New Ways of Thinking About Instruction, Assessment and Intervention for All Kids – And Why We’re Thinkin’ That Way

University of Oregon

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Who am I?
Big Picture Objectives

- To provide perspective on what’s going on Nationally in education as it relates to struggling learners
- To discuss little about the history that “Got Us Here”
- Some background on some of “Why” it’s going on
- If we don’t do what we’ve been doing, what could it look like?
- Putting an RTI system in place
  - What does it look like?
  - What are the steps?
- To give y’all time to try on the ideas and talk
How We’ll Do All This

- Take some time to *process* this and to contemplate possibilities. That is, I’m going to ask you to talk with each other about the stuff I’m presenting.
- What’cha gonna do when you go home?
One More Objective for The Morning

To encourage you think “Outside of the Box”
The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.

Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955)
Housekeeping

- Timelines
- Breaks
- Lunch
- Decorum
- Parking Lots
A Bias I Have

- In our current contexts, we ALL need to talk about ALL kids
- Part of why we’re here is that despite our best efforts, there are still MANY students not making it academically as a result of core instruction alone
- These kids historically have fallen into lots of different adult-created and instructionally irrelevant “categories” (Title 1, SPED, Gifted, etc.)
- I will not make these distinctions when I’m talking today, however, I will talk about all of the parts of the system as one system
- The key to ALL is EVERY and we’ve got to look at these kids uniquely
Vocabulary – Convergence of Thinking

- **Problem Solving Model (PS):** Proposed, implemented and refined since the early ’80s in special education as an alternative system to the traditional Refer-Test-Place system. It encompasses both general education and special education systems. Initially was individual student focused.

- **Response To Intervention (RTI) – Also called a Standard Treatment Approach (STA):** Being proposed by researchers across the country as an alternative method for identifying individuals with Learning Disabilities. An opportunity to link IDEA thinking with NCLB thinking.

- **School-Wide Model (SWM):** An integrative way of thinking logically and rationally about meeting All childrens’ needs in a school. It represents a promising way for schools to comprehensively draw together and allocate their resources to meet childrens’ educational needs.

- **Instructional Decision Making (IDM):** A descriptive term used in a small number of states to identify their initiatives that employ PS, RtI and SWM concepts.
Important Point

- They are not different
- The represent different spins on the same core thinking by different people
- The same “big components” are there
Important Point!

- Everything from here on out represents guidelines, not absolutes
- The problems are the same everywhere you go
- The principals for solving them are the same
- The **SPECIFICS** will be different in your setting

- **Your solutions will differ from our solutions!!!!!!**
So, LIKE

How’d We Get Here?
Some Points Along the Way: What Got Us Here (This’ll Go Quickly)

- 60s – Civil Rights Movement
- 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act
  - Offered grants and services to schools serving low income areas, including inner cities, bilingual communities, and Native Americans
- Part of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty
- Greatly expanded the Federal Government's involvement in education
Some Points Along the Way: What Got Us Here

- 1975 PL 94-142 Education of the Handicapped Act is Passed
- 1983 A Nation at Risk
  - Major concern about the quality of our public schools
  - The idea of standards-based reform came forward
  - Accountability was demanded
  - Sets the stage for everything that came later
  - This percolated a bunch before going “large scale"
Some Points Along the Way: What Got Us Here

- Regular Education Initiative (REI - 1986)
  - Madeline Will, Federal director for Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services promotes REI (Will, 1986).
- General and special education begin looking at shared roles and shared responsibilities
Some Points Along the Way: What Got Us Here

- Regular Education Initiative (REI - 1986)
- Problems highlighted:
  - Fragmented approach to service delivery
  - A dual system of segregated services (general and special education)
  - Stigmatizing labels
  - Placement decisions as a battleground between schools with specific eligibility criteria for placement and parents desiring services for their children
Some Points Along the Way: What Got Us Here

- ESEA Reauthorization ‘94
  Biggest Changes
  - Standards Based Reform – at a state level
  - Accountability
    - Reporting
    - Assessment
  - States were required to develop state standards, benchmarks and assessments
IDEA Reauthorization ‘97

- Participation in large-scale assessment
  - Civil Rights argument
- Alternate Assessment - all means all
- Emphasis of IEPs linked to general curriculum
- Some Alignment with ESEA
Elementary and Secondary Education Act 2002 aka: NCLB
The Themes

