



Overview of Response to Intervention (RtI)

Field Guides to RtI Prepared by
Wayne County RtI/LD Committee

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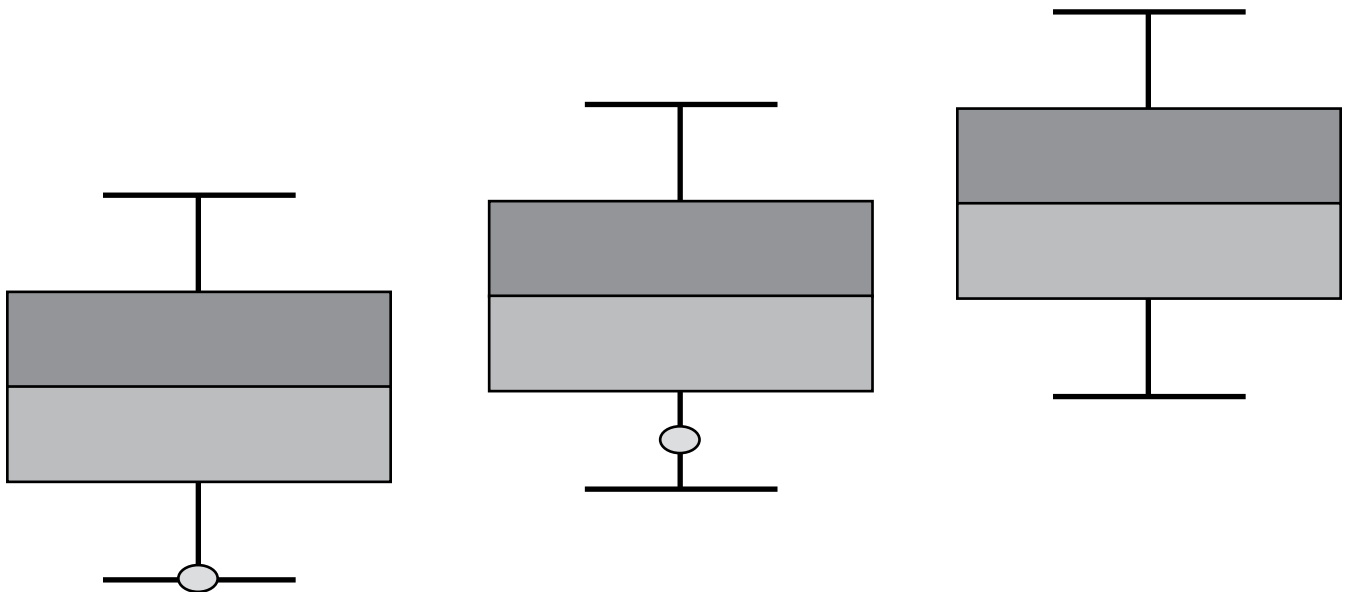
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Overview of Response to Intervention (RtI)

The IDEA 2004 requirements to provide data on student achievement progress are based on approximately 40 years of educational research called Response to Intervention (RtI). The RtI approach imparts a reform in educational systems that require an integrated approach to service delivery. General educators and special educators must work together to intervene early, with integrity, and with progress monitoring when students are struggling with basic skills. The effective

implementation of RtI requires the leadership, collaborative planning, and implementation by professionals across the education system. The process encourages the development of a single, well-integrated system that connects general education, remedial education and special education through appropriate practices, frequent measures of learning, and explicit decision-making procedures driven by student learning.



“General educators and special educators must work together to intervene early, with integrity, and with progress monitoring when students are struggling with basic skills.”

Core Principles of Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention defines an educational system for responding to academic difficulties. The following are core features of strong RTI (Mellard, 2003):

High quality classroom instruction

Students receive high quality instruction in their general education setting. Before students are identified for specific assistance, there must be assurance that the typical classroom instruction is of high quality. This quality can be assessed by comparing students' learning rates and achievement in different classrooms at the same grade level.

Research-based instruction

General education's classroom practices and the curriculum vary in their efficacy. Evidence that the classroom instructional practices and curriculum have demonstrated validity is important. If instruction is not research-based, one cannot be confident that students' limited gains are independent of the classroom experiences.

Classroom performance

General education teachers and staff assume an active role in students' assessment in the general education curriculum. This feature emphasizes the important role of the classroom staff in designing and completing student assessments rather than relying on externally developed tests (e.g., state or nationally developed tests).

