President's Message

Dear CLD colleagues,

It is with great excitement and humility that I write my first President's Message. We have a marvelous and busy year ahead of us. With the assistance of the Board of Trustees and support of CLD members, I hope to continue to guide our organization in promoting our commitment to individuals with learning disabilities and disseminate the mission and vision of CLD.

CLD's **35th International Conference** will be held in Austin, Texas, on October 24th and 25th. We are honored to have **Dr. Sharon Vaughn**, the **2013 J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer,** as our keynote speaker. The conference program is available on our website (**www.cldinternational.org**), and the Conference and Local Arrangements committees are doing a superb job organizing and preparing this event. I sincerely appreciate the hard work of those two committees and want to especially recognize **Steve Chamberlain, Diane Bryant, Brian Bryant,** and **Judy Voress** for their valuable contributions in making this another successful conference.

This past academic year, the ad hoc Professional Development Committee, under the guidance and mentorship of **Chris Curran,** and with participation of Leadership Academy members, made three excellent webinars available to CLD members. The committee will continue to provide new ones this year, so please support their outstanding work by participating in the webinars, which will be available to CLD members for a special rate. The webinar schedule will appear in the next *LD Forum.*

I want to welcome the two "new" members of our Executive Committee: **Vice-President Diane Bryant** and **Secretary Rebecca Shankland,** and new board members **Colleen Reutebuch** and **Brittany Hott,** Leadership Development co-chairs. In addition, I am grateful to all of the returning Board members for their commitment to continue to serve. This year we have a "new" CLD Standing Committee, **Professional Development** (as noted above, it previously was an ad hoc committee), co-chaired by **Chris Curran** and **Kathleen Hughes Pfannenstiel.** Thank you to all Board members, the new and the continuing, for your willingness to serve CLD.

The CLD Leadership Academy continues to grow while meeting our goals of mentoring future CLD leaders. Members of previous cohorts are already participating in leadership roles: **Kathleen Hughes Pfannenstiel** and **Brittany Hott** were members of the Leadership Academy's Cohort 1. **Lisa Morin,** co-chair of our Technology Committee, was a member of Cohort 2. Please get involved and volunteer to mentor the Academy's new members.

To all CLD members, thank you for your membership and for providing me with the opportunity to serve as CLD President. Please continue to support CLD by renewing your membership every year. I look forward to seeing you in Austin.

Sincerely,
Silvana Watson
2013–2014 CLD President

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CLD CONFERENCE REGISTRATION BEGAN MAY 1!

The 10th Birthday of RTI: Recommendations from Research

Stephen Ciullo, *Texas State University*
Cathy Newman-Thomas, *University of Missouri*

In 2013, Response to Intervention (RTI) celebrates its 10th birthday. This multi-tiered prevention and intervention framework has influenced how educators identify students with learning disabilities (LD). While there are many variations in implementation across states (D. Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012), three-tiered RTI models are common (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010).

In Tier 1, also referred to as *primary intervention,* evidence-based core instruction is delivered in the general education classroom; all students receive Tier 1 daily. *Universal screening measures* (also called *benchmark assessments*) are typically given three times per year to identify students at risk for failure to meet annual progress in state-identified skills. Assessment results can identify students for Tier 2 (*secondary prevention*), which is provided in addition to Tier 1.

Tier 2 interventions are based on students' specific needs and are delivered to small groups of four to six students. Students who respond to Tier 2 instruction by demonstrating grade-level proficiency would now only require Tier 1; other students may need continued support. Students who do not respond sufficiently in Tier 2 may need Tier 3 (tertiary-level prevention), the most intensive level.

Tier 3 interventions are taught to groups of one to three students, are more intense in duration, and target specific areas of risk. All tiers may include students already placed in special education based on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and need. In some systems, Tier 3 (or 4, etc.) is designated as special education, while in other models special education occurs outside of the tiered framework (Fuchs et al., 2012).

In sum, successfully implementing RTI is complex and requires time (Mellard et al., 2010). This article provides practical suggestions, based on new research, for refining the aforementioned model with the potential to improve efficiency and student learning outcomes.

Article Purpose

While research has demonstrated the value of RTI for improving student outcomes (Mellard, Frey, & Woods, 2012), several components can be enhanced. Fortunately, lessons from recent research have emerged (e.g., D. Fuchs et al., 2012; L. S. Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012; Swanson, Solis, Ciullo, & McKenna, 2012). In this article we offer a brief summary of key research and detailed suggestions to (a) strengthen Tier 1, (b) identify false positives in Tier 2, and (c) help students with the greatest needs, or with LD, to receive Tier 3 intervention more quickly. To illustrate these suggestions, we have included a case study of a struggling reader. Descriptions of her progress in key decision points within an RTI framework demonstrate how these adjustments can be helpful to a student who is at risk for LD.

