Using Problem Solving to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

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Advanced Organizer

• Why this topic?
• Assumptions
• Role of Problem Solving re: SWDs
• PS and IEP development/implementation
• Best practices for continuation of PS process
Why this topic?

• Concern that students “get less” after determined eligible for ESE services
• Confusion re: “intensive” v. “specialized” instruction
• Lack of seamless transition
• Persistence of parallel systems/silos
• Need for unified Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
• Data...
Percent Scoring Satisfactory
AMO (Reading)

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<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Percent Scoring Satisfactory</th>
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<td>2010-11</td>
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<td>2011-12</td>
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<td>2012-13</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>2013-14</td>
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- **AMERICAN INDIAN**: 67, 68, 68, 68
- **ASIAN**: 70, 67, 70, 73
- **BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN**: 36, 40, 37, 39
- **HISPANIC**: 51, 52, 53, 53
- **WHITE**: 39, 40, 42, 41
- **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**: 30, 31, 30, 30
- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**: 28, 29, 31, 30
- **ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED**: 36, 38, 36, 36
Percent Scoring Satisfactory
AMO (Reading)

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<th>School Year</th>
<th>Percent of Students Scoring Satisfactory</th>
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Legend:
- **AMERICAN INDIAN**
- **ASIAN**
- **BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN**
- **HISPANIC**
- **WHITE**
- **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**
- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
- **ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED**
Assumptions

• SWDs should be accessing support/instruction throughout all tiers
• ESE students are STILL General Education students
• “High incidence” disabilities (e.g., SLD, EBD, LI)
• Problem-solving is a four-step process—RtI is part of Step 4
Assumptions (con’t)

• Regardless of eligibility status, a robust Tier 1 improves outcomes for all students
• ESE support should improve general education outcomes
• Integrating a system of support means addressing Consensus, Infrastructure, Implementation
• Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) as framework
A Conceptual Framework for MTSS

Students may receive services in all areas of the pyramid at any one point in time.

Adapted from U.S. Department of Education
Meeting the needs of students with disabilities

THE ROLE OF PROBLEM SOLVING
Step 1 - Problem Identification
What's the problem?

Step 2 - Problem Analysis
Why is it occurring?

Step 3 - Intervention Design
What are we going to do about it?

Step 4 - Response to Intervention
Is it working?

(Florida PS/RtI Project, 2007)
“Finding the right kids is not difficult!! Doing something that changes academic and behavioral trajectories is the challenge.”

(Reschly, 2003)
Why continue PS?

• Close the gap (Ragford & Gallagher, n.d.)

• Improve outcomes for SWDs (Heller, Holtzman and Messick, 1982; Reschly, 1988; Reschly & Ysseldyke, 1995 as cited by Reschly & Tilly, 1999)

• Enhance the quality of instruction

• Develop “specially designed instruction” that better meets needs of SWDs (Coyne, n.d.)
Why continue PS?

To ensure one, fluid MTSS:

• **Seamless continuation** and expansion of instruction/intervention (Coyne et. al., 2004)

• Ongoing assessment, using information to show the effects of instruction

• Assessment integrated into instruction to inform decisions
Why continue PS?

And finally, because...

A “label” provides very little information about instruction

(Ysseldyke & Marston, 1999)
Research Indicates...

• Often SWDs’ needs are more similar than different...
  from students without disabilities
  from other SWDs (Coyne, n.d.)

• SWDs do not require instruction qualitatively different from effective reading instruction for students without disabilities
  (Coyne, Kame‘enui and Simmons, 2004)
• Differences among students who are “LD” and “low achieving” in overall achievement test performance not sufficient enough to suggest qualitatively different instruction
  
  (Algozzine et. al., 1995 as cited by Ysseldyke & Marston, 1999)

• Considerable evidence suggests educational interventions provided to students in these categories far more alike than different

  (Reschly & Tilly, 1999)
The role of problem solving

DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION
OF IEPs
What and how to teach

Eligibility process focuses on knowing how to make a student more successful rather than on validating that the student is sufficiently unsuccessful to warrant additional resources...

We are looking for the learning enabled

Adapted from Tilly, RTI Innovations 2009
“Problem-solving/RtI does not ‘start’ and ‘end’ like the traditional ‘pre-referral’ process. It is an ongoing, cyclical way of work that applies to all students enrolled in school and continues for students who are receiving special education and related services.”

Florida DOE Technical Assistance Paper for SLD Eligibility
Specially Designed Instruction (IDEA)

Methods used by teachers to instruct students with disabilities...

• Educators and parents work together to analyze student work and evaluation info

• Interventions are developed based on student learning needs

• Teachers measure student progress and adjust instruction as needed

• Hmmm. Sound familiar?
We view specially designed instruction as a process...which results from individual and professional *problem solving and decision making*. Therefore, to develop a program for a particular child, it is important that evaluators gather information on student performance and progress that can inform decision making.

