

Issues in the Application of RTI Methods with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children



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RTI and Diverse Children: Three Phase Model (Kovaleski & Prasse, 2004)

Phase 1: *Determine whether effective instruction is in place for groups of students*

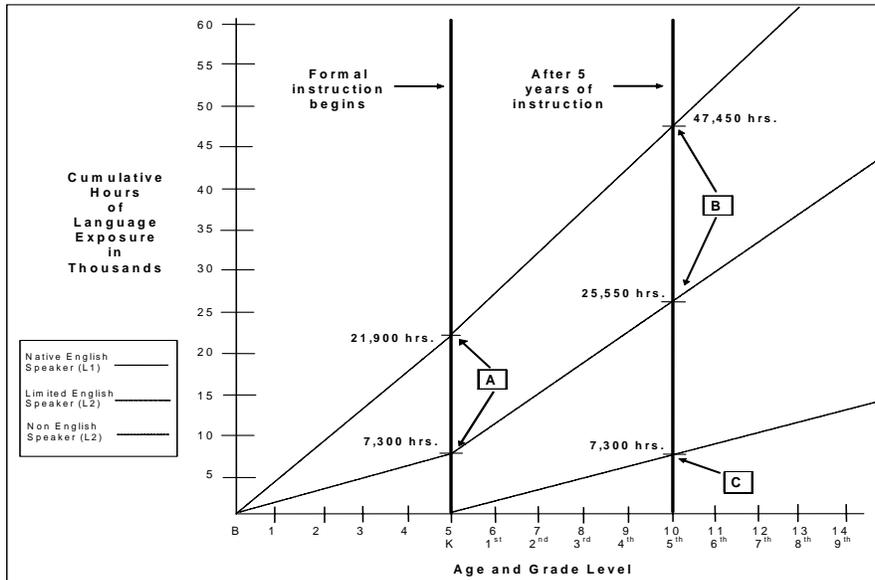
Phase 2: *Provide effective instruction to the target student and measure its effect on performance*

Phase 3: *Refer students whose RTI warrants additional or intensive continuing interventions*

Stated Potential Benefits:

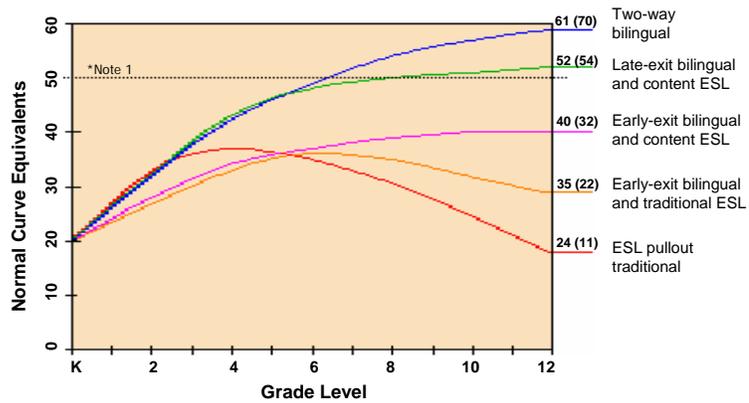
- *“Increased fairness in the assessment process, particularly for minority students”*

RTI and Diverse Children: Implications of English Only Instruction



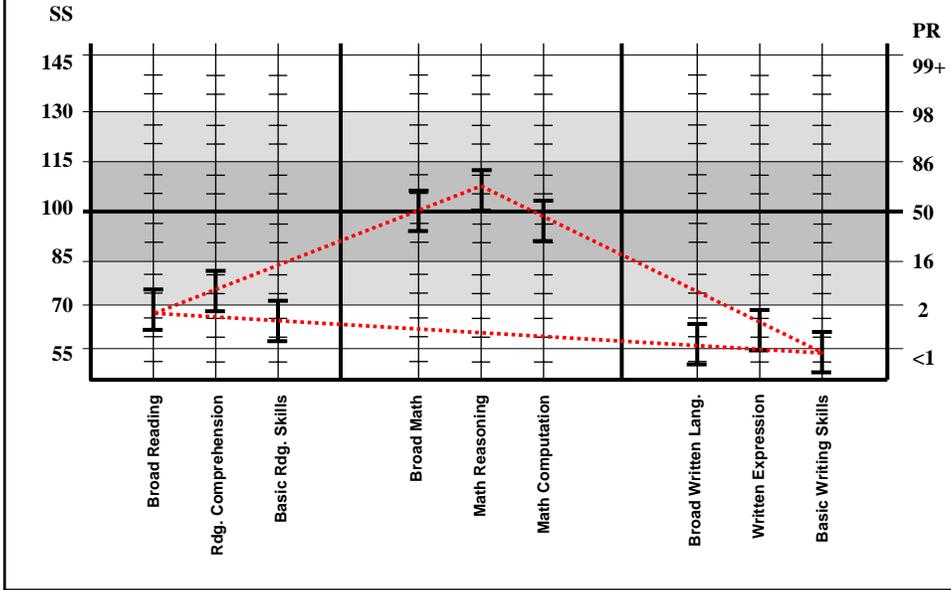
RTI and Diverse Children: Bilingual Education Models and Achievement

