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Response to Intervention

Abstract

In this literature review I looked at the vast literature on Response to Intervention (RTI). I focused on literature about Response to Intervention in regards to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, how Response to Intervention works as an academic model, and what a culturally responsive RTI program would look like. My research looked at a three tiered system of intervention that was in place in an elementary school for the 4th and 5th grade students for the 2007-2008 academic school year. I tracked student progress on reading levels using the Degree of Reading Assessment 2 throughout the year focusing specifically on those students who received some level of reading intervention during the school year.

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Introduction

The reauthorization of *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* that was signed into law in December of 2004 has brought about significant changes in the labeling of students with a specific learning disability. Among the areas affected by the reauthorization are the procedures for determining the existence of a learning disability, the addition of different criteria to make a determination whether a student has a specific learning disability, and the documentation necessary to have a student classified as having a specific learning disability.

Under the old IDEA legislation a discrepancy model was in place to make the determination of whether a student had a specific learning disability. This model looked at the discrepancy between a student's IQ and where they were currently performing. If there was a significant discrepancy of two or more years, the student was determined to have a specific learning disability. The problem with this model was there began to be a spike in the number of students that were being labeled with a learning disability (LD). Schools must now use a process based upon a student's response to specific scientific research based intervention methods and monitor the student's progress over time. This is requiring schools to prove that they have tried certain scientific research based interventions before a determination of LD is going to be made. This is in hopes of reducing the number of students that are mislabeled as having a specific learning disability.

RTI and IDEA

In the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* there were changes made to the criteria for identifying a student with a specific learning disability. If a child doesn't adequately meet the state approved grade level standards in one or more areas when given grade-level appropriate instruction, they may be considered to have a specific learning disability. The child may also be considered to have a learning disability if they are not making adequate progress to meeting standards based upon their response to specific, scientific research based interventions. The areas that are considered are oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics problem solving. The lack of adequate progress in these areas cannot be due to having or meeting the following criteria; a visual, hearing, or motor disability; mental retardation, emotional disturbance, cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency. After a student meets these criteria the school must provide data to support that the lack of progress is not due to a lack of quality instruction by providing data of where the student is performing before and after the interventions have been put into place. The school must also provide parents with this information as well (<http://www.idea.ed.gov>).

There were changes made in the observation criteria when observing a student with a suspected learning disability. The school must ensure that the child is being observed in different academic environments throughout his or her school day. This is done to ensure that the suspected student isn't just struggling in one class or with one teacher, but that a possible learning disability is present in different academic settings. The observations have to be made

after the student has been referred and any previous observations that have been done prior to the student's referral shouldn't be considered by the evaluation team. If the student being observed is not of school age or does not attend a school, the person doing the observations must observe the student in an environment that is appropriate for a student of their age (<http://www.idea.ed.gov>).

The changes in the required documentation needed to be present, to make a determination if a student has a specific learning disability, include the following; the school needs to describe any relevant behavior noted during the observations and if, or how that behavior relates directly to the child's academic functioning. In addition if there are any educationally relevant medical findings that may have an effect on the child's academic progress. They also need to prove that the student is not meeting state approved standards or is not making adequate academic progress based upon the scientific research based interventions put into place, and whether the student shows a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in academic performance for a student of his or her age. The school has to show the specific data that was collected from the interventions that were put into place and provide documentation that the parents were notified along the way with their child's progress and performance with the interventions that were used in schools (<http://www.idea.ed.gov>).