(Howell & Hazelton, 1999)
Problem Solving and IEPs

What’s the problem?
Define problem via discrepancy between expected level of performance and present level of performance.

Why is it occurring?
Analyze using data to explore why discrepancy exists. Consider factors related to instruction, curriculum, environment, learner

(Beech, 2012)
Problem Solving and IEPs (con’t)

What are we going to do about it?
   Establish measurable annual goals; how progress will be monitored. Identify services and supports student needs; integrity of implementation.

Is it working?
   Monitor student progress to evaluate effectiveness. How will IEP be adjusted to increase progress?

(Beech, 2012)

www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf
Shifts in focus...

- Under IDEA, IEP is no longer the exclusive responsibility of special ed teacher...shift toward developing IEP for improvement in general education
- Performance goals and indicators for SWDs are more closely aligned with goals for students *without* disabilities
- IEP plays more important role than ever before in provision of services to SWDs
IEP Shifts (con’t)

• Shift in focus from “opportunity” to **outcomes**
• SWDs not just to “benefit from” gen ed curriculum, but **meet gen ed standards**
• Focus on measurable post-school goals
Continuing PS after eligibility determination

BEST PRACTICE STRATEGIES
Best Practice: Consensus

• Commitment to increasing capacity to support a diverse group of students
• Commitment to data-based decision-making
• A symbiotic relationship between Gen Ed and ESE (Simonsen et. al., 2008)
• All educators share basic assumptions and espouse common beliefs about teaching and learning
• Shared assumptions and beliefs are manifested in activities that can be seen – shared planning, PLCs, team teaching, PD (OSEP, 2005)
Best Practice: Consensus

• “The goal of teaching all students to read – can be symbolic, representing a common commitment and a shared responsibility for all students.

• A school community that makes this commitment accepts responsibility for every student...

• When taken seriously teaching all students to read means teach each student to read.

• Therefore, when articulating a goal for all, we are compelled to address the needs of each.”

(Coyne, Kame’enui and Simmons, 2004)
Best Practice: Infrastructure

• Enroll administrative support
• Establish systems that facilitate data-based decision making
• Create a structure (e.g., a school-based team) that ensures data reviewed
• Train staff to effectively prioritize data for review, ask questions of their data, and use data effectively to make decisions

(Simonsen et. al., 2008)
Best Practice: Infrastructure

Ensure:

• ESE instruction/interventions are planned to improve student performance and rate of progress
• Support is delivered as intended
• Instruction/interventions are effective
• Parents are involved in supporting interventions
• ESE support is aligned with core instruction
Best Practice: Infrastructure

- Powerful classroom instruction for all students – evidence-based and aligned with standards
- Universal assessments include SWDs
- Inventory universal assessment data helpful to interdisciplinary team
- Common assessments - evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction and to identify students at risk
- “Strategic leveraging of personnel, expertise, materials, and scheduling”

(Coyne, n.d.)
Best Practice: Infrastructure

Develop critical skills/competencies

• Problem solving-interviewing skills
• Behavior assessment including CBM
• Powerful instructional interventions
• Powerful behavior change interventions
• Relationship skills
• Tailoring assessment to identified problem

(Reschly, 2007)
Best practice: Infrastructure

• Less dependence on prescribed “programs” and more focus on effectiveness/fidelity
• Shared responsibility
• IEP team seen as a type of PS team
• Increase options re: screening and progress monitoring tools—CBM, e.g.
Best Practice: Implementation

- Teaming structure supports frequent IEP data review
- Ready-access to a database to define level of need
- Consistent approaches to OPM
- IEP goals are streamlined, monitored and evaluated
- IEP goals outcome-based

(Radford & Gallagher, n.d.)
Best Practice: Implementation

- Supporting teachers by providing intervention plans that connect IEP goals to classroom instruction
  - Refining IEP goals (short-term objectives)
  - Interventions needed to address these goals
  - Collect data on student progress (Jung, et. al., 2008)
- IEP as product and process
Best practice: Implementation

- Entitlement decisions v. teaching decisions
- What to teach and how to teach
- Basing educational decisions on individual formative data

(Howell & Hazelton, 1999)
Best Practices: Implementation

• ESE and related service providers work collaboratively as part of a coherent system in planning and delivering interventions
• Instructional goals, delivery of instruction and services, assessments, PD are aligned
• Gen Ed and ESE teachers and related service providers know and respect each other, and depend on each other in collaborative relationships to best serve their students

(sep, 2005)
Best Practices: Implementation

“It is unrealistic to assume that individual teachers, working independently, can implement and sustain the host of research-based practices that we know are necessary to enable all students to reach grade level goals.”

(Coyne, n.d.)
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