



RtI: General or Special Education? Who is Responsible?

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Abstract

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative that takes place prior to placement in special education. RtI requires general education teachers to use research based instruction with all students and evaluate the effectiveness of that instruction. Given that RtI begins in the general education classroom the question remains, are general educators aware of the development and implementation of RtI as a process for assessing and possibly eventually placing students into special education?

RtI: General or Special

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RtI: General or Special Education? Who is Responsible?

Since the passage of Public Law 94-142, the definition and identification of children with high incidence disabilities have remained ambiguous and subjective (Harry and Klingner 2007). This ambiguity and subjectivity has led to the emergence of two trends: (a) the dramatic increase of students identified as having learning disabilities (LD) (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006), and (b) the higher percentages of minorities in special education than those found in the general population (Brown-Chidsey 2007). In response, alternative methods to ensure the accurate and efficient identification of students with disabilities have been suggested (Bradley, Danielson, and Doolittle 2007; Brown-Chidsey 2007; Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, and Vaughn 2004; Fuchs, Fuchs, and Hollenbeck 2007; Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, and Kavale 2006; Hammill, Leigh, McNutt, and Larsen 1987; Klingner and Edwards 2006; Mellard, Byrd, Johnson, Tollefson, and Boesche 2004; National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD] 2005). Response to Intervention (RtI) has been identified as an alternate method for identifying students who have learning disabilities while promoting the use of research based effective methods of instruction in order to eliminate the gap between identification and intervention (Bradley, Danielson, and Hallahan 2002). Simply put, RtI is a way to prevent academic failure and identify students with learning disabilities.

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Public Law 108-446, (IDEA 2004) and the removal of the federal requirement to use the ability-achievement discrepancy formula that has long been used to identify students with LD (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.307(a)(3)), the RtI approach has gained significant exposure as the preferred alternative (Bradley et al. 2007). Local educational agencies may determine that a student has a specific learning disability if the child does not respond to research based

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24 RtI has gone beyond just reading problems and has included other domains such as core
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36 Typically, RtI models are multi-tiered with at least three tiers: (a) Tier I, in which
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38 universal high quality instruction and assessment is provided to all students in general education;
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40 (b) Tier II, in which more specialized and specific strategies are used for those students who
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44 conducts a comprehensive assessment to see whether the child has a disability and is eligible for
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46 special education. The academic interventions change and become more intensive at each tier
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48 (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006). Data are collected at each tier to determine the effectiveness of the
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52 despite having high quality instruction and targeted interventions, then they may have learning
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RtI: General or Special

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5 from one tier to the next and duration, frequency, time of the interventions, and how screening
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7 for secondary intervention should occur are left to the schools (Bradley et al. 2007; Mellard et al.
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11 students are targeted for intervention. They recommended 5 weeks of short-term progress
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13 monitoring in response to general education for identifying which children will need preventative
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15 intervention. Students who respond to these preventative interventions are returned to the general
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17 classroom instruction or Tier I; those who do not respond may need to move to Tier III, which is
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19 synonymous with special education placement. The success of RtI at Tier II is dependent on
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21 implementation of specific interventions with fidelity by school personnel, the classroom
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23 teacher(s), reading specialists, school psychologists, and trained paraprofessionals. While
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25 Farstrup (2006) argued that it is critical for reading teachers and specialists to be part of RtI as
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27 they have the expertise to effectively guide and provide effective reading instruction, general
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29 educators are responsible to plan and evaluate progress.
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36 RtI will significantly impact the way general educators' instruction is delivered (Hilton
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38 2007). In its initial tiers, RtI is a general education initiative that takes place prior to evaluation
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40 for special education (Brown-Chidsey 2007; Zirkel 2007). According to Brown-Chidsey, the first
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42 goal of RtI is for teachers to use research based instructional methods for all students.
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44 Furthermore, general education teachers must assess and evaluate students in order to determine
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46 the effectiveness of the instruction. Therefore, as Bradley et al. (2007) stated, the greatest
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48 challenge of large scale implementation of RtI is in the preparation of all educators to effectively
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50 use assessment to drive instruction. Or, as Mellard and his colleagues (2004) stated, "The
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52 reliance on general education to implement research-based instruction and routine, systematic
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54 progress monitoring represents an enormous shift from current practice and would require
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5 general education to adopt an educational reform in which they may have had little input” (p.
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7 255).