Dr. Joseph Casbarro's Theory

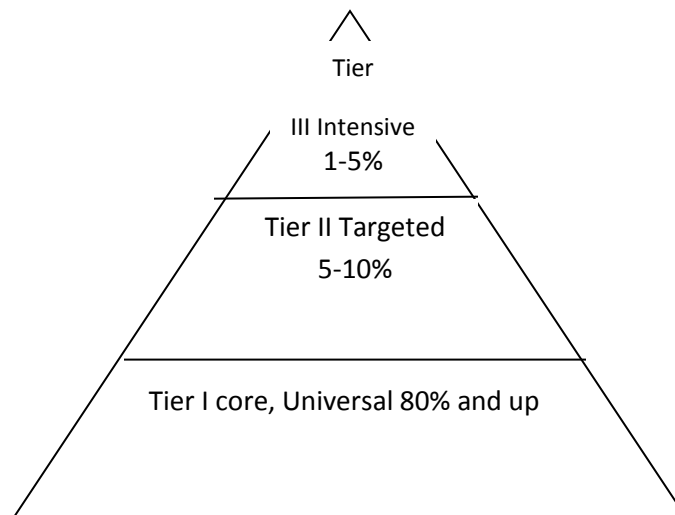
"Response to Intervention is primarily a general education initiative designed to address the needs of struggling learners early in their education experience" (Casbarro, 2008). Response to Intervention is a problem solving model that uses data to inform academic decision making that is taken from research based practices. The success of Response to Intervention is based on

the following components; high quality research based instruction, universal screening, progress monitoring, early intervention and progress monitoring during interventions. Response to Intervention assumes that the students are receiving high quality research based instruction that includes 90 minutes each of reading instruction, math and science that is given by a highly qualified teacher as defined by No Child Left Behind. A universal screening method is in place to identify levels of individual student proficiency as well as group performance on specific skills. Progress monitoring refers to the process of checking student progress at least three times per year. The early interventions refer to the decision in the early grades for specific targeted interventions to take place. The progress monitoring is the process of checking student progress during an intervention method or methods. The progress is checked frequently and that interventions are finely tuned as necessary based upon the data that is collected from the monitoring. The success level of Response to Intervention is based heavily on progress monitoring and data collection. The collection of this information and decisions based upon interventions is to be made by a team of teachers found in the academic setting. Response to Intervention is not the sole responsibility of one teacher but a group of teachers working to move students forward (Casbarro, 2008).

The Response to Intervention team is made primarily of the following people in the academic setting; the principal, reading teacher, school psychologist, speech therapist, general education teacher, and special education teacher. The purpose of the team is to meet to discuss the concerns about student's academic difficulties, identify student strengths, interests, and review data that has been collected. The team then decides what the projected academic outcomes should be and ways that student progress is going to be monitored. The team also makes decisions concerning what interventions are going to be implemented, how they are going

to review the intervention plans and changes that are going to be made to the plan. Additionally the team is responsible to communicate the plan to help the child, and the results of the interventions with the child's parents (Casbarro, 2008).

Response to Intervention is usually applied using a three-tiered model that mimics a pyramid. The purpose is to have the amount and intensity of the intervention or interventions increase as a child moves up the pyramid. This movement is based upon the need of the child which is determined by the Response to Intervention team.



The first tier in the model contains interventions designed to meet the needs of 80% or more of the class. This assumes that the instruction is differentiated enough to ensure adequate student progress toward standards. The second tier is necessary for the 5 to 10% of the class that isn't making adequate progress towards standards with the interventions already in place. Often times, these interventions are implemented in a small group instructional setting and are in addition to the general education curriculum. Progress monitoring in this group is usually done bi-weekly and the interventions could last upwards of ten weeks. The third tier is for the 1 to 5%

of the classroom population that hasn't made adequate progress with the interventions in the second tier. This is where a determination can be made for the possibility of special education services to help students. The students in this tier receive individualized intensive interventions that are specifically target to eliminate skill deficits in academic areas. These interventions most likely are given to students outside of the general educational classroom and in addition to the general education curriculum (Casbarro, 2008).

