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Does the RTI process really help teachers reach struggling students more effectively?

The Effects of RTI on Two Kindergarten Classrooms

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share the results of an action research project relating to the effects of using Response to Intervention (RTI) in the kindergarten classroom. At a rural Iowa school, the process RTI was implemented in two kindergarten classrooms. One classroom had access to a researched based reliable universal screener, interventions and progress monitoring system. The other classroom used teacher created assessments and interventions. The paper will share the findings of the study that looked at the effects of implementing RTI with integrity in the Kindergarten classroom.

Does the RTI process really help teachers reach
struggling students more effectively?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is an every- education decision-making framework of evidence based practices in instruction and assessment that addresses the needs of all students. This topic was chosen because among the faculty at the school, teachers were complaining about the amount of work and assessments we are required to do, when it comes to RTI. Many of the teachers believe that the general education teachers are doing all the work and the special education teachers are not doing anything. Some teachers also shared that they believe we do all these interventions and then they never qualify for special education. Assessing kids has become overwhelming to many teachers. Many teachers have questioned the need for the RTI process, as many of the veteran teachers complain that they can “just tell the students that need extra assistance”. They do not need to look at data walls and implement interventions. Many of the comments among the teachers at the school include, “we are just prolonging the process to special education” and “special education teachers should be doing the interventions”.

RTI is also known as Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and in this paper will be referred to as RTI as “both RTI and MTSS essentially mean the same thing” (Iowa Department of Education, 2014). The model can be effective in identifying areas where students need additional support and providing those targeted services. All though RTI or MTSS can be used for all subject’s areas and behaviors, this piece of action research is focusing on early literacy development in an Iowan kindergarten classroom.

This action research project was created because the chatter in the staff room about the extra work RTI creates in the classroom is unfair to the teacher. So many teachers tell you “I know that they (the student) is in need of special education, I have to jump through the hoops to

get them qualified”. RTI is about empowering the general education classroom teacher to help students succeed earlier. It’s about putting interventions in place to prevent students from being identified and using data to ensure what they are doing is actually working. The RTI process, this paper will research to effectiveness of implementing RTI in the Kindergarten Classroom.

Area of Focus Statement

The purpose of this study is to describe the effects of student’s success, when RTI is implemented with integrity. RTI ensures that poor academic performance is not a result of poor instruction and it also empowers the general education classroom teacher to do something about the struggling students instead of passing the problem to someone else.

Research Questions

This research will target the question:

1. Does the RTI process help teachers reach the struggling students more effectively?
2. Are the resources available to teachers beneficial to students learning?

Literature Review

RTI is “a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs” (RTI Action Network, n.d.). There are 5 components of RTI and it always begins with high- quality instruction, universal screening of all students, evidence-based instructional interventions. Progress monitoring for learners below expectations and data-based decision making throughout the system (Iowa Department of Education, 2016). RTI is about helping every child succeed and improving the quality of education for all children, whether they be below benchmark, on benchmark or above benchmark.

It allows educators to judge the overall health of their school system by examining data on all students in general and special education, as well as identifying students who need

additional supports. “The Idea is to ensure all students reach the expectations set by the Iowa Core standards and are prepared for success after high school (Iowa Department of Education, 2014). RTI is helping students be prepared for life beyond the school system. RTI allows teachers to provide much needed services for at risk students who may not have qualified under former eligibility processes. It also allows school to allocate funding through the ELI law to these students. This allows schools to purchase high quality interventions that they may not have had the funding for previously.

In 2001, No Child Left Behind (Public Law 107-110, 2002) required states to create accountability systems of assessments, graduation rates, teacher expertise and other indicators. No Child Left Behind gives schools the responsibility to ensure that all students are making yearly progress, and the RTI process is a teaching structure that helps teachers, help their students. The RTI provision of IDEA is a general education (regular classroom) initiative that seeks to reduce the numbers of children who are identified as disabled because they struggle academically (Wilcox, Murakami-Ramalho & Urick, 2013).

High Quality Instruction

The classroom instruction needs to be of a high quality, scientifically based. Teachers need to be implementing a curriculum in their classroom that is rigorous and scientifically researched. All students in the classroom receive the same researched based instruction in the general education classroom. Students who are struggling need consistent instruction that is layered across classroom and supplemental programs (Dorn & Soffos, 2012). The curriculum needs to be implemented by a highly qualified individual to ensure that the students difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction (National Center for Learning Disabilities, N.D.). The general education classroom is the first line of intervention all students are exposed to the core

curriculum and some students will need to be taught the same curriculum more than once and that is when classroom teachers need to differentiate their teaching.

