Response to Intervention: An Introduction for Middle & High Schools

Jim Wright

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Intervention Central
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http://www.interventioncentral.org/beekmantown
Secondary Students: Unique Challenges...

Struggling learners in middle and high school may:
• Have significant deficits in basic academic skills
• Lack higher-level problem-solving strategies and concepts
• Present with issues of school motivation
• Show social/emotional concerns that interfere with academics
• Have difficulty with attendance
• Are often in a process of disengaging from learning even as adults in school expect that those students will move toward being ‘self-managing’ learners...
Unmotivated Students: What Works

Motivation can be thought of as having two dimensions:

1. the student’s expectation of success on the task
   Multiplied by
2. the value that the student places on achieving success on that learning task

The relationship between the two factors is *multiplicative*. If EITHER of these factors (the student’s expectation of success on the task OR the student’s valuing of that success) is zero, then the ‘motivation’ product will also be zero.

What is ‘learned helplessness’ and how can this condition undermine motivation?
Learned Helplessness: The Failure Cycle

Students with a history of school failure are at particular risk of falling into the learned helplessness cycle:

1. The student experiences repeated academic failures...
2. ...which undermine self-confidence in their intellectual abilities.
3. The student begins to doubt that their efforts will overcome their learning difficulties...
4. ...causing that student to reduce efforts toward academic achievement.
5. ...resulting in continued failure...
6. ...and reinforcing the student’s belief that they lack the ability to learn.

Learned Helplessness: The Effects

Students who experience a sense of ‘learned helplessness’ feel powerless to improve their academic performance and standing. They can also experience these negative effects:

1. Reduced motivation to respond in the classroom
2. Lessened ability to associate responding with desirable outcomes
3. Symptoms of depression or anxiety

Tamara & Jack: Contrasting Learners

Has several favorite study techniques that help her to fully comprehend challenging reading assignments.

+ Cognitive Strategy Use

Completes a single reading of any assigned text, whether he understands the content or not.

- Cognitive Strategy Use
Attends all classes, takes full notes, has a strong homework routine, and is developing solid time management skills.

+ **Academic Survival Skills**

Takes sporadic notes, lacks a consistent homework routine, and has difficulty planning multi-step academic tasks such as writing a research paper.

- **Academic Survival Skills**
Tamara & Jack: Contrasting Learners

Engages in optimistic ‘self-coaching’ about her work habits and academic performance—and makes adjustments as needed.

+ Self-Coaching

Has a negative view of his abilities; seldom sets academic goals of any kind and pays little attention to work performance.

- Self-Coaching
Tamara & Jack: Contrasting Learners

Will seek out teachers immediately if she has a problem with coursework and is able to advocate for her learning needs.

+ Negotiation/Advocacy

Avoids meeting with teachers unless forced to—and says little during those instructor conferences.

- Negotiation/Advocacy
Student-Directed Strategies for Academic Success

1. Cognitive strategy use
2. Academic survival skills (a.k.a. ‘executive functioning skills’)
3. Self-coaching
4. Negotiation/advocacy
Self-Regulation: Motivation...With a Plan

“Self-regulation of learning involves learners setting goals, selecting appropriate learning strategies, maintaining motivation, engaging in self-monitoring, and evaluating their own academic progress.” p. 451

**RTI: Classroom Interventions.** What are examples of ‘research-based interventions’ that can empower the ‘learned-helplessness’ student?
The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

-Mark Twain
How to...Promote: Reading Comprehension
Reading Comprehension: Self-Management Strategies

• RETAIN TEXT INFORMATION WITH PARAPHRASING (RAP). The student is trained to use a 3-step cognitive strategy when reading each paragraph of an informational-text passage: (1) READ the paragraph; (2) ASK oneself what the main idea of the paragraph is and what two key details support that main idea; (3) PARAPHRASE the main idea and two supporting details into one's own words. This 3-step strategy is easily memorized using the acronym RAP (read-ask-paraphrase). OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED: Create an organizer sheet with spaces for the student to record main idea and supporting details of multiple paragraphs—to be used with the RAP strategy—to be used as an organizer and verifiable work product.

