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Addressing Barriers to Effective RTI through School Counselor Consultation: A Social Justice Approach

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Addressing Barriers to Effective RTI through School Counselor Consultation:
A Social Justice Approach

Abstract

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a culturally responsive framework developed to provide targeted, evidence-based instruction to all students in regular education settings. A goal of RTI is to reduce the disproportionate number of students of color referred for special education services. However, numerous barriers often prevent teachers from effectively engaging in the RTI process and serve to impede the delivery of instruction. School counselors can provide rational emotive-social behavior (RE-SB) consultation for teachers to address psychosocial barriers and promote social justice. This article outlines RTI, barriers to implementation, and how school counselors can advocate for all students through RE-SB consultation.

Keywords: response to intervention, REBT, school counselor consultation, social justice

Addressing Barriers to Effective RTI through School Counselor Consultation:

A Social Justice Approach

Implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has led to an increase in academic focus, higher expectations, and a dramatic shift in how teachers prepare students (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). The CCSS suggest students should continually become more skilled at reading and math in preparation for college and career (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Given these increased demands, a robust system of support is necessary to identify teachers and students in need of supplemental aid and intervention. Early and effective identification of students requiring additional instructional support is essential to any efforts to promote success and close the achievement gap (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Advocated nationally, response to intervention (RTI) is a culturally responsive framework that provides early intervention, prevents academic problems, and aids in the identification of students with learning disabilities (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009; Fuchs, & Deshler, 2007; Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan & Young, 2003). The RTI framework supports teachers implementing CCSS by offering evidence-based strategies for identifying and addressing gaps in student knowledge and skills. The RTI framework aims to reduce the disproportionate number of students of color referred to special education services (Bursuck, Smith, Munk, Damer, Mehlig, & Perry, 2004; Marston, Muyskens, Lau, & Canter, 2003). As such, RTI is designed to increase student achievement, decrease behavioral problems, and close the achievement gap (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). In an effort to deliver targeted services to students, RTI encourages collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including teachers, support personnel, and parents (McKenzie, 2009; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003).

School counselors often participate in the RTI process by leading and coordinating student support teams, monitoring academic and behavioral interventions, and analyzing data to determine the efficacy of interventions (Ockerman, Mason, & Hollenbeck, 2012; Prasse, 2009; Shepard, Shahidullah, & Carlson, 2013). However, school counselors rarely support teachers in developing practices necessary for successful delivery of instruction. For example, issues related to diversity and cultural competence influence teacher expectations for students during instruction, although are seldom addressed (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Inasmuch, the extent of buy-in, including teachers' beliefs and attitudes about student learning and the RTI process, remains a key factor in the adoption of any educational innovation (Turnbull, 2002). Literature suggesting how professional school counselors can promote culturally competent and equitable instructional practices within the RTI framework is limited.

This article describes factors that impede the delivery of effective instruction and interventions within the RTI framework. A consultation model is presented that school counselors can implement to develop psychosocial skills and foster cultural competence among teachers. A case example serves to clarify the consultation model and demonstrates how school counselors can advocate for social justice. Implications and directions for future research are presented.

Response to Intervention

The RTI model was developed based on the notion that early intervention circumvents educational problems for students considered at-risk. Through RTI, school professionals can determine which students have diagnosable learning disabilities as opposed to those students whose underachievement is attributable to other factors such as inadequate instruction. Appropriate diagnosis is especially important for students of color who are

frequently misplaced or fail to receive suitable services (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Losen & Orfield, 2002).

Considerable expertise is required for teachers to successfully implement RTI. Teachers must employ a culturally responsive core curriculum, use data to make decisions, and focus on objectively defined outcomes (Hosp & Madyun, 2007). The RTI framework promotes differentiation of evidence-based instruction through multiple levels of intervention referred to as tiers. In tier one, teachers provide high-quality core instruction to all students. For students who need additional support, teachers may provide supplemental small group interventions at tier two. Students who show minimal response to interventions at tier two will receive additional, individualized and intensive instruction at tier three (Klingner & Edwards, 2006).

