

33rd Annual International Conference Evidenced-Based Practices:

How Researchers Develop Evidenced-Based Interventions and How Practitioners Implement Evidenced-Based Interventions

On October 27th and 28th, the Council for Learning Disabilities held its 33rd annual International Conference in **Austin, Texas**. CLD was honored to present **Margo Mastropieri** of George Mason University with the **J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer Award**. Dr. Mastropieri delivered the keynote address, *Learning Disabilities and Evidenced-Based Practices: Is the Past Prologue?* She described



Margo Mastropieri, 2011 J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer and keynote speaker

the historical perspective on interventions; discussed present research—including mnemonic instruction, peer tutoring, and hands-on learning experiences; talked about reading interventions for students with learning disabilities (LD); and indicated future directions and problems faced by the field.

A variety of sessions presenting research methods and evidence-based practices were available to conference attendees. Sessions focused on conducting comprehensive literature reviews, establishing reliability, and selecting appropriate research-based interventions. **Barbara Freeman, Lindy Crawford, Lindsay Hall,** and **Robin Davis** discussed the Math Learning Companion, an online mathematics intervention designed for students with math disabilities, and **Asha Jitendra** shared key components of schema-based instruction in elementary and middle grades mathematics.

Margaret Werts highlighted the use of single-subject research methods for students with LD; **Sharon Blatz** provided information on how to locate and identify evidence-based practices. The **President's Reception** and an **Interactive Poster Session** highlighted innovative research conducted across the United States. Friday morning sessions included cutting-edge mathematics and reading intervention research. In addition, **Paul**

Worthington provided recommendations for supporting district-level reforms, and **Debi Gartland, Kathy Stewart, Janna Lilly,** and **Juanell Isaac** shared a summary of this year's activities and legislation in Washington as they pertain to students with LD. CLD thanks all of the presenters who contributed to this conference.

The **CLD Teacher of the Year Award** winners were **Cheryl Cambra, Colorado Chapter; Kathy Meier, Minnesota Chapter;** and **Veronica Miller, Texas Chapter.** Cheryl, a retired member of the Air Force, was described as

a person who wears many hats: life skills teacher, behavior interventionist, data analyst, and parent collaborator. Kathy co-teaches a Foundations of English class and provides intensive intervention, based on careful data analysis, to students with LD. Like Kathy, Veronica provides intensive



Colorado Chapter Teacher of the Year Cheryl Cambra with (r) Patti Meek, Colorado chapter president

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Minnesota Chapter Teacher of the Year Kathy Meier with (r) Julie Jochum Gartrell, Minnesota chapter president



Texas Chapter Teacher of the Year Veronica Leigh Miller with (r) Colleen Reutebuch, University of Texas at Austin



Floyd G. Hudson Award winner Candy Myers



interventions to support students with LD, including English language learners. These educators are commended for their service to students, their families, and the community.

Beverly Weiser from Southern Methodist College received the **Outstanding Researcher Award**. She presented her work, *Ameliorating Reading Disabilities Early: Examining an Encoding and Decoding Instruction Model*.

The **Floyd G. Hudson Award** was presented to **Candy Myers**. Candy is a principal consultant with the Exceptional Leadership Unit of the Colorado Department of Education. She provides guidance, technical assistance, and professional development for Colorado's teachers and administrators charged with educating students with LD.

This year CLD announced the creation of the **CLD Leadership Academy**. This group of emerging leaders, with the support of CLD mentors, initiated a project to provide CLD members with a series of webinars and related resources focusing on topics of interest in the LD field. **Jeannine Bagnall**, a doctoral student from George Mason University; **Brittany Hott**, a doctoral candidate from George Mason University; **Kathleen Hughes Pfannensteil**, project manager at the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, University of Texas at Austin; **Chad Rose**, an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University; and **Beverly Weiser**, a research assistant professor at Southern Methodist College, were selected



L to r: CLD President Monica Lambert, CLD President-Elect Caroline Kethley, and Beverly Weiser, recipient of the Outstanding Researcher Award

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as the inaugural CLD leadership academy participants. **Kyle Hughes**, CLD Leadership Development Chair, has been instrumental in the development of this exciting new program to mentor doctoral students and early career faculty into the field to benefit children with LD.