Universal Screening of All Students

All students in the general education classroom are put through a universal screener. Classroom screening establishes a baseline for scores; comparing performances of individual students to that baseline determines progress or lack thereof (Caldwell & Leslie, 2009). The universal screener needs to be balanced, valid and reliable. The universal screening of all students needs to occur several times a year as this enables educators to identify which students are on track to reach end of year outcomes and which students may be at risk (AEA 267, n.d.). Universal screenings allow us to reach the students who are struggling as early as possible, so as teachers we can put in place preventive practices. This allows us to help all students faster.

Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) is a suite of highly efficient assessment tools designed for universal screening, progress monitoring, and program evaluation as part of RTI. In 2013, FAST and IGDIs were adopted to support the implementation of RTI and has been provided to all Iowa Schools public and non-public. The FAST literacy suite of assessments helps districts meet the requirements of the Early Literacy Initiative (ELI) as part of Iowa Code Section 279.68 (AEA, n.d.). These screeners (FAST and IGDIS) were chosen by the state of Iowa as a screener of literacy skills. FAST Assessments currently include: CBM Reading (Spring 1st grade- 6th grade Oral Reading Fluency), early Reading (K-1 Concepts of Print, Onset Sounds Letter Names, Letter Sounds, Word Segmenting, Sight Words, Nonsense Words and Sentence Reading), and adaptive reading.

Evidence-based instructional interventions.

The 3rd component of RTI is evidence based instructional interventions. Students who are identified as struggling or at risk through the universal screenings receive supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. During this time, student progress needs to be closely monitored using a validated screening system. Evidence-based instruction interventions are chosen because they have been scientifically identified as improving students' skills. This means that teachers cannot just do something that they feel is best.

Progress monitoring for learners below expectations.

Progress monitoring encompasses a system of brief assessments that are given frequently, to determine whether students are progressing through the curriculum and are likely to meet long term goals. Scores provide teachers with information about both the levels of academic performance and his or her rate of improvement (Stecker, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). Progress monitoring needs to occur by teachers in the classroom to ensure what they are doing during the intervention period is working. Measures are typically given weekly to students who are targeted as performing significantly below peers on initial screening (Stecker, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). FAST and Iowa TIER have a progress monitoring recording component that the state of Iowa uses. This is a user friendly computer program that assists teachers in documenting their data. It can draw graphs, map predict progress, show growth lines and can show where the average student should be. All valuable information to the classroom teacher.

Data-based decision making throughout the system.

All decisions need to be backed up with data. Interventions should be fluid and change with student's needs. Data drives instruction as it shows the teacher where the student is and where they should be. Iowa TIER can assist teachers in documenting their data in a use friendly computer program.

When teachers implement RTI in their schools, it is often conceptualized as 3 tiers. The first tier is the classroom instruction. The teacher teaches the general education curriculum effectively and assess all students using the universal screener. In tier 1, the teachers and support staff collaborate to analyze the data to identify which students have gaps in skills, set measurable goals for closing the gaps and choose or create instructional strategies. The teacher can differentiate learning to best meet the needs of all students. Approximately 80-85% of student's experience success with Tier 1.

Tier 2 involves more intensive and specific instruction. This instruction is for the students who are not meeting benchmarks according to the universal screeners. The instruction in Tier 2 occurs in addition to that in Tier 1. Usually a small group of students with similar deficiencies receive direct, intensive instruction 3-5 times a week. Progress monitoring must occur to measure improvement. Tier 2 groups should change on a needs basis and should be very fluid. Careful records must be kept as well as weekly progress monitoring. Tier 2 serves approximately 10-15% of all students.

When improvement is not noted instruction needs to change. Tier 3 serves a much smaller percent of students (5-10%), the students who fail to respond to tier 2 instruction interventions. In tier 3 students receive individual instruction. Student's progress is assessed frequently and monitored by a team. A student who does not make academic progress after a reasonable period of time may be considered for special education services.

Historically school systems have used varying different ways to identify struggling students for special education. The wait to fail identification process, hasn't worked because we aren't helping the students immediately. We are literally waiting for them to fail before we can qualify them for special services. The IQ-achievement discrepancy model requires students to

“exhibit a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability” (Turse & Albrecht, 2015). This makes it hard to identify students before the 3rd grade and as we know, the earlier we intervene the better the outcome is. Early intervention is a component of RTI.