A Multi-Layered System

According to Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) they view Response To Intervention as “a multilayered prevention system, responsiveness to intervention (Response To Intervention) integrates increasingly intensive instruction and, at each layer, employs assessment to identify students who are inadequately responsive and who therefore require intervention at the next, more intensive layer in the system”(Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006; 621). The system of Response to Intervention is then used as a way to prevent academic failure in the long term and not as a means to prevent special education. They additionally say that “Response To Intervention simultaneously provides a framework for preventing long-term serious difficulties, even as it offers an innovative and promising process for identifying and serving students with disabilities” (2006; 621).

They propose a framework for Response to Intervention that is based upon three levels; primary, secondary, and tertiary. They provide a set of questions to address the intervention efficacy, integrity of the assessment, and the feasibility of the intervention at each level of the Response to Intervention model. At the primary level the intervention efficacy takes a look the universal core program, what is the expected size of those affected, what proportion of the

students respond adequately, and how the fidelity of implementation can be measured accurately. The assessment integrity at this level looks at how responsiveness to the universal core program is determined, how accurately does the screening tool predict who will and will not achieve important long-term outcomes, what the progress-monitoring tool reliably and validly represents progress at primary prevention, and what rules can be applied to the progress-monitoring data to reliably and validly dichotomize responsiveness so it corresponds to forecast important long-term outcomes. The feasibility looks what is the feasibility, cost, and training of implementing the universal core program, the feasibility, costs, and training required to implementing screening and progress monitoring, and is technology useful to support decision making (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

The secondary level in regards to intervention efficacy looks at the same questions that the primary level does. In regards to the assessment integrity, the model looks at how is responsiveness to the secondary intervention determined, and what is the reliability and validity of the progress monitoring tool in showing development, what rules can be applied to the progress-monitoring data to predict important long-term outcomes. The questions in regards to the feasibility of this level of intervention are exactly the same as the primary level (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

In regards to the tertiary level of intervention that is proposed by Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) the questions are exactly the same as the secondary level of intervention. There are many similarities between the questions that are asked at each level, which is meant to show that interventions change at the levels and not what you are looking at to determine the effectiveness

of the necessary interventions. This ensures that the Response to Intervention model is used to promote long-term success in students.

Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) believe that appropriate behavior is at the core of the success of the intervention that the student is going to receive. Another key important factor that they name is progress-monitoring. These two keys are important for success because if the child is not behaving appropriately how are you going to determine if the academic intervention is effective or not? The answer is that it cannot be accurately determined. In addition if the Response To Intervention team is not accurately or effectively monitoring student progress how is a determination going to be made on the effectiveness of the intervention, and more importantly, how to change the interventions as needed.

Douglas Marston examined three papers on Response to Intervention; *How Many Tiers Are Needed for Response to Intervention to Achieve Acceptable Prevention Outcomes* by Sharon Vaughn, *Tiers of Intervention in Kindergarten Through Third Grade* by Rollanda E. O'Connor, and *How Many Tiers Are Needed for Successful Prevention and Early Intervention? Heartland Area Education Agency's Evolution for Four to Three Tiers* by David Tilly III to look at prevention outcomes and learning disabilities identification patterns. According to Marston (2005) Vaughn and O'Connor look at using a Standard Protocol approach to Response to Intervention and Tilly uses the Problem Solving to RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION.

According to Marston (2005), Sharon Vaughn describes a three tiered model to help students struggling in kindergarten through third grade. The first tier is based primarily of core reading instruction that is provided by the classroom teacher for all students. The interventions that are used are based on research in the areas of phonemic awareness, alphabetic

understanding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The instruction is given for 90 minutes a day and the monitoring occurs three times each year. The second tier in Vaughn's model is a 30 minutes small group daily supplemental program in addition to the regular 90 minutes that the students receive. Students are identified as not meeting early literacy benchmarks and are instructed by general education, special education or other trained teachers in the school setting, and the interventions last anywhere from 10 to 20 weeks in length. In the third tier the students are in groups of three or less and receive two 30 minute specifically designed intervention session per day given by an intervention specialist and the length the interventions last can be longer than that of the second level.

