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About the Authors

Cecelia Boswell, Ed. D., is an educator who has more than thirty-five years experience in education. She has worked with children from kindergarten through grade twelve, as a teacher of migrant and gifted children and as a coach for competitive literary events. She has coordinated migrant, ESL, bilingual, and gifted education services. Dr. Boswell served as the Language Arts and Advanced Academics consultant for Education Service Center (ESC) Region 14 in Abilene, Texas, and as the state director for AP/IB Projects. Under her leadership, the Small Schools Guide for the Gifted, AP Task Force research, and twenty AP/IB Projects across the state were developed. Today, Dr. Boswell is an independent consultant and founder of Austin Creek Educational Systems. She is working throughout Texas with schools and ESC's, writing on-line courses and managing a variety of projects for Texas Education Agency, consulting for the Florida Department of Education, and conducting research for Texas International Baccalaureate Schools. She has just completed her term as president of the 3,000-member Texas Association for Gifted and Talented (TAGT) after serving as president-elect and for two terms as Region 14's representative on the State Board of Directors for TAGT.

Vowery Carlile is an educator with thirty years in the classroom. Twenty-one of those years has been in gifted education. Vowery is an author of forty teacher resource books and is also an educational consultant. She has worked on projects for the Texas Education Agency, such as the Small Schools Guide for the Gifted, The Fourth Grade Guide to Success for the Texas Performance Standards Project, a video for the Texas Performance Standards Project, and a PBS and TEA Awareness Campaign for Gifted Education. She also served as a pilot teacher for the Texas Performance Project. She was named Region 17's Teacher of the Gifted by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented in 2003. She has also served as the Region 17 representative on the State Board of Directors for TAGT. Today, Vowery is a full-time teacher of the gifted for grades K-12 in Sundown, Texas. She coaches four Destination Imagination© teams each year and serves on the Board of Directors for the Northwest Plains Destination Imagination Region. She also coordinates the Sundown Gifted Program. Vowery works as an educational consultant in the summer for school districts and Educational Service Centers throughout the state of Texas. She is the Region 17 Director of the Texas Performance Standards Project. She is now serving her second term as Region 17's representative on the State Board of Directors for TAGT.

Introduction

RTI for the Gifted Student is written to update educators about the RTI process and how it applies to gifted/talented (G/T) learners. Included in this introduction is an overview of the following:

- Features of RTI for G/T students
- Value-added practice
- Comparison of RTI for G/T and for struggling learners
- Best practices of differentiation for G/T students
- RTI process for G/T students
- Characteristics of G/T students

Features of RTI for G/T Students

This book is built upon the best practices for the education of G/T students. Best practices include differentiation, research-based strategies, classroom management strategies, products, and product assessment.

In what ways does RTI for the gifted student look the same as or different from RTI for the struggling learner?

Features of RTI for the G/T parallel those for struggling learners in several ways. Both include...

- observation, identification, and documentation;
- research-based instruction based on student assessment and best practices;
- choice of activities based on pre-assessment of content;
- continuous monitoring of progress toward student self-assessment; and
- evaluation of process and products through rubrics with external and student self evaluation.

RTI for the gifted in a regular classroom is a process that evaluates students' reactions to appropriate curriculum. This appropriate curriculum includes research-based management and instructional strategies.

RTI for the gifted includes instruction to observe behaviors particular to gifted learners. These observations lead to screening and identification of G/T students for services.

RTI for the gifted services include both pre- and post-assessment with documentation to ensure student growth.

RTI for the gifted offers assessments that guide further educational decisions and opportunities for the gifted.

Comparison of RTI for Struggling Learners and for Gifted Learners

The usual model for RTI is a 3-tiered triangle or pyramid. It works equally well for gifted learners as for struggling ones; however, the time spent in each of the levels should be inverted for gifted learners.*

Struggling Learners

Tiers and Best Practice

Struggling learners are provided interventions along with all students (Tier I). Armed with data that shows a lack of progress, the struggling learners are given intensive (30 minutes per day, 3 times a week) interventions (Tier II). When data indicates no progress with Tier II interventions, struggling learners are provided intensive instruction with new intervention strategies on a daily basis (Tier III).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Same as the Gifted

Distinguishing Features

- A general education strategy to meet the needs of struggling learners early in their education
- A problem-finding and problem-solving method that informs decision makers of appropriate actions
- Interventions and progress are monitored continuously
- Decision about intervention strategies and Tier placement are determined by a team of professionals with data to support decisions.

The Gifted

Tiers

Gifted learners spend time with all students (Tier I), with other gifted students (Tier II), and doing independent study (Tier III).

Best Practice

The best practice selected contributes to student learning and continuous progress in response to both the particular and diverse needs of the learner.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Although the strategies that guide the focus differ in goal, the focus is not different from that of special education:

- High-quality instruction
- Research-based instruction
- Screening and identification
- Continuous progress through product assessment
- Early intervention
- Progress monitoring during interventions

Distinguishing Features

- A general and specific education to address learners who struggle because their needs as a gifted learner are not met
- Based on best practices that include results to demonstrate learning
- Dependent upon progress monitoring through process observations and product evaluation
- Intervention plans designed for identification responses to best instructional practices

*Adapted from Casabarro, J. (2008). *RTI—Response-To-Intervention*. National Professional Resources, Inc. Port Chester, NY.