In essence, we are attempting to make recent research accessible to educators. Some of the research and recommendations that we describe have been termed "Smart RTI" or a "next generation approach" because the research has demonstrated improved effectiveness and can potentially increase the efficiency of RTI (D. Fuchs et al., 2012, p. 263).

Maria

Maria is a third-grade student with reading difficulties. At the end of second grade Maria began receiving Tier 2 intervention in reading. Maria's teacher reported that she had difficulties in regards to decoding words and oral reading fluency. Second-grade assessment results provided Maria's teacher with additional evidence of the student's learning difficulties: On the winter benchmark test, Maria's Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) phonics test, and the Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) test scores from the DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2002), placed her in the *at risk* category. In the fall of third grade, screening measures further confirmed the challenges Maria faced, but her new teacher hopes that the RTI framework interventions can remediate her reading difficulties.

Meeting the Needs of All Students: RTI Flexibility

Enhancing Tier 1

A key concept in RTI is that instruction should be differentiated to ensure maximum access for all learners. To help teachers make Tier 1 more robust and effective, we recommend the following evidence-based practices for differentiating instruction:

1. use flexible grouping based on learning objectives (Evertson & Harris, 2003),
2. increase instructional efficiency (Konrad, Helf, & Joseph, 2011), and
3. utilize peer mediated learning (Harper & Maheady, 2007).

Flexible grouping differs from ability grouping because the groups change based on the skill being taught (Evertson

& Harris, 2003). For example, Maria and her classmates are reading about U.S. National Parks. During the final 20 minutes, Maria and four other students with phonics difficulties receive small-group instruction. A special education teacher instructs students in using dry-erase boards to write and read "ai" family words such as *paint*, and the group reads a passage containing this digraph pattern. A second group practices paragraph structure and writing fluency. Students write two paragraphs about an imaginary visit to a national park, explaining their journey. The third group is engaged in a systematic vocabulary activity for the words *conservation* and *exploration*. The preceding flexible grouping scenario maintains engagement and meets the needs of all students.

Increased instructional efficiency refers to reducing class time spent on preparation and transitions in order to maximize teaching and learning opportunities. Key components include detailed lesson preparation to increase time that students are learning and engaged, while minimizing time spent on logistics, as was documented in a recent RTI observation study (Swanson et al., 2012). Increasing opportunities for students to respond is also associated with enhanced learning (Hott & Walker, 2012). For students with reading deficits, teachers must organize instruction so students are spending as much time as possible reading text (Ciullo & Reutebuch, 2012). In contrast to round-robin reading (in which one student reads while others follow along), reading options that increase engagement include *echo reading* (teacher reads and then students read the identical sentence); *partner reading*, which fosters the sustained practice required for skill building; and *independent silent reading* (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2003).

Basic strategies can also facilitate increased opportunities to respond to questions (Konrad et al., 2011). For example, Maria's teacher asked students in her group to use dry erase boards to write two words using the "ai" digraph as a quick way to promote generalization of this phonics skill. Before dismissal, she then assigned a *ticket out* activity to check for understanding. In these ways, Maria's teacher collects quick progress monitoring information and increases instructional time.

Peer-mediated learning promotes effective, differentiated instruction. Well-structured peer-mediated learning provides sustained practice opportunities, increases quality feedback, and increases the frequency of social interaction (Harper & Maheady, 2007). Peer-mediated learning also allows the teacher to systematically support different groups of students. Teachers should plan purposeful activities, carefully teach procedures, collect data, and monitor progress to promote successful learning experiences (Vaughn, 2013).

Pairs and small groups should be formed based on the instructional purpose and student data. Teachers can use universal screening or other assessments to create groups.

(Harper & Maheady, 2007). Teachers simply divide the list of students in half and then match the first student on List 1 with the first student on List 2, then the second student on List 1 with the second student on List 2, and so on. This process ensures that a stronger reader is paired with a weaker reader, but skill discrepancies are not too extreme.