Universal screening

School staff conducts universal screening of academics and behavior. This feature focuses on specific criteria for judging the learning and achievement of all students, not only in academics but also in related behaviors (e.g., interrupted prior schooling, home language other than English, class attendance, tardiness, truancy, suspensions, and disciplinary actions). Those criteria are applied in determining which students need closer monitoring or an intervention.

Continuous progress monitoring

In RTI models, students' classroom progress is to be monitored continuously. In this way, staff can readily identify those learners who are not meeting the benchmarks or other expected standards. Various curriculum-based assessment models are useful in this role.

Research-based interventions

When students' screening results or progress monitoring results indicate a deficit, an appropriate instructional intervention is implemented, perhaps an individually designed instructional package or a standardized intervention protocol. The standardized intervention protocols are the interventions that researchers have validated through a series of studies. School staff is expected to implement specific, research-based interventions to address the student's difficulties. These interventions might include a "double-dose" of the classroom instruction or a different instructional method. These interventions are not adaptations of the current curriculum or accommodations, because those procedures should have been implemented already. These research based interventions are 8 to 12 weeks in length and are designed to increase the intensity of the learner's instructional experience.

Progress monitoring during interventions

School staff members use progress monitoring data to determine interventions' effectiveness and to make any modifications, as needed. Carefully defined data are collected, perhaps daily, to provide a cumulative record of the learner's response to the intervention.

Fidelity measures

While the interventions themselves are designed, implemented, and assessed for their learner effectiveness, fidelity measures that focus on those individuals providing the instruction also are completed. The fidelity measure, usually an observational checklist of critical teaching behaviors, is completed by a staff member other than the teacher being observed and indicates whether or not the intervention was implemented as intended and with consistency.

The Multi-Tier Model of Educational Intervention

RtI uses a multi-tier model of educational resource delivery. Each tier involves increasing intensity of services matched to the student’s measured level of need. The outcomes of educational interventions are established with student data. Based on a problem-solving model, student data are used to determine appropriate instructional interventions and to evaluate if the interventions are actually working.

