Response to Intervention Glossary of Terms

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes to instruction or assessment administration that are designed to increase students' access to materials or enable them to demonstrate what they know by mitigating the impact of their disability. They also are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for children with disabilities. Accommodations might include assistive technology as well as alterations to presentation, response, timing, scheduling, or setting. When used appropriately, they sometimes reduce or even eliminate the effects of a child's disability, but they should not reduce or lower the standards or expectations for content. Accommodations that are appropriate for students' assessments do not invalidate assessment results.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP is a statewide accountability measurement mandated by the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA 2002). AYP requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make annual growth in student proficiency, as defined by states and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education invited state education agencies to request flexibility regarding specific requirements of ESEA 2002 in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. See *ESEA flexibility*.

Aim line

The aim line, which is sometimes referred to as the *goal line*, represents the target rate of student progress over time. The aim line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The aim line should be compared to the *trend line* to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Common Core State Standards Initiative

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that established a set of educational standards for Kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics, which states may voluntarily adopt. As of 2013, 45 states and the District of Columbia have voluntarily adopted the Common Core State Standards. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit-bearing entry courses in two- or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. For additional information, view the Common Core State Standards Initiative website.

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)

CEIS is a set of coordinated services for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on K–3 students) who are not currently identified as needing special

education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) includes a provision that allows local education agencies (LEAs) to use up to 15 percent of their IDEA Part B funds for CEIS. If an LEA chooses to use CEIS funds for services to children who need academic and behavioral support, it must ensure that the CEIS funds are used for one or more of the following three purposes: (1) professional development for teachers and other school staff to enable personnel to deliver scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions; (2) direct interventions, such as education and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports; and (3) offer services aligned with activities funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. [§613(f) of IDEA; 34 CFR §300.226(a) and §300.226(b)].

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum includes the materials and instructional standards required of all students in the general education setting. Core curricula often are instituted at the elementary and secondary levels by local school boards, departments of education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment

A criterion-referenced assessment measures student performance in relation to a specific standard. It typically is used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age-group or grade-level standard; however, it does not compare students to other students.

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA)

CBA refers to an assessment that has three components: (1) measurement materials that are aligned with the annual curriculum, (2) measurement that occurs frequently, and (3) assessment data that are used to formulate instructional decisions. CBA is an umbrella term that includes curriculum-based measurement.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)

CBM, a type of curriculum-based assessment, is a measurement approach used to screen students or to monitor student progress in mathematics, reading, writing, spelling, and other content areas. With CBM, teachers and schools can assess individual responsiveness to instruction. When a student proves unresponsive to the instructional program, CBM signals the team to revise the program. CBM is a distinctive form of curriculum-based assessment because of three additional properties: (1) Each CBM test is an alternate form of equivalent difficulty; (2) CBM measures are overall indicators of competence in the target curriculum; and (3) CBM is standardized, with its reliability and validity well documented. These properties allow teachers and schools to look at student growth over time.

Data Point

A data point is one score on a graph or chart. The data point represents a student's performance at one point in time.

Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision making is the ongoing process of analyzing and evaluating student data to inform educational decisions, including but not limited to approaches to instruction, intervention, allocation of resources, development of policy, movement within a multi-level system, and disability identification.

Data-Based Individualization (DBI)

Data-based individualization (DBI) is a systematic approach to intensive intervention. It is an iterative, multi-step process that involves (1) collecting frequent (usually weekly) progress monitoring data; (2) analyzing those data according to standard decision rules to determine when an increase to the student's goal is needed (in the case of strong progress) or a revision to the intervention program is needed (in the case of inadequate progress; (3) introducing a change to the intervention program when progress is inadequate, which is designed to improve the rate of learning; and (4) continuing to use Steps 1–3 on an ongoing basis to develop an individualized program that meets the student's needs. For additional information, view NCII's DBI Framework and DBI Training Series.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction refers to an educator's strategies for purposely adjusting curriculum, teaching environments, and instructional practices to align instruction with the goal of meeting the needs of individual students. Four elements of the curriculum may be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

Direct Behavior Rating (DBR)

Direct Behavior Rating (DBR is a tool that involves a rating of target behavior immediately following a specified observation period. It is based on the notion that teachers can reliably and accurately rate student behavior on a continuum following some specified period of time. These ratings then are used as the data to monitor student progress and response to behavior intervention and to determine whether intervention changes are needed. For additional information, view the Direct Behavior Ratings website or the DBR Overview Webinar.