READ-ASK-PARAPHRASE (RAP) Sheet:

Reading Comprehension:
Cognitive Strategy
(Available on Conference Web Page)
Reading Comprehension: Self-Management Strategies

• CREATE A PLAN FOR ASSIGNED READINGS (ART). A means to develop self-monitoring skills in comprehension is to teach students a cognitive strategy: ART: Ask-Read-Tell (McCallum et al., 2010). For challenging passages, the student is trained to apply a 3-step ART sequence, which maps to the pre-reading/reading/post-reading timeline:

1. ASK: Before reading the text, the student looks over the title of the passage, asks what the topic is likely to be, considers what he or she already knows about that topic, and generates 2 questions that the student hopes to answer through reading.

2. READ: While reading, the student stops after each paragraph to query whether he or she has adequately understood that section of the passage and, if necessary, applies comprehension fix-up skills.

3. TELL: After reading, the student attempts to answer the 2 questions posed earlier based on the content just read.

Step 2: Goal While Reading: I READ the passage carefully for full understanding:

While reading, I stop after each paragraph to ask, "Did I understand what I just read?"

If I do understand the paragraph, I mark it with a plus sign (+) and continue reading. If I do not understand the paragraph, I mark it with a minus (-) sign and:
- reread the paragraph;
- slow my reading;
- focus my *full* attention on what I am reading;
- underline any words that I do not know and try to figure them out from the reading (context).
How To...Promote Academic Self-Management: Work Planning Skills
The student is trained to follow a plan>work>self-evaluate>adjust sequence in work-planning:

- **Plan.** The student creates a work plan: inventorying a collection of related tasks to be done, setting specific outcome goals that signify success on each task, allocating time sufficient to carry out each task.

- **Work.** The student completes the work.

- **Self-Evaluate.** The student compares actual work performance to the outcome goals to evaluate success.

- **Adjust.** The student determines what to do differently in the future to improve performance and outcomes.

### Independent Work: Student Planner

**Student:** Russell Smith  
**Teacher/Staff Member:** Mrs. Lampe  
**Date:** 11/04/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: <strong>/</strong>/__</th>
<th>Task: Describe the assignment or task to be completed.</th>
<th>Time Allocated: E.g., &quot;20 minutes&quot;, &quot;11:20 to 11:40&quot;</th>
<th>Performance Goal: Your goal for the amount, accuracy, and/or quality of work to be completed.</th>
<th>Actual Performance: Amount, accuracy, and/or quality of the work actually completed.</th>
<th>Goal Met?: Did you achieve the goal within the time allocated?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>/</strong>/__</td>
<td>Select Topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES [ ] NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/10/15</td>
<td>Locate Sources</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Find at least 3 reputable sources</td>
<td>Found 3 sources</td>
<td>YES [ ] NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>/</strong>/__</td>
<td>Create Notes from Sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES [ ] NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>/</strong>/__</td>
<td>Organize Notes into Paper Outline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES [ ] NO</td>
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**Adjustment:** Find any 'NO' responses in the Goal Met? column. In the space below, write the number of that goal and your plan to improve on that goal next time.

2 Schedule at least 3 hours to find source material on next assignment.

How To...Promote Academic Self-Management: The Learning Contract
Learning Contracts: Put Student Promises in Writing...

• **Description.** A learning contract is a voluntary, student-completed document that outlines actions the learner promises to take in a course to achieve academic success.

• This contract is signed by the student, the instructor, and (optionally) the parent.


Learning Contract:

Example:

Negotiable and Non-Negotiable Elements

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**Troy Blue’s Learning Contract**

I am taking part in this learning contract because the strategies listed here will help me to learn the material and perform well in this course. This contract is in effect through the end of the current semester.

### Negotiable Items

I have chosen to complete the following actions:

1. I will spend a minimum of 1 hour per day reviewing notes and working on assignments.

2. After each class, I will use a copy of class notes supplied by the teacher to fill in any gaps in my notes.

### Non-Negotiable Items

I am also expected to complete the following actions:

1. I will be on-time for class.

2. I will turn in at least 80% of assigned homework, with all work completed.

3. I will check in with the instructor during his free period at least once per week and bring any questions from current work.

### Teacher Responsibilities

My teacher will help me to achieve success in this course through these actions/supports:

1. Answer questions and offer help during weekly free-period check-ins.
2. Remind Troy weekly about any missing assignments.
3. Supply review copy of class notes each period.

### Sign-Offs

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Learning Contracts: Put Student Promises in Writing…

**Benefits.** Learning contracts:

- provide academic structure and support,
- motivate struggling learners by having them pledge publicly to engage in specific, positive study and learning behaviors, and
- serve as a vehicle to bring teachers and students to agreement on what course goals are important and how to achieve them.


