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TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND VIEWS OF THE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION
INITIATIVE

A Chapter Style Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Education Specialist

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School Psychology

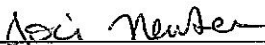
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By Alissa Gallagher

We recommend acceptance of this thesis in partial fulfillment of the candidate's
requirements for the degree of Education Specialist in School Psychology

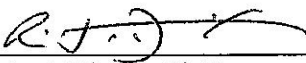
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ABSTRACT

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Since Congress added new provisions to federal educational laws (IDIEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001), a progressive movement in education called Response to Intervention (RTI) has become more widely known. Embedded in the framework of RTI is the expectation that classroom teachers will become proficient at such things as: using data to inform instruction, monitoring student progress, and adopting research-based teaching strategies. The purpose of the current study was to conduct a preliminary investigation of how educators would self-report their knowledge, views, and skills related to seven core principles and components of the RTI initiative. Current study findings found that special education teachers and school support staff reported significantly more knowledge and more positive views of RTI than did general education teachers. Primary teachers also reported more knowledge and feeling more supported in their efforts to implement RTI than did secondary teachers. Specific groups of teachers that need to be targeted for future professional development in RTI related areas, along with educational settings that would benefit from professional development and school-wide reorganization were identified, and implications of these findings were discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Literature Summary

In 1837, Horace Mann, the founding father of public education in our country, had a vision that education was a basic human right of every child in America and it would someday become the "great equalizer" amongst rich and poor alike (Cremlin, 1957). Since then, millions of educators have devoted their lives to Mann's cause and debated over how society should fulfill its obligation to provide the best education for every child in our country. Despite painstaking efforts to educate all children who enter public schools, approximately 20% will experience difficulty learning to read and of that 20%, 2-5% will experience severe reading difficulties (Dockrell & McShane, 1993). Recently, Congress added new provisions to federal educational laws (Individuals with Disabilities in Improvement Education Act, 2004 and No Child Left Behind, 2001) that are designed to encourage school districts to provide additional help for struggling students through supplemental instruction and support in general education.

Since these provisions have been written into law, a progressive movement in education called Response to Intervention (RTI) is becoming more widely known. RTI was founded on the principle that every child is capable of learning and it is the responsibility of educators to provide a continuum of instructional supports for students. RTI promises an educational system that emphasizes a research proven model of

instruction, early intervention, and outcomes based decision-making. Although this is an exciting time to be involved in education, some professionals are skeptical of the practicality of this movement, because this shift in focus will most likely result in a significant change in educators' job responsibilities and practices (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention is a framework built around the principles of providing high quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, making instructional decisions based on frequent monitoring of educational progress, and using student data to help make important educational decisions (Bender & Shores, 2007; Elliot, 2008). It has become a movement in educational reform that requires educators to provide instruction on a continuum and includes using research proven interventions for students who are not progressing adequately in the general education curriculum (Bender & Shores). The RTI framework was developed with the intention of identifying student problems early, and the goal of preventing future academic failure (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Response to Intervention has evolved slowly over the past few decades and is in part a reaction to both the lack of a universally accepted definition of a specific learning disability, and the absence of empirically based research supporting the criterion for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Graner, Faggella-Luby, & Fritschmann, 2005). One of the most highly debated subjects on this matter is the continued dissatisfaction with the IQ-achievement discrepancy model that is most commonly used for identification of a specific learning disability. The discrepancy

model identifies a specific learning disability as a combination of severe underachievement, evidence of a psychological processing disorder, and a significant discrepancy between a student's IQ and their academic scores on a standardized achievement test (Frankenberger & Fronzaglio, 1991). This model is still used in many states as criteria for identification of a specific learning disability despite the lack of scientific research supporting a point-by-point relationship between intelligence and reading ability (Vellutino, Scanlon, & Lyon, 2000).

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities stated in a Common Ground Report (2002) that the ability-achievement discrepancy model should no longer be used to determine eligibility for a specific learning disability. Two years later when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) was reauthorized, it included language that enabled educators to use a more preventative and systematic approach to determining eligibility for a specific learning disability by stating:

“in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local agency must use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention” [IDEIA; PL 108-446, Part B, Sec 614(b)(6)(B)].

Since then, researchers have been developing a growing body of research supporting the notion that Response to Intervention (RTI) is an effective way of identifying children with specific learning disabilities. If a child is non-responsive to instruction that benefits a majority of students, and environmental factors are ruled out, advocates of RTI suggest a specific learning disability is responsible for the lack of achievement, and specialized instruction is necessary to meet that particular child's needs (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2004).

Recently, schools have begun to use principles of the RTI movement as both an alternative method for identifying children with specific learning disabilities and a general education-based reform that promises early intervention to all children at-risk for school failure (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). When RTI is adopted as a school-wide framework it is applied to decisions for general, remedial, and special education, becoming an integrated system of instruction and intervention that is guided by student data (Bollman, Silberglitt, & Gibbons, 2007; Elliot, 2008).

The implementation of RTI incorporates three essential components: (1) developing an integrated data collection and measurement system to inform educational decisions, (2) implementing a multi-tiered model for providing instruction, and (3) using a problem solving approach to appropriately match students with interventions based on need (Elliot, 2008). The most crucial component to implementing the RTI framework effectively is to adopt a measurement system that yields relevant and meaningful data which is used to inform instruction and assist in making educational decisions about the academic growth and development of all students. Universal screening, or benchmarking is the first step to early intervention and is the principle means for targeting students who are at-risk for learning difficulties (Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007). In order for the universal screening assessment tools to accurately identify students as at-risk or not at-risk for poor outcomes, it is recommended they be administered school-wide three times per year (Howe, Scierka, Gibbons, & Silberglitt, 2003). A strong universal screening system includes a reliable and valid tool that is predictive of later performance, is sensitive to growth and can be administered repeatedly, informs instructional planning, and can be displayed in a graphic manner that is easily interpreted by both teachers and

parents (Elliot, 2008; Minnesota Response to Intervention Center, 2008). In addition to universal screening, a multi-tiered model of instruction is also reliant on ongoing data collection for students receiving targeted interventions, often referred to as progress monitoring. Progress monitoring data is usually collected using curriculum based measures (CBM) that provide sensitive and accurate data about an individual student's growth over time. Depending on the student's response to a given level of intervention, as measured through frequent progress monitoring, decisions are made regarding whether to move to a different level, or tier, of intervention that can include less or more intense supports (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007).

After an effective measurement system is developed in a school building or district, the next step towards RTI implementation is constructing a multi-tiered model of instruction (most frequently a three-tiered model of instruction) that provides a continuum of instructional supports for students based on needs, and appropriately allocates instructional resources in the most effective way possible. In this model of instruction progress monitoring data is used to identify when a shift from one tier of instructional support to another needs to take place (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). The RTI multi-tiered model of instruction is most often illustrated by a pyramid with the pyramid base, referred to as Tier One, being where core instruction takes place. Tier One is ideally comprised of the 75-85 % of students who experience success through high quality instruction of the core curriculum. In order for high quality instruction to take place teachers must be knowledgeable of research based principles for effective instruction and use a curriculum that is evidence based, appropriately aligned with identified state and local standards, uninterrupted with a high level of academic engaged

time (AET), and differentiated to meet student needs (Minnesota Response to Intervention Center, 2008).