Marsten (2005) notes there are similarities in O'Connor's and Vaughn's approaches. In O'Connors she also describes a three tier approach that contains a strong experimental research design. The first tier of O'Connor's plan is the same as Vaughn's with progress monitoring taking place three times per year. In the second tier there becomes a change in the model that O'Connor proposes. Marsten (2005) notes that in kindergarten students receive small group intervention three times per week for a total of 15 minutes, and in the other grades the students receive instruction for 20 to 25 minutes three times per week. The major difference in this level is that the interventions are based upon student weakness, and that the interventions made could last as little as eight months and upwards of several years. The third tier provides individualized instruction with one or two students in a group and is provided on a daily basis.

In his article Martsen states that Tilly's research is based over a 10 year span in Iowa. He goes on to further state that "Tilly's project lacks the experimental design of the Vaughn and O'Connor studies, it compensates with large sample sizes, many schools implementing the

model, and evidence of bringing Response to Intervention to scale” (2005, p.540). Marsten (2005) notes that there are two very important assumptions that Tilly makes clear that are present at each of the three levels; the first is an applied scientific method known as problem solving and the second is the use of scientifically based interventions being used to help struggling students. There are four essential questions Marsten (2005) points out that Tilly says need to be asked of each child; what is the problem, why is this happening, what do we do about it, and is the intervention working. Marsten additionally notes the importance of professional development in outlining instructional strategies to be used during the three levels of intervention. It is also noted that there are no given specifications of group size, duration, and intensity of the interventions being provided at each level.

Marsten states in his summary that the “Vaughn, O’Connor, and Tilly studies provide positive outcomes showing the efficacy of the three-tier approach to Response to Intervention. The Response to Intervention models had considerable impact on elementary student achievement in the area of reading” (2005, p.544-544). He gives additional factors that need to be considered in regards to future research. He believes that additional academic areas need to be looked at and also the grade level of the students. He concludes by saying “Vaughn, O’Connor, and Tilly describe promising approaches to Response to Intervention” (2005, p. 544).

Response to Intervention Teacher Requirements

Mary K. Lose is a professor at Oakland University in Rochester Michigan and wrote an article that looks at what a successful Response to Intervention program requires of teachers. In her article she lists the fundamental principles of Response to Intervention and the fundamental principles of a successful Response to Intervention program.

According to Lose (2007) the fundamental principles of Response to Intervention are to ensure early identification and intervention of all children that are struggling. This means that students are identified at the first sign of needing help, and not waiting for the students to get in the long run. She states that there needs to be an appropriate way to identify children with LD. This refers to assessments that look at all aspects of a child's literacy knowledge. The areas that Lose refers to are "oral language skill, knowledge of letters, words, sound letter correspondences; concepts of print and text reading and writing" (2007, p.276). The early intervention services used need to be effective, intensive and evidence based. The interventions need to be proven to provide student academic gains over a period of time to be considered successful. She highlights that the interventions for the lowest performing students needs to be individually planned out and to be most effective need to occur in a one-to-one setting. Progress monitoring should take place for all students in the classroom. The person should be experienced in diagnosing student needs based upon the information being collected, and also be the person carrying out the interventions. The annual yearly progress needs to be reported for all struggling students. This should be reported to the school and school community to examine the effectiveness of the interventions that are being provided to students. There needs to be the highest level of professional development for teachers who have students that are the lowest achieving. Lose (2007) also acknowledges the schools need to create a multi-tiered problem solving team to support student progress. This team needs to work together to assume the responsibility of student success. She notes that a division amongst team members could cause there to be ineffectiveness in the delivery of interventions (Lose, 2007). Lose states that: "many Response to Intervention approaches place emphasis on prescriptive instruction delivered by teachers-as-technicians who focus on what children don't know as the starting point for

instruction. Such approaches lack the necessary decision making on the part of teachers to respond effectively to differing challenges posed by individual children”(p. 277).

