

# RTI Glossary

Browse the glossary below to learn the terms you need to know to successfully implement RTI in your school. This glossary was compiled using the following resources: The RTI Glossary of Terms developed by the IDEA Partnership @ NASDSE, the New Mexico Public Education Department RTI Glossary, and contributions from members of the RTI Action Network Advisory Council.

Source: <http://rtinetwork.org/glossary>

## **Accommodation**

Change made to instruction and/or assessment that does not change the expectations for performance or change the construct that is being measured. Accommodations provide access to buildings, curriculum, and assessments.

## **Adaptation**

An adjustment to the instructional content or performance expectations of students with disabilities from what is expected or taught to students in general education. Adaptations can include decreasing the number of exercises the student is expected to complete, assigning different reading materials, or allowing use of a calculator.

## **Aimline**

Line on a graph that represents expected student growth over time. See **Goal-line**.

## **Assessment**

Measurement of student growth; assessment tool choice is dependent on the purpose and use of measurement results.

## **Authentic Assessment**

Tasks that require students to apply knowledge and skills; often such tasks are connected to real-world situations/challenges; the tool usually used to assess progress is a rubric with well-articulated descriptions of quality performance/product.

## **AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress**

A statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by states and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

## **Baseline**

A measure of performance prior to intervention. These initial data are used to monitor changes or the improvement in an individual performance.

## **Behavior Intervention Plan**

A behavior plan based on a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). It is developed and implemented by a collaborative team, which includes the student and parent. The plan includes positive behavior supports (PBS), identified skills for school success, and specific strategies for behavioral instruction.

## **Benchmark**

Important student outcomes or goals for a grade within a particular domain (e.g., reading), that students should be achieving during the course of a school year (e.g., fall, winter, spring) in order to be on target for end-of-grade performance by the

end of that school year benchmark assessments: assessments used to set benchmarks (e.g., according to local norms) and/or to determine whether students are achieving grade level standard.

## **Core Curriculum**

A course of study deemed critical and usually made mandatory for all students of a school or school system. Core curricula are often instituted at the primary and secondary levels by school boards, Departments of Education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education. Core curricula must be scientific and research-based.

## **Criterion-Referenced Assessment**

An assessment that measures what a student understands, knows, or can accomplish in relation to specific performance objectives. It is used to identify a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to skills defined as the goals of the instruction, but it does not compare students to other students. (Compare to norm-referenced assessment.)

## **Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA)**

Measurement that uses direct observation and recording of a student's performance in the local curriculum as a basis for gathering information to make instructional decisions.

## **Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)**

Tools for measuring student competency and progress in the basic skill areas of reading fluency, spelling, mathematics, and written language.

## **Cut point**

Cutoff scores on common benchmark assessments; cut points specify the score at or below which students would be considered for intervention.

## **Data Points**

Points on a graph that represent student achievement or behavior relative to a specific assessment at a specific time.

## **Data teams**

Teams of educators that are responsible for data analysis and decision making and that function at the level of the district, school, and grade (or content area) as well as across grade levels in the same content area (i.e., vertical teams); they include as members school administrators, school psychologists, grade/content area general educators, various specialists and other behavioral/mental health personnel.

## **Data-Based/Data-Driven Decision Making**

A process of collecting, analyzing, and summarizing information to answer a question and to guide development, implementation, and evaluation of an action. Data-based decision making is continuous and regular, and most importantly linked to educational/socially important questions.

## **Dependent Variable**

Element that may be influenced or modified by some treatment or exposure.

## **Differentiated Instruction**

Process of designing lesson plans that meet the needs of the range of learners; such planning includes learning objectives, grouping practices, teaching methods, varied assignments, and varied materials chosen based on student skill levels, interest levels, and learning preferences; differentiated instruction focuses on instructional strategies, instructional groupings, and an array of materials.

## **Discrepancy**

a) Difference between two outcome measures; b) IQ-achievement discrepancy – difference between scores on a norm-referenced intelligence test and a norm-referenced achievement test; c) Difference between pre-test and post-test on a criterion-referenced test.

## **Disproportionality**

The over- or under-representation of minority students in special education. In other words, there is a disproportionate number, either a significantly larger or smaller percentage, of students from a specific minority background receiving special education services than the percentage of that minority in the population generally.

## **Dual Discrepancy**

A dual discrepancy occurs when a student's performance and growth rate are both substantially below performance and growth rate of typical peers.

## **Duration**

For the purposes of documenting response to intervention, duration refers to the length (number of minutes) of a session multiplied by the number of sessions per school year. "Sufficient duration" is dependent on a number of factors including the program or strategy being used, the age of the student, and the severity of the deficit involved. Some programs offer guidelines or recommendations for duration and may even limit the number sessions in which a child can participate, believing that a child who does not make adequate gains after the specified amount of time would likely benefit from an alternative intervention.

## **Early Intervening Services (EIS)**

Early intervening services are the preventive components of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.