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10 According to Ehren and Whitmire (2005), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)
11 and the IDEA 2004 have

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13 blur[red] the line between general education and special education in such a way that the
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15 expertise of personnel typically assigned to special education programs can be utilized to
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17 assist and support students in general education and their teachers. It is critical for school
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19 administrators, classroom teachers, SLPs, school psychologists, special education
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21 teachers, reading specialists, and other educators to become familiar with the aspects of
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23 these laws relevant to RTI to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits that
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25 these laws provide. (p. 169)
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31 While the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is committed to the provision of
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33 technical assistance, the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities continues to provide
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35 information, and the International Reading Association develops materials, one has to wonder
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37 whether this general education initiative has fallen mainly within the confines of special
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39 education or teacher specialists.
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42 Purpose of the Study

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45 Given the increased attention that RtI is receiving in educational practice and state and
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47 federal legislation, it is important to assess the degree to which all educators are aware of
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49 developments and practices directly linked to RtI. One indicator of this professional awareness
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51 involves the presence of RtI in the professional literatures of different educator groups directly
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53 affected by these developments. To gauge this we posed the following questions:
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1. To what extent is RtI evident in the professional literature of educator groups (teachers, administrators, teacher educators, etc.) who will be responsible for implementing these school practices?
2. What is the nature of the published literature (concept papers, assessment practices, instructional practices, research, etc.) on RtI?

Method

Article Selection

To select articles to be included in this study, the authors conducted an electronic search of five electronic databases: ERIC, Exceptional Child Education Resources, Psychological Abstracts, EBSCOhost, and Searchasauras for all pertinent articles related to RtI. Descriptors used as the search criteria were response (or responsiveness) to intervention, RtI, pre-referral interventions, pre-referral strategies; early intervention, and 3-tier models. From this pool, articles were selected if (a) they were published between 2003 and April 2008; (b) they were published in peer-reviewed journals targeting elementary, middle, secondary general educators; principals; administrators; school psychologists; or special education personnel; and (c) there were references to RtI in the title or abstract. At least two authors reviewed the initial pool of potential articles to ascertain that each article met the selection criteria. The selection procedure initially identified 144 articles published in 34 journals. Of the 144 articles with response to intervention in the title or abstract, 128 were ultimately included in the study for coding. Sixteen articles were eliminated from the list because the “response to intervention” described did not relate to the identification of students with disabilities. A list of the journals is found in Table 1.

Coding Definitions and Scoring Procedures

To conduct a content analysis of the articles, an eight category code and rubric was developed. The code was refined during a series of exercises in which 20 articles were randomly selected and independently coded by the authors. After each round, the authors introduced scoring challenges and revisions until consensus was established on the definitions. The final code provided information on (a) demographic information (e.g., author, journal, year of publication), (b) the focus of the article (e.g., assessment, screening, eligibility issues; instructional practices; whether tiers were referenced), (c) how different models of RtI were presented (e.g., a general model of RtI versus RtI elements applied in particular schools), and (d) whether the article was original research (i.e., an investigation that employed a methodology for data collection, analysis, etc.) or a conceptual paper (e.g., position papers presenting a philosophical viewpoint, legal or policy issues, and manuals or technical guides). A summary of the coding definitions is presented in Table 2.

Once the coding definitions were established, the pool of articles was divided randomly among four of the authors for scoring. Each article was coded independently, and the results were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for later analysis. All coders sent their results to a single author for analysis.

Coding Agreement

A scoring agreement check was conducted on 10% of the articles. To conduct this agreement, one author was designated as a reliability coder. Each coder sent his or her articles to this coder, followed by his or her completed scoring sheet. Once the reliability coder completed her coding of these articles, her scoring results were compared to the results of the original coder to assess their level of agreement. Agreement was established for each individual code in the study, using the exact agreement method of $A / A+D \times 100\%$. Inter-rater agreement across all

codes and coders was 91.5%, ranging from 85% on the lowest codes (Is a general model described? Is RtI used for instruction?) to 96% agreement on the highest codes (Is the article original research or a conceptual paper? Is RtI used for assessment, screening, or eligibility? Is RtI applied in a specific place?).

Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics were run to establish the frequencies of response for each category of the coding system. Once those results were established, several categories were cross-checked to describe further the purpose, demographics, and audiences associated with other findings.

Results

Articles about RtI were found in 34 different journals. The journals were grouped according to audiences (see Table 1). For example, journals such as *Exceptional Children*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Journal of Special Education*, and *Remedial and Special Education*, which are intended for professionals in the special education, constituted one grouping, while journals such as *Education Digest* and *The Reading Teacher*, which are intended for the general education population, were grouped in a separate category. RtI articles were published in only four general education journals. Eight (6%) of the 128 articles were published in the four general education journals; six (75%) of those were published in the two reading journals. Special education journals (n=12) represented the most frequent avenue for publishing articles about RtI, followed by psychology journals (n=8), and leadership or policy journals (n=7). Journals related to special education and related disciplines constituted two-thirds of the journals reviewed. The range of articles found was inclusive of the 2003 to 2008 (April) years. The number of articles increased during the time period, from a low of 5 articles having RtI cited

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5 in the title or abstract in 2003 and 2004 to a high of 45 articles in 2007 (2008 was not a complete
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7 year).
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10 The articles then were analyzed as to the focus ascribed to RtI. While the IDEA 2004
11 indicates that RtI is essential to the identification of a specific learning disability, the researchers
12 wanted to know if writers on the topic were using RtI practices for assessment, screening and/or
13 eligibility. Of the 128 articles reviewed, 110 (86%) described RtI as an assessment or eligibility
14 tool. Further analysis indicated that 74 (58%) also indicated that RtI was useful as an
15 instructional practice. Of the articles reviewed, 52 were for assessment only, while in 13 others
16 the authors discussed RtI as an instructional practice only. In the rest, the authors wrote that RtI
17 was for both assessment and instruction.
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29 Next, the articles were analyzed as to how different models of RtI were presented. In 95
30 articles (74%), a conceptual model of RtI as a new or evolving practice in education was
31 described, while in 75 of the articles (59%) the authors specifically described RtI as a model
32 based on the concept of levels, stages, or tiers. In 36 articles (28%), the authors described a
33 particular application about how RtI had been implemented in schools, a district, or in a state.
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40 Last, the purpose of article was identified. Nearly three times as many conceptual articles
41 were published as compared to the number of research or empirical articles. Next, the researchers
42 coded each article based on whether it was research or an evaluation of original research,
43 professional opinion or position on RtI, a legal or policy article, or a presentation of guidelines
44 for implementation. Eighty-five articles (66%) were professional opinion or position papers
45 describing the use of RtI in various professions or in a variety of general situations. In 33 articles
46 (26%), the authors stated their professional opinion or position on RtI. In 9 articles, RtI was
47 described from a legal perspective or as a policy issue. Two articles provided readers with a
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5 continuous monitoring can serve as a “catalyst for instigating action to support children who are
6 likely to fail if not given appropriate intervention” (p. 527). RtI is a data driven decision-making
7 model and has the potential to provide teachers with continuous feedback about their students
8 that has instructional implications, yet the link between data driven decision-making and
9 eligibility decisions is not seen in the literature. Sloat et al. believed that the benefits of decision-
10 making models of this type outweighed the disadvantages. They believed that this process will
11 help teachers have greater confidence in their day-to-day instructional practices and become
12 more adept at individualizing instruction and motivating their students.
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24 In conclusion, our research has shown that to date the majority of articles about RtI have
25 targeted special educators rather than general educators. If, as Gersten and Dimino (2006)
26 profess that “for the most part, teachers see RTI, unlike prereferral interventions, as a genuine
27 part of the general education system” (p. 102) and therefore are more likely to implement it, then
28 authors, researchers, and policymakers need to do a better job of promoting the model in the
29 general education literature. In addition, for RtI to succeed there needs to be collaborative efforts
30 among state and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional
31 organizations from all areas of education (Hilton 2007). Not only should teacher education
32 programs make assessment a focus and equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills
33 about how to integrate teaching and assessment into their classroom practices (Heritage 2007),
34 but they also must help preservice teachers to understand how to tie assessment to instruction to
35 prevent academic failure.
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29 Heritage, Margaret. 2007. Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi*
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48 intervention models. *Reading Research Quarterly* 41: 108-17.
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51 Mellard, Daryl F., Sara E. Byrd, Evelyn Johnson, Julie M. Tollefson, and Liz Boesche. 2004.
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53 Foundations and research on identifying model responsiveness-to intervention sites.
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55 *Learning Disability Quarterly* 27: 243-56.
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5 National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD]. 2005, June. *Responsiveness to*
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16 No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Pub. L. No. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 *et seq.*
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18 (2001).
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21 Peck, Alan, & Stan Scarpatti. 2007. Special issue: Responsiveness to intervention. *Teaching*
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26 Silberglitt, Benjamin, and John M. Hintze. 2007. How much growth can we expect? A
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28 conditional analysis of R-CBM growth rates by level of performance. *Exceptional*
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33 Sloat, Elizabeth A., Joan F. Beswick, and J. Douglas Willms. 2007. Using early literacy
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43 Zirkel, Perry A. 2007. What does the law say? *Teaching Exceptional Children* 39(5): 65-7.
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Table 1