In RTI, a problem-solving approach guides school based teams in making instructional decisions for students (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). This approach typically includes a step-by-step process used to identify and analyze the problem, develop and implement a plan, and evaluate the efficacy of the interventions. This process increases the likelihood that reliable instructional and placement decisions are made (Kame'enui, 2007; Vaughn & Roberts, 2007). As such, RTI promotes carefully designed, evidence-based instruction and a special education referral system for students requiring services beyond tier three. However, barriers to effective RTI implementation exist which contribute to the achievement gap and issues related to social justice.

Barriers to Successful RTI Implementation

In order to effectively implement RTI, teachers need adequate resources, options for professional development, opportunities to collaborate, and clear steps for success (Pyle, Wade-Woolley, & Hutchinson, 2011; Robinson, Bursuck, & Sinclair, 2013; Sansosti, Goss, &

Noltemeyer, 2011; Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014). However, Robinson et al. (2013) found teachers in elementary schools piloting RTI expressed limited understanding of how to provide evidence-based instruction in academic skill areas. Teachers also indicated limited knowledge of data-based decision-making and problem-solving processes. Special education teachers have reported time constraints and a lack of training, knowledge, resources, and personnel as barriers to successful implementation of RTI (Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014).

These challenges serve as sources of information which impact teachers' efficacy beliefs or their perceived ability to engage students, deliver instruction, and manage classroom behavior (Warren & Hale, in press). Teachers' beliefs and their perceptions of the challenges to implementing RTI often serve as barriers to effective instruction (Warren & Baker, 2013). Perceived ability, yet incongruent instructional outcomes lead to a host of thoughts, emotions, and behavioral responses that impede teachers' attempts to deliver evidence-based instruction (Warren & Hale, in press).

Despite a sound methodological framework, psychosocial barriers exist among teachers which serve to weaken the RTI process. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs often hinder the effectiveness and responsiveness of the framework. For example, teachers often resist change, become disinterested when receiving new information, and fail to refer students due to the workload involved (Robinson, 2010; Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014). As such, teachers' rigid beliefs, intolerance for frustration, and feelings of anxiety hinder their efforts to provide effective instruction (Warren, 2010a, 2013, 2016; Warren & Baker, 2013; Warren & Gerler, 2013; Warren & Hale, in press).

When teachers fully embrace the culturally responsive model, barriers still remain that prohibit implementation fidelity. Often times, a host of emotions transpires during teachers'

efforts in tier one to provide effective instruction (Pyle, Wade-Woolley, & Hutchinson, 2011). These emotions become heightened as teachers provide supplemental and intensive supports at tiers two and three. It is reasonable and acceptable for teachers to experience healthy negative emotions (i.e., concern, bother). However, in some instances more intense emotions such as frustration, anger, depression, resentment, annoyance, as well as helplessness and worthlessness emerge (Warren, 2013). These emotions are detrimental and prohibit teachers from effectively delivering instruction (Warren & Hale, in press).

Teachers may understand how to deliver interventions, however, fail to implement strategies with fidelity due to these psychosocial barriers. For example, in a study exploring the impact of teacher empowerment on successful RTI implementation, Pyle, Wade-Woolley, and Hutchinson (2011) noted teachers experienced frustration when their efforts in tier one were not acknowledged, thus negatively affecting the delivery of tier two interventions. These emotions stem from thoughts maintained by teachers about their inability to effectively educate students (Warren & Hale, in press).

In some cases, teachers' perceived inability or lack of effort to effectively deliver interventions is predicated upon a rigid, cultural insensitive belief which foil worthy attempts to deliver instruction. For example, Holcomb-McCoy (2007) suggested teachers may view African Americans and Latinos as less than, simply because these are historically oppressed groups. Teachers often have low academic expectations for Latino and African American students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). These students are not encouraged and afforded the same educational experiences as other students. As a result, the cycle of oppression continues and the achievement gap persists.