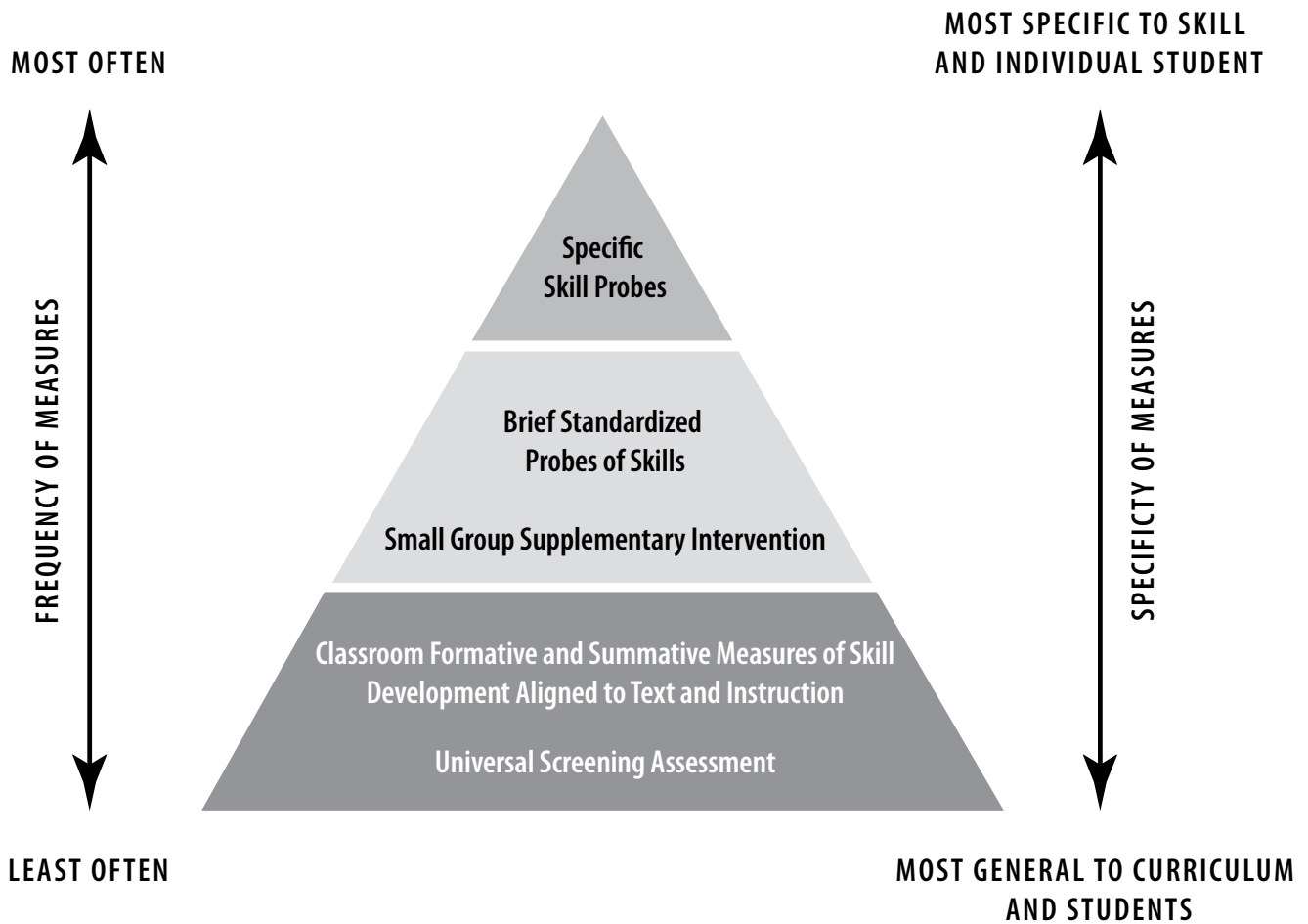




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“Integral to RtI is the notion of universal screening and on-going screening assessments that guide educational interventions.”

System-wide Collection of Achievement Data for Instruction Intervention Planning

Integral to RtI is the notion of universal screening and on-going screening assessments that guide educational interventions. The purpose of the universal screenings is to benchmark student progress at the classroom level. The regular education curriculum should have clearly defined instructional targets that can be measured in universal screening assessments that are administered at least once a year and may be used to mark progress 3 to 4 times a year.

- Mark progress with 3 to 4 universal screenings within each school year.
- Students are grouped for focused instruction based on the skills they need to master.
- Those students needing the most help would receive very intense, focused instruction that supplements the general education curriculum.
- Students are never pulled from their important grade level instruction.
- Interventions are planned as daily drill and reinforcement of component basic skills.

Research Models of RtI

Response to Intervention (RtI) is based on research models that define the steps or tiers of intervention. Deno's data-based program modification model was developed using brief, frequent samples of student learning. Bergan and colleagues developed systematic methods to intervene using behavior or academic skills delivered through a specific problem-solving process.

Bergan Model and Problem-Solving Steps	Deno Model and Modern Standard Protocol Reading Interventions
Define the problem behaviorally.	Define problems in terms of performance level and skills deficits.
Measure performance in the natural setting.	Assess reading skills through progress-monitoring, CBM and criterion-referenced skills inventories.
Determine current status and performance gap compared to peers.	Determine current status and performance gap compared to peers.
State a goal based on peer performance expectations.	State goals in terms of benchmarks for reading performance and peer expectations.
Design intervention plan, applying scientific instructional and behavior change principles.	Apply scientifically based instruction emphasizing five components of reading.
Implement intervention over a reasonable period of time with good treatment integrity.	Implement intervention over a reasonable period of time with good treatment integrity.
Monitor progress frequently using a time series analysis graph and make changes in the intervention as needed to improve effectiveness or raise goals, as indicated by data.	Monitor progress frequently using a time series analysis graph and make changes in the intervention as needed to improve effectiveness or raise goals, as indicated by data.
Evaluate results compared to goals and peer performance.	Evaluate results based on attainment of reading benchmarks.
Make decisions based on data to continue, fade, discontinue or seek more intense interventions.	Make decisions about discontinuing or phasing out small group instruction if benchmarks are attained or after consideration of further, more intense interventions, including possible special education eligibility.

Attributions of Failure

When students are struggling in school, we make attributions as to the cause of the problem. The attributions we make as to the reason for a learning problem define the choice of actions we will take to address the problem. If attributions of learning failure are pointed to the curriculum and delivery of instruction, efforts will then be focused on what can be done to teach the child the skills and concepts he or she will need to progress in school. This is NOT a “blame the teacher” paradigm. Rather, the location of learning problems to the educational system calls for reform of educational systems to be responsive to the needs of learners.

