RtI: General or Special Education? Who is Responsible?

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<th>The Education Forum</th>
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<td>UTEF-2009-0029.R1</td>
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<td>Manuscript Type:</td>
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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 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
interventions as part of the evaluation process (Sec. 614(b)(6)(B)). RtI is based on three core concepts: (a) application of scientific, research-based interventions in the general education classroom, (b) measurement of student response to these interventions, and (c) use of the RtI data to inform instruction (NJCLD 2005; New Report 2005).

RtI is a systematic method for assessment and instruction of students (Brown-Chidsey 2007), which uses progress monitoring to help pinpoint students who may need intervention (Peck and Scarpati 2007). As originally designed, the goal of RtI was to reduce the numbers of students who were identified for special education services primarily because of reading problems (Mellard et al. 2004; New Report 2005). However, in practice the implementation of RtI has gone beyond just reading problems and has included other domains such as core academics, behavior, and communication. The idea of RtI is to provide services to students before they have experienced multiple years of failure and therefore are in need of special education services (Dykeman 2006; Fletcher et al. 2004; Fuchs and Fuchs 2006).

Typically, RtI models are multi-tiered with at least three tiers: (a) Tier I, in which universal high quality instruction and assessment is provided to all students in general education; (b) Tier II, in which more specialized and specific strategies are used for those students who have not progressed as expected in Tier I; and (c) Tier III, in which a multidisciplinary team conducts a comprehensive assessment to see whether the child has a disability and is eligible for special education. The academic interventions change and become more intensive at each tier (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006). Data are collected at each tier to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Silberglitt and Hintze 2007). If students continue to demonstrate underachievement despite having high quality instruction and targeted interventions, then they may have learning disabilities (Mellard et al. 2004). Decisions regarding how many tiers are needed, movement
from one tier to the next and duration, frequency, time of the interventions, and how screening for secondary intervention should occur are left to the schools (Bradley et al. 2007; Mellard et al. 2004; Stecker 2007). Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) have recommended timelines for how long students are targeted for intervention. They recommended 5 weeks of short-term progress monitoring in response to general education for identifying which children will need preventative intervention. Students who respond to these preventative interventions are returned to the general classroom instruction or Tier I; those who do not respond may need to move to Tier III, which is synonymous with special education placement. The success of RtI at Tier II is dependent on implementation of specific interventions with fidelity by school personnel, the classroom teacher(s), reading specialists, school psychologists, and trained paraprofessionals. While Farstrup (2006) argued that it is critical for reading teachers and specialists to be part of RtI as they have the expertise to effectively guide and provide effective reading instruction, general educators are responsible to plan and evaluate progress.

RtI will significantly impact the way general educators’ instruction is delivered (Hilton 2007). In its initial tiers, RtI is a general education initiative that takes place prior to evaluation for special education (Brown-Chidsey 2007; Zirkel 2007). According to Brown-Chidsey, the first goal of RtI is for teachers to use research based instructional methods for all students. Furthermore, general education teachers must assess and evaluate students in order to determine the effectiveness of the instruction. Therefore, as Bradley et al. (2007) stated, the greatest challenge of large scale implementation of RtI is in the preparation of all educators to effectively use assessment to drive instruction. Or, as Mellard and his colleagues (2004) stated, “The reliance on general education to implement research-based instruction and routine, systematic progress monitoring represents an enormous shift from current practice and would require
general education to adopt an educational reform in which they may have had little input” (p. 255).

According to Ehren and Whitmire (2005), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the IDEA 2004 have blurred the line between general education and special education in such a way that the expertise of personnel typically assigned to special education programs can be utilized to assist and support students in general education and their teachers. It is critical for school administrators, classroom teachers, SLPs, school psychologists, special education teachers, reading specialists, and other educators to become familiar with the aspects of these laws relevant to RTI to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits that these laws provide. (p. 169)

While the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is committed to the provision of technical assistance, the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities continues to provide information, and the International Reading Association develops materials, one has to wonder whether this general education initiative has fallen mainly within the confines of special education or teacher specialists.