As a result of this Lose has come up with several key components to a successful Response to Intervention approach. The first key component that Lose names is the idea that children individually learn to read, not in a group. Teachers need to be observant of individual student learning that is taking place and individualize instruction to meet the learning needs of their students. The next component looks at the only valid Response to Intervention approach is one that delivers the desired outcome of the intervention. She believes that an intervention needs to be delivered without delay and be as long as needed to work. She says that interventions need to be for each individual student in order to be successful. The next component of a successful Response to Intervention program has the most qualified teachers working with the students that are the lowest achieving. She states that “teachers, not programs, teach children to read” (2007, p. 277). The idea behind having the highest qualified teacher working with this student population is to have the teacher be able to make on the spot determination of how to teach the students. This leads to her final component of a successful Response to Intervention approach which is to have sustained high quality professional-development. This is to ensure that teachers are highly-qualified to be able to give the best instruction to the students that need the highest-quality instruction to be successful. Lose also cites the What Works Clearinghouse website (www.whatworks.ed.gov) as a resource to find evidence based interventions that work. She goes on to explain that the website rates the effectiveness of the available interventions to help struggling readers. Lose concludes with her article with summing up her view that an effective Response to Intervention program requires an effective teacher. “A child’s Response To Intervention requires a skilled, responsive teacher, and reading professionals already have

enough information to make an appropriate, informed, and timely response to the challenges of Response To Intervention”(2007, p. 278)

Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention Model

One of the areas that have been majorly over misrepresented in special education is the minority population. Many times this population includes but isn't limited to students that are English Language Learners, students from high-poverty areas, and students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The purpose of the Response to Intervention model is to provide interventions to students to prevent future long-term academic failure. In order to provide effective interventions to all students including the minority population there needs to be cultural considerations in place when selecting a Response to Intervention model. There is very little research that has been done on looking into this aspect of Response to Intervention.

Janette K. Klingner of the University of Colorado at Boulder and Patricia A. Edwards of Michigan State University looked at this and wrote an article entitled *Cultural Considerations with Response to Intervention Models*. They claim that “this change has dramatic implications for culturally diverse students who historically have been disproportionately overrepresented in special education programs” (Klingner and Edwards, 2006, p. 108). Their article examines areas to look at for culturally responsive Response to Intervention and then proposes a Response to Intervention model that is culturally responsive. They give their perspectives on culturally responsive literacy instruction is, what evidence based interventions what works with whom, by whom and in what contexts, issues in regards to fidelity and generalizability, and looking more closely at non-responders.

When looking at the area of providing culturally responsive literacy instruction Klingner and Edwards (2006) base their information on an article written by T.G. Wiley entitled *Literacy and Language diversity in Sociocultural Contexts*. The framework that Wiley uses refers to accommodation, incorporation, and adaptation as the three main ideas in culturally responsive literacy education. Accommodation requires teachers have a better understanding of the communicative styles and practices of students. This means teachers have to be aware of the types of literacy instruction that can be enriched in the homes of all students. Incorporation “requires practices that have not been valued previously” by teachers and “incorporate them with the curriculum” (Klingner and Edwards, 2006, p.109). In this stage it is important to create a strong link between home and school. Teachers have to incorporate literature that includes other ethnic groups other than the majority. Adaptation refers to helping the parents adapt to the different cultural norms that are used to instruct their child. Teachers and schools need to provide parents with the opportunities to learn what is being taught in schools to better help and assist their children in the home setting.

When looking at evidence based interventions Klingner and Edwards (2006) warn of selecting appropriate interventions based upon the students that they are intended for. They have concluded that there isn't much research included with the interventions on students that are English Language Learners, and how proficient students are with English. Klingner and Edwards (2006) also warn about assuming there is a deficit in the child when there is a lack of progress. They urge the school to look at the classroom first to see if the students are in a position to be successful with the intervention or interventions that are in place before a determination can be made whether or not it is beneficial.