Tier Two of the RTI pyramid is where targeted instruction and strategic interventions take place. This level of instruction is aimed at providing an additional 10-15% of students with the instruction they need to adequately learn utilizing both individualized and standard treatment protocol interventions (Elliot, 2008). At the Tier Two level, educators implementing RTI use a problem solving approach to intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The problem solving approach follows a number of steps. First, educators identify the problem, determine the magnitude of that particular problem, and then analyze its causes. Next, educators design an intervention plan to meet the needs of the individual student and set a goal. Then they conduct the intervention as planned, while monitoring student progress to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, and determine the need to modify the intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs).

A standard treatment protocol intervention is an alternative to the problem solving approach (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Students identified as at-risk in this model receive a standard intervention that is empirically proven to remediate academic deficits and usually occurs for a fixed duration (i.e. 8-10 weeks). The standard intervention is most often delivered in small groups and on occasion individually (Fuchs & Fuchs). Some of the most recent research suggests that the standard treatment protocol method of providing interventions is the most empirically supported method of providing supplemental support at the Tier Two level of instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs). Intervention, whether through a problem solving approach or a standard treatment protocol, is intended

to provide struggling students with early, effective instruction and to provide a valid means of assessing learner needs (Fuchs & Fuchs).

Tier Three of the RTI pyramid is generally comprised of the approximately 5-10% of the student population who are unresponsive to supplemental, Tier Two support. The major difference between interventions at the Tier Three versus the Tier Two levels is that Tier Three requires more time and resource intensive instruction. Students with special education needs may fall into this tier of the pyramid, but students who are receiving Tier Three supports are not necessarily children with identified disabilities.

In conclusion, RTI is a multifaceted framework for providing a continuum of instructional supports for students. Successful implementation of the RTI model requires knowledge and skills in the areas of evidence-based interventions, multi-tiered intervention models, screening, assessment and progress monitoring, administering interventions with a high degree of integrity, and support and coordinated efforts across all levels of staff and leadership within a school (Kratowill et al., 2007).

Teacher Roles within an RTI Framework

Research on the relationship between teacher skill and student outcomes has led to evidence that teacher variables influence student achievement more so than any other factor in a child's environment; with the exception of the home environment (Kratowill et al., 2007). Teachers are considered by most policymakers and school change experts to be the centerpiece of educational change, making the involvement of teachers in the change process a critical component of success (Datnow & Castellano, 2000).

Response to Intervention is not unlike other systemic school improvement efforts in that implementing RTI requires change on many levels, with the most significant aspect of change pertaining to the practice of teachers and various other professionals working in the field of education (Kratochwill et al., 2007). The universal and general education based features of RTI that exist at the Tier One level of instruction in the core curriculum suggest that the first and most important personnel to implement RTI are classroom teachers (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). In order for the RTI movement to be successful it is important for administrators and other school leaders to take into account important factors that have been identified to foster positive teacher attitudes towards reform. These include the level of involvement and ownership teachers take in the implementation process of RTI and the degree to which they are major players in bringing about the reform in their classrooms (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). Teachers' personal experiences with RTI and the various components of the framework (progress monitoring, the problem solving process, research based interventions, etc.) will invariably influence their attitudes (positively and negatively) on the effectiveness, feasibility, and potential impact of RTI (McCutcheon, 2007).

The key to bringing about RTI reform at the most basic level, in the classroom, is systematically informing teachers about the theory and background of RTI so they have the capacity to take on leadership roles in their buildings with regard to the RTI reform effort (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). Teachers may be hesitant to buy into the reform effort until they understand the positive implications of restructuring their schools around the RTI framework. It is also imperative that teachers feel competent, confident, and

comfortable with utilizing and implementing RTI practices such as progress monitoring, differentiating instruction, and using research based strategies in their classrooms.

McCutcheon (2007) investigated teachers' attitudes related to the implementation of RTI in Wisconsin, and concluded that the majority of teachers surveyed identified a lack of resources as a roadblock to the success of RTI. McCutcheon went on to hypothesize that this perception may have led to views that RTI is an educational reform that places unrealistic expectations on teachers, and that RTI is just another passing fad in education that will fade away in time, due to its infeasibility. Because of this concern it is critical that general education teachers are informed and frequently updated about what resources are available to them to assist in adopting and implementing the RTI model into their classrooms, and what systems are in place at their schools to aid the process.

In order to properly implement RTI in their classrooms, teachers will be required to develop and broaden their skill-sets. As such, adequate training and professional development will need to be made available for teachers (Kratochwill et al., 2007). The emphasis on high quality professional development and its link to student achievement found in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) clearly highlights the importance of providing teachers with ongoing training in their field. Embedded in the framework of RTI is the expectation that teachers will become proficient at such things as using data to inform instruction, monitoring student progress through the use of formative assessment and curriculum based measures, and adopting research based teaching strategies in both academic and behavioral realms (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Brown-Chidsey & Steege (2005) reported that in order to increase the likelihood that teachers will become proficient at implementing RTI, a planned and sequenced program for teacher training is needed. Three main elements of this training program include (1) a schedule of training sessions, (2) teacher learning outcomes identified for each training session, and (3) a measurement tool that assesses indicators of mastery.

In addition to professional development, organizational capacity, staff support, having a program leader, and ensuring program fidelity are also widely identified factors that have contributed to the success of program change in the past (Kratochwill et al., 2007). Administrative involvement through an acknowledgement of the importance of RTI in their schools, and the development of systems for implementing the various components of the RTI framework are several examples of the type of support that educators will need if RTI is to be successfully adopted and implemented. Moreover, RTI cannot be seen as a function of the educational process distinct from elements such as schedules, structures for collaboration, curriculum selection, and instructional leadership (Bender & Shores, 2007). Restructuring school schedules and reallocating building resources are essential components of developing organizational capacity school-wide so that teachers feel supported in their efforts to implement RTI in their classrooms. Lastly, time and resources need to be systematically set aside to make RTI not only feasible, but an effective way of meeting the needs of all students.

The way in which teachers respond to educational reform and their perceptions of the changes can often shape the eventual outcomes and success of the reform, and the extent to which the reform is accepted and implemented in the classroom (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). With that in mind, if the reform efforts of the RTI framework are to

be implemented in such a way that they provide a seamless system of research based instruction that promises the improvement of educational outcomes for all students, then teachers, the most foundational component of the RTI process, must be brought to the forefront of this movement.

Statement of Problem

For the past two decades The St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) has been promoting research based practices related to RTI (Bollman et al., 2007). SCRED is a service agency that provides leadership and support to its five member districts in both general and special education. The five districts that comprise SCRED are located in east central Minnesota and have a total student population of approximately 9000. For the past 10 years, leaders at SCRED have worked with the school districts that it serves to aid in the implementation of an instructional model that coordinates the use of a comprehensive measurement system, evidence-based instructional practices, and school-wide organization (Bollman et al.; Howe et al., 2003). One big step towards the implementation of a Response to Intervention model that SCRED took in 1996 was organizing a systematic curriculum based measure (CBM) data collection process for reading performance (Bollman et al.). This investment in developing a strong measurement system for all of its member districts allowed SCRED to become a leader in the state of Minnesota and across the nation with regard to RTI. Another area of strength for SCRED has been the early development of building-level problem solving teams whose members are trained to respond to student concerns in a very specific way, particularly, using data to make decisions about student interventions.