- To hold states, school districts and schools accountable for educating all children to high academic standards – Kid level – Every Child
- Greater parental and student choice
- Flexibility for educators and administrators
- A focus on “scientifically-based research”
Current Realities: We Can View Them As Obstacles or Opportunities

- Major Reform
- Federal Law Changes
- Few Precedents Leading to the Future
- High Stakes
- Ready or not, Here We Come
Big Picture Context (NCLB)
Activity #1

- Question: Pick a grade: what percentage of students in your school are proficient in mathematics and reading?
Big Picture Context for Kids With Learning Problems

- We know with the collateral changes in IDEA all means every, and no students can be exempted from the accountability system.
- The stakes are really high.
- IDEA has been reauthorized.
- It has some REALLY INTERESTING STUFF IN it!!!!
It Can No Longer Be Business As Usual

So Where Do We Start?
Richard Feynman has said:  

“The best way to predict the future is to invent it”
It is Also True That...

If we don’t learn from the past, we’ll repeat it
One Perspective on History

- Our education system has grown up through a process of “Disjointed Incrementalism” (Reynolds, 1988)

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The current Education System’s Programmatic Evolution
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- K-12 Education
- Gifted
- SPED
- Migrant
- Title 1
- At Risk
- ELL
Unintended Effects

- Conflicting programs
- Conflicting funding streams
- Redundancy
- Lack of coordination across programs
- Nonsensical rules about program availability for students
- Extreme complexity in administration and implementation of the programs
We Have Got To Get More Systematic and Simplify – Especially in High Stakes Areas (RMS)

School Curricula – Pick an area

- Intensive Interventions 5%
- Strategic Interventions 15%
- Core Curriculum 80%

Adapted from: Sugai and Horner
We Have Got To Get More Systematic and Simplify – Especially in High Stakes Areas (RMS)

We’ll Come Back to This
This Sounds Good, But….

- Our hands are tied
- Federal law prescribes lots of how we’re organized
- Especially with Special Education and NCLB, there are lots of things we have to do
- How can we get them all done?
Instruction and Intervention
Survey ‘07

Activity #2: Complete Survey
Forces Underlying Our Assessment and Instructional Systems For Kids

- Aspirational Reasons
- Legal Reasons
- Professional Reasons
- Socio-Political Realities
Aspirational Reasons

Why Did You Go Into Education?
Legal Reasons: Purpose of NCLB – Title 1

- P.L. 107-110 (1001). The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.
Legal Reasons: The Purpose of IDEIA ‘04

- “(1)
  - (A) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living;
  - “(B) to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected; and
  - “(C) to assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities;
- “(2) to assist States in the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- “(3) to ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities …; and
Legal Reasons: The Purpose of IDEA ‘04

• (4) To assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities
Professional Reasons: Professional Judgment

- Determines **how** we carry out and meet our legal and inspirational purposes.
  - Assumptions
  - Practices
In the Beginning

- Assessment system used to differentiate instruction for struggling learners was based on a series of assumptions.
Activity #3: Name the Assumptions

- Think about your experience.
- What are one or more assumption about struggling learners inherent in our system?
If We Assume

- Assumption 1: Existing and widely used educational assessment procedures are sufficient and valid for differentiating instruction for students.
If We Assume

- Assumption 2: Thorough understanding of the intrapersonal (within person) cause of educational problems is the most critical factor in determining appropriate treatment.
If We Assume

- Assumption 3: Sufficient resources and meaningful strategies for providing differentiated instruction are available within a large majority of schools.
If We Assume

- Assumption 4: Grouping students with other “like students” is an efficient and effective method for matching differentiated instruction to student needs.
If We Assume

- Assumption 5: Matching treatments to underlying characteristics of students will result in maximally effective interventions.

Learning Disability X LD Methods = Effective Tx.

Auditory Learner X Auditory Instruction = Effective Tx.

Sequential Processor X Sequential Instr. = Effective Tx.
These Were The Assumptions

- Based on the best information we had at the time
- Based on structures designed to promote efficient organization of schools
Logical and Rational System Structure

- If these assumptions are true, then, from the standpoint of meeting our professional and legal purposes
  - The historical system is structured appropriately to meet our purposes
  - Nationally-normed, standardized tests are all we need to meet our purposes.
  - Effectiveness of service delivery could be determined by examining how many children we are helping.
The System Worked

- Children were placed in special programs
- Services were delivered
- An ever increasing number of professionals were involved
- We got really efficient at the process!
Until... Activity #4

- Turn To Activity Page
- Individually write down some of the challenges (practical, professional, ethical, and/or political) to education that you have experienced in Oregon throughout the past 10 years....
Until...