Beliefs and attitudes play a significant role in the teachers' ability to successfully deliver instruction and implement RTI. Teachers must reflect on the culturally responsive practices espoused by RTI (Dray, Cole, & White, 2009; Fiedler, Chiang, Van Haren, Jorengsen, Halberg, & Boreson, 2008) and believe all students, regardless of color, have the ability to learn (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007) in order for effective instruction to occur. As such, teachers with rigid beliefs and negative attitudes may implement RTI, yet fail to adequately support students struggling to meet CCSS. In addition to a need for training in evidence-based practices and data-based decision making as noted by Dimmitt, Carey, and Hatch (2007), psychosocial skills development and cultural competence is necessary for teachers to deliver effective instruction to all students.

Rational Emotive-Social Behavior Consultation

The main goal of a consultant is to assist the consultee in developing effective strategies for responding to a situation, individual, or group of individuals (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011). Rational emotive-social behavior (RE-SB) consultation was developed by Warren (2010b) based on a perceived need for school counselors to directly support teachers in promoting student success. RE-SB consultation blends Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (Ellis, 1962) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), two cognitive behavioral frameworks, to form a cohesive model for supporting teachers' instructional efforts.

REBT was developed in the 1950s by Ellis (1962) to address emotional disturbances and enhance daily functioning. REBT seeks to restructure cognitive processes which include irrational beliefs and extreme thoughts. The four main types of irrational beliefs (IBs) are demands, awfulizing, low frustration tolerance (LFT), and global evaluations of human worth (David, 2014; Ellis & MacLaren, 2005). These thoughts lead to unhealthy negative

emotions (UNE) such as anger, anxiety, depression (Dryden, 2009; Ellis, 1962; Malkinson, 2007). UNEs or dysfunctional emotions lead to self-defeating, counterproductive behaviors. Alternatively, healthy negative emotions (HNE) stem from rational, realistic thoughts and lead to functional, productive behaviors (see Warren & Baker, 2013).

Similarly, SCT suggests bi-directional interactions exist between thoughts, behaviors, and the environment. Individuals obtain and evaluate information about their surroundings and experiences (Bandura, 1978). This information impacts thought and behavior while the individual influences their environment. An intimate interplay exists between teachers and their classroom environment which leads to constructions of efficacy beliefs related to instructional practices.

RE-SB consultation emphasizes the role efficacy beliefs and irrational beliefs have on influencing teachers' classroom performance. Efficacy beliefs, if contradicted by classroom experiences, may ignite cognitive processes which lead to emotional disturbance and hinder performance (Warren & Hale, in press). Teacher efficacy beliefs fluctuate throughout the school day based on experiences. Teachers experience a variety of emotions when delivering instruction, attempting to engage students, and managing classroom behaviors. As a result, teachers must be diligent in managing thoughts and emotions which impede the delivery of instruction. RE-SB consultation affords teachers the opportunity to learn how to critically analyze instructional failures, logically assess their thoughts, and develop rational beliefs that enhance their efforts to effectively implement RTI. This model of consultation promotes social justice through psychosocial development and provides teachers with tools for maintaining self-awareness and a sense of well-being when faced with the day-to-day challenges of teaching.

RE-SB Consultation and Comprehensive School Counseling

School counselors develop comprehensive programs that support academic, personal-social, and career development of all students (ASCA, 2012; Schmidt, 2014). Comprehensive school counseling programs provide evidence-based practices through the delivery of direct and indirect student services that target factors which impact student success. Consultation is a valuable indirect student service offering concentrated and systemic support. However, consultation is often overlooked by school counselors exploring ways to increase student achievement (Warren & Baker, 2013) and promote social justice (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). School counselors can provide consultation to teachers in an effort to promote equity and equality while increasing the quality of the educational experiences received by all students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Pereza-Diltz, Moe, & Mason, 2011).