When looking at issues regarding fidelity and generalizations Klingner and Edwards (2006) ask the following question; to what extent is the teacher's reluctance, resistance, or inability to implement a practice in a certain way due to differences between his or her students and the students for whom the practice was originally developed, or perhaps to variations in the school context? They are quick to note that there is a huge difference in the controls of experiments and the real world applications of these interventions. They urge there to be more research that pays attention to this, so that when these students are being held accountable it can actually work with what the students are being given.

In regards to looking more closely at non-responders Klingner and Edwards (2006) challenge teachers to look at why the student didn't make the progress necessary for the intervention that was put into place. "As educators and researchers, we must continue to ask whether we are truly doing all we can to improve outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse student who do not response and seem to be left behind."(2006, p.112) Klingner and Edwards also suggest "that additional research is needed in which mixed-methods approaches are used to investigate culturally responsive practices singularly and in combination with other approaches."(2006, p. 112)

Klingner and Edwards (2006) suggest a four tiered Response to Intervention model that is culturally and linguistically diverse for minority students. The first tier consists of high quality instruction that is culturally responsive with progress monitoring taking place in the general education classroom. There are two important components that are pointed out by the authors and those are; there needs to be evidence based interventions and teachers have to develop culturally responsive attributes to be effective teachers. The teachers need to become aware of

professional development opportunities and be aware of what types of instruction and strategies are beneficial to the diverse population that they are teaching. Klingner and Edwards (2006) do note that there is little research available that will help assist teachers and school personnel find these types of interventions, but as educator we need to know our students and try to figure out what works and what doesn't work in the mean time.

The second tier is structured the same as discussed earlier in this paper. The students in this level haven't made adequate progress towards the benchmarks at their particular grade level. Klingner and Edwards (2006) admit that there isn't much research to know what this level of intervention should look like in terms of durations and intensity. They do acknowledge that there is research that shows that ELL learners are able to make progress using the interventions that native English speakers use at this level.

Klingner and Edwards (2006) recommend that the third tier consists of a multicultural and multidisciplinary team to help students. They suggest that on this team there needs to be a teacher or teachers that are experienced with bi-lingual instruction. The purpose here to it to be able to offer guidance and assistance to culturally sensitive assessment that is ongoing. Their expertise will also help in looking at how to alter existing interventions to be able meet student needs based upon the data that has been collected. The authors additionally note the importance of classroom observations in different academic settings in this tier of intervention.

The fourth tier in this Response to Intervention model is meant to be special education intervention. Klingner and Edwards (2006) see this importance in this level of intervention of more intensive individualized instruction. Another key facet of this tier according to the authors is there is no time limit set for the student to meet benchmarks.

In conclusion there is a vast wealth of information and research available on Response to Intervention. All of the articles that were reviewed see Response to Intervention as an effective way to deliver interventions and have the ability to benefit a student's academic progress, and in the long run start to balance out the number of students who are labeled as having a specific learning disability. There needs to be more literature and research to examine the effectiveness of culturally responsive Response to Intervention models and approaches. This literature and research over time is going to bring down the over misrepresentation of minority groups as being labeled with a learning disability.

Methodology

Setting

The setting of my research is the inner city of Rochester. The area is of a low socio-economic status with a large African-American and Hispanic population. This setting is different and unique from many of the sub-urban school setting in the surrounding areas of Rochester. Among these differences are cultural, socio-economic status and availability of resources for students. Resources available would include services or money in both the school and the community.

Participants

The participants in this study were 21 male and 22 female students ages 9-11. These students attended an elementary school in the city of Rochester. The students were not randomly selected. They were selected based on the level of reading intervention services that were provided during the 2007-2008 academic school year. The students were of African-American, and Hispanic backgrounds, of low socio-economic status, and in the 4th and 5th grade. The students were in average health for their age.