Teachers who dislike the RTI process according to Meyer et al. (2015) complain about the lack of time to do everything within the work hours and “Teachers knew they were more accountable but lacked sufficient knowledge and skills to implement RTI effectively” (Meyer et al., 2015). Some teachers are also apprehensive to collaborate with other teacher to make decisions (Wilcox, Murakami-Ramvalho &Urick, 2014). Teacher also are worried about implementing interventions and how to use special education teacher.

Data Collection

Qualitative data is being used I this project along with quantitative data. This study will compare students in 2 Kindergarten Classrooms progress on letter sound identification. One classroom is using Iowa TIER and Fast assessments, while the other classroom used teacher made assessments and interventions. The classrooms are both located within the same school district in rural Iowa. Both classroom will be using the RTI structure in their classrooms. They will both be implementing all 5 components of RTI to the best of their ability.

Setting And Participants

The study was conducted in a public elementary school serving 568 students, kindergarten through sixth grade. The children who attend the school generally come from low to middle class families. In the 2016-2017 school year 39% of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch with 14.9% of students living in poverty. 6.4% of the students enrolled were of a minority group with 2.2% of students had a Hispanic or Latino origin.

The school has 5 Kindergarten classrooms; the study took place using data from 2 first year Kindergarten classrooms. Classroom 1 is made up of 19 students ranging from 5 in September 2016, to 7 in August 2016. Classroom 2 has 18 students ranging in 5 in September, 2016 to 6 in September, 2016. The group of students involved were selected at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. The students involved included 6 from one class and 6 from the other class. They were all identified by the kindergarten teachers at a professional learning community (PLC) meeting. There were chosen because of their scores on the pre assessment. The students age ranged from turning 5 in September, to already being 7 years old.

Data Collection

- Data Technique 1- Pre and Post Tests- This assessment was given to all kindergarten students in the first 2 weeks of school. The assessment is a basic assessment of student's letter identification skills and sound identification skills. The assessment is found in Appendix A. This assessment provides a baseline for all students. The data from this assessment† lets us understand students letter and sound knowledge. The PLC discussed scores in length. The assessment was re-administered at the end of the period to assess growth over the 6 weeks.
- Data Collection Technique 2: Student and Parent Survey- This assessment is taken at the beginning of the school year. The teacher held a back to school meeting with both the child and the parents or guardians of the children. At the meeting the teacher asked background questions and learning preferences. Questions asked are in appendix B
- Data Collection Technique 3: Observations- The third data technique used was observation. Because the teacher was in the classroom and was an Active Participant she could take observation notes. Mills (2011) states that teachers are active participant

observers because they observe their own teaching practices. Observations include anecdotal notes written during Daily 5 time.

- Data Collection Technique 4: Progress Monitoring- Students were progress monitored weekly in accordance with the ELI laws. Progress monitoring was done by having students read letter sounds. The students were to read as many letter sounds as they could in one minute. The number of errors and the number of sounds correct per minute were recorded. One of the progress monitoring probes is included in Appendix C.

Intervention Procedures

The interventions took place in the student's classroom by their classroom teacher. The interventions took place in free center time, when there were additional adults in the room. This allowed the other students to be busy at their structure center or working with the other adult, while the teacher worked with the students needing interventions. There were expectations and routines about what you would do if you needed help, to avoid interruptions when interventions were taking place.

These are the interventions used in classroom 1 (they are classroom teacher created)

Intervention 1: Say the name, Say the sound, Find the picture
Time: 5-8 minutes per day
Duration: 2 weeks (10 school days)
Number of groups: 1-5
Activity: Students were presented with a card that showed an upper and lower case letter. As a group we traced the letter in the air while saying the name. Then we whispered the sound and said the sound out loud. The bottom of the card had three pictures from which students had to identify which began with the same sound of the letter on the card. Five cards were shown each day.

Intervention 2: Trace it, Say it, Say the object
Time: 5-8 minutes per day
Duration: 2 weeks (approximately 10 school days)

Number of groups: 3
Activity: Students were given a stack of 26 alphabet flashcards. Each flashcard had an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter, and a picture that began with the letter. All vowels used the short sound. Students would go through the stack and trace the uppercase letter while saying the letter name, trace the lower case letter while saying the name, and then say the object. (Example: “A, a, apple”) This was done for all letters of the alphabet daily.

