

# Teacher perspectives for response to intervention essay



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Response to Intervention (RTI) is a system-wide approach in general education to prevent and/or resolve lack of student success. RTI provides the framework and means to meet the needs of all learners, especially struggling learners, by using data-based decisions to identify the students, link interventions and instruction to their needs, monitor their progress, and make adjustments as needed based on an ongoing review of the data. Schools are restructuring to include the formation of data teams at the school and/or grade level.

The team is responsible for analyzing achievement and behavior data, setting norms to determine expected growth for students, determining interventions, and implementing the framework for RTI in the building (GDOE, 2008). Although Response to Intervention has been developing for the past 30 years (Deno & Merkin, 1977; Began, 1977), it was the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, also known as Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) that propelled RTI into the forefront of educational best practice throughout the United States. Furthermore, components of RTI are underscored in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and include a focus on accountability and continuous school improvement for all students through the following:

- High quality research-based classroom instruction in reading, math, and science provided by a highly qualified, effective teacher; instruction is differentiated within the classroom to meet a broad range of student needs;
- Scientifically based research is used to make decisions regarding the implementation of appropriate interventions;
- Universal screening and

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progress monitoring of academics and behavior; and • Early intervention for the provision of targeted interventions in reading, math, and behavior to prevent skill gaps for identified students; these interventions are in addition to the core instructional program (Casbarro 2008).

The Purpose of the Study Although Literature and best practice support utilizing the RTI model, school systems continue to struggle with full implementation of the concepts. As the system coordinator for Response to Intervention services, I witness firsthand the frustrations teachers experience with this state mandated practice. One concern that has been shared with me is the lack of training that teachers are exposed to regarding implementing RTI. Teachers note that it appears to be a top down approach and little to no information makes it back to the classroom level. A second concern is how to find the time to implement intervention when there are strict guidelines to class scheduling, lack of funding, and no additional support personnel available, especially at the high school level.

The intent of this study is to learn about teacher perceptions surrounding implementation of the Response to Intervention model. The focus will be on selected experienced teachers currently employed by the Valdosta City School system. The central questions to the study include but are not limited to the following:

- What knowledge do you have surrounding implementing RTI in your classroom?
- How is Response to Intervention practiced in your classroom?
- What research based practices are utilized in classrooms?
- How do you monitor a student's response to an intervention?
- What are some core

issues with implementing RTI in classrooms? • What supports are in place to meet teacher needs for RTI?

Finally, it is anticipated that results of this study will encourage system and school level personnel to develop appropriate strategies that will maximize implementation of the Response to Intervention practices at the classroom level. Definitions For this study, there is one term that needs to be defined:

1. Experienced Teacher - Teacher who has taught in the Georgia public school system for more than five years.

**Nature and Limitations of the Study** The proposed study follows a qualitative research approach, involving the use of semi-structured interview as the primary method. A review of system and school level RTI documents as will also be utilized as well as Georgia Department of Education material found on their website. This study will be limited to no more than 30 teacher interviews because of the time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis procedures.

**Design of the Study Setting** Valdosta City Schools' is located in southwest Georgia within Lowndes County. It is comprised mostly of inner-city students at high risk for academic failure. Teacher turn over rate is average when compared to other similar systems in Georgia.

**Research Perspective** A qualitative research approach is proposed for this study. Data collected will include attitudes, feelings, expressions, and other behaviors. Data will be collected from a wide array of material and blended throughout the study in order to provide comprehensive results. These

results will hopefully guide Valdosta City Schools in their endeavor to fully implement Response to Intervention at the classroom level.

Research Design and Procedures Proposed semi-structured interviews will begin in Winter of 2011 and utilize the questions presented earlier in the purpose section of this study. The interview process including data analysis is expected to take approximately one year in order to compile the necessary transcripts, review RTI documents, and perform analysis procedures throughout the study.

All interviews will be tape-recorded and are expected to last approximately one hour. The interviews will be informal and open-ended, and carried out in conversational style. Field notes will be taken in conjunction with the interviews. These field notes will include observations, encounters, and reflections with the teachers. I expect to obtain RTI document data from school administration as well as research state department guidelines accessible through the internet.

Connections between categories and themes will be used to further my understanding of how teacher's perceive the Response to Intervention Model and shape the organization of the data for portrayal in my final document.