Despite the relatively long history of RTI at SCRED, one barrier that SCRED leaders are currently trying to overcome is changing the perception that RTI is a special education initiative. Because the RTI movement was first embraced on a national level by special education related professionals, specifically school psychologists who were looking for an alternative method for identifying students with specific learning disabilities, it is easy to understand why general educators have historically viewed RTI as a special education initiative. It also provides an explanation for why special educators were among the first professionals in SCRED schools to be informed and trained in RTI related areas such as the problem solving model and monitoring student progress through curriculum based measures like oral reading fluency probes. Because SCRED's initial focus was on providing in-service training to special education staff, currently there are a limited number of general education staff in SCRED schools that have a clear idea of what RTI is, how the problem solving team works, and what resources are available to them with regards to Response to Intervention.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine teachers' knowledge and views of the RTI process across the five member school districts of the St. Croix River Education District. Input provided from teachers surveyed in this study will be used to identify areas of continuing need and provide SCRED a direction for future professional development. Specifically, teacher input could potentially identify components of the RTI model that need to be refined further, and quantify the perceived amount of administrative support and RTI related resources that are available to teachers across SCRED. The current study was also conducted to identify differences between sub-

groups of teachers with regard to their knowledge of and views on implementing the various essential components of RTI. Differences in the overall acceptance of RTI, and perceptions of the feasibility and potential effectiveness of RTI were also examined.

CHAPTER II: METHODS

Participants

The current study was conducted at 15 schools across five school districts located in east central Minnesota. The five school districts targeted for the study were members of the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED). At the time of the study each school had adopted the RTI model and was using it for determining special education eligibility for a specific learning disability (SLD). All demographic information reported in this section was obtained from the Minnesota Department of Education (2008) website. Data collected and reported by the Minnesota Department of Education was based on Fall 2008 child count data. The five school districts included in the current study have a combined student population of approximately 9000 students. The smallest school district in the study has an approximate student population of 775, and the largest school district in the study has a student population of 3526. Demographically, 17-53% of the student populations are on the free and reduced price lunch program while 7-15% of the student populations receive special education services. At the time of the study, School District 1 had a total licensed staff count of 206, School District 2 had a total licensed staff count of 49, School District 3 had a total licensed staff count of 71, School District 4 had a total licensed staff count of 106, and School District 5 had a total licensed staff count of 53, therefore the target sample size for this study was 485 participants.

Data Collection and Evaluation

Measures

Information on teacher knowledge and competence of the RTI process was collected using an adaptation of the RTI Needs Assessment (Appendix A) developed and published by Bender & Shores (2007). The RTI Needs Assessment is a 46 item survey that asks teachers to rate their knowledge of the various components of the RTI model, and their views on the level of implementation of those components in their schools. Specifically, the RTI Needs Assessment looks at seven components: General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research-Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization.

Five of the seven RTI components on the survey (General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research-Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions, and Administrative Factors) were developed and outlined on the original RTI Needs Assessment survey (Bender & Shores, 2007). Two of the seven RTI components on the survey, Problem Solving and Schoolwide Organization, were adapted from the Minnesota Response to Intervention Center (2008) School Readiness for RTI Implementation Checklist and added to the Bender & Shores Needs Assessment. All seven categories represent common components of RTI that are outlined in recent research (Bender & Shores, 2007; Bollman et al., 2007; Elliot, 2008; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Howe et al., 2003). Teachers' responses to the items were assessed on a 4-point likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Agree to (4) Strongly Disagree with the statements relating to self-reported knowledge and views of the various components of RTI.

Although reliability and validity data has not been collected on the use of the Bender & Shores (2007) needs assessment, the companies (Corwin Press & Council for Exceptional Children) and authors (William N. Bender, PhD, professor of special education at the University of Georgia & Cara Shores, EdS, President of Wesley Educational Services) that chose to endorse and publish this tool have strong ties to education and are highly reputable.

The Minnesota RTI Center School Readiness for RTI Implementation Checklist is published on the Minnesota RTI Center website and is part of a Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) grant supported program that provides consultation and professional development services to schools around the state of Minnesota on topics related to RTI. The relevance and utility of the RTI Readiness Checklist, and the information it yields, is supported by an endorsement of the tool from MDE and the extent for which it is available for use across the state.

Procedure

Initial approval for this study was sought from the UW- La Crosse Institutional Review Board (IRB), and from administration representing each of the SCRED member districts. After approval, the RTI Needs Assessment was administered to all teachers and support staff in SCRED participating school districts via an electronic survey that was available through Survey Monkey. Teachers were emailed a description of the survey (Appendix B) with an electronic hyperlink routing them to the RTI Needs Assessment. In the description of the survey, participants were informed that their participation in the proposed study was voluntary and informed consent was implied upon completion of the on-line survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey at their convenience

within a given time line. In an attempt to produce a high survey completion rate, school administrators were asked to request their employees complete the survey at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. Teachers who completed the survey also had the opportunity to be selected at random to receive a \$50.00 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble Bookstores. One week before the survey completion deadline, a second reminder email with the same survey description and electronic hyperlink routing participants to the RTI Needs Assessment was sent to all building administrators with a request it be forwarded to all of the certified staff in their buildings.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study has one main research question, followed by corresponding null and alternative hypotheses:

1. Do teachers within the St. Croix River Education District differ across the seven areas assessing their knowledge and views of RTI (General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Intervention, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization) as a function of: type of teacher (general educator vs. support staff/teachers), or type of school (primary vs. secondary)?
 - a. *Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant differences between sub-groups of teachers with regard to their knowledge and views of RTI*
 - b. *Alternative hypotheses include:*
 - i. *There will be significant differences between reported knowledge and views of RTI depending on general education versus support staff/teachers' reports.*

ii. There will be significant differences between reported knowledge and views of RTI depending on primary versus secondary teachers' reports.

Data Analysis

To address the main research question of this study, a 2 x 2 Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. For this analysis, the independent variables were type of teacher (general educator vs. support staff/teacher) and type of school (primary vs. secondary). The dependent variable was teachers' scores reflecting their knowledge and views across the seven areas assessed (General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research Based Strategies, Standard Protocol Intervention, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization). The level of significance used for this analysis was $p < .05$.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The current study was designed to examine teachers' knowledge and views of the RTI process by surveying staff across five member school districts of the St. Croix River Education District located in east central Minnesota. At the time of the study all five school districts had adopted the RTI model and were using RTI to determine special education eligibility for a specific learning disability (SLD). Teachers were asked to complete an adaptation of the RTI Needs Assessment developed and published by Bender & Shores (2007) which had them rate their knowledge and level of implementation of the various components of the RTI model. Specifically, the RTI Needs Assessment assessed teachers' knowledge and views across seven components: General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research-Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization.

Demographics

All demographic information was collected through participant self-report. Five school districts were asked to participate in the current study, and a total of four school districts chose to participate. A total of 485 participants were targeted for the current study, and 101 participants completed the survey and were included in the current study analyses. Demographic information including the type of teacher and grade levels taught are displayed in Table 1. Of the 101 participants in the current study, 59 were general educators, and 42 of the participants were special educators and support staff. Forty-seven of the participants were primary teachers, and 54 were secondary teachers.