Journals with RtI Articles

Special education journals

Annals of Dyslexia; Education & Treatment of Children; Exceptional Children; Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Journal of Learning Disabilities; Journal of Special Education; Journal of Special Education Leadership; Learning Disabilities - A Contemporary Journal; Learning Disabilities Quarterly; Learning Disability Research and Practice; Remedial and Special Education; Teaching Exceptional Children

General education journals

Education Digest; Issues in Teacher Education; Reading Research Quarterly; The Reading Teacher

Speech and language journals

Communication Disorders Quarterly; Language, Speech, & Hearing Services in Schools; Topics in Language Disorders

Psychology journals

Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology; Journal of Educational Psychology; Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation; Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment; Journal of School Psychology; Psychology in the Schools; School Psychology

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5 Quarterly; School Psychology Review
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8 Leadership or policy
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11 Creighton Law Review; Educational Leadership; Harvard Education Letter; Leadership;
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13 Principal Leadership; School Administrator; School System Special Interest Section
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For Peer Review Only

Table 2

Coding Categories, Definitions, and Examples

Code	Definitions
Demographic Information	Authors, Date of Publication, Journal
Intended Audience	Primary target of article is elementary, middle, secondary general educators; principals; other administrators; school psychologists; special education personnel; others
Assessment or Screening	RTI is described as a tool for screening students with disability, or helping establish whether students might be eligible for special education services
Instructional Applications	Article describes instructional adaptations delivered to students as a method of determining whether students might respond to an intervention
General Model of RTI	Article describes a conceptual model of RTI as a new or evolving practice in education
Tiers and Levels	Article describes the 3-stage model of RTI; provides examples of interventions that represent the three tiers
Specific Application	Article describes a particular application in a school, district, or state; practical application of the model
Purpose of the Article	The article is a research or evaluation report, presents professional opinions of advocates a position, provides legal or policy implications, or presents implementation guidelines

Abstract

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative that takes place prior to evaluation for placement in special education. Essentially, the first two tiers of RtI require general education teachers to use research based instruction with all students and then evaluate the effectiveness of that instruction. Given that the use of RtI as an assessment tool begins in the general education classroom the question remains, are general educators aware of the development and implementation of RtI as a process for assessing and possibly eventually placing students into special education? The purpose of this study was to review the literature in order to answer the following two questions:

1. To what extent is RtI evident in the professional literature of educator groups (teachers, administrators, teacher educators, etc.) who will be responsible for implementing these school practices?
2. What is the nature of the published literature (concept papers, assessment practices, instructional practices, research, etc.) on RtI?

RtI: General or Special Education? Who is Responsible?

