International Reading Association Webinar Series on RTI
Guiding Principle #2: Differentiating Instruction

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Overview

- Quick review of RTI and IRA RTI Principle #2
- Why should teachers differentiate
  - Brief review of the research
- Questions from the chat room
- Different ways to differentiate instruction
- Questions from the chat room
Background on RTI

• New (alternative) process for identifying specific learning disabilities

• Origins - President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002)
  o Children with LD should first be considered general education students;
  o Special education should embrace a model of prevention as opposed to failure.
RTI Dual Aims

• RTI as Prevention
  o Instructional problem
  o Emphasizes responsive teaching

• RTI as Identification
  o Measurement problem
  o Emphasizes standardization
Guiding Principles

1. Instruction
2. Responsive Teaching & Differentiation
3. Assessment
4. Collaboration
5. Systemic & Comprehensive
6. Expertise
Evidence shows that small group and individualized instruction are effective:
• For all students
• In reducing the number of students at risk of becoming classified LD (cf. Scanlon et al. 2005)

RTI is centrally about optimizing language and literacy instruction for students. This means that differentiated instruction, based on instructionally relevant assessment, is essential.
Effective Teachers Spend More Time in SMALL Group Instruction

- Most Effective Teachers ≈ 48 min.
- Moderately Effective Teachers ≈ 39 min.
- Least Effective Teachers ≈ 25 min.

From Effective Schools & Accomplished Teachers, Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, CIERA,
Effective Teachers Spend Less Time in Whole Group Instruction

- Most Effective Teachers ≈ 25 min.
- Moderately Effective Teachers ≈ 29 min.
- Least Effective Teachers ≈ 48 min.

From Effective Schools & Accomplished Teachers, Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, CIERA,
Using Assessment to Inform Differentiation

- Test data
- Observation & conversation
- Student work

**Speedy Librarian**

Now upon a time there was a librarian named Lisa. She could put books away faster than anybody.

One day she put books away and took them out again so fast the children said, "Slow down! So we can have a chance to look at the books in the library."

So she slowed down.
Student Profiles

- Constellations of skills, strategies, dispositions, background knowledge, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, etc.

## Reader Profiles: An Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reader Profile</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Word Id</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto Wd Callers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strug Wd Callers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wd Stumblers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Comprehenders</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Wd Callers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Readers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Moving from Assessment to Differentiated Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Id</th>
<th>Comp.</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Tomas</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Sandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Joey</td>
<td>Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Jesse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selection: How spider got a thin waist

Number of pages: 6

1. What do you think this reading will be about?
   How you retell a st

2. What do you already know about the topic?
   Spiders

3. Retell the story as if you were telling it to a friend who hasn’t read it.
   Spider with lazy

4. How accurate was your prediction?

5. What surprised you in the story?
Formative Assessment

- Use assessment to directly inform instructional decisions and implementation
- Align assessment with instructional focus
- Use multiple indicators of student performance
- Frequency of assessment will depend on the child and the skill assessed
Matching Instruction with Profile: A Mismatch
Case Study Changing Needs Over Time

![Graph showing changes in reading scores and study minutes over grades.]

- **Child A**
  - Reading GE score:
    - Grade 1: 0.5
    - Grade 1.9: 1
    - Grade 2: 1.5
    - Grade 2.9: 2.5

- **TM-code focused**
  - Minutes/day:
    - Grade 1: 10
    - Grade 1.9: 20
    - Grade 2: 30
    - Grade 2.9: 40

- **CM-meaning focused**
  - Minutes/day:
    - Grade 1: 20
    - Grade 1.9: 30
    - Grade 2: 40
    - Grade 2.9: 50
Matching Instruction to Constellations of Skills – Distance from Recommendations

![Graph showing the relationship between DFR (minutes) and Standard Score for TM-CF predicting LW and TM-CF predicting PC.](image)
RTI Is Not A “One Size Fits All” Approach

• Assessment is a critical first step
  o constellations of strengths and needs
• Ongoing assessment evaluates how well instructional strategies are working
• Ongoing differentiation and aligning instruction to students’ changing needs
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Why Do Readers Experience Difficulty?

• Knowledge & Skill
  ◦ Decoding * Vocabulary
  ◦ Comprehending * Fluency
  ◦ Semantic and academic knowledge
  ◦ Study skills

• Lack of Experience
  ◦ with books
  ◦ with concepts
  ◦ with tasks & formats
  ◦ with the community and other places in the world

• Interest & Motivation

• Texts & Tasks
  • Thin instruction
  • Inconsiderate text
  • Mismatch
Provide Instruction to All Students

- Set high expectations for all students
- Monitor literacy growth for all students
  - Including able students
Planning to Differentiate Instruction

• Don’t try to “wing it”

• Teachers who planned to differentiate instruction were generally more effective with all students
  ◦ (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994)

• Organize by students’ profile
  ◦ Different constellations of skills, dispositions, and background
  ◦ Plan for the week
  ◦ Plan for the day

• Don’t be afraid to change the plan
Classroom Set-Up

• One example but there are many ways to differentiate
• Flexible homogeneous-skill based groups based on learning needs
• Teacher table/station
  ◦ Provides the opportunity to work the small groups of students
  ◦ Focus on
    • Review and checking for understanding
    • Preview
    • Challenge
• Centers and student-managed activities
  ◦ Student Choice
  ◦ Meaningful activities
  ◦ Peer-group collaboration
  ◦ Seatwork
  ◦ Computers
  ◦ Library and writing centers
Flexible Learning Groups

• Change whenever children’s skills change
• May differ for different components
  ◦ Decoding
  ◦ Comprehension
  ◦ Writing
• Organize so teacher table is homogeneous but peer-group activities heterogeneous
  ◦ Word of caution – marginalization of children who struggle with reading
    • (Christian & Bloom, 2004; Palincscar, et al., 2000)
Classroom Management

- The goal is that students are engaged in meaningful instruction for most of the school day (Wharton-McDonald, et al., 1998)
  - This does not always happen (Pianta, et al., 2007)

- Planning
- Authoritative leadership
  - Not over-controlling or disengaged
- Consistency
- Routines
- Clear cues for transitions
  - Switch songs
  - Hot spots
# Adaptations Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of instruction</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(comp,.word id, fluency, vocabulary, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional support</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(intensity, duration, explicitness, scaffolding, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text(s)</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(difficulty, genre, familiarity, authenticity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(open/closed; timed/untimed; independent/cooperative, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(type, quantity, success rate, feedback, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Reading</th>
<th>Few Adaptations</th>
<th>More Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(independent, supported, collaborative, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“If you can both listen to children and accept their answers not as things to just be judged right or wrong, but as pieces of information, which may reveal what the child is thinking you will have taken a giant step toward becoming a master teacher rather than merely a disseminator of information.”

(Easley & Zwoyer, 1975)
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