Models of Explanation for Locating Learning Problems and Intervention Implications

Model Used to Explain the Learning Problem	Location of the Problem	Intervention Implications
Medical	The problem is in the child. The child has defective learning capacity or defective learning processes.	Medical treatments, such as medication management or highly specialized prescriptive therapies.
Social	The problem is in the social environment of the child. The family and culture of the family is the reason the child does not perform and learn at school.	The home environment must change for the child to adapt to school culture. Efforts focus on parents learning school culture and compliance to school structure.
Emotional	The problem is located in the child’s esteem, attitude or motivation toward school.	Counseling interventions to alter the child’s affect toward self and learning experiences.
Educational	The problem is located within the instruction and curriculum. With adjustments to the instruction and/or curriculum, the child will learn.	Instruction is designed and delivered with fidelity to teach essential skills to students.

This is NOT “Pre-Referral” Child Study Teams with a New Name

Response to Intervention (RtI) represents a departure from old ways of thinking about student learning problems. RtI will require our thinking to shift from past practices, to acquire new skill sets, and assume new responsibilities. The following table contrasts the paradigm of Child Study Team practices to Response to Intervention.

OLD: Child Study Team	NEW: Response to Intervention (RtI)
<p>Child Study Team</p>	<p>RtI Team:</p>
<p>Teacher meets with Itinerant Staff to show proof of child’s problem warranting a special education referral.</p>	<p>Building-based team uses data to work in support of teacher to design, implement, and study effectiveness of interventions.</p>
<p>Pre-Referral Procedure</p>	<p>Response to Intervention:</p>
<p>The team makes observations of student learning problem and collects work samples to verify teacher report of poor achievement.</p>	<p>Using specific curriculum measures, the team works with the teacher to design and implement an intervention.</p>
<p>Purpose of Child Study Team</p>	<p>Student response is measured with data and the intervention is intensified or changed if the child is not responding, or learning fast enough or acquiring skills.</p>
<p>The task of the child study team was to decide whether or not to test a child for special education.</p>	<p>Purpose of RtI Team:</p>
<p>Type of Data Collected</p>	<p>The task of the RtI team is to systematically use data to develop educational interventions for students to learn in class.</p>
<p>The team looked at work samples, anecdotal reports, school files, available standardized test scores, and observations.</p>	<p>Type of Data Collected:</p>
<p>Little to no data available to compare the student to peers.</p>	<p>Specific screenings aligned to curriculum.</p>
<p>Little to no data available to know if a child was able to learn with a specific intervention.</p>	<p>Specific probes of skills administered in a standardized way, often, and recorded over time.</p>
<p>Little to no dynamic assessment (error analysis) of student work to plan re-teaching activities.</p>	<p>Classroom measures for comparisons of learning.</p>
<p>Pre-Referral Interventions</p>	<p>Samples of learning over time to chart progress.</p>
<p>The team offered a general suggestion to the teacher to try something different. The teacher is unsupported to make the change in instruction or practice. There is no data to measure if the intervention occurred, the quality of the delivery of intervention, or if the student benefited.</p>	<p>All other information sources reviewed to help with problem-solving and understanding of the student (i.e., records, standardized tests, dynamic assessments of work, observations). These data sources are not sufficient for decision-making.</p>

OLD: Child Study Team

Outcomes for Students:

If the child was not referred for special education evaluation: No change in instruction or learning for student.

If the child was referred for special education evaluation: The child was extensively tested for 2 – 12 or more hours by various personnel.

If the child was not eligible for special education, there was no change in instruction or learning for the student, but extensive reports existed in school files.

If the child was eligible for special education, the child was labeled with a handicap and typically provided alternate curriculum.

NEW: Response to Intervention (RtI)

Interventions in RtI:

The team is to support the teacher in the effective delivery of the intervention and revisions to the intervention if data show the child did not improve.

Fidelity in delivery of the intervention with specific pre- and post-measures of student learning are fundamental to the process.

Outcomes for Students:

If the intervention works: The student is taught skills he/she needs to proceed.

If the intervention is not working: New approaches will be immediately attempted to catch the student up to age-mates.

If there is evidence of lack of learning or significant discrepancy from age-mates in learning:

The team may seek comprehensive evaluation to establish the following:

1. If sufficient RtI data exist to make SE decisions.
2. If factors of exclusion from special education eligibility exist.
3. If there is evidence of inability to meet standards for age-grades in 1 or more of the 8 achievement areas of LD in accordance with State regulations.

Student may return to general education based on progress.

Distinction Between Instructional Consultation and RtI

The focus of the Instructional Consultation Team is on in-depth planning for one student at a time. Instructional Consultation Teams use a teacher referral method. The teacher shares observations of student performance. The Instructional Consultation Team then works with the teacher to generate ideas to try in the classroom.