Since the passage of Public Law 94-142, the definition and identification of children with high incidence disabilities have remained ambiguous and subjective (Harry and Klingner 2007). This ambiguity and subjectivity has led to the emergence of two trends: (a) the dramatic increase of students identified as having learning disabilities (LD) (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006), and (b) the higher percentages of minorities in special education than those found in the general population (Brown-Chidsey 2007). In response, alternative methods to ensure the accurate and efficient identification of students with disabilities have been suggested (Bradley, Danielson, and Doolittle 2007; Brown-Chidsey 2007; Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, and Vaughn 2004; Fuchs, Fuchs, and Hollenbeck 2007; Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, and Kavale 2006; Hammill, Leigh, McNutt, and Larsen 1987; Klingner and Edwards 2006; Mellard, Byrd, Johnson, Tollefson, and Boesche 2004; National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD] 2005). Response to Intervention (RtI) has been identified as an alternate method for identifying students who have learning disabilities while promoting the use of research based effective methods of instruction in order to eliminate the gap between identification and intervention (Bradley, Danielson, and Hallahan 2002). Simply put, RtI is a way to prevent academic failure and identify students with learning disabilities.

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Public Law 108-446, (IDEA 2004) and the removal of the federal requirement to use the ability-achievement discrepancy formula that has long been used to identify students with LD (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.307(a)(3)), the RtI approach has gained significant exposure as the preferred alternative (Bradley et al. 2007). Local educational agencies may determine that a student has a specific learning disability if the child does not respond to research based

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25 Farstrup (2006) argued that it is critical for reading teachers and specialists to be part of RtI as
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27 they have the expertise to effectively guide and provide effective reading instruction, general
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29 educators are responsible to plan and evaluate progress.
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36 RtI will significantly impact the way general educators' instruction is delivered (Hilton
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38 2007). In its initial tiers, RtI is a general education initiative that takes place prior to evaluation
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40 for special education (Brown-Chidsey 2007; Zirkel 2007). According to Brown-Chidsey, the first
41
42 goal of RtI is for teachers to use research based instructional methods for all students.
43
44 Furthermore, general education teachers must assess and evaluate students in order to determine
45
46 the effectiveness of the instruction. Therefore, as Bradley et al. (2007) stated, the greatest
47
48 challenge of large scale implementation of RtI is in the preparation of all educators to effectively
49
50 use assessment to drive instruction. Or, as Mellard and his colleagues (2004) stated, "The
51
52 reliance on general education to implement research-based instruction and routine, systematic
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54 progress monitoring represents an enormous shift from current practice and would require
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RtI: General or Special

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5 general education to adopt an educational reform in which they may have had little input” (p.
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7 255).

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10 According to Ehren and Whitmire (2005), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)
11 and the IDEA 2004 have

12
13 blur[red] the line between general education and special education in such a way that the
14
15 expertise of personnel typically assigned to special education programs can be utilized to
16
17 assist and support students in general education and their teachers. It is critical for school
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19 administrators, classroom teachers, SLPs, school psychologists, special education
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21 teachers, reading specialists, and other educators to become familiar with the aspects of
22
23 these laws relevant to RTI to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits that
24
25 these laws provide. (p. 169)
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31 While the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is committed to the provision of
32
33 technical assistance, the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities continues to provide
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35 information, and the International Reading Association develops materials, one has to wonder
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37 whether this general education initiative has fallen mainly within the confines of special
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39 education or teacher specialists.
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42 Purpose of the Study

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44 Given the increased attention that RtI is receiving in educational practice and state and
45
46 federal legislation, it is important to assess the degree to which all educators are aware of
47
48 developments and practices directly linked to RtI. One indicator of this professional awareness
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50 involves the presence of RtI in the professional literatures of different educator groups directly
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52 affected by these developments. To gauge this we posed the following questions:
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5 3. To what extent is RtI evident in the professional literature of educator groups (teachers,
6 administrators, teacher educators, etc.) who will be responsible for implementing these
7 school practices?
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12 4. What is the nature of the published literature (concept papers, assessment practices,
13 instructional practices, research, etc.) on RtI?
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Method

Article Selection

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21 To select articles to be included in this study, the authors conducted an electronic search
22 of five electronic databases: ERIC, Exceptional Child Education Resources, Psychological
23 Abstracts, EBSCOhost, and Searchasauras for all pertinent articles related to RtI. Descriptors
24 used as the search criteria were response (or responsiveness) to intervention, RtI, pre-referral
25 interventions, pre-referral strategies; early intervention, and 3-tier models. From this pool,
26 articles were selected if (a) they were published between 2003 and April 2008; (b) they were
27 published in peer-reviewed journals targeting elementary, middle, secondary general educators;
28 principals; administrators; school psychologists; or special education personnel; and (c) there
29 were references to RtI in the title or abstract. At least two authors reviewed the initial pool of
30 potential articles to ascertain that each article met the selection criteria. The selection procedure
31 initially identified 144 articles published in 34 journals. Of the 144 articles with response to
32 intervention in the title or abstract, 128 were ultimately included in the study for coding. Sixteen
33 articles were eliminated from the list because the “response to intervention” described did not
34 relate to the identification of students with disabilities. A list of the journals is found in Table 1.
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Coding Definitions and Scoring Procedures