Table 1. Teacher Assignment Information (n=101)

	General Educator	Special Educator/ Support Staff	<u>Total</u>
Primary	29	18	<u>47</u>
Secondary	30	24	<u>54</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>101</u>

In the preliminary questions portion of the survey (Appendix C) all participants were asked to rate how familiar they were with Response to Intervention (RTI) and how it is implemented in their school districts. Participants were given five choices on how to respond to this question with options ranging from high familiarity and involvement (*I understand what RTI is and am involved in the implementation of RTI in my school district*) to no familiarity with the RTI initiative (*I've never heard of RTI*). A majority of the 101 participants who completed the survey and were considered in the current study analysis reported being highly familiar with RTI and how it is implemented in their schools, while less than 15% of participants reported being unfamiliar with the Response to Intervention initiative. A summary of participant self-reported familiarity of the RTI process is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant Familiarity of Response to Intervention (RTI) Initiative (n=101)

I understand what RTI is and am involved in the implementation of RTI in my school district	37.6% (n= 38)
I understand what RTI is and how it is used in my school district	35.6% (n= 36)
I understand what RTI is, but I am not sure how it is used in my school district	11.8% (n= 12)
I've heard of RTI, but I am not sure how it is used in my school district	13.8% (n= 14)
I've never heard of RTI	.009% (n= 1)

Preliminary Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted for the seven scales used in this study.

Chronbach's Alpha values of the seven components of the RTI Needs Assessment and the scale as a whole were calculated with the data obtained from the current sample and are provided in Table 3. Values ranged between .63 and .95 with 6 of 7 scales exceeding the recommendation of value of .70 (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005) and indicating that the individual items that form each scale have reasonable to strong internal consistency.

Table 3. Internal Consistency of Individual Scales

	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
General Education Curriculum	5	.63
Progress Monitoring	5	.93
Research Based Strategies	5	.82
Standard Treatment Protocol	5	.78
Problem Solving	7	.80
Administrative Factors	9	.87
Schoolwide Organization	10	.83
Total RTI Scale	46	.95

Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis

A 2 x 2 Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if teachers within the education district differed in their scores on the seven scales of the RTI Needs Assessment (Bender & Shores, 2007; MN RTI Center, 2008) depending on the type of teacher (general educator vs. support staff/teachers) and whether they worked in a primary or a secondary setting. When assumptions of independence of observations and homogeneity of variance and covariance were checked, assumptions for variance were met, but the covariance assumption was not met. Results from the analysis were interpreted nonetheless due to the fact that MANOVA is a fairly robust test when group sizes are relatively similar (Leech et al., 2005).

According to results from a MANOVA, the interaction effect was not significant, Wilks Λ = .89, $F(7, 91) = 1.68$, $p = .124$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .34$. The main effect for type of school (primary vs. secondary) was significant, Wilks Λ = .70, $F(7, 91) = 5.46$, $p = .00$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .54$. The main effect for teacher type was also significant, Wilks Λ = .69, $F(7, 91) = 5.90$, $p = .00$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .56$. This indicates that knowledge and views of components of the RTI process differs depending on the type of school and the type of teacher.

Given the MANOVA was significant with both dependent variables, follow-up ANOVAs were conducted. Follow-up ANOVAs examining differences for type of teacher (general educator vs. support staff) yielded statistically significant results on six of seven scales (Table 4) including: Progress Monitoring $F(1, 97) = 27.66$, $p = .000$, Research Based Strategies $F(1, 97) = 13.70$, $p = .000$, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions $F(1, 97) = 7.44$, $p = .008$, Problem Solving $F(1, 97) = 8.05$, $p = .006$, Administrative Factors $F(1, 97) = 9.54$, $p = .003$, and Schoolwide Organization $F(1, 97) = 4.72$, $p = .032$. Support staff/special education teachers reported more knowledge and more positive views of Progress Monitoring, Research Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization (Table 5) than did general education teachers. Effect sizes on scales yielding statistically significant results suggest differences in responses on the various scales that can be attributed to the type of teacher (general educator vs. support staff/teachers) range from larger than typical (Progress Monitoring; $r = .47$) to a smaller than typical effect size (Schoolwide Organization; $r = .21$) for this area of research (Leech et al., 2005).

Table 4. Effect Sizes Based on Type of Teacher (General Educator vs. Support Staff/Teachers)

	Level of Significance	Effect Size
General Curriculum	.929	--
Progress Monitoring	.000*	.471
Research Based Strategies	.000*	.352
Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions	.008*	.266
Problem Solving	.006*	.277
Administrative Factors	.003*	.3
Schoolwide Organization	.032*	.214

* $p < .05$

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Responses as a Function of Teacher Type

	General Curriculum		Progress Monitoring		Research Based Strategies		Standard Treatment Protocol Intervention		Problem Solving		Administrative Factors		School-wide Organization	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
General Educators (N= 59)	1.89	.43	<u>2.44</u>	.76	<u>2.37</u>	.53	<u>2.33</u>	.54	<u>1.92</u>	.50	<u>2.45</u>	.51	<u>2.14</u>	.44
Support Staff/ Teachers (N= 42)	1.89	.42	<u>1.76</u>	.60	<u>1.98</u>	.51	<u>2.05</u>	.40	<u>1.61</u>	.55	<u>2.18</u>	.46	<u>1.95</u>	.53

Data from the follow-up ANOVAs examining differences for type of school (primary vs. secondary) indicated that responses on both the Progress Monitoring and Schoolwide Organization scales were significantly different (Table 6), $F(1, 97) = 10.16$, $p = .002$ and $F(1, 97) = 8.72$, $p = .004$, respectively. Primary teachers reported significantly more knowledge and more positive perceptions in these areas than did secondary teachers (Table 7). Effect sizes on the Progress Monitoring ($r = .31$) and Schoolwide Organization ($r = .29$) scales suggest, in both instances, what would be considered a medium, or typical effect size, for this area of research (Leech et al., 2005).

Table 6. Effect Sizes Based on Type of School (Primary vs. Secondary)

	Level of Significance	Effect Size
General Curriculum	.383	--
Progress Monitoring	.002*	.308
Research Based Strategies	.301	--
Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions	.739	--
Problem Solving	.629	--
Administrative Factors	.790	--
Schoolwide Organization	.004*	.286

* $p < .05$

Table 7. Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Responses as a Function of Grade Level Taught

	General Curriculum		Progress Monitoring		Research Based Strategies		Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions		Problem Solving		Administrative Factors		Schoolwide Organization	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Primary Teachers (N= 47)	1.93	.36	<u>1.93</u>	.58	2.16	.50	2.23	.47	1.83	.47	2.39	.52	<u>1.91</u>	.37
Secondary Teachers (N= 54)	1.86	.47	<u>2.36</u>	.86	2.25	.60	2.21	.53	1.77	.60	2.34	.51	<u>2.19</u>	.54

Analysis of Descriptive Questions

Prior to completing the seven component survey, participants were asked to answer several preliminary questions related to the importance of pre-service teachers receiving undergraduate instruction in the various components of RTI. A summary of participant responses on this topic can be found in Figure 1. Of the staff surveyed, 94.5% reported that it is important to very important that pre-service teachers receive undergraduate instruction in the various components related to RTI. More specifically, the majority of staff surveyed reported scientifically research based instruction of the general education curriculum, training and instruction in progress monitoring, training in how to implement research based interventions, instruction on standard treatment protocol interventions, and instruction in how to use the problem solving model were important areas that should be covered during undergraduate training for pre-service teachers.