Procedures

The design of this study was to examine the Degree of Reading Assessment 2 (DRA) scores for students in 4th and 5th grade that received some level of reading intervention for the 2007-2008 school year. The study was set up to see the effectiveness of a three tiered intervention system on improving student performance. I looked at the progress the students made based on their DRA 2 scores at the different tiers of intervention. This was evaluated

based on the number of DRA 2 assessments the students were able to pass and what level of intervention services they received.

Findings

Looking at the combined data for the students in 4th and 5th grade for the 2007-2008 school year, there were a total of 43 students who received some level of reading intervention services for the year. In September there were 11 students receiving tier one services, 17 tier two and 10 tier three intervention services. In November there were 12 students at tier one, 18 in tier two and 11 at tier three. In March there were 12 students at tier one, 19 students at tier two and 12 at tier three. In June there were five at tier one, 17 at tier two and 10 at tier three. Out of the 43 students there were seven total students who didn't qualify for reading intervention services at the end of the school year. There were three students who did not pass one DRA 2 assessment, nine students who passed only one DRA 2 assessment, 14 students who passed two DRA 2 assessments and 15 that passed three or more DRA 2 assessments during the school year.

In the beginning of the school year in September there were a total of 17 students who were receiving reading intervention in fourth grade. There were a total of seven students who were in the first tier of intervention, six in the second tier and four at the third tier of intervention. In November the numbers increased to eight in tiers one and two and four students receiving intervention at their three. These numbers remained consistent in the month of March. In June the number of students receiving intervention dropped to a total of 14 students. The breakdown at each intervention level was as follows; three at tier one, five at tier two and six at tier three. There was one student who didn't pass any DRA assessments during the year, six students that passed only one DRA, four students who passed 2 DRA exams and seven who

passed three or more DRA exams. There were only two of the original 8 students at level one in June still receiving support on this level. There was one student who began the year in a level two intervention that moved out of receiving intervention and was reading at grade level at the end of the year. There were two new level three intervention students in June who were new to the elementary school. One student dropped from a level one to a level two and then finished the year at level one. There was no movement of the students who were receiving interventions on the third and most intense level of intervention provided by the school.

In fifth grade there were a total of 23 students that received reading intervention services at some point during the 2007-2008 school year. In September there were 21 total students with four receiving tier one services, 11 receiving tier two services and six receiving tier three services. In November there was the same number of students receiving intervention services. One student had moved from level two services to level three services. In March there were two new students that were enrolled in the elementary and received reading intervention services bringing the total number of students receiving intervention up to 23. There were four students at level one, 11 at level two, and eight at level three. In June the number of students that were receiving intervention services dropped to 18, this was due to three students leaving the school and two students not qualifying for services anymore. There were two students that were receiving level one services, 12 students receiving level two services and four students receiving level three services. There were a total of two students that moved out of the intervention system by June. One student dropped from level two services to level three services. Four of the students that were receiving level three services moved up to level two services. There were a total of two students who did not pass a DRA 2 assessment during the year, three students who

passed only one DRA 2 assessment, 10 students passed two DRA 2 assessments and seven students passed three or more DRA 2 assessments during the school year.

Discussion

According to literature reviewed on Response to Intervention, the breakdown of students in a three tiered intervention system should look like a pyramid with the fewest number of students receiving the highest and most intense level of services. The data that was collected for the total number of students receiving intervention services does not match the pyramid as suggested by the literature on Response to Intervention that was reviewed. The data suggests that an equal distribution between the least and most intensive levels of intervention and that the highest number of students be present in the second tier of intervention. This type of a spread between the intervention levels would make this an ineffective intervention system at this elementary school and would suggest an in-depth look in changing the requirements of each intervention level and the interventions provided at each level.

Another key factor that would lead to the conclusion of an ineffective Response to Intervention model is the lack of progress that is being made by those students who are receiving the highest level of support. The students at this tier should be the ones that are making the most progress due to the amount of time that is provided as a supplementation to the regular reading instruction they receive. Additionally students at this level should be making progress at closing the gap to becoming a student performing on standards based upon the measurement tool.