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**Statement of Purpose.** The contract opens with a statement presenting a rationale for why the contract is being implemented.
### Learning Contract: Example

#### Negotiable and Non-Negotiable Elements

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Response to Intervention

Student Actions. The contract lists any actions that the student is pledging to complete to ensure success in the course. This example divides actions into 2 groups: ‘Negotiable’ & ‘Non-Negotiable’.

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Learning Contract:
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**Teacher Actions.** Listing teacher responsibilities on the contract emphasizes that success in the course is a shared endeavor and can prod the student to take advantage of instructor supports that might otherwise be overlooked.

Teacher Responsibilities

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Learning Contract:  
Example:  
Negotiable and Non-Negotiable Elements
**Sign-Off.** Both student and teacher (and, optionally, the parent) sign the learning contract. The student signature in particular indicates a voluntary acceptance of the learning contract and a public pledge to follow through on its terms.
Learning Contract:
Example:
- Negotiable and Non-Negotiable Elements

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RTI: The Big Picture. What is Response to Intervention? And how can RTI support the Common Learning Standards?
Essential Elements of RTI (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007)

1. A “continuum of evidence-based services available to all students” that range from universal to highly individualized & intensive

2. “Decision points to determine if students are performing significantly below the level of their peers in academic and social behavior domains”

3. “Ongoing monitoring of student progress”

4. “Employment of more intensive or different interventions when students do not improve in response” to lesser interventions

5. “Evaluation for special education services if students do not respond to intervention instruction”

Response to Intervention

NYSED has defined in regulation the minimum components of an RtI program but does not require a specific RtI model that must be uniformly used by all school districts. School districts have discretion to make specific decisions when designing the structure and components of their RtI program. (NYSED RTI Guidance Document, 2010; p. 40).

What does RTI look like when applied to an individual student?

A widely accepted method for determining whether a student should be referred to Special Education under RTI is the ‘dual discrepancy model’ (Fuchs, 2003).

- Discrepancy 1: The student is found to be performing academically at a level significantly below that of his or her typical peers (discrepancy in initial skills or performance).

- Discrepancy 2: Despite the implementation of one or more well-designed, well-implemented interventions tailored specifically for the student, he or she fails to ‘close the gap’ with classmates (discrepancy in rate of learning relative to peers).
Response to Intervention

Avg Classroom Academic Performance Level

Discrepancy 1: Skill Gap (Current Performance Level)

Discrepancy 2: Gap in Rate of Learning (‘Slope of Improvement’)

‘Dual-Discrepancy’: RTI Model of Learning Disability (Fuchs 2003)
Common Core State Standards Initiative
http://www.corestandards.org/

View the set of Common Core Standards for English Language Arts (including writing) and mathematics being adopted by states across America.

Common Core State Standards: Supporting Different Learners in ELA

“The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations. No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom.”

Common Core State Standards: Supporting Different Learners in ELA

“...It is also beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English language learners and for students with special needs. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-high school lives.”

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a blue-print that schools can implement to proactively identify students who struggle with academic and/or behavioral deficits and provide them with academic and behavioral intervention support. RTI divides school support resources into 3 progressively more intensive levels—or 'tiers'—of intervention. RTI first gained national recognition when written into congressional legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004.

Because the focus of RTI is on the underperforming learner, schools can use this approach as the 'toolkit' for helping struggling learners to attain the ambitious Common Core Standards.
**RTI: Data Collection.** What is an example of a data collection method to document the effectiveness of a classroom intervention?
### Behavioral Checklist: General Behavior

**Example: Routine/Transition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start-of-Class Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- AT THE START OF CLASS, THE STUDENT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- has a sharpened pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- has paper for taking notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- has homework ready to turn in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- has put her cell phone away in her backpack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- has cleared her desk of unneeded materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- is sitting quietly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- is working on the assigned start-of-class activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker. This online tool allows teachers to define student behavior during classroom routines and transitions – a great way to clearly define behavioral expectations.
Tier 1 Interventions: Putting It All Together:
Classroom interventions are most effective and manageable when teachers can collaborate and follow a consistent problem-solving format.
Tier 1 Intervention Plans: Essentials...

- At Tier 1, problem-solving occurs when the teacher meets briefly with a team (e.g., grade-level team, instructional team, department) or a consultant.
- The teacher defines the student problem(s), selects intervention(s), decides how to monitor the intervention, and documents the intervention plan—with the guidance of the team or consultant.
- The teacher meets again with team or consultant several weeks later to check on the status of the intervention.