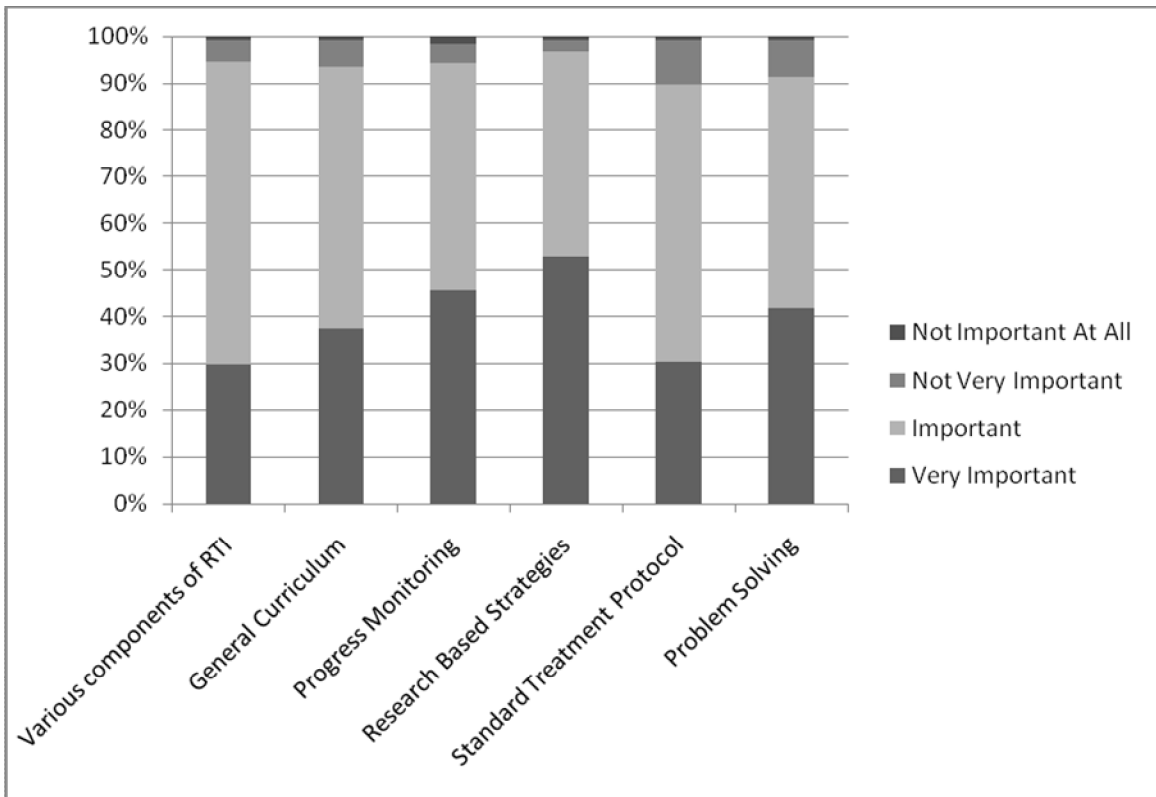


Figure 1. Percentages of teachers reporting on the importance of undergraduate training in RTI related areas

In addition to preliminary questions and the seven component survey, participants were also given the opportunity to respond to two open ended questions related to RTI at the end of the survey. Of the 101 school staff who participated in the survey, 88 responded to the first open-ended question and 60 responded to the second open-ended question. The content of these responses was analyzed and grouped into similar themes. Themes of responses to each of the two questions and frequencies are reported in Figures 2 and 3.

Themes and frequencies of responses to the first qualitative question (What are one to two things that you see as barriers to using the RTI framework in your school?) are

summarized in Figure 2. The majority of school staff who responded to the first qualitative question reported that finding time within student schedules to offer interventions was the biggest barrier to implementing the RTI framework in their schools. School staff also reported that the length of time the RTI process takes (paperwork, problem solving process, length of interventions, lag time after teachers request assistance) is also a significant barrier to implementing the RTI framework in their schools.

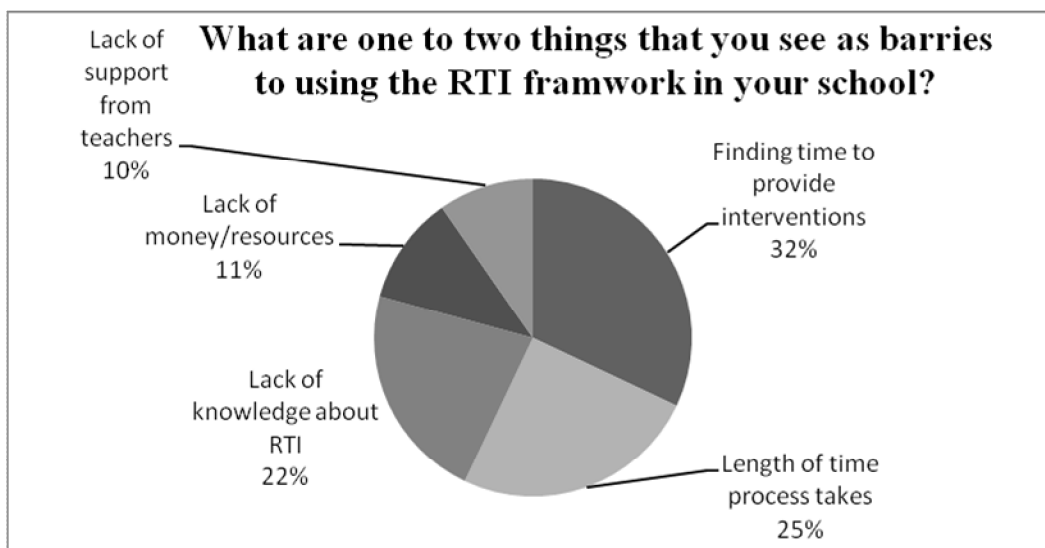


Figure 2. Common Responses to First Qualitative Question

Themes and frequencies of responses to the second qualitative question (What are one to two things you are confused about that are related to Response to Intervention?) are summarized in Figure 3. The most frequently reported areas related to RTI that educators were confused about were the paperwork that is required to be completed, and the length of time it takes for students to receive help and/or be evaluated for special education services. School staff also reported confusion about why general education teachers aren't more involved and/or informed about students who are receiving

interventions, why there aren't more interventions for areas beyond reading, and what to do with students who struggle in areas other than reading including math, writing, and behavior.