Disproportionality

Disproportionality is the over- or under-representation of racially, culturally, ethnically, or linguistically diverse groups of students in special education, restrictive learning environments, or school disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions and expulsions), compared to other groups.

ESEA Flexibility

The 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA 2002) contains provisions that expand state and district accountability for improving all schools and increasing the learning and achievement of all students, including those who struggle to master basic skills in reading and mathematics. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education waived certain provisions of the law in exchange for reforms by states related to four principles: (1) achieving college- and career-ready expectations for all students; (2) developing differentiated recognition, accountability, and support systems; (3) supporting effective instruction and leadership; and (4)

reducing duplication and unnecessary burden. As of September 2013, the U.S. Department of Education has approved the flexibility plans for 41 states and the District of Columbia. For additional information, [view the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility website](#).

Evidence-Based Intervention

An evidence-based intervention is an intervention for which data from scientific, rigorous research studies have demonstrated (or empirically validated) the efficacy of the intervention. Applying findings from experimental studies, single-case studies, or strong quasi-experimental studies, an evidence-based intervention improves student learning beyond what is expected without that intervention.

Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation refers to the accurate and consistent delivery of instruction or assessment in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed according to research findings and/or developers' specifications. Five common aspects of fidelity are adherence, exposure, program differentiation, student responsiveness, and quality of delivery.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a form of evaluation used to plan instruction in a recursive way. With formative assessment, student progress is regularly assessed to provide ongoing feedback to the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. With formative assessment, teachers diagnose skill, ability, and knowledge gaps; measure progress; and evaluate instruction. Formative assessments can be formal or informal and are not necessarily used for grading purposes. Examples of formative assessment include (but are not limited to) curriculum-based measurement, curriculum-based assessment, pretests and posttests, portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, and teacher/student conferencing.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

In the school setting, functional behavior assessments (FBA) are conducted when a student exhibits serious and/or chronic challenging behavior. A basic assumption of FBA is that the student's behavior serves a purpose (i.e., it is performed to obtain a desired outcome or goal). The hallmark of an FBA is that the process involves the identification of the environmental events that predict and maintain the student's problem behavior in order to alter those variables (i.e., change or eliminate events that trigger or follow problem behavior) and promote more adaptive and acceptable skills that allow the student to appropriately access desired outcomes.

Goal Line

The goal line, also known as the *aim line,* represents the expected rate of student progress over time. A goal line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The goal line should be compared to the *trend line* to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a service delivery model in which students with identified disabilities are educated in the general education setting with their age-group or grade-level peers. Although often used interchangeably, inclusion is not synonymous with the term *least restrictive environment*. It also is not synonymous with access to the general education curriculum.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, with the latest reauthorization in 2004. It is the federal special education law that guarantees a free, appropriate, public education in the *least restrictive environment* for students with disabilities from birth through age 21. IDEA 2004 allows *Response to Intervention* to be used as a basis for decision making when determining whether a student is eligible for special education services as a student with a learning disability.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program (IEP) is a legal document that describes the plan for delivering specially designed instruction, related services, and accommodations to meet the educational needs of a student with a disability**.**

Informal Diagnostic Assessment

Informal diagnostic assessment refers to data that may be used to identify a student's specific skill deficits and strengths. These data may be derived from standardized measures, error analysis of progress monitoring data, student work samples, and behavior rating forms, among other tools. Use of informal diagnostic assessment should allow teachers to identify a student's specific area(s) of difficulty when lack of progress is evident. This assessment also can inform decisions about how to adapt and individualize interventions for students.

Intensive Intervention

Intensive intervention is designed to address severe and persistent learning or behavior difficulties. It also is used for students who have proven nonresponsive to Tier 2 or secondary intervention. Intensive interventions are characterized by increased intensity (e.g., smaller group, increased time) and individualization of academic or behavioral intervention. Intensive intervention is sometimes synonymous with *Tier 3* or interventions delivered within the *tertiary prevention level*.

Intervention Adaptation

Teachers use data (including progress monitoring and diagnostic data) to revise, intensify, or individualize an intervention to target a student's specific needs. Strategies for intensifying an intervention may occur along several dimensions—including but not limited to changes to group size, frequency, or duration; or changes to the instructional principles incorporated within the intervention or in providing feedback.

Intervention Platform

An intervention platform is a validated, evidence-based program or instructional practice that provides targeted instruction in a specific skill or set of skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, vocabulary, math problem solving). The intervention platform also may be known as a *standard intervention protocol*; in some schools, this approach may be considered a *Tier 2* or an intervention occurring at the *secondary prevention level*. Within a data-based individualization process, the intervention platform serves as the departure point for intensification.