RtI is a broader problem-solving framework than Instructional Consultation Teams, as the focus is on system-wide instructional practices. The RtI model uses a universal screening method for identifying struggling learners. The RtI model combines planning for students on a school-wide basis along with planning at the individual student level.

Districts currently implementing Instructional Consultation Teams but wanting to begin Response to Intervention may need to choose between adding RtI teams to their existing structure or training Instructional Consultation Teams in the RtI methodology.

RtI and Culturally Responsive Practices

Disproportionate representation of students from differing racial, ethnic, income, language, or cultural groups in special education is a challenge for our districts in Wayne County.

The following considerations will help schools to retain the focus on ensuring learning for all students:

- Review Universal Screening Assessments for gender and culture bias
- Examine assessment administration procedures for culture or gender bias in directions, time, presentation, or response
- Determine the language proficiency of English Language Learners
- Determine if the student is being instructed in the native language or second language
- Differentiate language comprehension requirements from the difficulty of the task
- Include team members with knowledge of the student's culture and/or language

“The research point to the school-wide systems of educational quality, practices that ensure all students acquire fundamental skills, and appropriate evaluation practices as critical to equity in education for our diverse student population.”

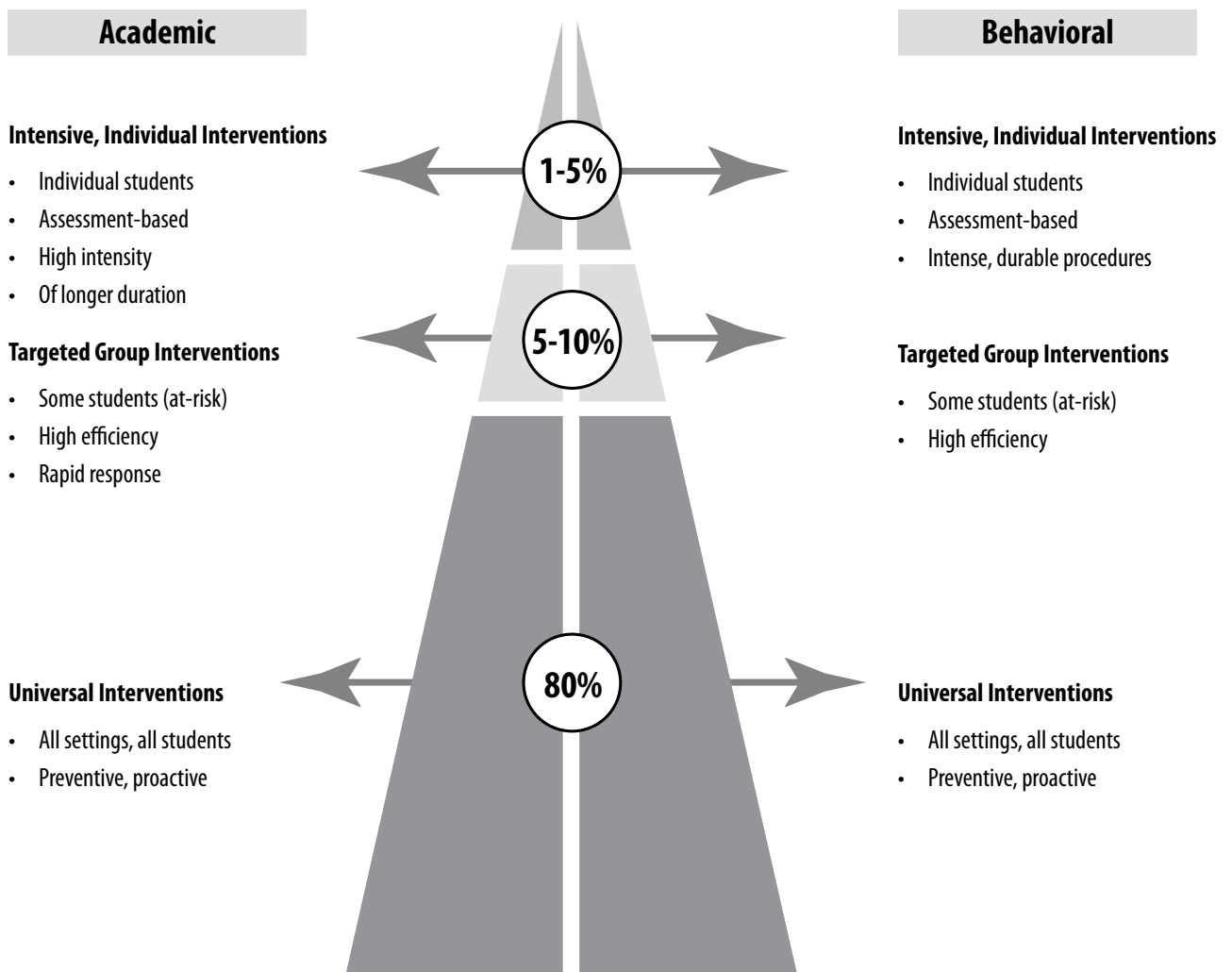
RtI Considerations

Educational practices should effectively meet the needs of 80 - 90% of students in classrooms. For students who are behind in level of learning or rate of learning, focused and intense interventions are delivered to teach the missing skills. An effective school program would involve 5 – 10 % of the population in focused interventions. Only about 5% of students should be involved in intensive individualized interventions. The system is designed to continually monitor student progress.

Students are not removed from core instruction in their classrooms for the small group or individual interventions. Instead, students receive core instruction in class and the supplemental instruction is provided in addition to learning in the classroom.

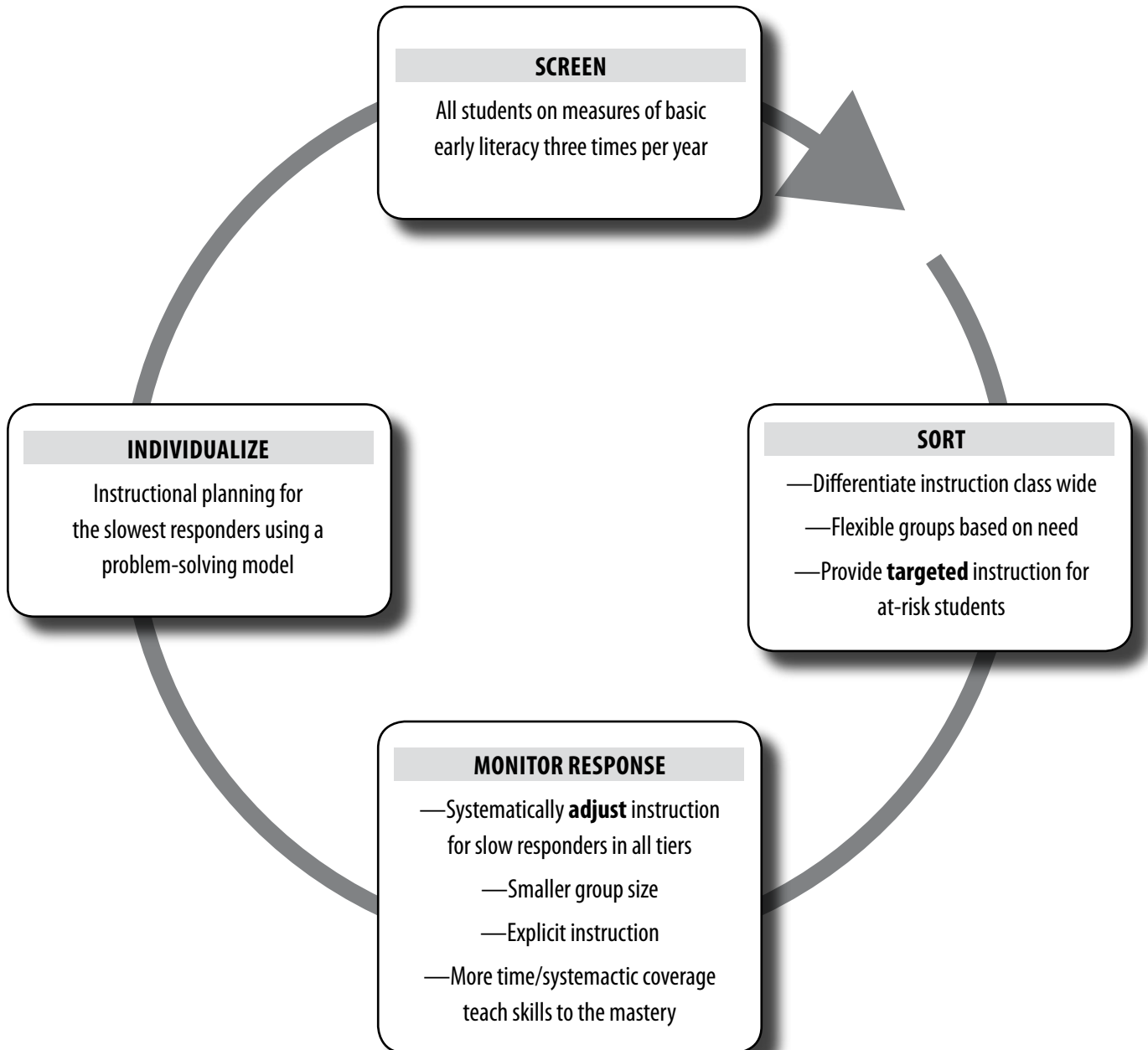
Student progress is continually monitored to determine if the intervention is working. When students do not respond, the intervention is adjusted or changed to bring about the intended result of student mastery. Students are not labeled as “remedial”. Rather, interventions are fluid and time-limited. **A student may move in and out of interventions based on progress.**