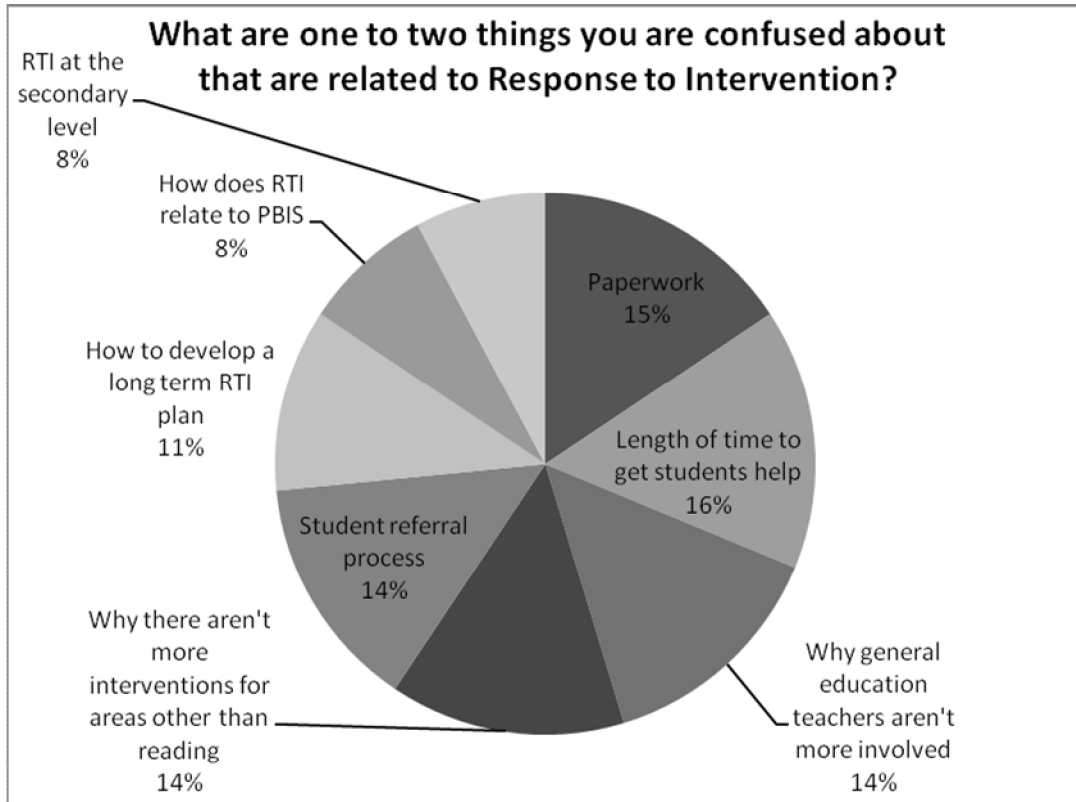


Figure 3 Common Responses to Second Qualitative Question

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to conduct a preliminary investigation of how educators and support staff working in schools who have adopted the RTI framework would self-report their views, knowledge, and skills related to seven core principles and components of the initiative. Participants of the study included 101 general educators, special educators, and support staff from both primary and secondary schools within SCRED located in the east central region of Minnesota. At the time of the study, all participants worked in schools that were implementing RTI and using the RTI process for determining special education eligibility in the area of specific learning disability (SLD). The majority of participants reported being familiar with the RTI process and how it was implemented in their schools.

The seven components of the RTI initiative that were examined included: General Education Curriculum, Progress Monitoring, Research Based Strategies, Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions, Problem Solving, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization. A preliminary reliability analysis of the measurement tool used in the current study provided strong evidence for adequate internal consistency of the seven scales that comprised the survey. Differences amongst educators and their patterns of responses on each of the seven scales were examined. Participants were also given an opportunity to answer qualitative questions related to RTI. Responses from several qualitative questions were gathered to determine which RTI components participants felt were most important for teacher trainers to consider incorporating into

the required coursework for their programs. Additional questions at the end of the survey also gave participants the opportunity to identify barriers and areas of confusion related to the RTI initiative.

General Educator and Special Educator/Support Staff Differences

The first objective of the current study was to examine potential differences in how general educators and special education teachers/support staff reported their knowledge and views of core components of RTI. Preliminary results suggested that special education teachers and support staff reported themselves as more knowledgeable and confident than general educators in implementing core components of the RTI. Further analysis indicated that special educators and support staff reported significantly more knowledge and more positive views across many of the scales examined, including Progress Monitoring, Research Based Strategies, Standard Protocol Interventions, the Problem Solving Process, Administrative Factors, and Schoolwide Organization. Knowledge and competence in implementing the general education curriculum was the only area where no differences between special education teachers and general education teachers were found. Current study findings suggest that general education teachers feel less confident than special educators and support staff in many of these areas thus further supporting a need for professional development that specifically targets general education teachers (NASP, 2006). Current research findings more specifically suggest that general education teachers would benefit from more instruction and training in using curriculum based measures of academic progress to help inform daily instructional practices. These findings support other study results (Begeny & Martens, 2006) that found special education graduate students reported significantly more coursework and applied training

in academic assessment strategies (e.g. the use of curriculum based measures for progress monitoring purposes) than students in elementary or secondary education master's programs.

Special educators and support staff also reported observing important characteristics of Schoolwide Organization that are needed for the successful implementation of RTI, more so than general educators. Some of these characteristics include viewing more positive leadership practices driving the process, more of a standardized/evidence based process for evaluating curriculum, and more resources allocated to teacher teams based on student needs. The successful implementation of RTI is dependent on the support and coordinated efforts across *all* levels of staff and leadership within a school (Kratochwill et al., 2007). With that in mind, while schools are comprised of predominately general education teachers, in the current study special educators and support staff were the ones who reported feeling more supported in their efforts to move forward with the RTI initiative. If RTI is to be seen as a school-wide prevention system with quality core instruction in the general education classroom (NASP, 2006) and multi-tiered levels of intervention for students at-risk for not meeting grade level standards, then current findings suggest schools need to do a better job of helping general education teachers feel supported in their efforts to implement RTI in their classrooms. Before efforts to provide professional development for general education teachers are made, school administrators need to make sure they are organized in ways that allow general education teachers to easily adopt research based teaching strategies in their classrooms and use data to inform daily instructional practices.

Primary and Secondary Educator Differences

Next, the current study examined if there were differences between how primary and secondary educators reported their knowledge and views of several principle components of the RTI initiative. Preliminary findings in relation to this objective indicated that primary teachers reported themselves as more knowledgeable and confident than secondary teachers in the areas of Progress Monitoring and Schoolwide Organization. In the area of Progress Monitoring primary teachers reported being more familiar with progress monitoring tools, having a better understanding of how to analyze progress monitoring data, and using progress monitoring tools more frequently in their classrooms to help drive instructional decisions than secondary teachers. Current research findings suggest that secondary teachers need more practice and training in using progress monitoring tools so they can become more confident and proficient in determining student success, or responsiveness, to Tier Two and Tier Three interventions. It should be noted that the bulk of existing research on using curriculum based measures for progress monitoring purposes is at the elementary level and considerable research needs to be done to further establish these measures at the secondary level (Foegen, Jiban, & Deno, 2007). Although training teachers how to administer and utilize curriculum based measures is an important issue, the overall lack of established progress monitoring tools for secondary students in the areas of reading, writing, and math is a more pressing concern at this time.

In the area of Schoolwide Organization primary teachers reported observing more characteristics of the school-wide organization needed for successful RTI implementation than did secondary teachers. As stated above, some of these characteristics include

perceiving more leadership driving the RTI process, observing more of a standardized/evidence based process for evaluating curriculum, and feeling as though there are more resources allocated to teacher teams based on student need. In order for best practices of assessment and instruction to be put into place effectively, a school-wide system of organization at both the primary and secondary level is necessary (Burns & Gibbons, 2008). Current study findings suggest that primary educators perceive a better level of system-wide organization in their schools than do secondary educators. This finding is most likely due to the fact that the majority of research on the RTI initiative has been focused primarily at the elementary level (Burns & Gibbons; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005).