Intervention 3: Whiteboards
Time: 5-8 minutes per day
Duration: 2 weeks (approximately 10 school days)
Number of groups: 6 (done individually)
Activity: Students were given a stack of 26 alphabet flashcards. Each flashcard had an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter, and a picture that began with the letter. Students would go through the stack and write the uppercase letter while saying the letter name, write the lower case letter while saying the name.

Intervention 3: Fly Swat
Time: 5-8 minutes per day
Duration: 2 weeks (approximately 10 school days)
Number of groups: 3
Activity: Students were given 6 letters (or less depending on ability) and a fly swatter. They had to swat the sound that the teacher said. The students then had to say the letter sound on the card and the picture on the back of the card.

In classroom 2 interventions included:

Intervention 3: Constant Time Delay
Time: 5-8 minutes per day
Duration: 2 weeks (approximately 10 school days)
Number of groups: Individually
Activity: Students were learning using flashcard with individual letters on them. The student was asked “What sound?” the student had 5 seconds to respond. If they responded correctly the teacher would say “Yes! You are correct, the sound is _.” If the student answered incorrectly the teacher would say, “No, the sound is _, What is the sound?”. If the student did not answer then the teacher would say “The sound is_, what’s the sound?” The teacher would do as many flashcards as they could for 5 minutes.

Intervention 3: Duet Reading
Time: 5-8 minutes per day

Duration: 2 weeks (approximately 10 school days)
Number of groups: Individually
Activity: The students were given a teacher made probe (Appendix B) to read. The students would read as many sounds as they could in 2 minutes with the teacher reading at the same time.

Procedure

The first step of this study was to conduct a pre assessment of all the kindergarteners letter sound and letter identification skills. This assessment was given within the first 2 weeks of the 2016-2017 school year. To administer the test, the teacher met with students individually during center time. During this time the teacher tested all the students in the classroom using a letter identification and letter sound identification probe. Using the information collected, all the kindergarten teachers in the building met with the special education teachers and reading teachers in a PLC and identified 6 students for each teacher.

All the student's in classroom 2 then took The Formative Reading Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) assessment with their classroom teacher. The FAST assessment is completed within the classroom. The teacher assessed print awareness, phonemic awareness, sound identification and letter identification. The assessment is completed in one sitting, individually with the teacher who has had significant training in how to administer the test. The teacher then used the data from both the FAST assessment and the teacher created letter sounds and letter id to identify students that were struggling or students that would need interventions. After looking at both sets of data in a PLC we identified 6 students for interventions.

The teacher's held back to school meetings with the parents and revealed the scores and talked about strengths and weaknesses of the student. They did this for every student in the classroom to make sure to connect with families. The purpose is to also find out background

information about the child and if the parents have any learning concerns. Parents and students completed the survey at this meeting.

During the next phase of the action research study, the teachers worked with their intervention groups. While the teacher had planned to work with students 15 minutes daily, they adjusted this time to 8-10 minutes 3 or 4 times a week, as it was more developmentally appropriate for kindergarten students. The size of the groups varied from 1-5 students, depending on the need for the specific skill. The teacher chooses to use a range of interventions, found on websites, knowledge from fellow teachers in my building, teachers on a Facebook group Simply Kinder as well as from reading books. All the interventions used were teacher created, and the teacher rarely knew the history of the strategy or skill.

The teacher of classroom 2, had to use the interventions that had been researched and validated. The school that we work at had a list that she could choose from. The list is very limited as the school is struggling to find research based strategies that meet the criteria. The teacher in room 2 decided to implement 2 strategies over the 5 weeks of intervention. The strategies she chose was Duet Reading and Constant Time Delay

Intervention requires data and both teachers used data to drive instruction. The teachers of both rooms aimed to work with the children daily, although interventions were only expected to occur 3 or 4 times a week. The teachers kept anecdotal notes and observations of these interventions.