- Increases in SPED incidence (particularly in Specific Learning Disabilities and recently in Other Health Impaired)
- Increases in English Language Learners
- Changes in Family Demographics
- Inclusion
- Undocumented Effectiveness of many programs
- Fordham Foundation Report “Rethinking Special Education for the New Millennium”
- National Movement Toward Better Educational Results (e.g., Nation at Risk leading to Standards-Based Reform)
Until...

- Increasing 504 Awareness
- Increased Poverty
- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- IDEA ’97
- ESEA 2002 (aka No Child Left Behind)
IDEA ’97’s Contributions

- Functional and Developmental Assessment in all assessment domains
- Increased parental involvement
- Inclusion of all kids in district and state assessments
- FBA and Behavioral interventions
- General Education Curriculum
- I could go on....
No Child Left Behind

- Sweeping changes to ESEA
- Increased complexity (1100 pages of it)
- Increased accountability
- Increased rewards and sanctions
- Increased prescriptiveness (esp. in Reading)
- Increased linkages with Special Education
President’s Commission Report: A New Era

- Launch the “antiquated wait to fail” model
- SPED kids are GenEd. Kids first!
- Empower parents
- Emphasize results over compliance
- Use better approaches to identifying kids with disabilities
- Prepare teachers better
- SPED research needs enhanced rigor
Status of Reauthorization: We Are Reauthorized

- Title: “Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act”
- Passed House in 2003, Senate in 2004
- Signed by President Bush in December, 2004.
- IN EFFECT July 1, 2005
- Regulations Fall 2006
In general._Notwithstanding section 607(b), when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in section 602(29), a local educational agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in …
Additional authority._In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention.

- Process refers to “Problem Solving Process”
- Responds refers to “Response to Intervention”
(5) SPECIAL RULE FOR ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION-
In making a determination of eligibility under paragraph (4)(A), a child shall not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for such determination is—

(A) lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including in the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the ESEA of 1965);
(B) lack of instruction in math; or
(C) limited English proficiency.
For a child suspected of having a specific learning disability, the group must consider, as part of the evaluation described in §§300.304 through 300.306, data that demonstrates that--

(1) Prior to, or as a part of the referral process, the child was provided appropriate high-quality, research-based instruction in regular education settings, consistent with section 1111(b)(8)(D) and (E) of the ESEA, including that the instruction was delivered by qualified personnel; and

(2) Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, was provided to the child's parents.
Implications

- Poor/lack of instruction must be ruled out
- Curricular access blocked by any of the following must be addressed
  - Attendance
  - Health
  - Mobility
- Sufficient exposure to and focus on the curriculum must occur
- Frequent, repeated assessment must be conducted
Pedagogical History of Special Education

- “Find Them!” We did a good job at this.
- “Teach Them!” We tried, but as a separate pedagogy and separate system

Results
- Reduced Academic Engaged Time
- Failed to compare individual “growth” to the “growth” of the peers in the regular curriculum

- “Outstanding Effort, Undeniable Intentions, Unintended Outcomes”
Should We Change the Way We Do Business?

- We're all looking for new ways to do things, but how do we do this within the context of NCLB and IDEA? What are the parameters?
  - Legal Standards (shifting)
  - Professional Knowledge (evolving)
There is tremendous flexibility within Federal Law.

One of Iowa’s greatest learnings as a state was that “we did it to ourselves.”

That is, most of the restrictions we perceived as barriers to changing what we were doing – they were self imposed by our state’s interpretation of the Federal Law and Regulations.

RtI has been allowable under Federal Law since 1975.
Professionally, we now have many years experience implementing our systems for supporting struggling learners.
Our Professional Obligation

- Review practice and assumptions related to accomplishing our purposes of improving teaching and learning for all children.
Professionally, after 30 years we know

- **Old Habit 1**: Existing and widely used educational assessment procedures are sufficient and valid for differentiating instruction for students.

- **New Habit 1**: Many assessment devices used for differential diagnosis and programming are not reliable and valid enough for use with individuals (e.g., Salvia and Ysseldyke, 1991; Witt, 1986).
Professionally, after 30 years we know

- **Old Habit 2**: Thorough understanding of the intrapersonal (within person) cause of educational problems is the most critical factor in determining appropriate treatment.

- **New Habit 2**: Learning problems results from a complex interaction between curriculum, instruction, the environment and learner characteristics (e.g., Howell, 1993).
Professionally, after 30 years we know

- **Old Habit 3**: Sufficient resources and meaningful strategies for providing differentiated instruction are available within schools.

- **New Habit 3**: Changing learning trajectories for all students requires sustained, ongoing and focused efforts beyond what traditionally has been available in most of our schools. (Simmons, Kuykendall, King, Cornachione & Kame’enui, 2000)
Professionally, after 30 years we know

- **Old Habit 4**: Grouping students with other “*like students*” is an efficient and effective method for matching differentiated instruction to student needs.

- **New Habit 4**: Educational needs vary widely within and across categorical “groupings” of students (e.g., Jenkins, Pious, & Peterson, 1988; Marston, 1987).
Professionally, after 30 years we know

- **Old Habit 5:** Matching treatments to underlying characteristics of students will result in maximally effective interventions.

- **New Habit 5:** Aptitude-by-treatment interactions (ATIs) have not been proven (e.g., Arter & Jenkins, 1979; Cronbach, 1975; Good, et al., 1993; Teeter, 1987, 1989; Ysseldyke & Mirkin, 1982).
The Reality

- The effectiveness of any educational strategy for an individual can only be determined through its implementation.
In Short: We Need A Different Instruction, Assessment and Intervention System

- We need a system:
  - For identifying problems more specifically and earlier
  - That allows for a broader range of explanations of why problems are occurring
  - Emphasizes assessment for Problem ID, Problem Analysis, Treatment Planning
  - and; Evaluating whether the interventions are effective
In Short: We Need

• A Problem Solving System
So How Do We Get There?

- We need to create a new box, outside of our historical paradigm?
But How?

- The Feds don’t know how to do this
- Our state departments don’t know how to do this
- But…
- We on the ground have the tools, the experience to get this done
- It has been demonstrated over and over
Let’s Examine the Parameters

- Reexamine the *Instruction and Intervention Survey ‘07*.
1. The most important variable in how much a student learns is their IQ. False

- The most critical components in how much a student learns are:
  - Instruction
  - Curriculum
  - The environment
2. Grouping children for instruction based on student characteristics (e.g., disability status, learning style, processing modality) results in enhanced results for students.  **False**

- For individuals, aptitude by treatment interactions have not been proven.
- Matching treatments to learner characteristics seems to make sense, but it DOES NOT WORK! (e.g., Arter & Jenkins, 1979; Cronbach, 1975; Good, et al., 1993; Teeter, 1987, 1989; Ysseldyke & Mirkin, 1982).
3. If we use research validated reading practices, monitor students’ progress and make changes to instruction based on what we find, between 95 and 100 percent of children can become proficient readers. True

- Individual Differences in Response to Early Intervention in Reading: The Lingering Problem of Treatment Resisters
4. The use of research validated practices is the most important variable in whether individual intervention plans are successful. False

- There are two keys
  - One is research validated practices. This gives us the “best shot” at an improved outcome
  - The other is good problem analysis and match with student need. Powerful interventions are doomed if they are applied to the wrong problems.
5. Special Education, as it has been defined nationally since 1975 has been very effective at raising student achievement in reading and mathematics. **True/False**

- We have lots of anecdotal evidence of individual student success stories
- Our practices have precluded our answering this question
  - Different curriculum
  - Lack of assessment
- The evidence is mixed
- We must fix this. This is what RTI is all about
6. Scientifically Research-validated strategies are widely available in reading and mathematics across K-12 to help us work smarter at remediating student learning problems.  

- We have the most in early literacy
- We have less at later literacy
- We have even less in mathematics
- We do, however have promising practices that we can implement in most areas
7. Grouping students for instruction based on student skill, monitoring their progress over small periods of time, adjusting instruction based on the data and providing kids feedback on their performance is one of the most powerful sets of educational practices that exists. **True**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment/Intervention</th>
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<td>Special Education Placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modality Matched Instruction (Auditory)</td>
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<td>Modality Matched Instruction (Visual)</td>
<td>+.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum-Based Instruction/ Graphing and Formative Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum-Based Instruction, Graphing, Formative Evaluation and Systematic use of Reinforcement</td>
<td>+1.00</td>
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</table>
8. It will be possible to meet the NCLB 100% proficiency target without unifying, simplifying and rationalizing how we allocate instructional resources. **False – OK, My Bias**