The lack of movement of students at this level could be because of a high level of differing needs among the students in this level and a lack of available resources to help the students become more successful. The major reason I believe that there is little growth made by

these students is due to the severity of academic needs of the students in these grade levels. Realistically speaking there is a limited amount of progress that students can make in one academic school year. If a student is reading two years or more below grade level it is going to be difficult for them to make huge gains necessary to bring them to grade level in one year.

The second tier of this intervention model appears to be effective on some level. There is growth and movement of students at this level. There are students who move up to the first tier and out of the intervention model altogether from this level. The data would suggest with the highest number of students being at this level that the qualifications of students at this level should be looked at. According to the literature reviewed there should be five to ten percent of the population of students receiving intervention to be at this level. In actuality there is close to 50% of the intervention students at this level. A misdistribution of the percentage of students suggests further suggests a need to look at the requirements of each intervention level.

The only effective part of the first tier in this intervention model provided by looking at the data is that 16% of the students no longer require some level of intervention based on the qualifications needed. The main purpose of the first tier of intervention is to provide a boost to students to get them back on grade level or meeting the standards of the assessment tool used for measuring student success. The literature suggests that this should be 80% or higher of students receiving intervention services, which is not matched by the number of students at this level and further leading to the conclusion of looking at the qualifications for students receiving services

The overall system at first glance appears to be effective due to the high number of students that are passing DRA 2 assessments during the year. There were a total of 29 students that passed two or more DRA 2 assessments during the year. However, after a closer examination there is a high level of ineffectiveness of this intervention system. This main reason

for this ineffectiveness is that the intervention system is not a culturally relevant model. The breakdown of the student population is 52% African American, 46% Hispanic and 2% white Caucasian. The literature reviewed suggested that there be measures in place to have culturally relevant teaching materials, and most importantly a way of teaching and educating parents on ways that they could be of assistance at home. I know that the school does require that teachers meet with parents of those students receiving interventions and gives them strategies to practice at home. However, I believe that this is where there is a problem with the intervention system. A student is only going to make so much progress working in school and if there isn't the same type or level of support at home a student is going to struggle to make academic gains in the classroom.

Another reason for the ineffectiveness of student progress in this intervention model is lack of resources. I know that the funding is not available to get the intervention materials needed for these students. As an educator you need to be able to have the tools necessary to make progress a reality for students. Lastly, the data suggest that requirements of each tier of intervention needs to be looked at. If a majority of the students in the program are not receiving the lowest level of intervention then it is going to be hard for students to make progress. How is a student who is far behind going to make progress in a group that could be as high as eight students? The answer is they are going to struggle because that is how they got to this point.

In conclusion I think that there is promise that a proper intervention model will aide in eliminating the performance gap and the overrepresentation of students with a specific learning disability in special education. The literature reviewed provided a means to suggest that this will take place. I think that in theory Response to Intervention will work to provide a promising outcome for students who may have not had as good an outlook previously. I think that the

realistic implementation of a system needed to help bridge the learning gap is going to be the toughest opponent. If interventions are not carried out the way they are supposed to be, by people with the proper training and having the proper materials necessary it is impossible to make a determination on the effectiveness of the model.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study would be not having intervention data from schools with similar intervention models and similar demographics. This would allow me to be able to make a conclusion of whether the model is ineffective or if it is due to implementation of the school that is using the model.

Next Steps

In looking at the next steps for research, I decided it should go one of two ways. The first would be look at and examine how effectiveness of this intervention model in other urban schools with similar intervention systems and compare that data for sub-urban schools that use a similar model. This would allow me to see if the intervention model being used was effective or not. The other way would be examining data from schools that use a more culturally relevant intervention model. This would provide a basis to see the degree that culture plays in eliminating the performance gap among students who are struggling in school.

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