
Preface

An Open Letter to Educators

Within the next two or three years, education will change rather dramatically, because of the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) procedures across the nation. Teachers in both general and special education classes will find their jobs transformed as we move into a research-proven instructional method that will benefit many children who are challenged by the academic content. In fact, all students will benefit from implementation of this procedure, as teachers become more fluent in truly individualized progress monitoring and instruction.

While this change is prompted by several legislative measures including the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, and more specifically, the 2004 Reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), this metamorphosis is much broader than merely a new way to document the existence of a learning disability. All educators will become involved in implementation of programs to demonstrate how students respond on an individual basis to various educational interventions. Most of the early work required by the RTI procedures for a particular child will take place in the general education classroom. Thus, this initiative will not only affect special educators; all educators will be expected to implement this procedure in their classes. This book is intended as a practical guide to assist those teachers in what, for many, will be a new and untried instructional procedure.

We strongly support this renewed emphasis on monitoring students' response to educational interventions. In fact, frequent progress monitoring and implementation of specific educational interventions based on that monitoring—the essence of RTI—has been proven to be among the best instructional practices available. Although this book is not intended as

an exhaustive review of research on RTI, we do discuss the most influential studies as a backdrop for understanding RTI.

Moreover, because teachers across the nation will be challenged to understand and implement these procedures in their classrooms, this book provides specific examples of how to implement RTI. Both general educators and special educators will be required to apply research-proven educational interventions; monitor student progress daily or weekly; and plan additional, more intensive educational interventions for students who are not progressing adequately. Thus, RTI is likely to affect almost every classroom in the nation; virtually every student will see their teachers become more sensitive to individualized academic progress.

In short, this is not merely another initiative; this move to RTI promises to reform education in very significant ways, as educators in every classroom instruct and monitor progress on an individual basis for many of their students. Clearly, this is not business as usual. Within two years, it will become the responsibility of almost every teacher in the nation to develop skills for RTI and implement RTI in their classes.

With that in mind, we believe this book can be of great use for educators nationwide. We have made every effort to present rigorous examples of RTI procedures, and also to indicate where and how educators may save time while taking on these new and challenging responsibilities. We have provided many opportunities for reflection on the RTI procedures discussed throughout the chapters, and all educators are encouraged to use those reflections within the chapters to consider how RTI might be implemented in their own class. Finally, although RTI has received recent interest as one way to document eligibility for students suspected of having a learning disability, there are many other applications of RTI including using the RTI process to curb inappropriate behavior. An example of behaviorally focused RTI is presented here.

As we all move into this new emphasis, we should focus on the benefits of RTI for all children in our classes. RTI is, in effect, one of the best instructional practices we can implement for our students. Implementation of RTI will enhance learning across the board in our classes, and ultimately benefit all of the students whom we serve.

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