CLD wishes to recognize the members of the Local Arrangements Committee for their hard work and Texas hospitality: **Steven Ciullo, Marilyn Goodwin, Jim Gonzales,**

Marty Hougen, Jessica H. Hunt, Olga Jerman, Jane Pemberton, Kathleen Hughes Pfannenstiel, Colleen Klein Reutebuch, Elizabeth Swanson, Joanne Valdespino, and Jacob L. Williams. Sincere thanks to **Monica Lambert** and **Judy Voress**, who served as co-chairs for the Local Arrangements Committee, and our appreciation to **Brian R. Bryant**, conference director, for his leadership and dedicated service to CLDi



Leadership Development Chair Kyle Hughes (left) and CLD President Monica Lambert (2nd from right) with Leadership Academy members Beverly Weiser (Southern Methodist University), Chad Rose (Sam Houston State University), Brittany Hott (George Mason University), Kathleen Hughes Pfannenstiel (University of Texas at Austin) and Jeannine Bagnall (George Mason University)



THANK YOU!

CLD would like to thank the following universities and companies for their support during the 2011 conference:

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Research to Practice

Editor’s Note: This article is the second in a two-part series on Response to Intervention (RtI). The first article (Little, 2009) presented definitions, purposes, and legislation, and discussed benefits and concerns about the RtI process, with a focus on students with learning disabilities (LD). This second article briefly defines RtI as it highlights relevant legislation, provides in-depth information on implementation across the United States, presents descriptions of two currently implemented RtI models, and describes the roles and responsibilities of general and special educators in each tier of the model. Web-based resources are also included. The authors cover these topics with respect to services and supports for students with LD within the RtI model.

Current Realities and Changing Roles for Teachers Within the Tiers (Not Tears!) of the Response to Intervention Process

Katie M. Miller and Mary E. Little

University of Central Florida

Response to Intervention Defined

RtI is a systematic, data-based method for identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and behavioral difficulties within a *continuous improvement cycle* (see Table 1 for definitions.) RtI is defined as the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs and using learning rate and level of performance to make important educational decisions to guide instruction (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2005). Levels of instruction and interventions (i.e., tiers of increasing intensity) are provided in this approach (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). As a proactive and prevention-focused approach, RtI encourages teams of educators to use *classroom instructional decision-making* to develop dynamic instructional plans that address

academic or behavioral concerns for individual students. RtI focuses on the use of *evidence-based practices*, interventions, resources, and strategies while continuously monitoring progress of student learning through regularly administered classroom-based assessments. Because the purpose is to increase achievement for all students, special education teachers—including teachers of students with LD—are primary participants in the RtI process. The collaborative process includes other school personnel (e.g., general education teacher, instructional coach, school psychologist) on a school-based team to help identify and participate in potential solutions for students. In the RtI process, the focus is on increased achievement for students with and without LD.

Legislation and RtI

The numbers of models and policies regarding implementation of RtI continue to increase. In the Individuals with Disabilities

TABLE 1. Definitions of RtI Components

Term	Definition
Continuous improvement cycle	Ongoing process of data collection (assessment) through screening, diagnostic, and outcome measures to inform instruction
Classroom instructional decision making	Continual analyses of student progress-monitoring data to guide day-to-day instruction and interventions to meet learner needs through systematic analysis of instructional, curricular, and environmental variables
Diagnostic assessment	Assessments administered by professionals with special knowledge and skills in specific assessment to provide more in-depth and detailed information about students’ skills and instructional needs for purposes of planning specific interventions
Evidence-based practices	Instruction and intervention practices and programs that have demonstrated improved student results through research
Fidelity of implementation	Delivery of instruction and interventions in the way (a) in which they were designed to be delivered and (b) that research has demonstrated to be effective
Intensity	Increasing support, explicit and direct instruction, and opportunities for feedback and clarification to improve student learning
Progress monitoring	Continuous use of various assessments and probes to measure student academic performance on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to adjust and/or intensify instruction and/or interventions as needed
Tiers	Three (or more) levels of services (instruction and intervention) with increased intensity to meet needs of student(s) within an RtI framework
Universal screening	Assessment used for initial determination of students’ current performance and to identify students in need of additional interventions

Education Improvement Act of 2004, which went into effect in July 1, 2005, changes were made to policies pertinent to eligibility and services for students with LD, with three important legislative components:

- revised the severe discrepancy approach from mandatory to nonmandatory status;
- expressly permitted RtI, as defined by Congress: “A process which determines if a child responds to scientific, research-based interventions”; and
- provided for use of 15% of IDEA (2004) funds for early intervening services, which may include RtI.