**Student Achievement
on Standardized Tests in English**

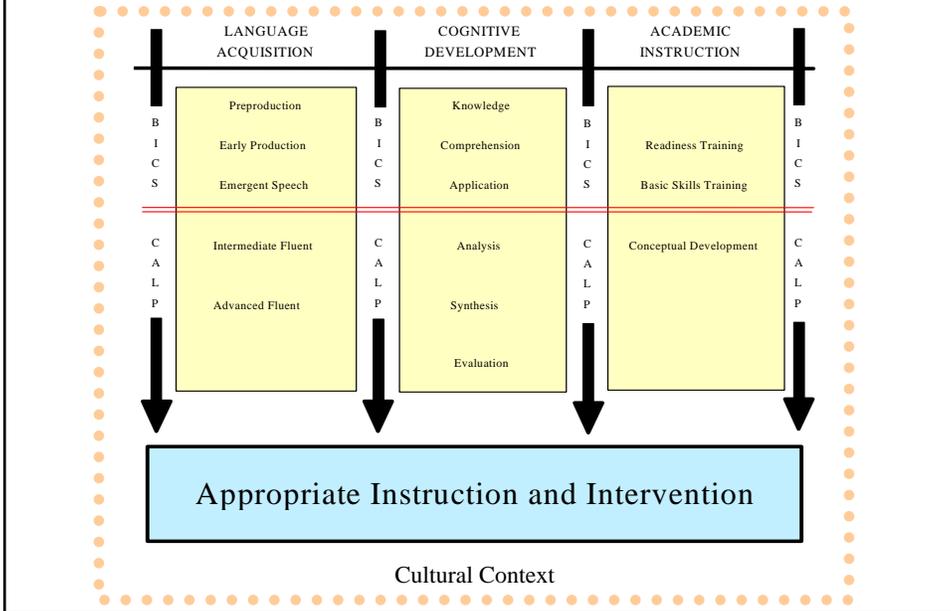


Adapted from: Thomas, W. & Collier, V. (1997). Language Minority Student Achievement and Program Effectiveness. Washington DC

RTI and Diverse Children: The “Bilingual Bermuda Triangle”



RTI and Diverse Children: Education Follows Maturation



RTI and Diverse Children: Classroom Behavior and Performance

Characteristics and behaviors often associated with various learning problems	Common manifestations of English Language Learners (ELLs) during classroom instruction that may mimic various disorders or cognitive deficits.
Slow to begin tasks	ELLs may have limited comprehension of the classroom language so that they are not always clear on how to properly begin tasks or what must be done in order to start them or complete them correctly.
Slow to finish tasks	ELLs, especially those with very limited English skills, often need to translate material from English into their native language in order to be able to work with it and then must translate it back to English in order to demonstrate it. This process extends the time for completion of time-limited tasks that may be expected in the classroom.
Forgetful	ELLs cannot always fully encode information as efficiently into memory as monolinguals because of their limited comprehension of the language and will often appear to be forgetful when in fact the issue relates more to their lack of proficiency with English.
Inattentive	ELLs may not fully understand what is being said to them in the classroom and consequently they don't know when to pay attention or what exactly they should be paying attention to.
Hyperactive	ELLs may appear to be hyperactive because they are unaware of situation-specific behavioral norms, classroom rules, and other rules of social behavior.
Impulsive	ELLs may lack the ability to fully comprehend instructions so that they display a tendency to act impulsively in their work rather than following classroom instructions systematically.
Distractible	ELLs may not fully comprehend the language being being spoken in the classroom and therefore will move their attention to whatever they can comprehend appearing to be distractible in the process.
Disruptive	ELLs may exhibit disruptive behavior, particularly excessive talking—often with other ELLs, due to a need to try and figure out what is expected of them or to frustration about not knowing what to do or how to do it.
Disorganized	ELLs often display strategies and work habits that appear disorganized because they don't comprehend instructions on how to organize or arrange materials and may never have been taught efficient learning and problem solving strategies.