To conduct a content analysis of the articles, an eight category code and rubric was developed. The code was refined during a series of exercises in which 20 articles were randomly selected and independently coded by the authors. After each round, the authors introduced scoring challenges and revisions until consensus was established on the definitions. The final code provided information on (a) demographic information (e.g., author, journal, year of publication), (b) the focus of the article (e.g., assessment, screening, eligibility issues; instructional practices; whether tiers were referenced), (c) how different models of RtI were presented (e.g., a general model of RtI versus RtI elements applied in particular schools), and (d) whether the article was original research (i.e., an investigation that employed a methodology for data collection, analysis, etc.) or a conceptual paper (e.g., position papers presenting a philosophical viewpoint, legal or policy issues, and manuals or technical guides). A summary of the coding definitions is presented in Table 2.

Once the coding definitions were established, the pool of articles was divided randomly among four of the authors for scoring. Each article was coded independently, and the results were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for later analysis. All coders sent their results to a single author for analysis.

Coding Agreement

A scoring agreement check was conducted on 10% of the articles. To conduct this agreement, one author was designated as a reliability coder. Each coder sent his or her articles to this coder, followed by his or her completed scoring sheet. Once the reliability coder completed her coding of these articles, her scoring results were compared to the results of the original coder to assess their level of agreement. Agreement was established for each individual code in the study, using the exact agreement method of $A / A+D \times 100\%$. Inter-rater agreement across all

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5 codes and coders was 91.5%, ranging from 85% on the lowest codes (Is a general model
6 described? Is RtI used for instruction?) to 96% agreement on the highest codes (Is the article
7 original research or a conceptual paper? Is RtI used for assessment, screening, or eligibility? Is
8 RtI applied in a specific place?).
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13 *Analysis of the Data*

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17 Descriptive statistics were run to establish the frequencies of response for each category
18 of the coding system. Once those results were established, several categories were cross-checked
19 to describe further the purpose, demographics, and audiences associated with other findings.
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23 Results

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25
26 Articles about RtI were found in 34 different journals. The journals were grouped
27 according to audiences (see Table 1). For example, journals such as *Exceptional Children*,
28 *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Journal of Special Education*, and *Remedial and Special*
29 *Education*, which are intended for professionals in the special education, constituted one
30 grouping, while journals such as *Education Digest* and *The Reading Teacher*, which are intended
31 for the general education population, were grouped in a separate category. RtI articles were
32 published in only four general education journals. Eight (6%) of the 128 articles were published
33 in the four general education journals; six (75%) of those were published in the two reading
34 journals. Special education journals (n=12) represented the most frequent avenue for publishing
35 articles about RtI, followed by psychology journals (n=8), and leadership or policy journals
36 (n=7). Journals related to special education and related disciplines constituted two-thirds of the
37 journals reviewed. The range of articles found was inclusive of the 2003 to 2008 (April) years.
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The number of articles increased during the time period, from a low of 5 articles having RtI cited