Both classrooms used the same technique for progress monitoring. In classroom 1, the teacher wrote the information on a piece of paper. In classroom 2 had access to the Iowa TIER suite and were able to formally progress monitor and input data. During this time, the 5 kindergarten teachers worked together to discuss learning and interventions occurring in the

classroom. This occurred during the Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. This provided opportunity to learn about strategies that could help with student growth. After the initial testing and 5 weeks of interventions and progress monitoring, the teachers re-assessed students on the teacher created letter sounds and letter ID assessment. This data was used to analyze the results of the action research study.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to create and use interventions within a classroom that supports the RTI. The teacher wanted to know if RTI really benefited the students. The teacher also wanted to know if the FAST suite of assessments and if access to Iowa TIER really benefitted the students learning. By maximizing the strategies and using all available resources the teacher had hoped RTI would prevent students from falling further behind and eventually being identified as special education. The teacher used 4 methods to collect data, a teacher created pre and post assessment assessing letter sounds and letter identification, student and parent survey and classroom observations and progress monitoring data.

Data collection technique 1: pre assessment and post assessment. In order to create the intervention groups. The teacher needed baseline data. The teacher used a teacher created letter sound and letter identification assessment to gather this data. The assessment can be found in Appendix A. This assessment was given individual to students. The students were given a piece of paper with letters on it, not in order the students were to say the letter name or sound depending on the assessment. From this assessment the teacher was able to identify 6 students in each classroom that had outlying lower scores in 3 areas. The table below shows the 6 students from each classroom that were identified as needing intervention.

Classroom A	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F
Letter ID /54	6	16	7	7	1	33
Sounds /26	1	3	0	1	2	4

Classroom B	Student Z	Student Y	Student X	Student W	Student V	Student U
Letter ID /54	3	13	29	1	1	2
Sounds /26	1	4	1	1	1	0

The Kindergarten team in the PLC decided to focus on letter sounds as it was the foundation of reading. An expert reading teacher had shared that she believed that children will pick up on letter names through hearing them but stressed the importance of students knowing and understating letter sounds.

At the end of the intervention process, the PLC decided that children who knew fewer than 20 letter sounds would qualify for further intervention and would possibly be serviced by the Title 1 Reading Teacher. The team decided this, due to the following factors- time, the students had been introduced to all the letter names and sounds during whole group instruction. They had received 30 minutes of small group time with a highly qualified teacher every day and were in an intervention for 5-8 minutes 3 or 4 times a week.

Classroom A	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F
Letter ID /54	6	16	3	20	11	33
Sounds /26	10	17	2	25	17	12

Classroom B	Student Z	Student Y	Student X	Student W	Student V	Student U
Letter ID /54	20	13	29	1	1	10
Sounds /26	15	26	19	12	15	19

Data collection technique 2: student and parent survey. During the first two weeks of school the teacher held back to school meetings with families and the student. This is done to get to know the families better and familiarize them with the school. Depending on parent questions these meetings can take anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour.

To complete the survey, the teacher asked the students and their families questions. The students answered the questions and the teacher recorded the results.

Part 1-

1. How do you feel about reading?

I don't like it.	It's okay.	I like it.	I love it!
W, V,	C, U	E,F, Z, X,	A, B, D, Y,

2. How do you feel about reading at home?

I don't like it.	It's okay.	I like it.	I love it!
Z, X, W, V,	C, U	A, E,F,	B, D, Y,

3. How do you feel when someone reads a story?

I don't like it.	It's okay.	I like it.	I love it!
W, V,		C, E,F, Z, X, U	A, B, D, Y,

4. What is your favorite book?

Student	Favorite Book
A	The Magic Schoolbus
B	Disney Princesses
C	The Hungry Caterpillar
D	"I don't have books at home"
E	"A book about monster trucks"
F	Pete The Cat and The Four Groovy Buttons
Z	Pete The Cat Books
Y	Pinkalicious
X	Pigeon Drives a Bus
W	No! David.
V	Pete the Cat
U	Books about the Rodeo

5. Do you read at home?

Yes	No
B, C, E, F, Z, Y, X, U	A, D, W, V,

The results of the survey allowed the teacher to gauge students attitude's to reading and their exposure to reading. The survey also indicated that some of the students we were working with had very little exposure to books before school. This was valuable information that was

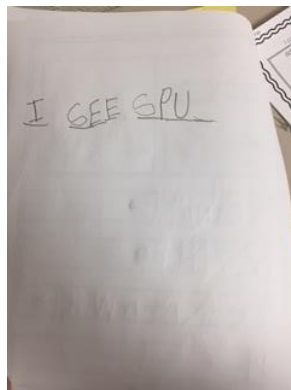
used when trying to motivate student to learn and engage in interventions. It also appeared that many of the students came from very supportive families.

