

RtI: The Possibilities & Questions

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The Possibilities of RtI

We should be able to:

- Provide help to students who need it (based on level and growth)
- Reduce inappropriate referrals to Special Education



The Possibilities of RtI

We might be able to:

- Improve long-term outcomes for struggling learners
- Identify students who may have disabilities



Prevalence of Poor Responders

- Torgesen (2000): 2-4% in K-1
- O'Connor (2000; 2002; 2005; 2007) 3-6% in K-4



The Questions Researchers Study

- How to ensure high quality in Tier 1
- Nature and content of Tier 2
- Measures:
 - Of risk and protection
 - Catch and release criteria
- Long-term outcomes across risk levels when RtI is implemented well

Ensuring High Quality Tier 1?

School and Teacher Effects

- Al Otaiba & Fuchs (2006)
 - Poor responders found in classrooms where instruction was implemented with lower quality
- O'Connor et al. (in press)
 - In 4 MT schools, 4 of 5 poor responders were in one school (reading instruction described as “eclectic”)
 - In 4 CA schools, 11 of 14 poor responders were in 1 school; 6 of these students were in 2 of the 8 teachers’ classes in that school (classes described as having “control problems”)

Nature and Content of Tier 2

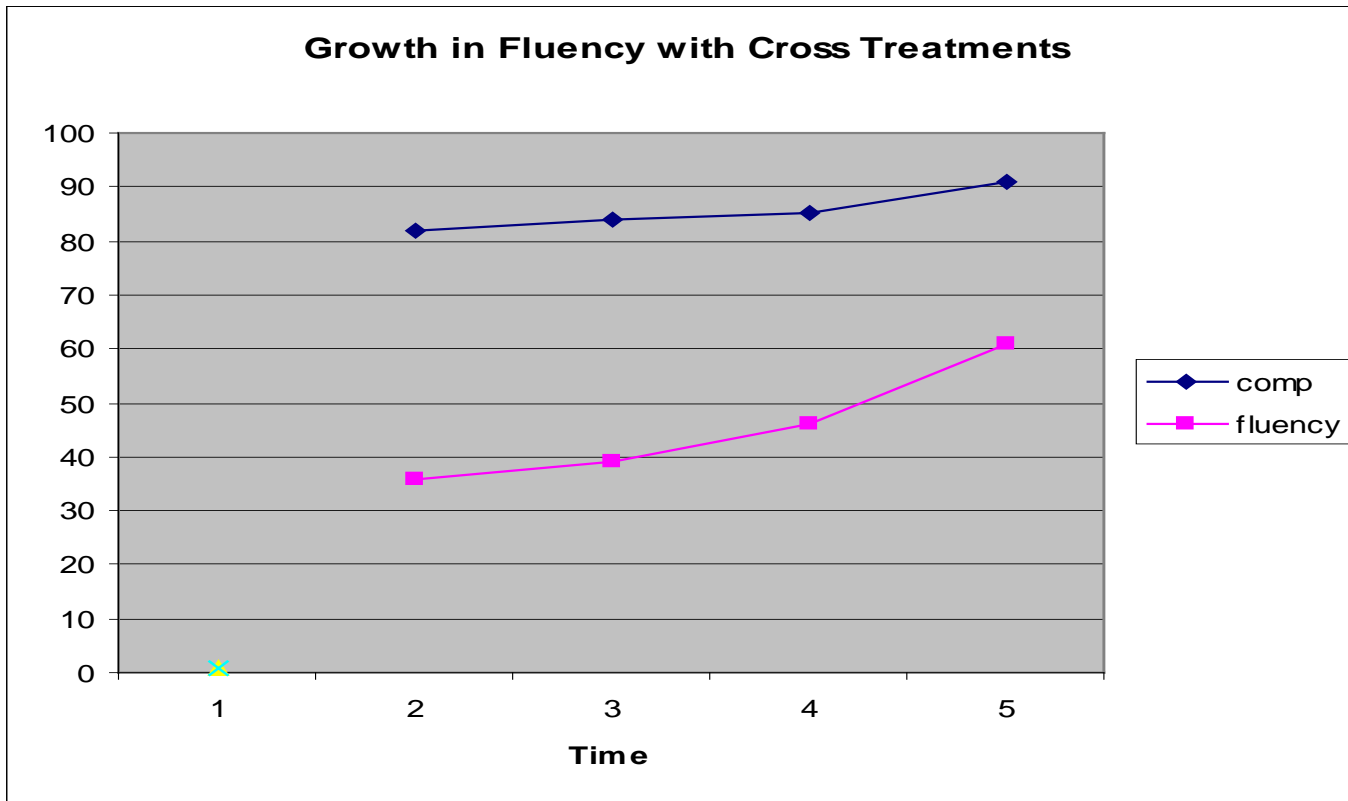
- Do we want a good intervention “to be delivered?”
 - Standard protocol (Fuchs et al., Torgesen et al., Vellutino et al.)
- Do we want interventions “to be adjusted or changed altogether” when students do not respond as expected?
 - Individualized treatments (O’Connor et al., Marston et al.)