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5 in the title or abstract in 2003 and 2004 to a high of 45 articles in 2007 (2008 was not a complete
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7 year).
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10 The articles then were analyzed as to the focus ascribed to RtI. While the IDEA 2004
11 indicates that RtI is essential to the identification of a specific learning disability, the researchers
12 wanted to know if writers on the topic were using RtI practices for assessment, screening and/or
13 eligibility. Of the 128 articles reviewed, 110 (86%) described RtI as an assessment or eligibility
14 tool. Further analysis indicated that 74 (58%) also indicated that RtI was useful as an
15 instructional practice. Of the articles reviewed, 52 were for assessment only, while in 13 others
16 the authors discussed RtI as an instructional practice only. In the rest, the authors wrote that RtI
17 was for both assessment and instruction.
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29 Next, the articles were analyzed as to how different models of RtI were presented. In 95
30 articles (74%), a conceptual model of RtI as a new or evolving practice in education was
31 described, while in 75 of the articles (59%) the authors specifically described RtI as a model
32 based on the concept of levels, stages, or tiers. In 36 articles (28%), the authors described a
33 particular application about how RtI had been implemented in schools, a district, or in a state.
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40 Last, the purpose of article was identified. Nearly three times as many conceptual articles
41 were published as compared to the number of research or empirical articles. Next, the researchers
42 coded each article based on whether it was research or an evaluation of original research,
43 professional opinion or position on RtI, a legal or policy article, or a presentation of guidelines
44 for implementation. Eighty-five articles (66%) were professional opinion or position papers
45 describing the use of RtI in various professions or in a variety of general situations. In 33 articles
46 (26%), the authors stated their professional opinion or position on RtI. In 9 articles, RtI was
47 described from a legal perspective or as a policy issue. Two articles provided readers with a
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5 continuous monitoring can serve as a “catalyst for instigating action to support children who are
6 likely to fail if not given appropriate intervention” (p. 527). RtI is a data driven decision-making
7 model and has the potential to provide teachers with continuous feedback about their students
8 that has instructional implications, yet the link between data driven decision-making and
9 eligibility decisions is not seen in the literature. Sloat et al. believed that the benefits of decision-
10 making models of this type outweighed the disadvantages. They believed that this process will
11 help teachers have greater confidence in their day-to-day instructional practices and become
12 more adept at individualizing instruction and motivating their students.
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24 In conclusion, our research has shown that to date the majority of articles about RtI have
25 targeted special educators rather than general educators. If, as Gersten and Dimino (2006)
26 profess that “for the most part, teachers see RTI, unlike prereferral interventions, as a genuine
27 part of the general education system” (p. 102) and therefore are more likely to implement it, then
28 authors, researchers, and policymakers need to do a better job of promoting the model in the
29 general education literature. In addition, for RtI to succeed there needs to be collaborative efforts
30 among state and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional
31 organizations from all areas of education (Hilton 2007). Not only should teacher education
32 programs make assessment a focus and equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills
33 about how to integrate teaching and assessment into their classroom practices (Heritage 2007),
34 but they also must help preservice teachers to understand how to tie assessment to instruction to
35 prevent academic failure.
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Table 1

Journals with RtI Articles

Special education journals

Annals of Dyslexia; Education & Treatment of Children; Exceptional Children; Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Journal of Learning Disabilities; Journal of Special Education; Journal of Special Education Leadership; Learning Disabilities - A Contemporary Journal; Learning Disabilities Quarterly; Learning Disability Research and Practice; Remedial and Special Education; Teaching Exceptional Children

General education journals

Education Digest; Issues in Teacher Education; Reading Research Quarterly; The Reading Teacher

Speech and language journals

Communication Disorders Quarterly; Language, Speech, & Hearing Services in Schools; Topics in Language Disorders

Psychology journals

Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology; Journal of Educational Psychology; Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation; Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment; Journal of School Psychology; Psychology in the Schools; School Psychology

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Quarterly; School Psychology Review



Leadership or policy

Creighton Law Review; Educational Leadership; Harvard Education Letter; Leadership;

Principal Leadership; School Administrator; School System Special Interest Section

Quarterly



For Peer Review Only

Table 2

Coding Categories, Definitions, and Examples

Code	Definitions
Demographic Information	Authors, Date of Publication, Journal
Intended Audience	Primary target of article is elementary, middle, secondary general educators; principals; other administrators; school psychologists; special education personnel; others
Assessment or Screening	RTI is described as a tool for screening students with disability, or helping establish whether students might be eligible for special education services
Instructional Applications	Article describes instructional adaptations delivered to students as a method of determining whether students might respond to an intervention
General Model of RTI	Article describes a conceptual model of RTI as a new or evolving practice in education
Tiers and Levels	Article describes the 3-stage model of RTI; provides examples of interventions that represent the three tiers
Specific Application	Article describes a particular application in a school, district, or state; practical application of the model
Purpose of the Article	The article is a research or evaluation report, presents professional opinions of advocates a position, provides legal or policy implications, or presents implementation guidelines