Purpose of the Study

Given the increased attention that RtI is receiving in educational practice and state and federal legislation, it is important to assess the degree to which all educators are aware of developments and practices directly linked to RtI. One indicator of this professional awareness involves the presence of RtI in the professional literatures of different educator groups directly affected by these developments. To gauge this we posed the following 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?

**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 Searchasuras 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**

URL: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/utef
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
in the title or abstract in 2003 and 2004 to a high of 45 articles in 2007 (2008 was not a complete year).

The articles then were analyzed as to the focus ascribed to RtI. While the IDEA 2004 indicates that RtI is essential to the identification of a specific learning disability, the researchers wanted to know if writers on the topic were using RtI practices for assessment, screening and/or eligibility. Of the 128 articles reviewed, 110 (86%) described RtI as an assessment or eligibility tool. Further analysis indicated that 74 (58%) also indicated that RtI was useful as an instructional practice. Of the articles reviewed, 52 were for assessment only, while in 13 others the authors discussed RtI as an instructional practice only. In the rest, the authors wrote that RtI was for both assessment and instruction.

Next, the articles were analyzed as to how different models of RtI were presented. In 95 articles (74%), a conceptual model of RtI as a new or evolving practice in education was described, while in 75 of the articles (59%) the authors specifically described RtI as a model based on the concept of levels, stages, or tiers. In 36 articles (28%), the authors described a particular application about how RtI had been implemented in schools, a district, or in a state.

Last, the purpose of article was identified. Nearly three times as many conceptual articles were published as compared to the number of research or empirical articles. Next, the researchers coded each article based on whether it was research or an evaluation of original research, professional opinion or position on RtI, a legal or policy article, or a presentation of guidelines for implementation. Eighty-five articles (66%) were professional opinion or position papers describing the use of RtI in various professions or in a variety of general situations. In 33 articles (26%), the authors stated their professional opinion or position on RtI. In 9 articles, RtI was described from a legal perspective or as a policy issue. Two articles provided readers with a
“how-to” for RtI implementation, allowing for development of a process and data to be collected before presenting a plan of action.

Conclusion

The passage of the IDEA 2004 and the need to reduce the numbers of children being identified as learning disabled because of reading problems (Mellard et al. 2004; New Report 2005) has pushed RtI to the forefront as the preferred method for identifying, evaluating, and instructing students with LD. In the first two tiers or stages, RtI is essentially a general education initiative. To determine whether general educators are aware of the RtI initiative and its implications, the professional literature was searched to determine where and how RtI articles were being published.

As expected, more articles were published in journals related to special education than in regular education journals, possibly because RtI was developed by special educators for general education. What is surprising however is that not more than the eight articles were published in the general education journals. In 2005, the International Reading Association (IRA) realized “that RtI will affect many of its members,” and proposed to develop books, articles, case studies to inform its membership (New Report 2005, p. 3). It appears that the IRA is attempting to follow through with its goal as 75% of the articles published in the general education journals were IRA publications. What also is surprising is that these eight articles on RtI did not show up in the general education literature until 2006, which is 3 years after articles on RtI were published in the special education journals.

In looking at the nature of the published articles on RtI, it’s interesting to note that only in 58% of the articles was RtI discussed as an instructional strategy. As Sloat, Beswick, and Willms (2007) found in their 5-year pilot project in New Brunswick, Canada, student data from
continuous monitoring can serve as a “catalyst for instigating action to support children who are likely to fail if not given appropriate intervention” (p. 527). RtI is a data driven decision-making model and has the potential to provide teachers with continuous feedback about their students that has instructional implications, yet the link between data driven decision-making and eligibility decisions is not seen in the literature. Sloat et al. believed that the benefits of decision-making models of this type outweighed the disadvantages. They believed that this process will help teachers have greater confidence in their day-to-day instructional practices and become more adept at individualizing instruction and motivating their students.

