Culturally Responsive Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners in an RTI Model: Culturally Responsive RTI

Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D.
October 7, 2015
2015 RtI Webinar Series
NYS RtI TAC
Acknowledgments

Project ESTRE\textsuperscript{2}LLA, US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant # H326M110010

- Sylvia Linan-Thompson
- Alba Ortiz
- Laura McFarland
- Dan Haiman
- Julie Martinez
Agenda

• What it is/What it isn’t
• Benefits and challenges of RtI
• Creating the Context for Culturally responsive RtI
What is your role?

- Classroom teacher
- ESL teacher
- Interventionist
- Special education teacher
- Administrator
Culturally responsive RtI

WHAT IT IS/ WHAT IT ISN’T
Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Response to Intervention

• Ensures that no group of students is over- or under-represented in supplemental or intensive interventions.
• Ensures that ELs are properly instructed in each tier.
• Takes into account the many factors that can impact student performance, progress, and scores on screening and progress monitoring measures. Factors include:
  • Changes in English and native language proficiency and literacy skills over time
  • Quality, quantity, and features of prior educational experience
  • Imprecise and/or biased assessment instruments
How Assessment Informs Instruction within a RTI Framework

Universal Screening

- Begins of Year
- Middle of Year
- End of Year

Does NOT Meet Expectations

Supplemental Instruction

Meets Expectations

Receives Core Instruction Only

ALL STUDENTS

Problem Solving

Does NOT Meet Expectations

Ongoing; Between Benchmarks
What kind of bilingual program do you have?

- Transitional bilingual
- Dual language
- ESL
RtI and ESL Programs

English as a Second Language

- For students who have limited English proficiency.

Response to Instruction

- For students who are experiencing learning difficulties.
Parallel Programs

**ESL**
- Qualification criteria, Prescriptive instruction
- Exit criteria

**RtI**
- Qualification criteria, Prescriptive instruction
- Exit criteria
Differences in programs

1. Most reading programs focus on building reading skills, they assume a certain level of English language skills.

2. Thus, there is not enough emphasis on building language proficiency, in particular academic language.

3. Further, students need access to expository text to build disciplinary knowledge.
RtI +

Core Instruction (Tier 1)
- Reading instruction that takes into consideration features of students’ first language
- Focus on all four communicative domains are included
- Leverage language knowledge
- Build academic and content vocabulary

Data-based Decision-making
- Students’ language proficiency, cultural background, and educational histories inform decisions
- Language development is monitored

Supplemental Instruction (Tiers 2 & 3)
- Reading instruction that takes into consideration features of students’ first language
- Focus on all four communicative domains are included
- Leverage language knowledge
High quality instruction

• apply higher order thinking to key disciplinary areas,
• deliberately structure productive collaboration,
• develop rigorous and coherent content, knowledge and applications,
• develop academic language, and
• develop disciplinary literacy
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES
Benefits of RtI

- Confidence in referral process
- Prevention
- Intervention
- Multiple tasks and opportunities
The Challenges

• There are no clear guidelines in the transition from one language to another
• Does not address the time needed to develop language skills
• Lack of definitive answers practical significance of benchmarks
• Getting adequate data
Culturally Responsive RtI

CREATING THE CONTEXT FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RTI
RTI and the identification of ELLs

• Rather than have 2 parallel RtI systems determine how the two will work together.
  
  – Consider data in light of students language proficiency and their opportunities to learn.
  – Consider the norming sample of assessments used.
  – Consider with whom interventions have been validated.
  – Consider the language proficiency of students.
Implementing RtI With ELs

- Access to high-quality core and supplemental language and literacy instruction
- Availability of assessments and instructional materials
- Accuracy of screening and progress-monitoring tools
- Appropriate use and interpretation of data
- Accuracy in identifying literacy-related disabilities
Choosing Linguistically Appropriate Measures

One- or Two-Way Bilingual

- Use grade-appropriate measures that match the language of literacy instruction.
- Assess in both L1 and L2 during the transition process.

Transitional Bilingual Program

- Initially, assess in the language of literacy instruction (L1).
- Assess in both L1 and L2 during the transition process.
- Assess in L2 upon exit.

English Immersion and English as a Second Language

- Use grade-appropriate measures in English to document language and literacy development.
Other Data

• Students’ educational history:
  – Extent of educational opportunity in L1 and L2
  – Language and literacy trajectories

• Relationship between language proficiency and literacy achievement

• Cut scores for measures not normed for ELs: School and district comparisons (past performance)

• Class means:
  – Grade expectations
  – Similar peers
Integrated Process

Screening
- Literacy level
- Language proficiency

Instruction
- Literacy skills
- Academic language
- Progress monitoring

Exit
- English proficient
- Grade level decoding and fluency
- Grade level comprehension
QUESTIONS
Practice Briefs can be found on the Model Demonstration Coordination Center website: http://mdcc.sri.com/cohort5.html
Thank you

Sylvia Linan-Thompson
sylvialt@austin.utexas.edu