School counselors who provide RE-SB consultation as part of a comprehensive program aim to provide teachers with tools for addressing the thoughts and emotions that impede instruction when working with students, especially students of color. Empirical and theoretical evidence suggests RE-SB consultation is an effective, indirect service school counselors offer to enhance educational practices and foster student success. For example, Warren (2010a) and Warren and Dowden (2012) found negative relationships between irrational beliefs and efficacy beliefs. These beliefs also correlated with emotions such as depression, anxiety, and stress. While these findings do not support causation, REBT suggests irrational beliefs precede UNE. School counselors can address these beliefs in an effort to promote HNEs. RE-SB consultation conducted by school counselors has led teachers toward flexible and preferential thinking, a greater sense of efficacy, and healthier interactions with students and colleagues (Warren, 2010b; Warren & Gerler, 2013, Warren, 2016). RE-SB consultation offers school counselors a solid, evidence-based approach for enhancing teacher performance, fostering

teacher-student relationships, and increasing student success (Warren, 2013; Warren & Baker, 2013). As such, RE-SB consultation can enhance the delivery and fidelity of instructional practices during the implementation of RTI as schools strive to address student gaps in the core curriculum.

RE-SB consultation addresses the barriers which prevent teachers from successfully implementing RTI. Teachers who are culturally sensitive and hold realistic and rational beliefs about educational practices are likely to respond in favorable ways when supporting students across all tiers of RTI. School counselors can offer several levels of RE-SB consultation to support student success and promote social justice. RE-SB consultation supports teachers in providing effective instruction to all students across the core curriculum and in every facet of the education delivery system.

Tiers of RE-SB Consultation

Warren and Baker (2013) outlined several models of RE-SB consultation available to school counselors to support teachers' instructional efforts. These tiers complement the RTI framework and provide direction for addressing curriculum standards by offering ancillary services which support the educational mission of schools. School counselors determine the tier of consultation by the degree of assistance or support needed by the teacher. As with any intervention implemented by the school counselor, the decision to provide RE-SB consultation should stem from a need identified through a data-based decision making process (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

School counselors can implement large group consultation (LGC) to provide teachers, general strategies for overcoming thoughts, emotions and behaviors that impede instructional practices (Warren, 2010a). Small group consultation (SGC) is a viable means of offering

additional targeted support for teachers experiencing ongoing instructional difficulties. School counselors can provide individual consultation (IC) to offer direct one-on-one guidance aimed at addressing specific barriers maintained by a teacher which impedes classroom performance (Bernard & DiGuseppe, 1994, Warren & Baker, 2013). These models of RE-SB enhance the educational opportunities of students by increasing the fidelity of instructional intervention across all tiers of RTI and the core curriculum. Regardless of the tier or model of consultation provided, school counselors should collect data to determine the effects on student achievement outcomes (Dimmitt et al., 2007).

Large group consultation. School counselors can provide large group RE-SB consultation in an effort to develop a school climate and culture conducive to addressing barriers to equality and equitable instruction. LGC serves preventative and maintenance roles by occurring at the onset of the school year and continuing periodically, at least once a month. This model of consultation most readily aligns with tier one of RTI; all teachers participate. It is critical for administrators to support the efforts of the school counselor and encourage all teachers to invest time and energy in this initiative. In LGC, a prescriptive mode is employed, which provides teachers with psychoeducation targeting barriers which often impede instructional delivery, student-teacher relationships and effective classroom management (Baker & Gerler, 2008). As such, LGC offers teachers strategies and techniques rooted in RE-SB and social justice frameworks used to manage cognitive and emotional responses when providing instruction and interventions through RTI.