From NCLB:

An LEA will provide training to enable teachers to teach and address the needs of students with different learning styles, particularly students with disabilities, students with special learning needs (including students who are gifted and talented), and students with limited English proficiency; and to improve student behavior in the classroom and identify early and appropriate interventions to help these students.

From IDEA:

An LEA may use up to 15% of its IDEA Part B funds in any fiscal year, less any funds reduced from its local fiscal effort, to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services. Coordinated early intervening services may include interagency financing structures (for students in K-12 with a particular emphasis on students in K-3) who have not been identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. When it has been determined that there is significant disproportionality with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, or the placement in particular educational settings of such children, the SEA shall require the LEA to reserve the maximum 15% of IDEA Part B funds to provide comprehensive coordinated early intervening services to serve children in the LEA, particularly children in those groups that were significantly over-identified.

EIS Activities could include:

- Professional development for teachers and other school staff to deliver scientifically-based academic instruction and

- behavioral interventions, including scientifically-based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and
- Providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services and supports, including scientifically-based literacy instruction.

## **Eligibility**

An individual, who by nature of his or her disability and need requires special education and related services in order to receive an appropriate education.

## **ESEA/NCLB**

Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [original passage in 1965], renamed the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) Act of 2001; federal statute relative to K-12 public education.

## **Evidence-Based Practice**

Educational practices/instructional strategies supported by relevant scientific research studies.

## **Explicit Instruction**

Systematic instructional approach that includes a set of delivery and design procedures derived from effective schools' research merged with behavior analysis; essential components of well-designed explicit instruction include a) visible delivery features of group instruction with a high level of teacher and student interactions and b) the less observable, instructional design principles and assumptions that make up the content and strategies to be taught.

## **Fidelity of Implementation & Instruction**

Implementation of an intervention, program, or curriculum according to research findings and/or on developers' specifications.

## **Flexible Grouping**

The ability for students to move among different groups based upon their performance and instructional needs.

## **Formative Assessment/Evaluation**

Classroom/curriculum measures of student progress; monitors progress made toward achieving learning outcomes; informs instructional decision making.

## **Functional Assessment**

Behaviors: Process to identify the problem, determine the function or purpose of the behavior, and develop interventions to teach acceptable alternatives to the behavior.

Academics: Process to identify the skill gap, determine strategies that have and have not been effective, and develop interventions to teach the necessary skill(s).

## **Gap Analysis**

Gap Analysis is a tool for measuring the difference between the student's current level of performance and benchmark expectations.

## **Gifted Student**

A student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

## **Goal-line**

The straight line connecting a student's baseline level of performance with his or her long-range goal; the slope of the aimline shows the expected rate of improvement if the student is going to meet the long-range goal. See **Aimline**.

## **Growth Chart**

Graphical display of individual student's growth and performance in a particular skill or set of skills.

## **IDEA**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, also referred to as IDEA 2004

Original passage in 1975; latest reauthorization in 2004; federal statute relative to public education and services to students with disabilities ages 3 through 21.

## **Inclusion**

(as a service delivery model)

Students with identified disabilities are educated with general education age-/grade-level peers.

## **Independent Variable**

Variable that is manipulated or selected by the researcher to determine relationship to a dependent variable; independent variable is the element that someone actively controls/changes (e.g., instructional strategy/intervention), while the dependent variable (e.g., student demonstration of skills) is the element that changes as a result.

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

A written document that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004 that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability.

## **Integrity of Intervention Implementation**

See Fidelity.

## **Intensive Interventions**

Academic and/or behavioral interventions characterized by increased length, frequency, and duration of implementation for students who struggle significantly; often associated with narrowest tier of an RTI tiered model; also referred to as tertiary interventions.

## **Intervention**

The systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Interventions are provided by both special and general educators, and are based on training, not titles. They are designed to improve performance relative to a specific, measurable goal. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation, and include ongoing student progress monitoring.

## **Learning Disability**

IDEA 2004 defines a Learning Disability/Specific Learning Disability in the following manner: The child does not achieve

adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

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

### **Learning Rate**

Average progress over a period of time, e.g., one year's growth in one year's time.

### **Local Education Agency (LEA)**

Refers to a specific school district or a group of school districts in a cooperative or regional configuration.

### **Modifications**

Alterations that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Consistent use of modifications can negatively impact grade level achievement outcomes. Modifications in statewide assessments may invalidate the results of the assessment.

### **NCLB/ESEA**

No Child Left Behind/Elementary and Secondary Education Act. See ESEA/NCLB.

### **Norm-Referenced Assessment**

An assessment designed to discover how an individual student's performance or test result compares to that of an appropriate peer group. (Compare to criterion-referenced assessment.)

### **Over-Identification**

Refers to the over representation of students in special education programs/services that is above state and national averages; identification of more students for services through special education than the proportion of that population in the general population.