In our example, after the teacher describes the rules and procedures of partner reading, Maria is paired with Alex. As Alex reads he makes a mistake: pronouncing *far* as *fair*. Maria, following the error correction procedures her teacher has taught, says, "Stop," pointing to the word and asking Alex, "What is that word?" Maria then waits 3 seconds before saying, "That word is *far*," directing her partner to re-read from the beginning of the sentence. When Alex says the word and re-reads the sentence correctly, Maria provides positive reinforcement, smiling and saying, "Very good!" This process is repeated so Maria has the opportunity to read. After reading, Maria and Alex collaboratively answer questions to identify the main ideas. This example illustrates how peer-mediated instruction can increase student engagement.

While ideas such as efficient use of time, flexible grouping, and peer-mediated instruction may not be novel, they are often under-utilized. When these practices are intentionally and consistently embedded, instructional quality improves and diverse learners benefit. Table 1 provides additional free resources that educators should also consider to enhance RTI implementation.

Identifying False Positives in Tier 2

Research has suggested that additional data may increase the likelihood of properly identifying students who need Tier 2 intervention. Just as multiple tools are used to determine if treatment is necessary during a doctor's visit, in education a two-stage screening process may be used to ensure that students are accurately identified (L. S. Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). Students who score below the *cut point* on the first screening assessment are given a secondary brief screening measure to gather additional information before a Tier 2 decision is made. The cut points for determining which students are at risk are typically provided by the testing instrument (e.g., DIBELS: see **http://dibels.org/next.html**) or determined by school personnel through examination of state learning objectives (Ciullo, SoRelle, Kim, You-jin, & Bryant, 2011).

In their 2012 study of a group of at-risk first-grade students, D. Fuchs et al. found that using a single screening tool resulted in high rates of false positives at Tier 2. They also discovered that although some students' scores fell below the cut point on a single measure, additional screening indicated that some students possessed better skills than they demonstrated during the initial test and did not require Tier 2 interventions. Although administering a separate screen-

Table 1. Resources for Evidence-Based Practices to Support Tier 1 Instruction in Reading

Resource	Website	Description
National Center on Response to Intervention	http://www.rti4success.org	This technical assistance and dissemination center is led by researchers at the University of Kansas and Vanderbilt University and is supported by OSEP. The mission is to help build the capacity of schools and districts to implement RTI.
National Center on Intensive Intervention	http://www.intensiveintervention.org/	The American Institutes for Research supports the need for interventions that are evidence-based and of high intensity. Popular features of this site include videos with experts answering common questions, webinars about current "hot topics," and an Interventions Tool Chart. The chart summarizes academic programs and indicates whether the program meets high-quality criteria for improving learning.
National Center on Student Progress Monitoring	http://www.studentprogress.org	This site—housed by the American Institutes for Research—is a technical assistance and dissemination center led by researchers at Vanderbilt University and is supported by OSEP. Content is focused on providing information and training to promote the effective use of progress monitoring in Grades K–5.
National Research Center on Learning Disabilities	http://www.nrcld.org/index.html	This site is housed at the University of Kansas and supported by OSEP. The purpose is to conduct research on the identification of LD, disseminate findings and make recommendations for implementation, and provide technical assistance. The site includes information about policy and practice related to RTI as a determination of LD.
RTI Action Network	http://www.rtinetwork.org http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/ld	A program of the National Center on Learning Disabilities, its website offers general information about RTI implementation for students with LD as well as information about LD identification, including policy and position statements.

ing measure to students who fall below a pre-determined cut point is time consuming, the process provides useful information and allows educators to offer support and resources to students who need targeted interventions for skill deficits (D. Fuchs et al., 2012). Using more than one screening measure increases the likelihood of accurate Tier 2 identification.

In Maria's class, the teacher administered the third-grade subtests from the DIBELS. Maria read 48 words per minute on the DORF subtest, placing her in the at-risk category. Students, such as Maria, who were identified as at risk then took another measure from the district's adopted reading series. On the fluency subtest of this second measure, Maria scored below the 20th percentile, confirming that Tier 2 was necessary. Maria's classmate Vanessa scored in the at-risk category on the first measure, but her class performance and improved results on the second screening tool led her teachers to conclude that Tier 2 was unnecessary. This approach thus was successful at identifying which students might not have actually needed Tier 2 intervention.

Rx for Smart RTI: Tier 3 Now!

Tier 3 differs from Tier 2 in terms of intensity and opportunities for feedback and response. Tier 3 is generally conducted in small groups of one to three students, and the duration is measured in months (Mellard et al., 2010). While early intervention is one purpose of RTI (L. S. Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012), for some students with profound needs the hierarchical nature of the three-tier model has inadvertently resulted in delayed LD identification and insufficient intensity of services. For students who fall significantly below normative benchmarks, new recommendations suggest the immediate provision of Tier 3, bypassing Tier 2 (L. S. Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). To demonstrate this process, a brief summary of research and an example are provided.