School counselors can provide LGC using materials from texts and articles emphasizing strategies based on REBT and SCT in an effort to address instructional barriers (see Warren & Baker, 2013). Role-plays, songs, and other creative means can foster social justice, climates that

encourage self-awareness, and critical analyses of teacher attributes that hinder student success. Warren (2010a, 2013, 2016) conducted in-service trainings for teachers using RE-SB consultation in an effort to indirectly support student success. Participants indicated they exhibited more functional classroom behaviors and enhanced the quality of their relationships with students. By implementing large group RE-SB consultation, school counselors can effect systemic change and develop a cohesive educational environment which best supports at-risk students and attempts to close the achievement gap.

Small group consultation. Most teachers will become more culturally competent and increase the fidelity of their instructional practices through participation in ongoing LGC. However, some teachers need more support as a result of various factors, including excessive instructional failings, student dispositions, classroom dynamics, personal attributes, and life experiences. School and classroom data, such as the number of disciplinary or special education referrals, for example, may also suggest additional consultation is warranted. School counselors should disaggregate data to better identify and describe problems (Dimmitt et al., 2007). SGC is similar to tier two of the RTI framework, offering teachers remedial, weekly support in addition to LGC. While LGC is didactic and psychoeducational in nature, SGC offers an instructional, yet collaborative approach.

SGC provides teachers a place to unload stressful thoughts in a non-judgmental arena while building cohesion among colleagues. The school counselor and teachers collaborate to address cognitive, emotive, and behavioral responses that impact instructional delivery. Barriers that impact classroom performance and student success are explored. Teachers are supported by group members when processing classroom scenarios and developing RE-SB-based strategies for

increasing RTI fidelity. The school counselor, utilizing a Socratic-style dialog, facilitates the SGC session, only interjecting to further the group process.

The goal of SGC is to work collaboratively to increase self-awareness and cultural competence and decrease cognitive, emotional, and behavioral barriers in an effort to improve the quality of instruction. School counselors should encourage teachers to attend group consultation consistently to support their peers and further enhance their classroom performance, especially if they are providing interventions for students in tiers two or three of RTI.

Individual consultation. Individual RE-SB consultation provides teachers the greatest level of support, mirroring tier three of the RTI framework. Teachers who participate in LGC and SGC yet still experience psychosocial barriers to instructional delivery should invest in IC. In an effort to prevent inappropriate referrals to special education, all teachers providing interventions for students in tier three should engage in IC. School counselors can utilize several modes of RE-SB consultation to support teachers in IC: prescription, initiation, and collaboration.

In the prescription mode the school counselor directly inventories the barriers that plague the delivery of instruction. In this instance, school counselors may conduct classroom observations of the teacher providing instruction (Baker & Gerler, 2008). Additionally, student interviews may provide the school counselor with a thorough understanding of teacher responses that hinder learning. Once data are collected, an evaluation of the problem is presented to the teacher. In a collaborative attempt to remedy the problem and overcome psychosocial barriers to instruction, the teacher and school counselor negotiate an appropriate plan of action.

At times, teachers may not realize the impact their emotional and behavioral responses have on instructional delivery. In other cases, teachers know a problem exists, but fail to seek

help or assistance. In the initiation mode, school counselors identify teachers who exhibit psychosocial barriers and attempt to intervene. According to Holcomb-McCoy (2007) “Consultants working for social justice assume that the establishment of a warm and supportive relationship is a prerequisite to a significant change in the behavior of teachers” (p. 60). School counselors must remain cognizant of this during consultation, especially when initiating services.

Collaborative consultation is also a mode of IC available to school counselors. In this mode of consultation, a school counselor will work in tandem with a teacher to identify barriers to instruction and develop a roadmap for overcoming them. A collaborative approach to IC is most effective when teachers are knowledgeable of the RE-SB framework and have actively participated in LGC and SGC. In collaborative IC both teacher and school counselor are positioned to offer useful and relevant knowledge and skills in an effort to address inequities and enhance the delivery of instruction for students in the RTI process. When school counselors implement RE-SB consultation, teachers grow personally and professionally as their students enjoy greater academic success (Warren, 2010a, 2013; Warren & Baker, 2013).

