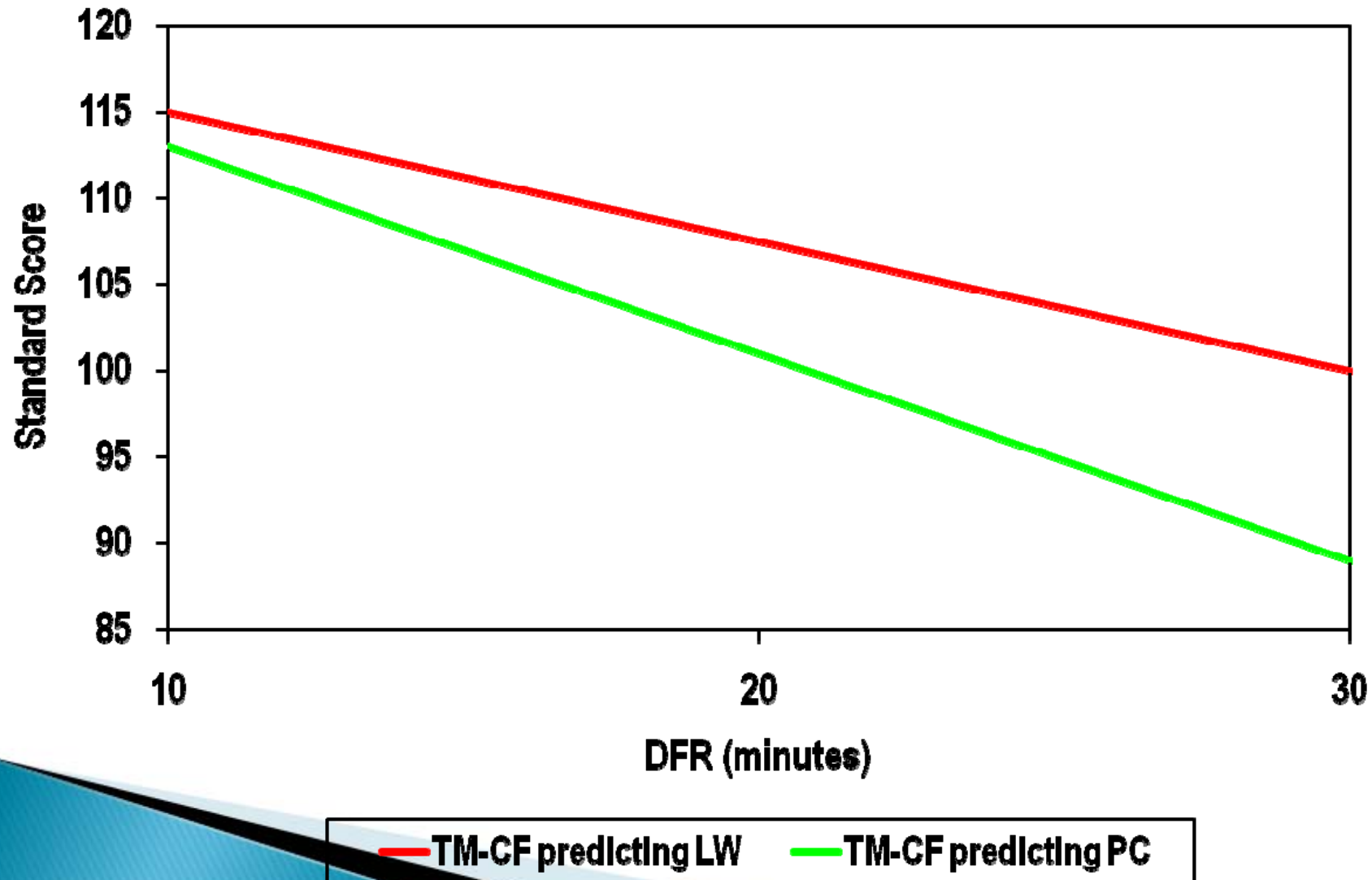
RTI Is Not A "One Size Fits All" Approach

- Assessment is a critical first step
  - constellations of strengths and needs
- Ongoing assessment evaluates how well instructional strategies are working
- Ongoing differentiation and aligning instruction to students' changing needs

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Why Do Readers Experience Difficulty?

- **Knowledge & Skill**
  - Decoding   * Vocabulary
  - Comprehending   * Fluency
  - Semantic and academic knowledge
  - Study skills
- **Lack of Experience**
  - with books
  - with concepts
  - with tasks & formats
  - with the community and other places in the world
- **Interest & Motivation**
- **Texts & Tasks**
  - Thin instruction
  - Inconsiderate text
  - Mismatch

Provide Instruction to All Students

- Set high expectations for all students
- Monitor literacy growth for all students
  - Including able students

Planning to Differentiate Instruction

- Don't try to "wing it"
- Teachers who planned to differentiate instruction were generally more effective with all students
  - (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994)
- Organize by students' profile
  - Different constellations of skills, dispositions, and background
  - Plan for the week
  - Plan for the day
- Don't be afraid to change the plan

Classroom Set-Up

- One example but there are many ways to differentiate
- Flexible homogeneous-skill based groups based on learning needs
- Teacher table/station
  - Provides the opportunity to work the small groups of students
  - Focus on
    - Review and checking for understanding
    - Preview
    - Challenge
- Centers and student-managed activities
  - Student Choice
  - Meaningful activities
  - Peer-group collaboration
  - Seatwork
  - Computers
  - Library and writing centers

Flexible Learning Groups

- Change whenever children's skills change
- May differ for different components
  - Decoding
  - Comprehension
  - Writing
- Organize so teacher table is homogeneous but peer-group activities heterogeneous
  - Word of caution – marginalization of children who struggle with reading
    - (Christian & Bloom, 2004; Palincscar, et al., 2000)

Classroom Management

- The goal is that students are engaged in meaningful instruction for most of the school day (Wharton-McDonald, et al., 1998)
  - This does not always happen (Pianta, et al., 2007)
- Planning
- Authoritative leadership
  - Not over-controlling or disengaged
- Consistency
- Routines
- Clear cues for transitions
  - Switch songs
  - Hot spots

Adaptations Framework

	Few Adaptations	More Adaptations
Focus of instruction (comp,.word id, fluency, vocabulary, etc.)		
Instructional support (intensity, duration, explicitness, scaffolding, etc.)		
Text(s) (difficulty, genre, familiarity, authenticity)		
Tasks (open/closed; timed/untimed; independent/cooperative, etc.)		
Practice (type, quantity, success rate, feedback, etc.)		
Amount of Reading (independent, supported, collaborative, etc.)		

"If you can both listen to children and accept their answers not as things to just be judged right or wrong, but as pieces of information, which may reveal what the child is thinking you will have taken a giant step toward becoming a master teacher rather than merely a disseminator of information."
(Easley & Zwoyer, 1975)

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