Learning Disability

See *specific learning disability.*

Least Restrictive Environment

As defined in IDEA 2004, the *least restrictive environment* indicates that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities (including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities) are educated with students who are not disabled; special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [34 CFR 612(a)(5)]

Multi-Level Prevention System

A multi-level prevention system, sometimes called multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), is an instruction and intervention system that is designed to meet the needs of all students. Multi-level prevention systems allow for the early identification of learning and behavioral challenges and timely intervention for students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. The increasingly intense levels of prevention (e.g. primary, secondary, intensive) represent a continuum of supports. See *multi-tiered system of support* (MTSS).

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS is a prevention framework that organizes building-level resources to address each individual student's academic and/or behavioral needs within intervention tiers that vary in intensity. MTSS allows for the early identification of learning and behavioral challenges and timely intervention for students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. It also may be called a *multi-level prevention system*. The increasingly intense tiers (e.g., *Tier 1*, *Tier 2*, *Tier 3*), sometimes referred to as *levels of prevention (i.e.,, primary, secondary, intensive* prevention levels), represent a continuum of supports. *Response to intervention* (RTI) and *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* (PBIS) are examples of MTSS.

Norm-Referenced Assessment

Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group or normative sample. The SAT Reasoning Test is an example of a normative assessment because it compares an individual student's performance to the performance of a normative sample of test takers.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a tiered behavior support framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve behaviorally important outcomes for all students. PBIS provides a decision-making framework that guides the selection, integration, and implementation of preventive and instructive behavioral practices. For additional information, view the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website.

Primary Prevention Level

Primary prevention may also be referred to as the core curriculum or Tier 1. The primary prevention level is the first level in a multi-level prevention system. It consists of high-quality core curriculum and research-based instructional practices that meet the needs of most students.

Problem-Solving Approach

Within an MTSS, RTI, or PBIS model, a problem-solving approach is used to tailor an intervention for an individual student. A problem-solving approach typically has four stages: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is used to assess a student's performance, to quantify his or her rate of improvement or responsiveness to intervention, to adjust the student's instructional program to make it more effective and suited to the student's needs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. For additional information, view NCII's Academic Progress Monitoring and Behavioral Progress Monitoring Tools Chart.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to intervention (RTI) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. For more information, view the Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research website.

Screening

Screening is conducted to identify students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes so that early intervention can occur. Screening assessments typically are brief and usually are administered with all students at a grade level. Some schools use a gated screening system, in which universal screening is followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to confirm a student's risk status before intervention occurs.

Secondary Prevention Level

The secondary prevention level also may be referred to as *Tier 2* or targeted intervention. It is the second level of intensity in a multi-level prevention system. Interventions occurring at the secondary level are evidence based and address the learning or behavioral challenges of students identified as at risk for poor learning or behavioral outcomes.

Specific Learning Disability

Specific learning disability refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and may result from conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. Specific learning disability is one of the disability categories defined in IDEA 2004. [34 CFR 300.8(c)(10)].

Standard Intervention Protocol

A standard intervention protocol is a well-specified, and often scripted, empirically validated instructional program intended for students who have academic or behavioral needs. See *intervention platform*.

Tertiary Prevention Level

The tertiary prevention level also may be referred to as *intensive intervention* or *Tier 3*. This level is typically the most intense level of a multi-level prevention system. Tertiary prevention consists of individualized, intensive intervention(s) for students who have severe and persistent learning or behavioral needs. *Data-based individualization* is an approach that may be used within the tertiary prevention level.

Tier 1

See *primary prevention level* and *core curriculum.*

Tier 2

See *secondary prevention level.* Tier 2 also may be called *strategic intervention*.

Tier 3

See *tertiary prevention level* and *intensive intervention*.

Trend Line

A trend line is a line on a graph that presents the line of best fit drawn through a series of data points. The trend line can be compared against the *aim line* or *goal line* to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

This glossary, from the Center on Response to Intervention (Center on RTI) at American Institutes for Research and the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII), was initially compiled in April 2009 using the following resources: the RTI Glossary of Terms developed by the IDEA Partnership at NASDSE, the RTI Action Network Glossary, the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, the National Center on Response to Intervention, the New Mexico Public Education Department RTI Glossary, the Georgia Department of Education RTI Glossary, the South Carolina Department of Education RTI Glossary, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction RTI Manual Glossary. It was revised in March 2014 by the Center on RTI and NCII.