Since the enactment of that federal legislation, 88% of all states have included policies regarding RtI within their State Performance Plans (SPP), which are annual action plans written by policy makers within state Departments of Education and approved by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Washington (National Center for Response to Intervention, 2010). Revised policies at the state level must address the three components as outlined above regarding use of the discrepancy approach, RtI implementation, and early intervening services. Every state reports the use of RtI within policies and procedures for identifying a student with LD, with five states (Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, and Iowa) using only RtI for eligibility purposes (NCRtI, 2010). Implementation of RtI within schools and classrooms has increased 27% since 2007 (Spectrum, 2010), irrespective of state policies mandating RtI as a component of eligibility procedures. Therefore, current policies and legislation promote implementation of RtI by classroom teachers, and national data on RtI implementation continue to show increased use.

Models of RtI

Currently, two models of RtI guide decisions made by teachers and other educational personnel: the Standard Protocol (RtI-SP) model and the Problem Solving Approach (RtI-PS). The RtI-SP model involves the delivery of evidence-based, multicomponent programs with strong research support that are focused on specific skill areas (Shapiro, 2009). These standard protocols are structured, explicit, and designed to be delivered to small groups of students as a Tier II intervention. Groups are identified by matching student needs to the particular protocol. For example, an elementary school may have an evidence-based, packaged commercial program that aligns with the core curriculum standards to address students’ skill deficits in reading. Students needing Tier II intervention would receive this additional instruction delivered by a general education teacher, special education teacher, or other specialist, such as the reading teacher, using an evidence-based intervention program like the standard protocol reading intervention. According to Shapiro (2009), “The key feature of RtI-SP is that standard instruction/intervention protocols are used within an in-depth analysis of the deficit skills and are delivered in moderate-size groups (6–10 students)” (p. 2). For students with LD who are not making sufficient progress in the Tier I core curriculum, interventions could be delivered in inclusive settings via the RtI-SP approach. Therefore, students with LD could be included in instructional groups with other students with similar academic needs for intervention.

The RtI-PS model is a process with an emphasis on individualized interventions that focus equal attention on the learner, the environment, and the curriculum. Decisions regarding student movement/progression/placement within the tiers are based on assessment data, either from initial instruction or interventions. Although instructional decision-making can be used within each tier, the RtI-PS model is focused on unique solutions to individual student needs through a systematic analysis of instructional, environmental, and curricular variables. Due to the student’s continued academic or behavioral difficulties, members of the RtI team may need to problem solve very specialized interventions by using the following steps:

1. **Define:** Identify the problem.
2. **Analyze:** Analyze the problem using multiple sources of data to determine trends and patterns from the assessment data, and develop a hypothesis of the problem or a problem statement.
3. **Implement:** Establish an achievable goal and develop an implementation plan. Plan for ongoing professional development to ensure that teachers and interventionists are implementing interventions as designed. Monitor implementation fidelity using observation checklists that contain researched, quality indicators of the program and/or intervention.
4. **Evaluate:** Evaluate the success of the intervention based on student data. There should be an increase in student performance and rate of progress. These improvements should be sufficient to support the student in meeting annual yearly progress (AYP) goals. If there is insufficient growth, the team will repeat this iterative problem-solving process, again working to identify the problem, revise the current plan, or develop a new plan.

The RtI-PS process utilizes or employs a *continuous improvement cycle* for instruction. The members of the RtI team use data of student results to guide instruction and take shared responsibility to ensure that (a) instruction and supports are implemented with fidelity and (b) student improvement can be documented as a result of the instruction and supports within each RtI tier of service delivery.

Teachers’ Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of RtI depends on collaboration involving the general educator, special educator, and other specialist personnel within the classroom (Murawski & Hughes, 2008). While the special education teacher will continue to be responsible for students identified with disabilities, including LD, special educators could have increasingly shared responsibilities with general education teachers for students in the general education classroom during implementation of RtI in their school (Bryant & Barrera, 2009).

Tier I

In Tier I, the focus is on ensuring that instruction of the core curriculum consists of evidence-based practices taught with *fidelity* so that all students have the opportunity to master the curriculum. Data from *universal screening* assessments, usually collected on

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all students by the school or district, provide initial assessment information important for instructional planning. Together, general and special education teachers are responsible for learning about, implementing, and coaching each other to continuously improve and enhance Tier I instruction of the core curriculum. General education and special education teachers can collaborate to identify appropriate data systems and to collect, interpret, and use results of ongoing *progress monitoring* assessments to determine student learning within a classroom. Instruction based on progress monitoring will also benefit students already identified with LD who are included in the general education classroom. Without professional development and collaborative support, general educators may not feel comfortable with collecting, graphing, and interpreting the assessment data. Special education teachers typically have more knowledge, familiarity, and proficiency in interpreting individual progress monitoring assessments (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007); therefore, collaboration among teachers regarding instruction and assessment data enhances the role of both teachers at Tier I. The purpose of ongoing progress monitoring assessment is identification of students who may need interventions and increased intensity of instruction at Tier II (Mellard, McKnight, & Woods, 2009).