Data collection technique 3: observation. Observation played a large role in the teacher’s formative assessment, the student’s abilities in the classroom during the time period of intervention was recorded. The teacher kept anecdotal notes on student’s behaviors attitudes and how they were working in the classroom both during interventions and during literacy block. Students were observed answering questions, and their ability to participate in classroom conversations. Copies of the students work during Daily 5 were also kept because that showed us if students were able to put in place what they had learned during the intervention.

Student A



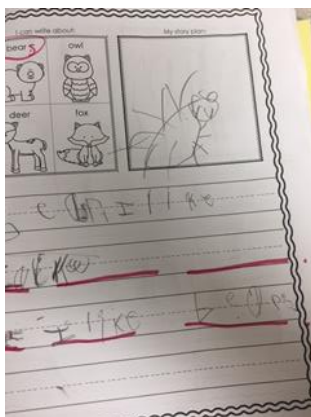
Student B



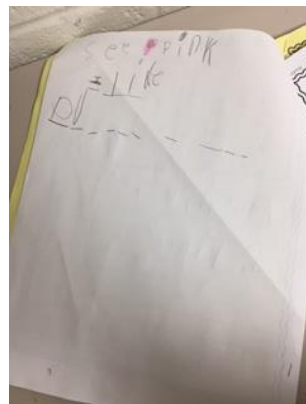
Student C



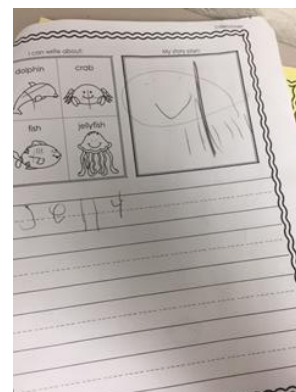
Student D



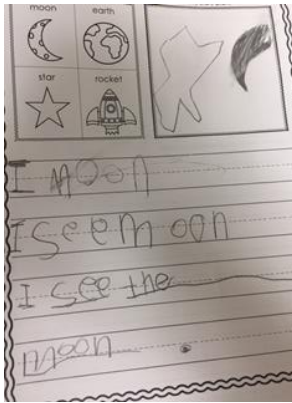
Student E



Student F



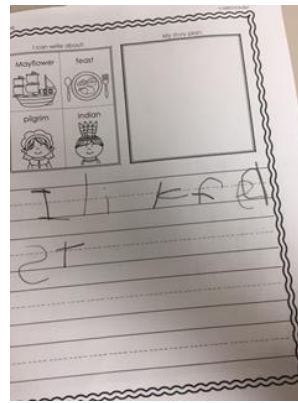
Student Z



Student Y



Student X



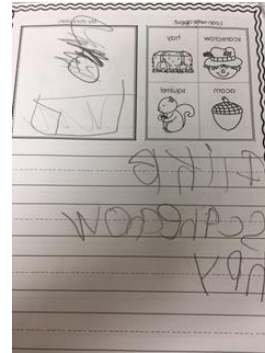
Student W

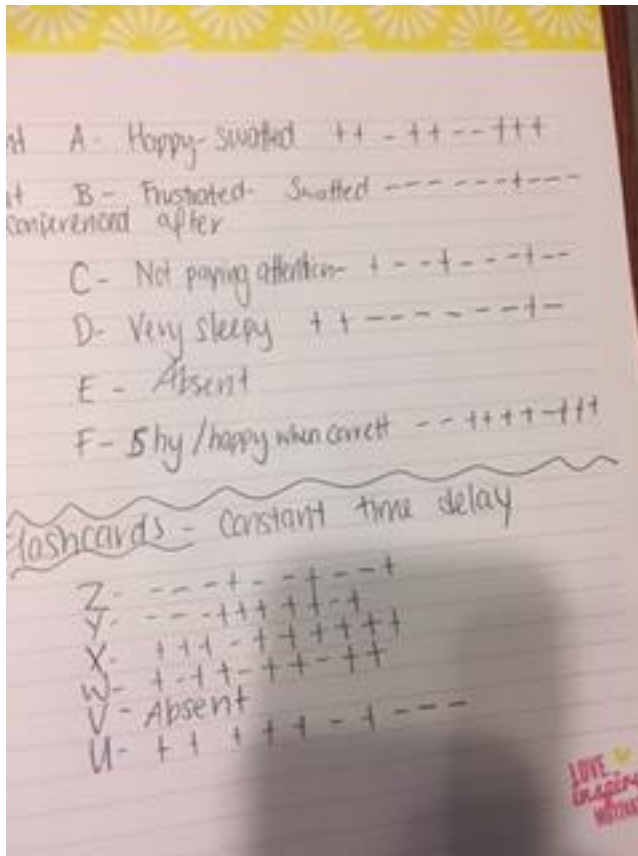


Student V



Student U





Data collection technique 4: progress monitoring. Progress monitoring was done weekly during the 5 weeks of interventions. The students had 1 minute to read as many letter sounds as they could. The number of errors and the number of letters correct were recorded. The students in classroom 2's information was inputted into Iowa TIER. The teacher in classroom 1 did not have access to the program during the intervention process, due to issues out of the districts control.

C- letters correct in 1 minute

E- errors in 1 minute

Student	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
A	1	11	3	12	6	3	5	8	7	5	8	5
B	5	12	2	17	6	8	10	5	16	5	17	2
C	1	10	2	15	6	10	A	A	A	A	2	13
D	2	13	6	18	10	5	13	9	20	6	23	4
E	5	6	3	9	5	9	8	5	10	1	11	3
F	6	6	8	7	9	4	7	12	9	3	10	4
Z	1	13	9	3	2	16	12	3	14	4	16	3
Y	3	19	4	16	5	12	17	3	12	2	20	3
X	2	9	5	7	9	12	16	2	19	3	22	6
W	8	2	4	12	7	2	6	3	11	5	10	2
V	3	9	1	17	6	12	8	5	15	3	13	5
U	4	191	8	8	11	5	17	2	15	3	19	4

Revisiting the Literature

Reflecting back on the literature that was reviewed the teacher researcher can see how when the components of the RTI model are implemented effectively student can grow in leaps and bound academically. The literature review, first discussed the 5 components of RTI: evidence-based curriculum and instruction provided at the universal level by a highly qualified teacher, universal screening of all students, evidence-based instructional interventions at the

targeted and intensive levels to the students who need them, progress monitoring for learners below expectations, and data-based decision making throughout the system (Iowa Department of Education, n.d.).

The teacher also researched the three tiers of the RTI and discovered that there is a lot to know about the RTI process and without this information it is hard to implement RTI effectively. The teacher learned about the importance of data in the decision making process. The research and literature review highlighted the importance of keeping data to guide all students learning. The instruction in all interventions should be student driven. Using the data from progress monitoring and the pre and posttests I was able to change and use interventions to best meet the needs of each individual student.

