



RTI Glossary of Terms

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This RTI Glossary of Terms presents definitions for commonly used terms related to response to intervention.

Accommodation

Accommodations are changes in instruction that enable children to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom or assessment/testing setting. Accommodations are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for children with disabilities. Accommodations might include assistive technology as well as alterations to presentation, response, scheduling, or settings. When used appropriately, they reduce or even eliminate the effects of a child's disability, but do not reduce or lower the standards or expectations for content. Accommodations that are appropriate for assessments do not invalidate assessment results.

Aimline

The aim line is also referred to as the goal line. It is the line on a graph that connects the intersection of the student's initial performance level and date of that initial performance level to the intersection of the student's year-end goal and the date of that year-end goal. It represents the expected rate of student progress over time.

AYP- Adequate Yearly Progress

AYP is a statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by states and as approved by the US Department of Education.

Students At Risk for Poor Learning Outcomes

At-risk students are students whose initial performance level or characteristics predict poor learning outcomes unless intervention occurs to accelerate knowledge, skill, or ability development.

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is the course of study deemed critical and usually made mandatory for all students of a school or school system. Core curricula are often instituted at the elementary and secondary levels by local school boards, Departments of Education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment

Criterion-referenced assessment measures what a student understands, knows, or can accomplish in relation to a specific performance objective. It is typically used to identify a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age or grade level standard. It does not compare students to other students.

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA)

CBA is a broader term than Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), as defined by Tucker (1987). CBM meets the three CBA requirements: (1) measurement materials are aligned with the school's curriculum; (2) measurement occurs frequently; and (3) assessment information is used to formulate instructional decisions. Tucker, J. (1987). Curriculum-based assessment is not a fad. *The Collaborative Educator*, 1, 4, 10.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)

CBM is an approach to measurement that is used to screen students or to monitor student progress in mathematics, reading, writing, and spelling. With CBM, teachers and schools can assess individual responsiveness to instruction. When a student proves unresponsive to the instructional program, CBM signals the teacher/school to revise that program. CBM is a distinctive form of CBA because of two additional properties: (1) Each CBM test is an alternate form of equivalent difficulty; and (2) CBM is standardized, with its reliability and validity well documented.

Data Point

A data point is one score on a graph or chart, which represents a student's performance at one point in time.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction refers to educators tailoring the curriculum, teaching environments, and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students in order to meet each student's needs. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying interests, readiness levels, and levels of responsiveness to the standard core curriculum and to plan responsively to address these individual differences. There are four elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

Disproportionality

Disproportionality is the over- or under-representation of racially, culturally, ethnically or linguistically diverse groups of students in special education, restrictive learning environments, or school disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) in comparison to other students.

Early Intervening Services

Early intervening services are the preventative components of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Early intervening services are implemented to benefit students who manifest risk for poor learning outcomes but have not been identified as needing special education or related services.

Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practices are educational practices and instructional strategies that are supported by scientific research studies.

Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity refers to the accurate and consistent provision or delivery of instruction in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed according to research findings and/or developers' specifications. Five common aspects of fidelity include: adherence, exposure, program differentiation, student responsiveness, and quality of delivery.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a form of evaluation used to plan instruction in a recursive way. With formative assessment, student progress is systematically assessed to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. With formative assessment, teachers diagnose skill, ability, and knowledge gaps, measure progress, and evaluate instruction. Formative assessments are not necessarily used for grading purposes. Examples include (but are not limited to): CBM, CBA, pre/post tests, portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, and teacher/student conferencing.

Goal Line (sometimes referred to as an *aimline*)

The goal line on a graph connects the intersection of the student's initial performance level and date of that initial performance level to the intersection of the student's year-end goal and the date of that year-end goal. It represents the expected rate of student progress over time.

IDEA

IDEA stands for Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, also referred to as IDEA 2004. It was originally passed in 1975 with the latest reauthorization in 2004. It is a federal statute related to providing a free, appropriate, public education and early intervening services to students with disabilities ages birth through 21.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a service delivery model where students with identified disabilities are educated with general education age/grade-level peers.

Intensive Intervention

Intensive academic and/or behavioral interventions are characterized by their increased focus for students who fail to respond to less intensive forms of instruction. Intensity can be increased through many dimensions including length, frequency, and duration of implementation. Within RTI, intensive is sometimes referred to as *tertiary* intervention.

Modifications

Modifications are alterations that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level.

Learning Disability

The IDEA 2004 definition of a Learning Disability/Specific Learning Disability is: The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

- (i) Oral expression
- (ii) Listening comprehension
- (iii) Written expression
- (iv) Basic reading skill
- (v) Reading fluency skills
- (vi) Reading comprehension
- (vii) Mathematics calculation
- (viii) Mathematics problem solving.

Norm-Referenced Assessment

Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group.

Primary Level of Intervention

Primary intervention is the universal core program that all students receive.

Problem-Solving Approach within RTI

Within RTI, a problem-solving approach is used to individually tailor an intervention. It typically has four stages: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is used to assess students' academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without assistance.

Screening

Universal screening is conducted, usually as a first stage within a screening process, to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Universal screening tests are typically brief; conducted with all students at a grade level; and followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to corroborate students' risk status.

Secondary Level of Intervention

Secondary intervention supplements primary intervention (i.e., the universal core program) such that students receive additional research-based preventative treatment. Secondary level interventions are often short-term, implemented in small group settings, and may be individualized.

Specific Learning Disability

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Standard Protocol Intervention

Standard protocol intervention relies on the same, empirically validated intervention for all students with similar academic or behavioral needs. Standard protocol interventions facilitate quality control.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is a form of evaluation used to describe the effectiveness of an instruction program or intervention, that is, whether the intervention had the desired effect. With summative assessment, student learning is typically assessed at the end of a course of study or annually (at the end of a grade).

Tertiary Level of Intervention

Tertiary intervention supplements primary and secondary interventions to intensify instruction (see intensive intervention). Tertiary level of intervention often occurs under the auspices of special education. Individualized education program (IEP) goals are established; individualized student programs are developed formatively using systematic progress monitoring; and student progress data are also used to determine when a student may return to secondary or primary prevention. Tertiary level of intervention is usually implemented individually or in very small groups.

Tiered Instruction

Tiered instruction describes levels of instructional intensity within a multi-tiered prevention system.

Trend Line

A trend line is a line on a graph that represents a line of best fit through a student's data points. The trend line can be compared against the aimline to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Universal Screening

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This glossary was compiled using the following resources: The RTI Glossary of Terms developed by the IDEA Partnership at NASDSE, the RTI Action Network Glossary, the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, the National Center on Response to Intervention, the New Mexico Public Education Department RTI Glossary, the Georgia Department of Education RTI Glossary, the South Carolina Department of Education RTI glossary, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction RTI Manual Glossary.

National Center on Response to Intervention

For additional information on this or other topics, please contact The National Center on Response to Intervention at rticenter@air.org.

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