In conclusion, our research has shown that to date the majority of articles about RtI have targeted special educators rather than general educators. If, as Gersten and Dimino (2006) profess that “for the most part, teachers see RTI, unlike prereferral interventions, as a genuine part of the general education system” (p. 102) and therefore are more likely to implement it, then authors, researchers, and policymakers need to do a better job of promoting the model in the general education literature. In addition, for RtI to succeed there needs to be collaborative efforts among state and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional organizations from all areas of education (Hilton 2007). Not only should teacher education programs make assessment a focus and equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills about how to integrate teaching and assessment into their classroom practices (Heritage 2007), but they also must help preservice teachers to understand how to tie assessment to instruction to prevent academic failure.
References


RtI: General or Special


Table 1

*Journals with RtI Articles*

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<tr>
<th>Special education journals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Annals of Dyslexia; Education &amp; 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</td>
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<th>General education journals</th>
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<td>Education Digest; Issues in Teacher Education; Reading Research Quarterly; The Reading Teacher</td>
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<th>Speech and language journals</th>
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<td>Communication Disorders Quarterly; Language, Speech, &amp; Hearing Services in Schools; Topics in Language Disorders</td>
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<th>Psychology journals</th>
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<td>Journal of Clinical Child &amp; Adolescent Psychology; Journal of Educational Psychology; Journal of Educational &amp; Psychological Consultation; Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment; Journal of School Psychology; Psychology in the Schools; School Psychology</td>
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RtI: General or Special

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
### Table 2

#### Coding Categories, Definitions, and Examples

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

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
interventions as part of the evaluation process (Sec. 614(b)(6)(B)). RtI is based on three core concepts: (a) application of scientific, research-based interventions in the general education classroom, (b) measurement of student response to these interventions, and (c) use of the RtI data to inform instruction (NJCLD 2005; New Report 2005).

RtI is a systematic method for assessment and instruction of students (Brown-Chidsey 2007), which uses progress monitoring to help pinpoint students who may need intervention (Peck and Scarpati 2007). As originally designed, the goal of RtI was to reduce the numbers of students who were identified for special education services primarily because of reading problems (Mellard et al. 2004; New Report 2005). However, in practice the implementation of RtI has gone beyond just reading problems and has included other domains such as core academics, behavior, and communication. The idea of RtI is to provide services to students before they have experienced multiple years of failure and therefore are in need of special education services (Dykeman 2006; Fletcher et al. 2004; Fuchs and Fuchs 2006).

Typically, RtI models are multi-tiered with at least three tiers: (a) Tier I, in which universal high quality instruction and assessment is provided to all students in general education; (b) Tier II, in which more specialized and specific strategies are used for those students who have not progressed as expected in Tier I; and (c) Tier III, in which a multidisciplinary team conducts a comprehensive assessment to see whether the child has a disability and is eligible for special education. The academic interventions change and become more intensive at each tier (Fuchs and Fuchs 2006). Data are collected at each tier to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Silberglitt and Hintze 2007). If students continue to demonstrate underachievement despite having high quality instruction and targeted interventions, then they may have learning disabilities (Mellard et al. 2004). Decisions regarding how many tiers are needed, movement
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(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

URL: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/utef
in the title or abstract in 2003 and 2004 to a high of 45 articles in 2007 (2008 was not a complete year).

The articles then were analyzed as to the focus ascribed to RtI. While the IDEA 2004 indicates that RtI is essential to the identification of a specific learning disability, the researchers wanted to know if writers on the topic were using RtI practices for assessment, screening and/or eligibility. Of the 128 articles reviewed, 110 (86%) described RtI as an assessment or eligibility tool. Further analysis indicated that 74 (58%) also indicated that RtI was useful as an instructional practice. Of the articles reviewed, 52 were for assessment only, while in 13 others the authors discussed RtI as an instructional practice only. In the rest, the authors wrote that RtI was for both assessment and instruction.

Next, the articles were analyzed as to how different models of RtI were presented. In 95 articles (74%), a conceptual model of RtI as a new or evolving practice in education was described, while in 75 of the articles (59%) the authors specifically described RtI as a model based on the concept of levels, stages, or tiers. In 36 articles (28%), the authors described a particular application about how RtI had been implemented in schools, a district, or in a state.

