How RTI Supports Early Identification of Students with Different Learning Profiles

Addressing Dyslexia and other Reading Disabilities

Response to Intervention (RTI)* implemented properly and well can and should address the needs of students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. In order to identify and provide appropriate instruction for these students as early as possible, universal screening and subsequent diagnostic assessments for students identified as "at risk" must be administered with fidelity to determine the specific nature of the reading difficulties. Leadership, instructional, and support teams must look beyond universal screenings and dig deeper to develop and implement an educational plan tailored to each student's reading profile.

Using Universal Screening Data to Differentiate Profiles

How can we use screening data to differentiate among the three profiles of struggling readers (depicted above)? David Kilpatrick (2015) suggests an approach that uses two questions to initially determine if a student's reading comprehension is weak. First, "Would he understand the text if you read it to him?" Second, "Does his oral reading seem effortless?"

Diagnostic Decision Tree

A decision tree can guide the digging deeper process and the selection of diagnostic assessments to provide information on why a student with good language comprehension is struggling to comprehend what s/he reads. Teachers can use Kilpatrick's questions in conjunction with the decision tree. For example, in order to answer "Does his oral reading
the teacher would need to administer an oral reading fluency assessment that measures the student's accuracy, rate, and prosody while reading connected text.

**Supporting At-Risk Students**

When RTI is implemented effectively, students at risk for reading difficulties are identified early and can receive instructional interventions without waiting to fail. RTI provides the framework to implement the important goal of ensuring at-risk students, including those with dyslexia, receive the support they need. RTI team members who understand the nature of these three reading profiles are in a position to administer and analyze universal screening data to determine next steps in terms of diagnostic testing and the prescription for appropriate intervention.

* In Connecticut, we use the term Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI).

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Detecting, Diagnosing, and Understanding Dyslexia

Register today for the Dyslexia Society of Connecticut conference, featuring keynote Nadine Gaab, Ph.D., as well as breakout sessions by Literacy How's Margie Gillis, Wendy North, and others.

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