### **Over-Representation**

Refers to over representation of students in specific disability-related categories that is above state and national averages.

### **Parental Engagement**

The meaningful and active involvement of parents and family members in the educational process.

### **Positive Behavior Support**

A tiered intervention system based on school-wide practices that encourage and reward positive student and adult behavior.

## **Positive Behavior Supports**

Evidence-based practices embedded in the school curriculum/culture/expectations that have a prevention focus; teaching, practice, and demonstration of pro-social behaviors.

## **Prescriptive Intervention**

A specified response, which focuses on academic or behavioral areas of concern, to meet the specific needs of a student.

## **Primary Levels of Intervention**

Interventions that are preventive and proactive; implementation is school-wide or by whole classroom; often connected to broadest tier (core or foundational tier) of a tiered intervention model.

## **Problem-Solving Approach to RTI**

Assumes that no given intervention will be effective for all students; generally has four stages (problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation); is sensitive to individual student differences; depends on the integrity of implementing interventions.

## **Problem-Solving Team**

Group of education professionals coming together to consider student-specific data, brainstorm possible strategies/interventions, and develop a plan of action to address a student-specific need.

## **Professional Learning Community**

A group of individuals who seek and participate in professional learning on an identified topic.

## **Progress Monitoring**

A scientifically based practice used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. Also, the process used to monitor implementation of specific interventions.

## **Recognition and Response**

Tiered model for pre-k based on Response to Intervention (RTI); designed to provide high quality instruction and targeted interventions that are matched to children's learning needs.

## **Remediation**

Instruction intended to remedy a situation; to teach a student something that he or she should have previously learned or be able to demonstrate; assumes appropriate strategies matched to student learning have been used previously.

## **Research-based Instruction/Intervention/**

A research-based instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of evidence, the instruction/ intervention must be considered "best practice" based on available research and professional literature.

## **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Also Response to Instruction / Responsiveness to Intervention

Practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions.

## **Scaffolding**

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

## **Scientific, Research-Based instruction**

Curriculum and educational interventions that have been proven to be effective for most students based on scientific study.

## **Scientifically-based Research**

Education related research that meets the following criteria:

- Analyzes and presents the impact of effective teaching on achievement of students
- Includes study and control groups
- Applies a rigorous peer review process
- Includes replication studies to validate results

## **Screening**

See Universal Screening.

## **Secondary Levels of Intervention**

Interventions that relate directly to an area of need; are different from and supplementary to primary interventions; are often implemented in small group settings; may be individualized; are often connected to supplemental tier of a tiered intervention model.

## **Section 504**

A student is eligible under Section 504 if the student has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities and needs accommodations to access education.

## **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)**

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

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

## **Specific, Measurable Outcome**

The statement of a single, specific desired result from an intervention. To be measurable, the outcome should be expressed in observable and quantifiable terms (i.e., Johnny will demonstrate mastery of grade-level basic math calculation skills as

measured by a score of 85% or better on the end of the unit test on numerical operations).

### **Standard Protocol Intervention**

Use of same empirically validated intervention for all students with similar academic or behavioral needs; facilitates quality control.

### **State Education Agency (SEA)**

Refers to the department of education at the state level.

### **Strategic Interventions Specific to Need**

Intervention chosen in relation to student data and from among those that have been documented through education research to be effective with like students under like circumstances.

### **Students at Risk for Poor Learning Outco**

Students whose initial performance level or characteristics predict poor learning outcomes unless intervention occurs to accelerate knowledge, skill, or ability development.

### **Summative Assessment/Evaluation**

Comprehensive in nature, provides accountability, and is used to check the level of learning at the end of a unit of study.

### **Systematic Data Collection**

Planning a time frame for and following through with appropriate assessments to set baselines and monitor student progress.

### **Systemic Reform**

Change that occurs in all aspects and levels of the educational process and that impacts all stakeholders within the process — students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members — with implications for all components, including curriculum, assessment, professional development, instruction, and compensation.

### **Tertiary Levels of Intervention**

Interventions that relate directly to an area of need; are supplementary to and are different from primary and secondary interventions; are usually implemented individually or in very small group settings; may be individualized; are often connected to the narrowest tier of a tiered intervention model.

### **Tiered Instruction**

Levels of instructional intensity within a tiered model.

### **Tiered Model**

Common model of three or more tiers that delineate levels of instructional interventions based on student skill need.

### **Trendline**

Line on a graph that connects data points; compare against aimline to determine responsiveness to intervention.

### **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Process of designing instruction that is accessible by all students; UDL includes multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement; the focus in creation of UDL curricula is on technology and materials.

**Universal Screening**

A quick check of all students' current levels of performance in a content or skill area. This is administered three times per year.

**Validated Intervention**

Intervention supported by education research to be effective with identified needs of sets of students.

**Validity**

An indication that an assessment instrument consistently measures what it is designed to measure, excluding extraneous features from such measurement.