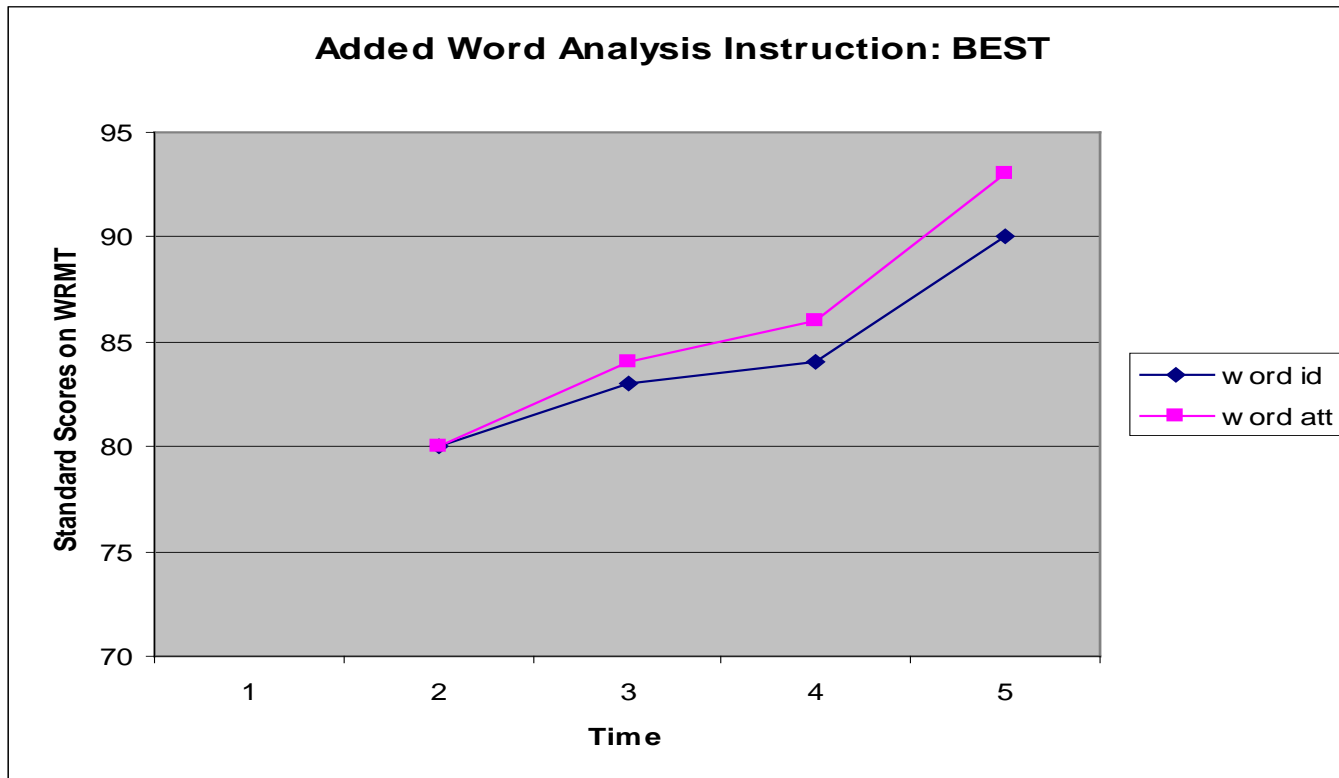
Standard Protocol or Individualized Tier 2?

- **Level of text difficulty** (O'Connor, Bell, Harty et al., 2002)
 - 16 weeks of daily half hour tutoring using different types of text
 - 6 of 32 students responded poorly
 - Instruction adjusted for 8 more weeks -- 5 of 6 responded
- **Students who respond poorly might be receiving the wrong intervention.**
 - Difficult to test if only a standard protocol is available.