RTI and Diverse Children: Listening Comprehension and Receptive Language

"I pledge a lesson to the frog of the United States
of America, and to the wee puppet for witches hands.
One Asian, under God, in the vestibule,
with little tea and just rice for all."

Source: In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson by Bette Bao Lord, © 1986, Harper Trophy.

Children who are learning a second language hear and interpret sounds in a manner that conforms to words that already exist in their vocabulary. This is a natural part of the first and second language acquisition processes and should not be considered abnormal in any way. It represents the brain's attempt to make sense and meaning of what it perceives by connecting it to what it already knows. The well known song lyrics: "There's a bathroom on the right," "Excuse me while I kiss this guy," "Doughnuts make my brown eyes blue," and "Midnight after you're wasted" are classic examples of this linguistic phenomenon for native English speakers.

RTI and Diverse Children: Reading Comprehension

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogroves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll

Meaning in print is not derived solely from word knowledge. Mature and advanced readers eventually discard “decoding” as the primary means for developing reading abilities in favor of orthographic processing of letters, words, sentences, and grammatical structure. Meaning is often inferred from our cultural knowledge and experience with the language. More experience equals clearer meaning and better comprehension.

RTI and Diverse Children: General Information and Incidental Cultural Knowledge

What I thought	The reality
Tabasco – Mexican hot sauce	Made by McIlhenny Co., USA
Kahlua – Hawaiian liquor	Coffee liqueur made in Mexico
Enfamil – Puerto Rican baby formula	Made by Meade-Johnson, USA
Amoco – Bilingual reference to mucous	Brand of British Petroleum gas
Chiclet – Mexican chewing gum	Made by Cadbury/Adams, USA
Toto – Strange name for a dog	Dorothy’s dog’s real name

Acculturation to the mainstream plays a significant role in linguistic development and learning in and out of the classroom. The presence and interaction of dual cultural contexts with which to embed certain culturally-specific words or ideas in English may lead to a failure to comprehend or acquire the true meaning of the word or the concept.

Idioms are another example of this problem.

RTI and Diverse Children: Caveats in Instruction and Assessment

Instruction:

The most “effective” instruction for ELLs is predicated on continued development of native language while English is also being developed. But ESL is by far the most common type of instruction given in schools today creating an artificial linguistic “handicap” that when combined with a bicultural experiential background puts otherwise capable children at levels well below, often substantially below, their age and grade-related peers in terms of school achievement. What is “effective instruction” for the average 3rd grader may be totally inappropriate for the average ELL who, nonetheless is in 3rd grade.

Assessment:

Unless measurement methods, whether CBM or standardized, account for the differential rates of development that are occurring in the processes related to native language acquisition, English acquisition, and acculturation to the mainstream, there is no guarantee that results will be any more “fair.”

RTI and Diverse Children: Effective Instruction and Intervention

Listening

- Provide focus questions prior to beginning lessons
- Use of Sheltered Techniques (use body language, visuals, real life props, hands-on activities, clear language)
- Cooperative, interactive learning activities
- Student-Centered interactive instruction
- Instruction is organized around central themes that integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
- Use graphic organizers

Speaking

- Allow extra wait time to allow *all* students the opportunity to process the information
- Ask students to paraphrase information
- Have students cluster vocabulary related to topic to broaden vocabulary

RTI and Diverse Children: Effective Instruction and Intervention

Reading

- “Front load” lesson by spending time developing the “into” part of lesson tapping into student’s prior knowledge and providing first-hand experience with the new ideas
- Preview in native language if possible
- Utilize graphic organizers
- Provide reading material at all levels related to your topic of study
- Utilize Read Alouds
- Utilize Language Experience

Writing

- Students illustrate and label objects and diagrams
- Model writing through the Language Experience Approach
- Use “Read Around Groups” (RAGS) so students will have an opportunity to listen to exemplary models of writing
- Encourage the use of vocabulary books

RTI and Diverse Children: Final Thought

COMMENTARY

JEFF MacNELLY