Tier II

During Tier II, collaboration among general and special education teachers will enhance and differentiate large- and small-group instruction and interventions to meet diverse student needs. Core instruction will be delivered by general education teachers, while special education teachers may assist in providing interventions within the classrooms to small groups of students. Special education teachers may offer collaborative, consultative, and/or coaching services to the general educator to ensure the fidelity of interventions and support differentiated instruction (Richards et al., 2007). Assessments will be administered with increased regularity for students receiving Tier II supports to determine if progress is occurring (Mellard et al., 2009). The special education teacher may support the general educator in collecting, graphing, and interpreting the data to make decisions about instruction and interventions for students in general education classrooms, including students with LD.

Tier III

Even with an evidence-based core curriculum and Tier II supports, some students may require additional specialized intensive intervention in one-to-one or small-group settings in Tier III. In this tier, the special educator will have an expanded role, with primary responsibility for this most intensive level of intervention. The special education teacher’s specialized knowledge and competencies in *diagnostic assessment* and diagnostic teaching are invaluable during this process. The results of a diagnostic assessment may result in a specific, intensive intervention for the individual student (Mellard et al., 2009).

Special education and LD identification. The student assessment data collected by teachers as a result of high-quality instruction using evidence-based instructional practices and interventions within the RtI process are important to the determination of eligibility for LD services (Spectrum, 2010), if this is warranted. Because progress monitoring data are narrow in scope, students who have not been successful in the general education program will need a more comprehensive evaluation. The measures should produce data that have sufficient scope to identify LD, to inform individualized instruction, and to produce recommendations for appropriate services (Division for Learning Disabilities, 2007).

Therefore, throughout instruction, intervention, and assessment within the tiers of RtI, general education teachers, special education teachers, and other school personnel collaborate and document the early intervening services provided to students during instruction and interventions within the general education classroom as part of instructional decision making and/or the eligibility process.

Concluding Thoughts

The focus of RtI is to ensure improved achievement for all students. Each state, each district, and each school determines specific procedures of RtI to meet federal and state requirements (Bryant & Barrera, 2009). A comprehensive RtI implementation plan includes evidence-based instruction, interventions, and assessments (see Table 2 for resources). In addition, RtI data can be used for educational determination of eligibility for services through special education, including identification of students with LD, as warranted. Putting the RtI model into action requires much consideration and planning to make it valid,

TABLE 2. Online Resources for RtI Information

Source	URL
National Center on Response to Intervention	http://www.rti4success.org/
RTI Action Network	http:// www.RTInetwork.org/
Center on Instruction	http:// www.centeroninstruction.org/resources
Intervention Central	http:// www.interventioncentral.org/
National Center on Student Progress Monitoring	http://www.studentprogress.org

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Committee/Chapter Reports and News

Chapter News

Colorado CLD (CCLD) is offering its annual conference, *Math on the “Planes,”* February 24th and 25th, 2012. Successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics depends on understanding of the embedded learning trajectories and how they relate to the development of student thinking about rational number reasoning. Researchers and technology designers **Drs. Jere Confrey** and **Alan Maloney** will demonstrate their interactive diagnostic-assessment system that runs on tablets, smart phones, and computers, showing how the use of just-in-time student data can lead to a new generation of data-driven instructional practices.

In addition to the February conference, the Colorado Council of Teachers of Mathematics, in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Education, is presenting a series of regional workshops designed to support teachers in building readiness for implementing Colorado’s revised mathematics standards. *Math on the “Planes”* participants are encouraged to attend these regional workshops because the content will link to the content of the February conference. For further information, go to the website (<http://www.cctmath.org>).