Qualitative Perspectives of Educators

The final objective of the current study was to use qualitative responses from participants to identify which components of the RTI initiative educators view as important for pre-service teachers to receive instruction in before entering the field. Qualitative information was also gathered to help identify what educators feel are the biggest barriers to successful implementation of RTI in their schools. Specifically, participants were asked to identify areas related to the RTI initiative that are important for pre-service teachers to develop competency. Three general themes that emerged from content analysis of these responses were: research based instructional practices of the general education curriculum, research based strategies or interventions for teachers to use in the classroom, and the use of curriculum based measures (CBM) for progress monitoring purposes. The successful implementation of RTI in a school-wide sense requires change on many levels, with the most significant change pertaining to the

professional practices of teachers and other school personnel (Kratochwill et al., 2007). Current research findings further support the notion that professional development concerns with regard to the RTI initiative are not limited to teacher in-service needs, but also apply to pre-service individuals, thus placing the responsibility, at least in part, for building competency in these areas in undergraduate and graduate training programs (Kratochwill et al.). Current research findings also suggest that in-service educational professionals feel that pre-service teachers would benefit greatly from instruction and training in the areas of intervention and assessment (specifically in using CBM for progress monitoring purposes). In addition to intervention and assessment, the majority of educators surveyed in the current study also agreed that undergraduate training in research based instructional practices of general education curriculum would greatly benefit pre-service teachers entering the field. These results help confirm previous findings that pre-service preparation programs do not provide adequate training in empirically based instructional methods (Begeny & Martens, 2006).

Participants of the current study identified finding time within student schedules to offer interventions as the biggest barrier to implementing the RTI framework in their schools. Additionally, they also reported that the length of time the RTI process takes (paperwork, problem solving process, length of interventions, and lag time after teachers request assistance) is also a significant barrier to fully implementing RTI in their schools. In a recent study (McCutcheon, 2008) teachers surveyed in Wisconsin identified lack of resources as the biggest roadblock to the success of RTI. Past and current research findings suggest that in order for RTI to be fully accepted by educational professionals in their schools, proponents of the reform must first demonstrate their investment in the

change at a local level through strong administrative leadership, school-wide organization efforts, and efforts to provide professional development to their teachers (Kratochwill et al., 2007). Furthermore, our public education system is notorious for failed reform efforts and initiatives like the "whole language approach" to reading instruction, "invented spelling," and "constructivist math," or in the special education world "full inclusion" and "facilitated communication" (Kozloff, 2002). These initiatives often sweep eager and optimistic teachers off their feet only to later become passing fads. This reputation has left many teachers and other educational professionals reticent to put much time and effort into adopting any kind of change (Datnow & Castelleno, 2000) until schools, with the help of federal and state educational funding sources, show confidence in the feasibility and staying power of the reform. Confidence and investment in the RTI initiative at the local, state, and federal levels, along with a sufficient longitudinal and large scale body of research supporting the improvement of student outcomes (Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009) is most likely what teachers and educational professionals are awaiting before accepting RTI as worthy of the time and resources it will take to educate themselves on the different components and principles of the initiative.

Limitations of the Current Study

As with most studies, this investigation was not without limitations. First, as with any type of survey-based research, all information gathered was based on participant self-report. The information gathered on knowledge and competency levels of teachers working in schools who have adopted the RTI framework is limited to how teachers view their own skills in each of the areas assessed. Second, because RTI is a fairly new education initiative with limited research done by way of surveying teachers, the 46 item

questionnaire used in the current study was an adaptation of two different RTI needs based assessment tools. Neither of the RTI needs assessments had reliability or validity data available, thus the only psychometric properties available for the measurement tool used were through a preliminary reliability analysis that was conducted during the current study. Third, the primary purpose of the current study was to gather information for the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED). Therefore, research findings are most relevant for these particular school districts and further research is needed to determine the broader applicability of current study findings. Despite limitations, the original intent of the study was fulfilled. That is, preliminary information was collected related to teacher knowledge and views of seven core components of the RTI initiative, and differences between groups of teachers and their response patterns were examined.

Implications and Future Directions

Over the past decade there has been a surge of research on different aspects of the RTI initiative. Much of this research is related to topics such as reading instruction, multi-tiered instruction, problem solving, intervention practices, and access to special education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). One area of research related to RTI that has been largely ignored is how the initiative affects the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and how teachers view the core principles and components of RTI. Because teachers are often considered the centerpiece of educational change, and a critical component of success with regard to educational reform (Datnow & Castellano, 2000), the current study attempted to gather information from educators working in schools who have adopted the RTI framework on their views, knowledge, and skills related to the initiative. More specifically, the purpose of the current study was to determine if there are differences in

how education professionals report their knowledge and skills of components related to RTI. Current findings helped to identify specific groups of teachers (general educators) that need to be targeted for future professional development in RTI related areas, along with educational settings (secondary schools) that would benefit from teacher-focused professional development and school-wide re-organization within an RTI framework. Further research needs to be done to determine the most effective ways to go about building teacher knowledge and skills in the areas of research based instructional practices and assessment methods. Research also needs to be done to determine how to gain buy-in and ownership of the RTI initiative from general education teachers, and to more systematically identify what general educators and special educators see as barriers to the successful implementation of RTI in their schools. With regard to RTI at the secondary level, there is an unforeseeable amount of research and development that needs to take place before RTI will be adopted in a more global sense, as the gold standard for providing instruction and improving student outcomes at the secondary level. Several areas, specifically targeting the secondary setting that would benefit from further research and development are school-wide organizational models, measurement systems, and research-based instructional practices at all three tiers of the RTI model.

Current and future research in this area will hopefully help to more clearly define what it takes, from a teacher's perspective, to set RTI apart from failed educational reform efforts of the past. If proponents of the reform are successful in doing so it will catapult the RTI initiative into a category of its own where data based decision making and empirically supported instructional practices are widely accepted and implemented in

schools across the nation, thus changing, for the better, how our public schools do business.

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APPENDIX A

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (46 QUESTIONS)

Response to Intervention Needs Assessment (46 Questions)

Response Options:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree
5. N/A

General Curriculum

I feel I have been effectively trained in the curriculum standards for the grade level(s) and content area(s) in which I teach

I implement curriculum standards as they are designed in each of the content areas in which I teach

I have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the principles and strategies of differentiated instruction (varying instruction to meet individual student needs)

I consistently differentiate my instruction by content, process, product, and learning environment on an ongoing basis.

To my knowledge, my school uses curriculum mapping to align the curriculum across grade levels and content areas.