Collaboration among educators is absolutely needed to effectively use the RTI model. Collaboration is essential when working with the children. Teacher can learn a lot from attending PLC's. All the teachers in my building have a wealth of information, that they can share and others can learn when teachers are given the opportunity to collaborate in this manner. Whether it be sharing ideas on what works in the different classrooms or collaborating and using the data wall to guide the decision making process. Collaborating with fellow educators in PLC's helps teachers to effectively reach all the students.

Major Learnings

RTI process does help us effectively reach all the students in the classrooms. Throughout this research the teacher has learned about the 5 major components of the RTI model.

Early Intervention

The most important thing the teacher has learned about RTI and this action research project is that it is important to have interventions in place. When teachers are able to work with

students and provide interventions to help students succeed academically, teachers are less likely to identify students for special education. Early intervention allows teachers to reach and teach students the skills when they need when they need it. Early intervention prevented the students we were working with from falling further behind. Teachers want to teach the students when they need the help, instead of waiting until they fail.

Consistency

Consistency is key in student learning. Students need to practice the skills every day. When interventions were done daily students made gains consistently. The one student (Student C) who was gone for 9 school days, when she returned to school she had lost most of the knowledge she had already gained. She also had lost some of the confidence she had gained. During the action research project, she did not gain the knowledge back. Interventions were done in a short amount of time, as Kindergarten students have very short attention spans and developmentally it is more appropriate to work for a shorter amount of time. The teachers in this project used the same routines for interventions which allowed the students who thrive on routine to be able to predict what was coming next.

Iowa TIER

The teacher that had better results in the intervention was the teacher that had the access to Iowa TIER, although we both made significant gains in all the children's letter sounds skills. Both teachers each had one student who met benchmark and would not need an intervention during the next period. Being able to look at and input data weekly into the program helps the teacher, as it gives the teacher a visual of the learning that is taking place, through graphs. These graphs are a visual that shows if the students are making adequate gains or if interventions need to be changed. The teacher was also held more accountable because intervention time is recorded

on the website and the information is given to the state. Through access to Iowa TIER, the teacher was able to complete FAST assessments on all the student's in the room. The FAST assessment gave the teacher more data on the student's individual skills.