A RE-SB Consultation Profile

A case example highlights the effects of numerous factors on teachers' abilities to effectively deliver instruction and interventions. Analysis, recommendations, and outcome are provided to further demonstrate the role school counselors play in advocating for social justice through the delivery of indirect student services such as RE-SB consultation.

The Resentful Retreat

At the end of the second nine-weeks, Steven, a first grade African American male, is referred to the school-based problem solving team by Ms. Daniel, a White, second-year

teacher. Ms. Daniel indicates Steven is struggling in reading and has yet to master core curriculum standards despite the implementation of several evidence-based strategies during the marking period. At the team meeting, Ms. Daniel states, “if Steven hasn’t gotten it by now, he probably won’t.” She is frustrated with Steven and the lack of support from his mother, a single-parent. Ms. Daniel says, “I can’t stand dealing with situations like this.” The team recommends that she implement an evidence-based intervention in a small group setting three times a week for six weeks. The intervention targets the core curriculum standards the student has yet to master. The team asks Ms. Daniel to progress-monitor (i.e., collect data across the 6 weeks in order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention). Ms. Daniel, already frustrated with the situation, believes she has done all she can and does not think she should complete another intervention. She has little faith the intervention will work and therefore disengages in the process, failing to implement it as prescribed.

The teacher meets with the team 6 weeks later to provide an update on Steven’s progress. Ms. Daniel indicates the intervention was ineffective and the student has made little progress and has become defiant. She is further frustrated with the student and the RTI process and requests traditional testing for exceptional children services. She believes all other options are exhausted.

Case Analysis

Based on the principles of RE-SB consultation, this teacher maintains irrational and biased beliefs. These beliefs stem from Ms. Daniel’s lack of cultural competence, teaching experience, and unrealistic expectations. This situation may be exacerbated further by a societal belief that students of color cannot learn and the anxiety Steven experiences related to this stereotype. These factors fuel rigid and discriminatory beliefs held by the teacher thus impeding

her ability to work effectively with the family. All of these factors contribute to the quality of education Steven receives and serve to widen the achievement gap (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Various beliefs and emotions emerge as the teacher attempts to remedy Steven's academic deficiencies. While remediation suggests the problem lies with the student, the teacher significantly contributes to the deficiencies. The teacher maintains several irrational beliefs about the student and the parent. The teacher also rationalizes her inability to teach Steven and blamed the parent due to a perceived lack of concern. These beliefs lead to frustration and dysfunctional behaviors when interacting with the child and parent. The teacher may model dysfunctional emotions and behaviors which the student uses to construct a self-concept and evaluate his worth. The situation culminates with Ms. Daniel displaying a lack of effort when completing the recommended intervention. Ms. Daniel's responses lead Steven to give up and display inappropriate classroom behaviors which only serves to widen the achievement gap.

Recommendations

School counselors support instructional practice, advocate for students, and strive to effect system change in a variety of ways. Based on the case example above, the school counselor should recommend Ms. Daniel participate in weekly SGC. This tier of consultation will provide Ms. Daniel with peer support for exploring her thoughts, feelings, and behavior related to her efforts with Steven. The school counselor will guide and direct the consultation process by encouraging candid conversations about beliefs, culture, and expectations. Through participation in the group, the teacher will become more culturally competent and learn psychosocial strategies that will support her future efforts to provide quality, equitable instruction. The school counselor can challenge irrational beliefs, stereotypes, and

discriminatory practices in an ongoing effort to promote social justice in classrooms and across the school.

Outcome

As Ms. Daniel addresses the identified psychosocial barriers, the problem-solving team collaborates with her to develop alternative methods for assisting Steven. The teacher develops a set of rational coping statements, works to increase her tolerance for frustration, and explores ways to create a more equitable, bias-free classroom environment.