—Kyle Hughes, CLD Leadership Development Chair
(kyle.hughes24@gmail.com)

Minnesota CLD (MNCLD) has made some unique changes this year that we hope will expand our membership and enhance communication across the state. We have developed a website

(<http://mnchaptercld.efoliomn.com>) that offers both general information and information related to the field in Minnesota. We have designed a logo for the chapter and are in the process of voting on a chapter motto, both of which will be used on a chapter t-shirt. In conjunction with identifying a teacher of the year, we have linked with the LD coordinator for the state and hope to collaborate with her more on statewide issues. Last, we are working toward being able to offer free webcasts on topics critical to LD in Minnesota to the membership. We have an invested executive committee with representatives from both the cities and northern Minnesota and are working toward getting representatives from Winnipeg (formerly part of the Northern Lights chapter) and Wisconsin through the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

— Julie Jochum Gartrell, MNCLD President
(drjuliejg@gmail.com)

Virginia CLD (VCLD) will be hosting a one-day symposium, *Celebrating Effective Teaching*, on March 24, 2012, at James Madison University. We look forward to collaborating with and learning from all our colleagues who work to serve students with LD and other disabilities. For more information please visit our website (www.vclld.org) or join us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=304821247443>).

—Sharon Blatz, VCLD President
(jmugator@gmail.com)

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reliable, and feasible (Bender & Shores, 2007). Due to the specialized competencies, skills, and knowledge of special education teachers, their roles and responsibilities may be expanded to align with the RtI processes. The role of the special education teacher is important and continues to evolve as the models of RtI are implemented and refined.

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Amendment to By-Laws, November 2, 2011

1. On recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously on October 26, 2011, to suspend the By-laws (Article XVII. Section 2) to allow electronic voting for officers to be conducted. Following is the original and amended version of this By-law:

Article XVII. Section 2.

Original wording: Election of officers shall be conducted by mail ballot. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.

Proposed change to wording: Election of officers shall be conducted by ballot. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.

Amended version approved by BOT on 10-26-11: Election of officers shall be conducted by ballot. A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.

Notes:

- a. For individuals for whom we do not have an email address, we will send a ballot for the current election.
 - b. All new memberships must include an email address if the member intends to be a full-voting member as all future elections will utilize electronic voting.
 - c. By-laws changes will be published in *LD Forum*, and information about the changes will be included on the hard copy of the current election ballot sent to current members for whom we do not have email address.
2. On recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to allow electronic voting for amendments to the By-laws to be conducted. Following is the original and amended version of this By-law:

Article XXI. Section 3.

Original wording: Any amendment to these Bylaws adopted by the Board of Trustees at a duly called meeting shall be presented for review by the entire CLD membership and shall be voted on by members (present) at the next Annual Business Meeting. Any such amendment adopted by the Board of Trustees may be repealed by a vote of a majority of the members present and voting at the Annual Business Meeting at which such amendment is reviewed.

Proposed change to wording: “Any amendment to these Bylaws adopted by the Board of Trustees at an duly called meeting shall be presented for review and vote by the entire CLD membership. Any such amendment adopted by the Board of Trustees may be repealed by a vote of a majority of the members.”

Amended version approved by BOT on 10-26-11: Any amendment to these Bylaws adopted by the Board of Trustees at any duly called meeting shall be presented for review and vote by the entire CLD membership. Any such amendment adopted by the Board of Trustees may be repealed by a vote of a majority of the members voting.

Notes:

- a. BOT vote on By-laws change: to change vote at “Annual Business Meeting” to facilitate online/electronic voting for amendments to the By-laws of CLD
- b. Put the By-laws change in *LD Forum* and on the bottom of the Voting Ballot for the current election letter to those who do not have email

A Letter to the Membership About Raising Annual Dues

At the annual business meeting, held on October 28 in Austin, Texas, the Finance Committee, with the support of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees, moved to raise annual professional dues from \$75 to \$103. After discussion, this motion passed unanimously. The purpose of this letter is to explain the rationale for the dues increase to members who were not able to attend the annual meeting.

In short, dues were increased because of past annual deficits and future deficit projections. A close analysis of the budget revealed a decrease in operating expenses of over 60% (approximately \$150,000 in 2006–2007 to \$56,495 in 2011–2012) over the past five years, with no increase in dues during that time. The Finance Committee came to the conclusion that for the organization to continue its mission, the budget could not be cut any further. Contributing to the need to raise dues is the fact that membership has steadily declined over the past several years. From the perspective of the Board, this is a trend seen across

many professional organizations as budgets at both the higher end and the K–12 levels have been cut. We hope to see membership increase over time, but given recent circumstances, membership dues do not cover operating expenses.

The consensus in ongoing discussion among the CLD leadership was that membership dues need to pay for the organization’s operating expenses. Given the current annual budget of \$56,495 and current membership of 548, dues must equal \$103 if the budget is to be balanced. The dues increase will take place March 1, 2012.

If you would like further information about the operating budget of CLD, please email me (steve.chamberlain@utb.edu). On behalf of the Finance Committee, I thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Steve Chamberlain

Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee