

**Division for Learning
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**RtI: Who Still Needs Help When
Interventions Have Failed?**

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Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Response to Intervention

- ★ General Education: IDEA and NCLB
- ★ Special Education: When students respond poorly to good instruction
- ★ Focus on reading

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Guiding Questions

- ★ What do we know about students who respond poorly to interventions?
- ★ What instructional features influence students' response to interventions?
- ★ How do we decide the degree of response, and what constitutes enough?
- ★ How do cultural and linguistic characteristics contribute to responsiveness?

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Framing this Session

- Overview of research on response of students to interventions
- ★ Characteristics of students and instruction
- ★ Can we predict responsiveness?
- ★ Altering instruction in response to response
- ★ Conclusions and next steps
- ★ Discussion: John Lloyd & Naomi Zigmond

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Who are Non-Responders? How do we Identify Them?

- ★ The following research studies each addressed these questions in some way.
- ★ Some, though not all, also investigated the effectiveness of interventions for non-responders.

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Burns, M. K., & Senesac, B. V. (2005). Comparison of dual discrepancy criteria to assess response to intervention. *Journal of School Psychology, 43*, 393-406.

★ Purpose:

- To determine best method of determining dual discrepancy (DD) by comparing identification rates for 4 models (25th%, 33rd%, 50th%, and one standard deviation below the mean)

★ IV: DIBELS (to determine rate of growth and skills for each student), i.e., who was DD.

★ DV: Level of reading proficiency b/w DD children and responsive children on the GORT.



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Burns & Senesac, 2005, cont.

★ Participants:

- 146 1st-3rd grade students in 9 schools, each nominated as experiencing reading difficulties and scored at or below 25th percentile on district-administered reading test.

★ Results:

- DD models that best differentiated reading skills were based on the 25th and 33rd percentiles.

★ Findings support use of DD over individual criteria (for determining “non-responders”).



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Vellutino, F. R., Scanlon, D. M., Zhang, H., & Schatschneider, C. (in press).
Using response to kindergarten and first grade intervention to identify
children at-risk for long-term reading difficulties. *Reading and Writing: An
Interdisciplinary Journal*.

★ Purpose:

- To develop RTI indicators for distinguishing between at-risk kindergartners who no longer require remedial services at the beginning of 1st grade and at-risk kindergartners who continue to require such services and, thereby, qualify for Tier 3–type intervention.
- To explore the utility of using indices of response to intervention in distinguishing between children who receive both Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and are meeting grade level expectations 2 years later and those who receive the same interventions but who nevertheless demonstrate limited reading abilities 2 years later.

★ Participants:

- 1,373 students in 28 classrooms, 9 schools, 5 school districts
- 462 identified as at-risk for early reading difficulties (30%).



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Vellutino et al., in press, continued

• Measures:

★ Initial Screening and Progress Monitoring Measures:

- Letter Identification (WRMT-R), Sensitivity to Rhyme, Sensitivity to Alliteration, Counting by Ones, Number Identification, Rapid Naming of Objects

★ Kindergarten Intervention Outcome Measures:

- Letter Identification (WRMT-R), Letter Sounds, Sensitivity to Rhyme, Sensitivity to Alliteration, Phoneme Segmentation (Yopp-Singer), Phoneme Blending, Print Concepts, Primary Word Identification, WRMT-R Word Identification, Primary Word Decoding, WRMT-R Word Attack, Spelling

★ First Grade Screening Measures:

- All of the above except for Print Concepts

★ First, Second, and Third Grade Outcome Measures:

- WRMT-R Word Identification, WRMT-R Word Attack, Reading Comprehension (from WIAT-III), Cognitive Battery: Rapid Naming of Objects, Rapid Naming of Letters, Confrontational Naming (Boston Naming Test), Phonological Memory, Verbal Working Memory (Digit Span Test from WIAT-III), Vocabulary Knowledge (PPVT), Language Comprehension (Listening Comprehension of WIAT-III), Verbal and Non-Verbal Intelligence (WIAT-III).



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Vellutino et al., in press, continued

★ Procedures:

- All entering K screened—those considered at-risk were randomly assigned to an intervention or comparison group.
- At the beginning of 1st grade, all at-risk children were again assessed to identify those who continued to demonstrate serious delays (“Continued Risk” readers) and those who had made substantial progress and were “No-Longer-at Risk (NLAR).”
- Continued Risk readers received daily one to one tutoring in reading throughout 1st grade.
- Progress assessed at the end of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades.
- Based on reading performance at the end of 3rd grade, the Continued Risk group was divided into two groups – a **“Difficult to Remediate” (DR) group** and a “Less Difficult to Remediate” (LDR) group.
- An extensive battery of cognitive abilities was administered to all five groups.



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Vellutino et al., in press, continued

• Results:

- ★ Intelligence tests did not reliably differentiate DR, LDR, NLAR, and normal progress groups; most importantly, they did not distinguish between the DR and the LDR groups,
- ★ Language-based cognitive measures did distinguish the NLAR and normal progress groups from the DR and the LDR groups, but did not differentiate between the DR and LDR groups.
- ★ Whereas the children in the LDR group attained grade level expectations in reading after receiving intervention in 1st grade and maintained them, the children in the DR group did not maintain gains and continued to have reading difficulties in 2nd and 3rd grades and, in fact, lost ground.
- ★ Summer drop off scores contributed significant variance and were a strong predictor of DR status.
- ★ RTI measures more effectively and more consistently distinguished between continued-risk and no-longer-at-risk children than did the psychometric measures.



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Linan-Thompson, L. Vaughn, S., Prater, K., & Cirino, P. T. (2006). The response to intervention of English language learners at-risk for reading problems. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*, 390-398.

★ Purpose:

- To determine:
 - The number of students who met minimum criteria in 1st grade but were at risk again at the end of 2nd grade, and
 - The number of students who were still at risk at the end of 1st grade and continued to be at risk at the end of 2nd grade.
- To compare students who received the researcher provided intervention with students who received school provided interventions.

★ Participants:

- Spanish Intervention: 64 students (31 intervention, 33 comparison).
- English Intervention: 39 students (22 intervention, 17 comparison).



O'Connor & Klingner, 2007

Linan-Thompson et al., 2006, continued

★ Procedures:

- All 1st graders were screened at the beginning of the school-year.
- Those who scored < 24th percentile on WJ Letter-Word ID and who were unable to read more than one word from a word list were randomly assigned to intervention or comparison groups:
- At the end of each year, students whose standard scores on Word Attack or Passage Comprehension were less than 85 were identified as non-responders.

★ Measures: Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery, English and Spanish (Woodcock & Munoz-Sandoval), Letter-Word ID, Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension



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Linan-Thompson et al., 2006, continued

★Results:

- Spanish intervention students who responded and were no longer at risk at the end of 1st grade maintained that status at the end of 2nd grade.

	End of Grade 1		End of Grade 2	
	Interv.	Comp.	Interv.	Comp.

- The 2 students in the English intervention who were non-responders were not different on pretest scores in terms of language proficiency or academic measures. They represented less than 1% of all students screened.

	<i>Spanish</i>			
	Intervention	Comp.	Intervention	Comp.
Did not Meet Criteria	1/31 (3%)	10/33 (30%)	0/22 (0%)	2/24 (8%)
	<i>English</i>			
	Intervention	Comp.	Intervention	Comp.
Did not Meet Criteria	2/22 (9%)	10/17 (59%)	1/18 (6%)	6/11 (55%)

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Al Otaiba, S., & Fuchs, D. (2006). Who are the young children for whom best practices in reading are ineffective? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 39, 414-431.

★Purpose:

- To identify student characteristics that predict responsiveness and non-responsiveness to generally effective interventions.
- Responsiveness/non-responsiveness determined after 2 years in which students participated in “best practice” instruction in (a) kindergarten and 1st grade, (b) in kindergarten only, (c) in 1st grade only, or (d) in neither year.

★ Non-Responsiveness Defined:

- At the end of kindergarten: Performing in the lowest 30% of intervention students on the amount of pre-to-post treatment growth on letter-sound and segmentation fluency measures.
- At the end of 1st grade: Reading less than 40 words per minute correctly from unfamiliar grade level text.

★ Participants: 104 children, including 7 with IEPs.

- Non-Responsive (34): 7 K & 1st; 4 1st grade; 5 K; 18 control
- Sometimes responsive (26): 5 K & 1st; 4 1st; 14 K; 3 controls
- Always responsive (44): 16 K & 1st; 3 1st; 21 K; 4 control

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Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006, continued

★ Intervention:

- Kindergarten (2 versions):
 - Phonological awareness activities selected from Ladders to Literacy, 5 to 15 minute sessions 3 times a week
 - K-PALS + phonological awareness from Ladders to Literacy.
- 1st grade: PALS

★ Measures:

- Measures Used to Define RtI
 - Oral Reading Fluency (3 1 min. fluency measures), Rapid Letter Sound Test, Yopp-Singer Segmentation Test.
- Measures Used to Describe Non-Responders
 - Rapid Letter Naming Test, 2 subtests of Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude: Word Sequences, Sentence Imitation, Grammatical Closure Subtest of TOLD-P2, Word Discrimination Subtest of TOLD-P2, PPVT-R, Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist-Teacher Report Form



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Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006, continued

★ Results:

- All but one of non-responders who received intervention had already been identified as requiring special education.
- Non-responsive students were in classrooms in which Ladders to Literacy activities were implemented with significantly lower quality than in the classrooms of sometimes and always responsive students. Similar finding with PALS in 1st grade classrooms.
- Of the 227 students who received intervention in K, 1st, or K & 1st, 7% were non-responsive. Of the control students, 25.35% were non-responsive.
- Characteristics of non-responders:
 - 1.5 SD lower on receptive vocabulary (PPVT)
 - Lower scores on rapid naming
 - Problem behavior—distractibility
 - SD lower on verbal memory.
 - No differences by race, age, or SES status.



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Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., Anthony, J. L., & Francis, D. J. (2006). An evaluation of intensive interventions for students with persistent reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*, 447-466.

★ Purpose:

- To evaluate the effects of an intensive tertiary reading intervention for students with reading difficulties who did not respond adequately to primary- or secondary-level interventions previously provided in Grade 1.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of an 8-week program of explicit code instruction followed by an 8-week program of oral reading fluency instruction.

★ Participants: 27 students with severe reading difficulties, 14 of whom had previously demonstrated an inadequate response to 1–2 tiers of prior reading instruction

- 52% African American, 22% Hispanic, 22% European American, and 4% Asian American students.
- On average, the beginning performance of the group on the Basic Reading Skills composite of the WJ-III was the 13th percentile (range = 1–31).



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Denton et al., 2006, continued

★ Intervention:

- 16-week intervention package involving decoding and fluency skills:
 - *Phono-Graphix* (2 hours daily for 8 weeks)
 - *Read Naturally* (1 hour daily for 8 weeks)
- For some participants, the intervention took the place of their regular reading–language arts instruction.
- Intervention fidelity was assessed.

★ Measures:

- TOWRE (Sight Word Fluency and Phonemic Decoding Fluency)
- WJ-III (Spelling, Word Attack, Letter–Word Identification, Passage Comprehension)
- GORT-4 (for text reading fluency and reading comprehension)



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Denton et al., 2006, continued

★ Results:

- The 16-week intervention resulted in significant improvement in reading decoding, fluency, and comprehension for 12 of the 27 students.
- Four out of the 5 students who had participated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions had a stronger response to intervention than students who had previously participated only in Tier 1 intervention or no intervention.
- The only student from this group who did not respond well was in Grade 3 and was served by special education because of multiple disabilities.
- Other factors that appeared related to the adequacy of response to intervention in this study: grade level and special education status.
 - Non-Responders were more likely to already have a special education label (1 for a behavior disorder, 6 for LD, and 2 for “other health”).



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McMaster, K. L., Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L., Compton, D. L. (2005). Responding to non-responders: An experimental field trial of identification and intervention methods. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 445-463.

★ Purpose:

- To refine a process that (a) distinguishes a risk pool of lowest-performing readers, (b) monitors their progress using valid measures, and (c) identifies non-responders to intervention in a way that minimizes false positives and false negatives.
- To compare the achievement of non-responders who continued receiving PALS to non-responders who received modified classroom intervention (Modified PALS), or individualized pull-out instruction (Tutoring).

★ Non-Responders defined:

- Students dually discrepant from average readers with respect to performance level and growth rate on PALS.

★ Setting: 8 schools participating in a large-scale investigation of First-Grade PALS (4 Title I schools; 4 non-Title I schools).

★ Participants: 56 1st graders identified as non-responders.



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McMaster et al., 2005, continued

★ Measures:

- Rapid Letter Naming, Rapid Letter Sounds, Phoneme segmentation (based on the Yopp-Singer test), A blending task, WRMT-R (Word Identification and Word Attack subtests)W, IAT Spelling, Near-transfer reading passages and far-transfer reading passages from the Comprehensive Reading Assessment Battery

★ Monitoring Measures:

- Chapter tests
- Dolch probes
- Non-word fluency probes

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McMaster et al., 2005, continued

★ Results: *IDENTIFYING Non-ResponDERS*

- DD used to identify initial non-responders and again to identify persistent non-responders after 13 weeks of treatment.
 - Students identified as persistent non-responders if $> 0.5 SD$ below average performers' levels and slopes on the CBM.
 - 81% of PALS students, 80% of Modified PALS students, and 50% of Tutoring students remained unresponsive to treatment.
 - 70% of the initial non-responders were persistent non-responders.
- Using 40 correct words per minute as a performance-level-only criterion resulted in many more non-responders. Yet some of the students who had not yet reached this criterion were making above average mean gains in word reading.
- Using the 30th percentile as a performance-level criterion resulted in fewer non-responders than the DD approach.
- Similarly, the no growth and limited growth criteria resulted in fewer non-responders than the DD criteria, most likely overlooking many students who made some, but not sufficient growth.

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Substantial Variability

- ★ Procedures for determining non-responsiveness
- ★ Criteria for determining non-responsiveness
- ★ Measures
- ★ Interventions

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Issues in Response to Interventions

- ★ Nature and content of interventions
- ★ Skills of the interventionist
- ★ Language of the student and instruction
- ★ Defining response

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Nature and Content of Interventions

- ★ Standard protocol and individualized treatments
 - Proponents of each, but not yet compared
- ★ Variations among interventions
 - Fuchs & colleagues: teacher & peer-mediated
 - Simmons & colleagues: degree of specificity
- ★ Behavior and reading
 - Greenwood, Kamps, Sugai, Horner

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A Question to Consider

- ★ Do we want a good intervention “to be delivered”?
- ★ Do we want interveners who adjust the delivery of instruction or who change it altogether when students do not respond as expected?

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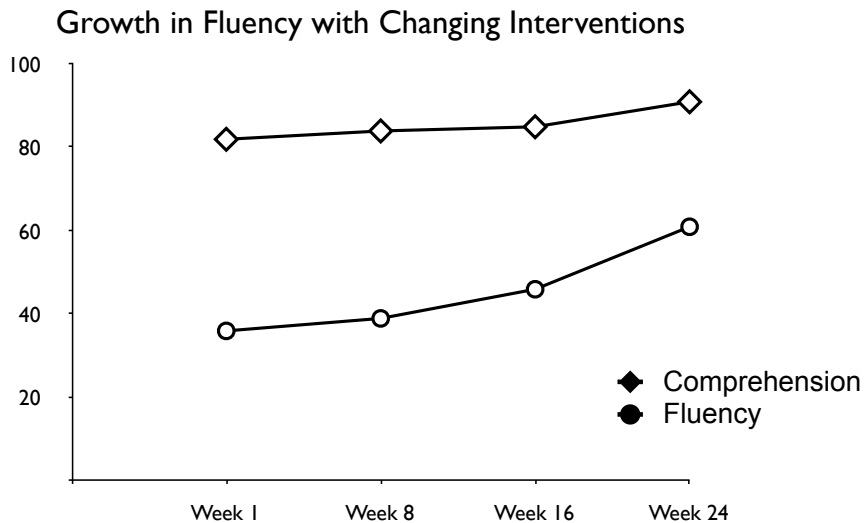
Standard Protocol and Individualized Treatments

- ★ Level of text difficulty (O'Connor, Bell, Harty, et al., 2002)
 - 16 weeks of daily half hour tutoring using text at current reading level or grade level
 - 7 of 32 students responded poorly—6 in grade level text
 - These 6 tutored for 8 more weeks in reading level text. 5 of 6 responded
- ★ Students who respond poorly might be receiving the wrong intervention.
 - Difficult to test if only a standard protocol is available.

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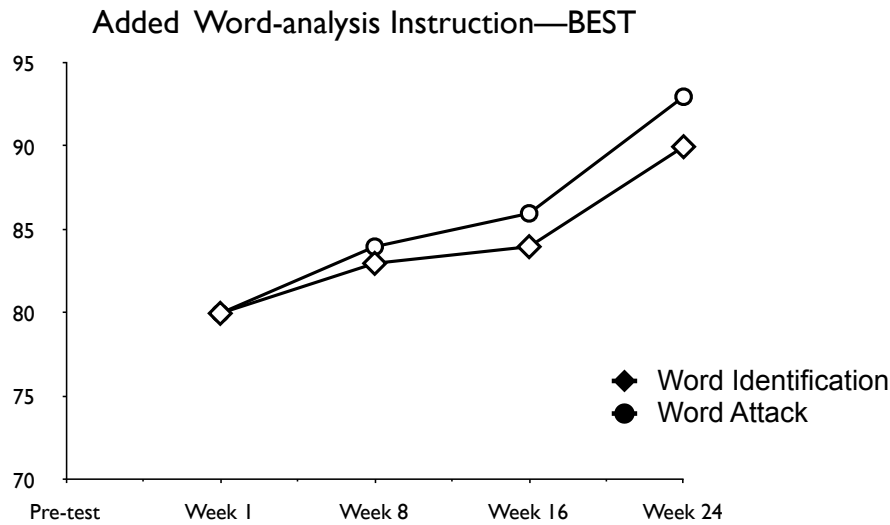
Changing Interventions



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Changing Interventions



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Responding to Student's Response

- ★ Skills of the Interventionist
 - Teachers, Graduate students, Teaching Assistants
- ★ Why it matters:
 - Responsiveness of students is related to how the teacher responds to students during instruction
 - Changing or fine-tuning instruction is hallmark of skilled teaching
 - Changing instruction means poor fidelity if the competing goal is adherence to a standard protocol

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Characteristics of Students

(O'Connor, Bocian, Beebe-Frankenberger & Linklater, 2007)

	Fast Growth (n = 21)	Good Growth (n = 29)	Poor Growth (n = 19)
RLN	1.33 (.48)	1.38 (.49)	1.53 (.51)
ISF	3.38 (1.5)	2.86 (2.2)	3.21 (2.3)
PPVT-III	74.57 (10.7)	77.31 (12.9)	66.89 (15.1)
CELDT	2.38 (.92)	2.59 (.78)	2.32 (.95)

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Summer Slippage

- ★ Students who responded poorly lost ground in key skills between K-1 (O'Connor, 2000; Vellutino et al., in press)
- ★ And between Gr 1-2, 2-3 (O'Connor et al., 2005)

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Do Students' Response Rates Differ by EL Status and/or Ethnicity?

★ Linan-Thompson et al. (2006)

- Not predictive of response

★ O'Connor et al. (2007)

- Not predictive of response

★ VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gilbertson (2007)

- Proportion of non-responders did not differ from expected proportion based on ethnicity (or gender)

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Diminishing Correlations

(O'Connor et al., 2007)

★ CELDT scores significantly correlated with pretests

- PPVT-III (.34)
- WPPSI vocabulary (.26) and picture naming (.45)
- Initial sound identification (.07)

★ but NOT with reading outcomes

- LNF (.03)
- PSF (.04)
- NWF (.01)

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Prevalence

- ★ Torgesen (2000): 2% - 6%
- ★ O'Connor (2000; 2002; 2005; 2007): 3-6%

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Recommendations from RtI Researchers

We asked:

- ★ How do you define non-responders? (In other words, whom do you consider them to be?)
- ★ What do think we should do about non-responders?

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Is “Non-Responders” a Misnomer?

- ★ *Frank Vellutino*: “Difficult to remediate students”
- ★ *Amanda VanDerHeyden*: “Students for whom we have not found the right intervention”

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Who are Non-responders (i.e., Difficult-to-remediate Students)?

- ★ *Frank Vellutino*: Students who, despite having made significant progress during intervention, have difficulty consolidating their gains after remediation is discontinued, as manifested in significant backsliding over the summer and/or over a school year
- ★ *Amanda VanDerHeyden*: The bottom performing 16% of students who are also in the frustrational range even after incentives designed to improve motivation
- ★ *Mike Gerber*: “Students who do not learn—or show performance evidence of having learned—what teachers intend to teach”
- ★ *Diane Haager*: “Students who fail to make adequate progress ... following multiple adjustments and refinements of the intervention”

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Who are Non-responders (i.e., Difficult-to-remediate Students)?

- ★ *Jack Fletcher*: Students who “show intractability (resistance) as indicated by inadequate response to quality instruction that works with most students”
- ★ *Sylvia Linan-Thompson*: Students who fail to meet grade level benchmarks even after receiving intensive intervention for at least 1 year, 2 years for ELLs
- ★ *Deb Kamps*: Children who do not respond to primary or secondary level interventions, as defined with data (i.e., DIBELS or CBM) based on a benchmark performance score and/OR a slower rate of responding than desirable over time (slope)
- ★ *Deb Speece*: Consider slope and level. The cut points are arbitrary—I would go with $.5\ sd$ below on both level and slope

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Where are we in Defining Non-responders?

- ★ *Doug Fuchs*: We lack “an empirically validated method of identifying non-responders.”
- ★ *Joe Torgesen*: “I do not have a formal way of defining non-responders, other than the ways that I have used in some articles ... the decision was arbitrary, based on the information about the students that was available. This is a very difficult question, made more so because I'm convinced that we do not have, at this point, any widely agreed upon, or scientifically defensible, "benchmarks" for student progress in early reading for component skills like phonemic awareness, vocabulary, phonemic decoding, and reading fluency.”

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What Should we do About Non-Responders?

- ★ *Frank Vellutino*: More time in an optimally individualized program that is well-coordinated with the classroom instructional program.
- ★ *Amanda VanDerHeyden*: Individualized intervention.
- ★ *Sylvia Linan-Thompson*: Special education--very targeted, intense intervention
- ★ *Doug Fuchs*: General education and special education should join forces...
- ★ *Lynn Fuchs*: More intensive services (typically delivered under the auspices of special education), where individualized programs are inductively formulated.
- ★ *Diane Haager*: More intensive and specialized instruction, more diagnostic assessment.

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What Should we do About Non-Responders?

- ★ *Joe Torgesen*: 1) increase the level of explicitness and supportiveness (scaffolding); 2) reduce instructional group size; 3) increase instructional time.
- ★ *Jack Fletcher*: Study them from neurobiological, cognitive, and instructional perspectives. Provide very intense intervention.
- ★ *Deb Speece*: First examine all the moving parts (quality of instruction is foremost) for problems. Then, continue to teach with modifications to instruction that are systematically introduced and examined.
- ★ *Doug Marston*: Special education.
- ★ *Don Compton*: A more clinical approach (e.g., diagnostic teaching); special education.

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Considering the Instructional Context...

- ★ *Frank Vellutino*: Notes that the children who showed backsliding were in less than optimally supportive classroom instructional programs.
- ★ *Amanda VanDerHeyden*: Includes class-wide interventions if a classwide problem is detected (class median score on expected grade level task is in the frustrational range using Deno and Mirkin 77 standards).
- ★ *Mike Gerber*: Emphasizes the role of the teacher in “response to response to intervention”: teachers must be motivated, knowledgeable, and skilled in at least three domains: knowledge of the child, knowledge of the domain, and knowledge of pedagogy.
- ★ *Stephanie Al Otaiba*: Notes that as instruction is improving, we are seeing fewer non-responders.

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School and Teacher Effects

- Rarely analyzed in RtI studies
- In O'Connor, Bocian, Beebe-Frankenberger, & Linklater (2007):
 - ★ In 4 Montana schools, 4 of the 5 poor responders were in one school (background reading instruction described as “eclectic”)
 - ★ Of 4 California schools, 11 of 14 poor responders were in 1 school; 6 of these students were in 2 of the 8 teachers’ classes in that school (classes described as having “control problems”)

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Teacher Effects

- Al Otaiba and Fuchs (2006) found that non-responsive students were more likely to be in classrooms in which instructional activities were implemented with significantly lower quality.

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So—Who Still Needs Help When Interventions Have Failed?

- ★ We cannot predict responsiveness with current measures or by student characteristics prior to intervening
- ★ Teacher skill and fidelity to treatment are consistent predictors
- ★ Responsiveness to student response can decrease the proportion of students who still need help
- ★ Students “fixed” on low level skills may become less responsive as reading becomes more complicated in later grades

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