Compton et al. (2012) studied a group of first-grade students, following students who failed to respond to Tiers 1 and 2. They found that screening results and insufficient progress in Tier 1 were enough to accurately identify students for Tier 3. For example, if the fall benchmark DORF scores for Maria had indicated that she could only read 22 words per minute, and her district basal scores in fluency and comprehension also placed her below the 10th percentile, she and other students with such severe deficits could receive Tier 3 immediately. A specialized educator in a small-group or one-to-one setting would deliver Maria's instruction.

To summarize, the needs of most students can be met with high-quality evidence-based Tier 1 instruction and, as needed, Tier 2. For a small percentage of students with pervasive academic needs, Tier 3 is a viable option (Compton et al., 2012).

Conclusion

In this article, we have described recommendations with the potential to improve RTI for students like Maria who have, or

are at risk for, LD. Utilizing these suggestions has the potential to result in the following outcomes:

1. improvement in diverse learners' academic engagement through use of research-based Tier 1 strategies such as flexible grouping and maximization of teaching time;
2. more accurate identification of students needing Tier 2 intervention by administering multiple screening measures; and
3. intensive intervention and quicker identification of LD for students with extensive learning needs via faster placement in Tier 3 (L. S. Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012).

We encourage educators to discuss and consider the suggestions to make RTI responsive and effective in the coming years.

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CLD Leadership Academy – Cohort III

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the current Leadership Academy members, and the Leadership Development Committee, we would like to congratulate members of the Cohort III Leadership Academy.

Jacquelyn Chovanes, *Lehigh University*
Stephen Ciullo, *Texas State University at San Marcos*
Theresa Garfield Dorel, *Texas A&M–San Antonio*
Sara Flanagan, *University of Kentucky*
Lisa Goran, *Truman State University*
Katrina Hovey, *University of North Texas*
Catherine Howerter, *Georgia Southern University*
Yun-Ju Hsiao, *Washington State University*
Todd Johnson, *George Mason University*
Ben Matthews, *George Mason University*

Maria Peterson, *Texas Woman's University*
Apryl Poch, *University of Missouri*
Roberta Raymond, *Houston Independent School District*
Lidia Sedano, *Clark County School District, Nevada*
Shaunita Strozier, *Valdosta State University*

Bylaws Election Results

Forty-eight CLD members voted to approve the bylaws changes posed by the executive board. Please see the June 2013 *LD Forum* issue for a copy of the changes.

2013 CLD Conference Update

The program for the CLD 2013 conference is set and we have a fantastic group of presenters. In addition to our renowned **J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer, Sharon Vaughn,** we will have 22 Panel Discussions, 25 Round Table Sessions, and more than 75 Interactive Paper Sessions over both days of the conference. Presenters will be listed on the CLD website shortly. Here are some highlights:

Ed Ellis, Dan Boudah, and Beth Long will present on professional development resources and activities for supporting fidelity implementation of (a) a series of discipline-specific visual tools designed for teaching 6–12 CCS-LA Standards, (b) instructional routines for using them, and (c) the research basis validating their effectiveness with students who are high-, typical-, and low-achieving as well as those identified as LD. Participants should bring PC or Mac laptops containing Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Adobe Reader.

Susan de la Paz, Cindy Sherman, and Kelly Worland Piantedosi will offer a panel discussion on *Improving Writing Instruction and Assessment for Struggling Learners*. They will share two SRSD writing interventions, an elementary revising strategy, and a secondary planning strategy. Evidence-based recommendations for instruction, in addition to assessment recommendations that focus on recent research with culturally and linguistically diverse students, will be provided.

Deborah Reed, Mary Beth Calhoun, and Joseph Morgan will discuss *Reading Instruction for Secondary Students with Reading Difficulties*. Panelists will present research on approaches to teaching reading to adolescents in intervention and content-area classes.

Ben Clarke, Mari Strand Cary, and Tricia Berg will share findings from a promising first-grade mathematics intervention program. This study examined Tier 2 intervention for improving the achievement of first-grade students at risk in mathematics. They will provide an overview of the program's critical features, along with findings regarding the program's feasibility and usability.

Jugnu Agrawal, Endia Lindo, Monica Brown, and Lida Sedano, representatives of the CLD Diversity Committee, will present on *CLD Students and LD: Critical Contemporary Issues in the Literature*. The panelists will discuss issues related to assessment, identification, misrepresentation, and finding evidence-based strategies and also provide recommendations to resolve problems as they are described in the literature.