Enter a School-Wide System for Student Success



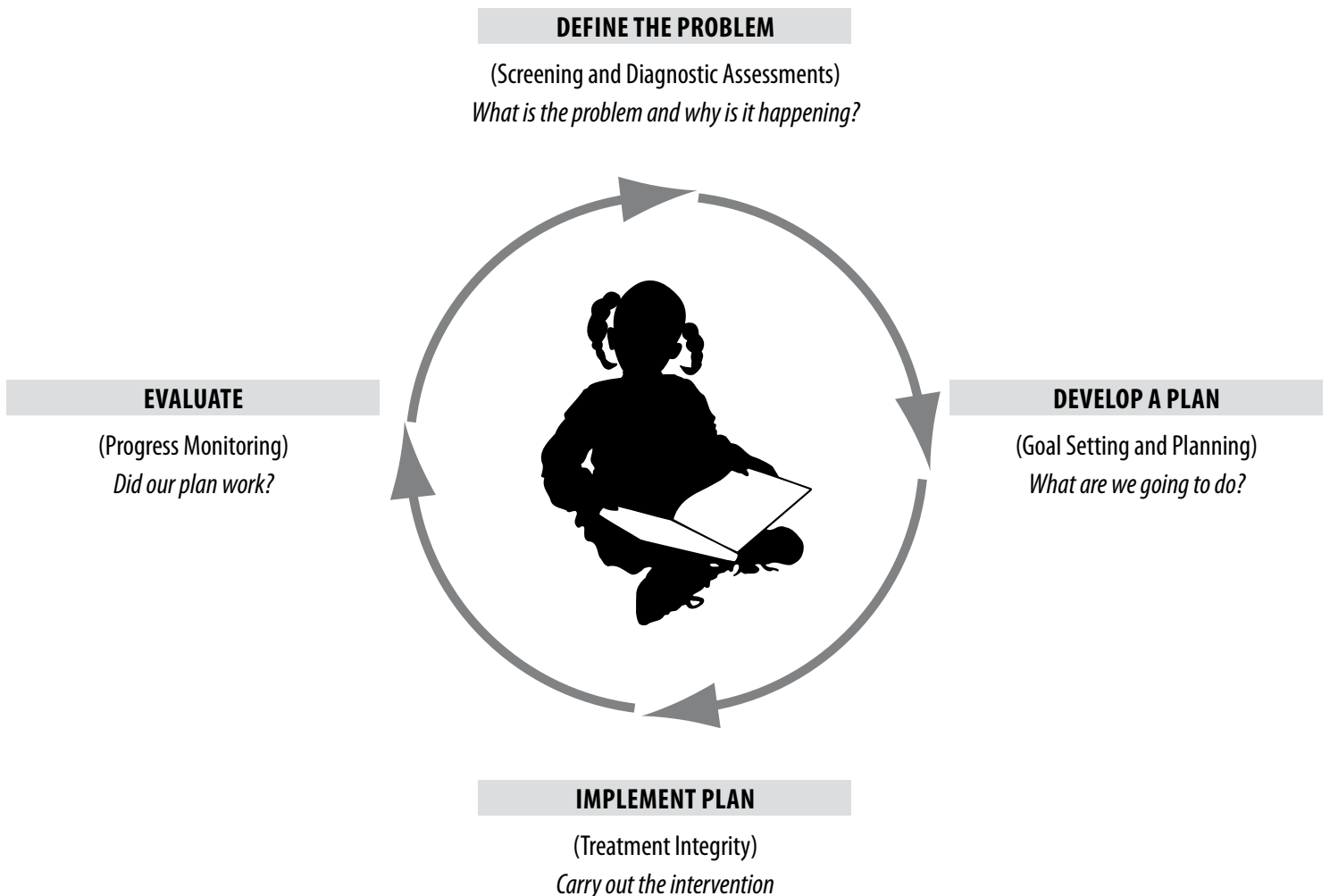
Continuous Process: Screen, Sort, Monitor, Individualize

The implementation of RtI is a continuous process. **Universal screening assessments are administered 3 times a year to sort students into groupings targeted instruction.** Student response to instruction is monitored and adjusted, leading to increasingly individualized attention until students are once again screened for skill acquisition. The following diagram portrays this model, which was developed to intervene with early literacy skills.