Teacher Created vs. Researched Interventions

Both teachers had students make significant gains in their learning during the interventions. The students who were able to do teacher created interventions, enjoyed the interventions more, as they were created to be fun. The researched based intervention was flashcards using constant time delay and duet reading.

Limitations

While best practice was taken in account in the procedure, there are some limitations to this research.

Accuracy of Initial Assessment

The initial assessment was taken within the first 2 weeks of school. The experience of taking an assessment can be overwhelming to students, especially when they do not really know their teachers yet. Many of the students made substantial jumps in their knowledge and some of it has to do with confidence and knowing the teacher.

Teachers

It was not the same teacher doing the intervention in both classrooms, there could be some variability in the interventions because of who was teaching them. The teacher in classroom 1 was also absent for a couple of days and the interventions were done by the paraprofessional in the classroom. The paraprofessional is a highly qualified teacher, so the difference would be teaching styles and familiarity of the student with the person doing the teaching.

There are limitations that couldn't be helped in my study, like this study took place in the beginning of kindergarten when many of the students are learning classroom expectations and how to act in a classroom.

Implications

Data

Teachers need to collect data to drive their instruction. It doesn't matter if they have access to a fancy computer system to record it. Data lets us know what the students are able to do. As teachers we should be constantly assessing formatively, through observations and teacher made assessments. The data used for RTI purposes needs to be constant across all classrooms so information can be compared.

Response to Intervention

This is a fantastic learning structure that teachers can use to help students learn to their capacity. By using the structure, teachers can see where we need to teach and reteach and use interventions to increase students' knowledge. By using the 5 components of RTI teachers can have a classroom that meets the needs for all students. Students can get most of their learning from the classroom teacher. All teachers need to use the RTI process in their classrooms.

Early Intervention

By doing early interventions the teacher is able to reach students faster. I was able to work with students immediately to prevent them from falling further behind. The RTI process allows us to reach all students. As a teacher we collect data, and when we see that students are not meeting benchmarks we need to intervene immediately instead of waiting for them to fail or fall further behind. RTI teaches that teachers need to intervene and be responsible for all students learning in the classroom.

Final Thoughts

The implications of this research suggests that all teachers need to use the RTI process in the classroom. As part of the RTI process we need to keep accurate data on students' progress. By intervening early, we are reaching students faster. The general education teachers are becoming responsible for all students in their classroom. Teachers need to teach and reach every child in their classroom.

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Kindergarten Letter Identification

correct response
 no response
 (write incorrect response)

	Letter	Letter (incorrect response)	Letter	Letter (incorrect response)
1				
2				
3				
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99				
100				

Student grade: 26

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student grade: 26

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

Student name: _____

TOTAL: 54

TOTAL: _____

TOTAL: _____

TOTAL: _____

TOTAL: _____

TOTAL: _____

412206

Appendix B- Oral Survey

Appendix B is the oral survey given during the Back To School Meeting between the parents, students and teachers.

Ask the student to rate 1-5 (Show the student the scale with faces. Record answers)

1. How do you feel about reading?
2. How do you feel about reading at home?
3. How do you feel when someone reads a story?

1. What's your favorite book?
2. Do you read at home?
3. Where do you get your books from?

Ask Parent-

1. Do you enjoy reading to your child?
2. Did your child attend preschool? Where? When?
3. Any health conditions I should be aware of?

Explain-

1. FAST SCORE
2. Letter sound/ Letter ID
3. Reading goal and calendar.
4. Ask for help in classroom.

Appendix C- Progress Monitoring

Appendix C is one of the probes given to the students to assess growth. The students are to read all the letters sounds they can in one minute. The teacher records the number of errors as well as the number of sounds correct. This assessment is part of Iowa TIER's suite of assessments.

Progress Monitoring Form 4

h k f b p w e r m x

c z d l a qu s v j u

o g i y t n g t o z

w h e b s i x j m n

k qu p a y v f c d r

l u g d z m u r o y

x l v w f j h p qu k

c e i n s a b t x r

qu w c v a o g s h y

u m l z j e f i k d

i g u o e a c