Joseph Morgan, Nancy Brown, and Joice Higa will present on *Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities to Track Academic Progress Data*. This session will review findings from an intervention designed to teach elementary students with LD to analyze their own achievement data.

Peggy King-Sears, Todd Johnson, Anya Evmenova, and Peggy Weiss will discuss *Universal Design for Learning, Multimedia, and Cognitive Load: LD Research Intersections*. They will describe a chemistry study that integrated these three areas and feature feedback from students with and without LD.

In addition, **Gerry Wallace** will lead a panel session of past presidents, including **Don Hammill, James McLoughlin,** and **Ann Ryan,** who will be discussing life after serving as a CLD president; **Debi Gartland** will lead a panel discussion on the past year's important legislative actions and upcoming reauthorizations of the ESEA and IDEA; and **Deborah Reed** will lead a discussion on "must reads in the literature."

We are extremely pleased with the program for the upcoming conference and want to thank everyone who submitted a proposal. We look forward to seeing you there!

Steve Chamberlain
Vice President and Program Chair

October 24–25, 2013
Austin, Texas

2014 Planning: Save the Date
36th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

October 2 & 3, 2014

Sonesta Hotel

Concurrent skill-building sessions on research, interventions, teacher preparation, and policies for students with LD

President's awards reception and interactive poster session on evidence-based practices

Networking opportunities with local, state, andnational educators in LD

**Join CLD in Philadelphia!
Attend the conference!**

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www.cldinternational.org

Editors' Note

This issue of *LD Forum* was edited by Interim Editor Brittany Hott and Assistant Editor Kimberly Coy.

CLD Information Central

CLD Mission, Vision, & Goals

Mission Statement: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) is an international organization that promotes evidence-based teaching, collaboration, research, leadership, and advocacy. CLD is composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines and are committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning.

Vision Statement: Our vision is to include all educators, researchers, administrators, and support personnel to improve the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning.

External Goals

1. Promote the use and monitoring of evidence-based interventions for individuals with learning disabilities (LD) and others who experience challenges in learning.
2. Foster collaborative networks with and among professionals who serve individuals with LD and others who experience challenges in learning.
3. Expand our audience to educators, researchers, administrators, and support personnel.
4. Promote high-quality research of importance to individuals with LD and persons who experience challenges in learning.
5. Support leadership development among professionals who serve individuals with LD and others who experience challenges in learning.
6. Advocate for an educational system that respects, supports, and values individual differences.

Internal Goals

1. Ensure efficient, accountable, responsive governance to achieve the CLD mission.
2. Mentor future CLD leaders.
3. Maintain sound fiscal planning and practice.
4. Recruit and retain CLD members.
5. Increase the diversity of our organization.

CLD on the Web

www.cldinternational.org

Visit the CLD website for all the latest updates! Read CLD's Annual Report, position papers, conference news, Infosheets, and much more.

Convenient E-Access to ISC and LDQ

You can access your complimentary members-only subscriptions to *Intervention in School and Clinic* and *Learning Disability Quarterly* through the CLD website. Articles are searchable by keyword, author, or title and are indexed back to 1998. Simply log-in through our Members' Only portal(**https://www.cldinternational.org/Login/Login.asp**) and then click on the link provided.

Infosheets

Infosheets provide concise, current information about topics of interest to those in the field of learning disabilities. Current Infosheets are available for viewing and download at **http://www.cldinternational.org/Infosheets/Infosheets.asp**

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CLD Publications Invite Authors to Submit Manuscripts

Learning Disability Quarterly
The flagship publication of CLD, LDQ is a nationally ranked journal. Author guidelines may be accessed at:
http://www.cldinternational.org/Publications/LDQAuthors.asp

Intervention in School and Clinic
ISC, a nationally ranked journal with a historical affiliation to CLD, posts author guidelines at:
http://www.cldinternational.org/Publications/ISC.asp

LD Forum
The official newsletter of CLD, *LD Forum* accepts manuscripts for its **Research to Practice** and **5 Ways to…** columns. Author guidelines are available at:
http://www.cldinternational.org/Articles/RTP-5.pdf

Infosheets
Research summaries on current, important topics, Infosheets are aligned with CLD's tradition of translating research into practice to make it accessible and useful to practitioners. Author guidelines may be accessed at:
http://www.cldinternational.org/Infosheets/Infosheets.asp