Responding Across Interventions



Responding Across Interventions



Responding to Student's Response

- Skills of the Interventionist
 - Teachers, Graduate students, Teaching Assistants
- Why it matters:
 - Responsiveness of students is related to how the teacher responds to students during instruction
 - Changing or fine-tuning instruction is hallmark of skilled teaching
 - Difficult to change if the competing goal is adherence to a standard protocol



What Does RtI Imply?

- At Tier 1, general class instruction is good enough.
- At Tier 2, general class instruction was insufficient, but small group, focused instruction is good enough.
- Do “true LD” students respond to Tier 2?

When can we identify poor responders?

(O'Connor et al., 2007)

	Fast Growth	Good Growth	Poor Growth
	(n = 21)	(n = 29)	(n = 19)
RLN	1.33 (.48)	1.38 (.49)	1.53 (.51)
ISF	3.38 (1.5)	2.86 (2.2)	3.21 (2.3)
PPVT-III	74.57 (10.7)	77.31 (12.9)	66.89 (15.1)
CEDLT	2.38 (.92)	2.59 (.78)	2.32 (.95)

Across 3 years, Grades 1-3 (O'Connor et al., 2005)

Tier 2	Tier 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tier 2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	Tier 2		X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	Tier 2				X	X	X	X
Tier 2					X	X	X	X	X	X
Tier 2			X	X	X	Tier 2	X	X	X	X
Tier 2			X	X	X	Tier 2	X	X	X	X
Tier 2			Tier 3			Tier 2	X	X	X	X
Tier 2			Tier 3				X	X	X	X
Tier 2			Tier 3				X	X	X	X
Tier 2	X	X	X	Tier 2	X	Tier 2	X	X	X	X
Tier 2	X	Tier 2		X	X	Tier 2		X	X	X
Tier 2			Tier 3		Tier 2			X	X	X
Tier 2			X	Tier 2		X	X	Tier 2 Tier 2 Tier 2		X
Tier 2						X	X			X
Tier 2	X	X	X	Tier 3			X			Tier 3
Tier 2			Tier 3		X	Tier 2		Tier 3		
Tier 2	X	X	Tier 2		Tier 3					
Tier 2				Tier 3						
Tier 2			Tier 3							
Tier 2			Tier 3							
Tier 2			Tier 3							

Summer Slippage

- Students who responded poorly also lost ground in key skills between K-1 (O'Connor, 2000; Vellutino et al., 2007)
- And also between Gr 1-2 and Gr 2-3 (O'Connor et al., 2005).

Identification of LD (Lloyd, 2007)

- Given that RtI will not eliminate LD, reflect on how we interpret RtI:
 - Persistent poor responding \neq LD
 - Ample evidence that students with LD respond to good interventions
 - Responding does not mean a student doesn't have a disability
 - Tier 2 helps some students with disabilities



Do Response Rates Differ for ELLs?

- Linan-Thompson et al. (2006)
 - Not predictive of response
- O'Connor et al. (2007)
 - Not predictive of response
- VanDerHeyden et al. (2007)
 - Not predictive of response

Diminishing Correlations for ELL (O'Connor et al, 2007)

- ELL scores correlated significantly with pretests
 - PSF (.32)
 - LNF (.31)
 - PPVT-III (.34)

- But not with reading outcomes in Grade 1
 - PSF (.04)
 - LNF (.03)
 - NWF (.01)
 - ORF (.12)



Substantial Variability Across Studies

- Procedures for determining poor response
- Criteria for determining poor response
- Measures
- Interventions

Current Study in RtI Variations

Years 1-2:

1. What are the relative effects of Tier 2 packaged interventions and targeted skills in Tier 2?
 - Do these effects differ for Grades K and 1?

2. Are variations on progress monitoring measures more predictive of reading and responsiveness to intervention in K-1?
 - Which catch and release criteria improve classification?



General Areas of Agreement

- Screen early in the school year and again later to consider starting points and growth
- Instruction should be increasingly specific and focused in Tiers 2 and 3



Lingering Concerns

- Teacher skill is a consistent predictor of responsiveness of students
- Responsiveness to student response can decrease the proportion of students who still need help
- What level of response is good enough?
- Students “fixed” on low level reading skills may become less responsive as reading grows in complexity in later grades