Progress Monitoring

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is used frequently in my classroom to assess student progress

I have been trained in the use of Curriculum-Based Measurement to evaluate the learning of my students

I have Curriculum-Based Measurement tools available to me in my content area(s) and appropriate grade level(s)

I have a good understanding of how to analyze, chart, and interpret data

I utilize data from ongoing CBMs to drive instruction decisions on a daily and/or weekly basis

Research Based Strategies

I have a good knowledge base of multiple research based strategies that address a wide variety of learning and behavioral problems

There are adequate resources available to me in specific research based strategies that I am able use with my students

I have been trained in the use of research based strategies that I am able to implement with students in my classroom

I frequently implement research based strategies in my classroom with integrity and fidelity (i.e. in a manner that is consistent with how they were designed to be implemented)

My school has a process in place that ensures research based strategies are implemented with integrity and fidelity

Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions

The school has in place standard treatment protocol interventions designed to address common and/or frequent learning or behavior problems

Flexible scheduling for students and staff is utilized to enable student access to standard treatment protocols

Job responsibilities have been restructured to enable student access to standard treatment protocols

Standard treatment protocols are designed to assertively and intensively address student needs

I am knowledgeable about and/or have resources available to inform myself about appropriate standard treatment protocol interventions

Problem Solving

In my school(s) there is a building problem solving team designed to help general education teachers and parents solve student problems

I am familiar with the problem solving process that my school employs

The problem solving team is seen as a general education rather than a special education process

My school's problem solving team has balanced representation of grade level, general, and special education staff

My school's problem solving team has an administrator team member.

I am familiar with my school problem solving team's regularly scheduled meeting time and place

If I have a child I would like to refer to the problem solving team, I am aware of what I need to do to initiate the process

Administrative Factors

The entire administration portrays to the staff, students, and parents the importance of using the RTI framework for increased student achievement in my school(s)

The school schedule is designed to provide for flexibility and restructuring of resources to meet student needs.

Various strategies including observations, teacher conferences, lesson plan evaluations, and others are used to monitor the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom

A variety of resources have been identified and provided to staff in my school to address deficit areas in curriculum, behavior management, and instructional strategies

Teachers in my school are provided with time and incentives for collaboration, professional growth, and staff development

Inventive programs for teacher training (i.e. action research, strategy sharing, publishing) are utilized in my school

In my building, partnerships exist with local organizations (i.e. colleges, retired teacher associations, education districts, etc) for programs that directly affect teacher training and student performance.

School-wide and classroom data is frequently used to determine areas of needed improvement in my school(s)

Adequate and useful resources to address identified needs are readily available to staff in my building

Schoolwide Organization

In my school there is strong instructional leadership that guides the RTI process by using data for decision-making purposes and finds the resources necessary to meet student needs.

My school uses a standardized, evidenced-based framework for evaluating curriculum.

My school has evidenced based curriculum, instruction and/or strategies for tier 2 and tier 3 supports.

My school has a data warehouse where all relevant student data can be accessed for problem solving.

Reading instruction at my school(s) is scheduled at the same time within grade levels and different times across grade levels to maximize use of resources.

Each grade level (elementary school) has a common daily block dedicated to reading instruction.

For elementary aged students in my school district, there is at least 90 minutes a day allocated for reading instruction.

The school schedule is arranged in such a way that grade level teaching teams can meet to discuss student progress and instructional changes on a monthly basis.

Resources are allocated to teaching teams based on student needs documented by progress monitoring data (e.g. teams with more needs have more resources)

Comprehensive and on-going professional development in curriculum, instruction, measurement, and problem solving is offered to staff as part of a continuous improvement process

Adapted from RTI Needs Assessment found in:

Bender, W. N. & Shores, C. (2007). *Response to Intervention: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Problem Solving and Schoolwide Organization Sections were adapted from:

Minnesota Response to Intervention Center (2008). School readiness for response to intervention (RTI) implementation checklist. Retrieved on September 20, 2008 from <http://www.scred.k12.mn.us/School/Index.cfm/go:site.Page/Page:3/Area:4/index.html>

APPENDIX B

SURVEY DESCRIPTION

Survey Description

Dear Teacher:

My name is Alissa Gallagher a recent graduate school student from the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse and school psychologist for the Pine City School District. In order for me to complete my graduate school requirements at UW- La Crosse I am required to complete an applied thesis project. I have selected Response to Intervention as the main topic for my project.

I am interested in your knowledge and perceptions related to the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative in your school district(s). As a teacher you are in a position to provide valuable information with regard to your perceptions of the RTI initiative and your knowledge of various components of RTI.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an on-line survey. The 63 question survey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and informed consent is implied upon completion of the on-line survey. **As thanks for taking time to complete the survey, when you are finished your name will be placed in a drawing for one of two \$50.00 gift certificates to Barnes and Noble bookstores.**

The results of this study may be published in scientific literature or presented at professional meetings using grouped data only. All information will be kept confidential through the use of numbered codes and not linked to any personally identifiable information.

Participating in this study will assist in identifying areas of need in your school with regard to the RTI initiative and will potentially assist in the planning of future professional development topics and speakers provided through the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) and your local school district. In addition, findings from this study may assist in providing institutions of higher education around the state and region in making decisions about content material related to RTI for future educators enrolled in teacher education programs.

The distribution of this survey has been approved by St. Croix River Education District (SCRED), your district administrators, and the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions regarding study procedures may be directed to Alissa Gallagher (329-629-4279), principal investigator. Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICS/PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

Demographics/Preliminary Questions

1. School District in which you are employed

Chisago Lakes

East Central

Hinckley-Finlayson

Rush City

Pine City

I work for multiple districts

2. Current teaching assignment

Teacher- General Education

Teacher-Special Education

Administrator

Support Staff **

3. Grade levels taught in your building

Elementary (Early Childhood through 6th grade)

Middle (6th-8th Grade)

Jr. and Senior High School (Grades 7-12)

Senior High School (Grades 9-12)

4. Years of experience in education

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

More than 15 years

5. Number of years in current position

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

More than 15 years

6. Highest Degree Earned

Less than a 4 year degree

BA/BS

Masters/Specialist

Doctorate

Response to intervention is an educational initiative built around the principles of providing high quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, frequent monitoring of educational progress to make instructional decisions, and using student data to help make important educational decisions (Elliot, 2008; Bender & Shores, 2007).

7. How familiar are you with the Response to Intervention Initiative?

I understand what RTI is and am involved in the implementation of RTI in my school district

I understand what RTI is and how it is used in my school district

I understand what RTI is, but I am not sure how it is used in my school district

I've heard of RTI, but I am not sure how it is used in my school district

I've never heard of RTI

8. RTI is a general education initiative

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. RTI is a special education initiative

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. The RTI initiative is an effective way to identify students who are falling behind academically early on in school

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. Pre-service educators would benefit from undergraduate instruction on the various components of RTI

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12. How important is it that pre-service teachers receive training in: Research Based General Education?

Very Important

Somewhat Important

Not very important

Not important at all

13. How important is it that pre-service teachers receive training in: Progress monitoring and the use of curriculum based assessment/measurement?

Very Important

Somewhat Important

Not very important

Not important at all

14. How important is it that pre-service teachers receive training in: Research-Based Interventions and strategies for the general education classroom?

Very Important

Somewhat Important

Not very important

Not important at all

15. How important is it that pre-service teachers receive training in: Standard Treatment Protocol Interventions?

Very Important

Somewhat Important

Not very important

Not important at all

16. How important is it that pre-service teachers receive training in: The Problem Solving Model?

Very Important

Somewhat Important

Not very important

Not important at all

**Including but not limited to reading specialists, unique learning coordinators, guidance counselors, social workers, school nurses, school psychologists, and alternative service delivery teachers