As a result of consultation, Ms. Daniel becomes more sensitive to her students' cultural backgrounds and academic needs. Over the next three weeks, Ms. Daniel works to develop a solid relationship with the Steven. After two weeks of intervention mediated by principles of RE-SB consultation, Steven meets and exceeds the academic standards. Based on data collected from progress monitoring, the team determines a higher level of support is not required. Ms. Daniel agrees that additional services are not a requisite for the students' success. The teacher's delivery of instruction improves across all lessons and groups of students.

Discussion

RTI is considered a culturally responsive model of instruction emphasizing early intervention. A goal of this framework is to ensure all students meet core curriculum standards, reduce the number of special education referrals, and close the achievement gap. However, supports offered to teachers that promote wellness, psychosocial development, and cultural competence are limited. Despite adequate training and resources, psychosocial barriers (i.e., irrational beliefs, biases, stress, etc.) often impede the delivery of effective educational practices. As a result, interventions designed and implemented to circumvent educational deficiencies, while considered evidence-based, often lack adequacy and fidelity.

RE-SB consultation is an evidence-based approach that promotes social justice through advocating for equitable, effective instruction across all tiers of the RTI framework. This model of consultation complements RTI by placing an emphasis on teaching a rigorous core curriculum for all students. Teachers who are culturally competent and maintain psychosocial wellness have high expectations for all students and willingly seek guidance and support. In turn, deficiencies, when noted, are addressed effectively and efficiently and inappropriate referrals to special education are reduced. Alternatively, teachers who struggle with psychosocial skills and lack cultural competence fail to adequately meet the needs of all of their students. Students failing to meet CCSS receive intensive and individualized instruction to remediate deficiencies. As academic supports are increased from tier one to tiers two and three, more resources are required and costs dramatically increase. The greatest cost of this process, however, is that deficiencies are often misplaced on the student rather than the teacher. This process sends a confirming message to the student that he or she cannot learn and that society does not expect them to do so (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

It is critical school administrators develop collaborative relationships with school counselors in an effort to establish school-wide initiatives such as RE-SB consultation. Principals, assistant principals, teachers, and staff should view the school counselor as an educational leader trained to effect systemic change through data-driven initiatives that support the delivery of instruction and the academic success of all students. Otherwise, school counselors will meet resistance when attempting to support instructional practices, promote cultural competence, and advocate for social justice.

School counselors must advocate for their role as educational leaders in the school. Educating teachers, administrators, and staff of the school counselor's role and expertise

is critical for school counselors who aim to effect systemic change. School counselors should establish advisory councils and foster working relationships that serve to guide comprehensive, data-driven school counseling programs. Through informing stakeholders of their role, utilizing data, and building systemic alliances, school counselors position themselves as educational leaders. As such, teachers will readily embrace indirect student services such as RE-SB consultation.

While studies exist substantiating the effectiveness of RE-SB consultation (see Warren, 2010, Warren & Gerler, 2013, Warren, 2016), more research is necessary. In particular, researchers should consider the large scale impact of RE-SB consultation on academic achievement-related factors. Factors such as truancy, homework completion, student support team referrals, disciplinary referrals, and retention are measurable and predictive of student achievement. Researchers should also explore the effects of RE-SB consultation on student engagement, a key to academic achievement. Finally, future outcome studies, must consider the impact of RE-SB consultation on issues that impact social justice, such as cultural competence, equitable and equal educational practices, and closing the opportunity gap.

Conclusion

It is critical that school counselors position themselves as leaders, student advocates, and agents of change. “School counselors can be the one person in a school that will act as an advocate for students” (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007, p. 5). Should administrators elect to support the efforts of school-wide initiatives such as RE-SB consultation, school counselors can advocate more effectively for all students including those at-risk and historically marginalized. Additionally, school counselors can promote strategies and techniques for inclusion in instructional practices which may lead to greater psychosocial health among teachers and

systemic change. As a result, teachers can implement the RTI framework at its full potential and all students will have an opportunity to thrive and demonstrate their true strengths.

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