Decision-Making and Integrity with the Problem-Solving Model

The RtI model will require teams to come to the table to make decisions applying their skills in the areas of assessment data collection and analysis, collaboration, behavior management, and instruction. Teams will need to use Problem-Solving Steps in which student learning and teaching interventions are continually reviewed and revised. Problem statements are based on the observed skills or performances students are to demonstrate in class. Goals are stated as skills to be learned. The plan is a specific intervention that will be delivered with fidelity to the student. Data are the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention plan and the basis for determining if the plan will need to be revised.



Source: Tilly 2005 NASDSE Satellite Conference *Why RTI?, RTI Defined and RTI On the Ground*

Improving the level of student achievement is the goal of the problem-solving process. It is only through the monitoring of data that achievement issues can be effectively addressed. Criteria must exist at each TIER of the decision-making process. A general framework for thinking about the criteria used to plan interventions for students is outlined in the following table.

	TIER I: CORE CLASS INSTRUCTION	TIER II: SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS	TIER III: INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS
FOCUS	All students	Students identified as not responding to TIER I	Students with NO response to TIER I or TIER II
PROGRAM	Scientifically-based curriculum	Content specific to program	Individualized interventions
GROUPING	Formats designed to meet all student needs	Homogenous small groups 1:5	Homogenous small groups 1:3
DAILY TIME	90+ minutes of instruction	23-35 minutes in addition to the 90+ minutes of core instruction	50 minutes in addition to the 90+ minutes of core instruction
ASSESSMENT	Fall, Winter, Spring Benchmarks	Weekly progress charted	Weekly progress charted
INTERVENTIONIST	General Education Teacher	"Research provided" Interventionist	"Research provided" Interventionist
SETTING	General Education Classroom	Appropriate setting	Appropriate setting

Source: W. Alan Coulter, Ph.D. National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitor, LSU HSC, New Orleans

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Committee Members

The individuals listed below contributed their time and talents to developing recommendations for approaching Response to Intervention in Wayne County schools. Initial conversations began in June, 2005.

Dr. John Cellitti, Teacher Consultant
Lincoln Park Public Schools

Dr. Kathleen Grodus, School Psychologist
Plymouth-Canton Public Schools

Lisa Khoury, School Psychologist
Grosse Pointe Public Schools

Dr. Dona Beach-Johnson, School Psychologist
Grosse Pointe Public Schools

Dr. Delia Laing, Administrator
The Leona Group

Diane Lesley, School Psychologist
Detroit Public Schools

Valerie McNeece, Teacher Consultant
Melvindale-Northern Allen Park Public School

Dr. Maria Sella, School Psychologist
Flat Rock Public Schools

Anne Sheehan, Office of Student Support Services, Supervisor
Detroit Public Schools

Kathleen Sykes, Curriculum Consultant
Plymouth-Canton Public Schools

Dr. Stephen Taylor, School Psychologist
Livonia Public Schools

Rebecca Uribe, Director of Special Education
Dearborn Heights Public Schools

Shirley Veldhuis, Speech Pathologist
Lincoln Park Public Schools

Pearl Weiss, School Psychologist
Detroit Public Schools

Linda Wheeler, Consultant
Detroit Public Schools

Deborah Williamson, Office of Student Support Services, Supervisor
Detroit Public Schools

Estelle Wright-Alexander, Teacher Consultant
Detroit Public Schools

Marcy Yee, School Psychologist D
Detroit Public Schools

Dr. Patricia Drake, Special Education Data Consultant, Wayne RESA

Acknowledgements for Contributions:

Jeffrey Crockett, Teacher Consultant, Plymouth Canton Schools
Dr. Kathy Storchan, ELL Consultant, Wayne RESA

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Kevin D. Magin, Executive Director Special Education and Early Intervention Services, Wayne RESA

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Wayne RESA

33500 Van Born Road • P.O. Box 807
Wayne, MI 48184-2497
734.334.1300 • 734.334.1620 FAX
www.resa.net

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