Last, the purpose of article was identified. Nearly three times as many conceptual articles were published as compared to the number of research or empirical articles. Next, the researchers coded each article based on whether it was research or an evaluation of original research, professional opinion or position on RtI, a legal or policy article, or a presentation of guidelines for implementation. Eighty-five articles (66%) were professional opinion or position papers describing the use of RtI in various professions or in a variety of general situations. In 33 articles (26%), the authors stated their professional opinion or position on RtI. In 9 articles, RtI was described from a legal perspective or as a policy issue. Two articles provided readers with a
“how-to” for RtI implementation, allowing for development of a process and data to be collected before presenting a plan of action.

Conclusion

The passage of the IDEA 2004 and the need to reduce the numbers of children being identified as learning disabled because of reading problems (Mellard et al. 2004; New Report 2005) has pushed RtI to the forefront as the preferred method for identifying, evaluating, and instructing students with LD. In the first two tiers or stages, RtI is essentially a general education initiative. To determine whether general educators are aware of the RtI initiative and its implications, the professional literature was searched to determine where and how RtI articles were being published.

As expected, more articles were published in journals related to special education than in regular education journals, possibly because RtI was developed by special educators for general education. What is surprising however is that not more than the eight articles were published in the general education journals. In 2005, the International Reading Association (IRA) realized “that RtI will affect many of its members,” and proposed to develop books, articles, case studies to inform its membership (New Report 2005, p. 3). It appears that the IRA is attempting to follow through with its goal as 75% of the articles published in the general education journals were IRA publications. What also is surprising is that these eight articles on RtI did not show up in the general education literature until 2006, which is 3 years after articles on RtI were published in the special education journals.

In looking at the nature of the published articles on RtI, it’s interesting to note that only in 58% of the articles was RtI discussed as an instructional strategy. As Sloat, Beswick, and Willms (2007) found in their 5-year pilot project in New Brunswick, Canada, student data from
continuous monitoring can serve as a “catalyst for instigating action to support children who are likely to fail if not given appropriate intervention” (p. 527). RtI is a data driven decision-making model and has the potential to provide teachers with continuous feedback about their students that has instructional implications, yet the link between data driven decision-making and eligibility decisions is not seen in the literature. Sloat et al. believed that the benefits of decision-making models of this type outweighed the disadvantages. They believed that this process will help teachers have greater confidence in their day-to-day instructional practices and become more adept at individualizing instruction and motivating their students.

In conclusion, our research has shown that to date the majority of articles about RtI have targeted special educators rather than general educators. If, as Gersten and Dimino (2006) profess that “for the most part, teachers see RTI, unlike prereferral interventions, as a genuine part of the general education system” (p. 102) and therefore are more likely to implement it, then authors, researchers, and policymakers need to do a better job of promoting the model in the general education literature. In addition, for RtI to succeed there needs to be collaborative efforts among state and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional organizations from all areas of education (Hilton 2007). Not only should teacher education programs make assessment a focus and equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills about how to integrate teaching and assessment into their classroom practices (Heritage 2007), but they also must help preservice teachers to understand how to tie assessment to instruction to prevent academic failure.
References


Table 1

*Journals with RtI Articles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special education journals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Dyslexia; Education &amp; 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</td>
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<tr>
<th>General education journals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Education Digest; Issues in Teacher Education; Reading Research Quarterly; The Reading Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<th>Speech and language journals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Disorders Quarterly; Language, Speech, &amp; Hearing Services in Schools; Topics in Language Disorders</td>
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<th>Psychology journals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Clinical Child &amp; Adolescent Psychology; Journal of Educational Psychology; Journal of Educational &amp; Psychological Consultation; Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment; Journal of School Psychology; Psychology in the Schools; School Psychology</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RtI: General or Special

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
Table 2  

**Coding Categories, Definitions, and Examples**

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