- It hasn’t happened anywhere that I know of
- We spend too much of our attention on instructionally irrelevant stuff
- Rome is burning!
9. Knowing specifically why students are experiencing learning problems is critical to remediating their skill problems. **True**

- Not all students with the same general performance deficits have the same learning needs (thermometer analogy)
- Different performance profiles will require different approaches to remediate
10. Placing children in classrooms based on their specific disability is permissible by federal law. **False, False, False**

- “The unavoidable consequence of such a labeling practice is to identify and plan to meet each child's educational needs on the basis of what that child has in common with other children similarly identified rather than on the basis of that child's individualized needs. Thus it is the view of this office that any labeling practice that categorizes children according to their disability in order to facilitate the individual determination of any child's appropriate educational needs or services will be presumed to violate the protections accorded under Federal and State Law.”

  Thomas Bellamy, former OSEP Director
So Where Does That Leave Us?
The Solutions
(Research and Common Sense Into Action)

- We can't work any harder!
- So...
- We gotta work smarter
- And...
- It will require the whole system working together
The Solutions
(Research and Common Sense Into Action)

- Instructional design advances
  - Especially in Reading!!
- Behavior change technological advances
  - Implemented through Positive Behavior Support
- Assessment systems linked to instruction and intervention
- One integrated problem-solving structure that eliminates bureaucratic silos
So What Happens When You Do All this Stuff?
Iowa’s Experience: How it all started (remember, your path will be different)

- Began in 1986-1987
- Discussions with stakeholders
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
  - Area Education Agency Personnel
  - Policy Makers
- Over 4000 persons contributed
A Series of Questions Were Asked

- What is working with the current system?
- What components of the system are in need of reconsideration?
- What barriers get in the way of trying these changes?
- Important - There was no presumption that what we were doing was not being done well.
Iowa’s Experience

- Systematically piloted in late ’80s and early ’90s
- Changed state rules in ’95
- Requires General Education Intervention
- Defines systematic problem solving
- Promotes assessments tailored to individuals’ needs
- Assessment for identifying problems, analyzing them, planning interventions, monitoring progress and evaluating effectiveness
Problem Solving and the School-Wide Model in Practice

Heartland Early Literacy Project
“Helping Children Read ...Helping Teachers Teach”
Components of Successful School Implementation of HELP

• Administrative Support
• Link to School Improvement
• Adequate Time for Staff Development
• Materials
• Data Collection by Teachers
• Data Interpretation and Understanding
• Instruction Guided by Data
Benchmark goal for all students in Winter of Kindergarten:
25-35 correct initial sounds per minute.
Kindergarten: PSF Project-Wide Data

Benchmark goal for all students in Spring of Kindergarten: 35-45 correct phonemes per minute.
First: NWF Project Wide Data

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<th>End</th>
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<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>1593</td>
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Benchmark goal for all students in Winter of First Grade: 50-60 correct letter-sounds per minute.
First: ORF Project Wide Data

Benchmark goal for all students in Spring of First Grade:
40 or more correct words per minute.
What Happened In the Larger System? Not So Near In Indicators
## CBM Reading Norms

Changes in Agency-Wide Medians (Spring of the Year)

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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>104</td>
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Schools In Need Of Improvement
List of Heartland Elementary Schools, Implementing DIBELS/HELP Who Are on the NCLB Watch List or SINI in 2003-2004
Effects of Heartland Early Literacy Project on New Special Education Placements: Kindergarten Across 36 School Buildings 1996-2004

41% Decrease in Kindergarten New SPED Placements
Effect of Heartland Early Literacy Project on New Special Education Placements: First Grade Across 36 Schools 1996-2004

34% Reduction in First-Grade New Special Education Placements
Effect of Heartland Early Literacy Project on New Special Education Placements: Second Grade for 36 Schools 1996-2004

25% Reduction in New Second-Grade SPED Placements
Effects of Heartland Early Literacy Project on New Special Education Placements: Third-Grade for 36 Schools 1996-2004

19% Reduction in Third-Grade New SPED Placements
Iowa Test of Basic Skills Percent Proficient – Reading Comprehension Subtest

n approx. = 9000 per grade level

Note: Data include all public and non-public accredited schools in AEA 11 (including Des Moines)
Activity
Last

• Individually, identify one idea that “made you think – HMMM”
• Individually identify one thing you want to know more about.
• Individually identify one question that you have.

• Share these out at your table and let’s talk about them
Questions and Answers