MODULE 6: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Academy 1: Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention Models

Version 1.1
Building coalitions of students, families, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers around interventions and strategic improvements in practice and policy that are culturally responsive
Academy 1: Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention (RTI) Models

What are Leadership Academies? ................................................................. 4
Academy Abstract: ................................................................................. 7
Academy Outcomes: .............................................................................. 7
Academy Agenda: .................................................................................. 7
Tips for Facilitating Leadership Academies .......................................... 8
Facilitator Note: ...................................................................................... 8
    Special Facilitation Tips for Talking About Potentially Emotional Topics: 10
Academy Materials .................................................................................. 11
Academy Overview .................................................................................. 13
Activity 1: Opportunities to Learn .......................................................... 18
    Vignette 1 ......................................................................................... 19
    Vignette 2 ......................................................................................... 20
    Vignette 3 ......................................................................................... 21
Lecturette 1: Foundations of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention (RTI) 22
Activity 2: Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities .......... 35
Lecturette 2: Structure and Components of a Culturally Responsive Early Intervening and Universal Interventions Tier .......................................................... 38
Activity 3: Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Interventions ................. 46
    Section 1 Reading ............................................................................ 47
    Section 2 Reading ............................................................................ 48
    Section 3 Reading ............................................................................ 49
    Section 4 Reading ............................................................................ 50
Leave Taking ............................................................................................ 51
    Leave Taking, Part 1: Self Assessment ............................................. 51
    Leave Taking, Part 2: Debrief ......................................................... 52
    Leave Taking, Part 3: Academy Evaluation ..................................... 53
Resources ............................................................................................... 54
References Cited ..................................................................................... 57
Glossary ................................................................................................. 59

We strive to produce the most reliable and current academies possible. Therefore, our academies are updated regularly based on facilitator and participant feedback, on subject-matter expert input, and on up-to-date research. You will find the version of this academy on the Table of Contents page. Please check our web site regularly – www.NCCRESt.org—to find new versions and addenda to this academy.

Module: Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention
Academy 1: Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention Models (2008)
Version 1.1
What are Leadership Academies?

A strategy through which NCCRESt supports the creation of networks of skilled and knowledgeable teacher leaders, administrators, community members, and family members to serve as transformational agents of change for culturally responsive practices and systems is through the Leadership Academy model of professional learning. In collaboration with schools and local universities, NCCRESt creates these Leadership Academies for pre-service and in-service activities. The approach includes careful consideration of the content for professional learning, application of adult learning principles, and selection of teams from schools and districts that can support their team members’ learning and practice. In this way, professional learning builds on converged needs, creates a sense of common purpose, and extends the creativity and skill of practitioners.

All Leadership Academies are based on NCCRESt’s assumptions that culturally responsive educational systems:

- Use the valuable knowledge and experience that children and their families bring to school learning.
- Expand students’ life opportunities, available choices, and community contributions.
- Construct education for social justice, access, and equity.
- Build on the extraordinary resources that urban communities provide for life-long earning.
- Need individuals, family, organizations, and communities to work together to create future generations of possibility.
- Practice scholarship by creating partnerships for action-based research and inquiry.
- Shape their practice based on evidence of what results in successful learning of each student.
- Foster relationships based on care, respect, and responsibility.
- Produce high achieving students.
- Understand that people learn in different ways throughout their lives.
- Respond with learning opportunities that work.

Academy participants are generally teams of educational professionals from schools and districts, selected to advance knowledge and practice related to culturally responsive systems and practices. Academies are organized into modules that share an overarching theme and are designed to (1) engage adult learners in advancing their knowledge and skills about culturally responsive practices within organizations; (2) build communities of practice in which inquiry and public discourse are cornerstones of continuous improvement in culturally responsive systems; and (3) embody approaches to learning that affirm the sociocultural histories and experiences that all members of the academies bring to shared learning. Finally, the Leadership Academies create forums for open discussion to help school and community members think more broadly and systemically about culturally responsive schools and classrooms.
The best way to implement this module is to bring together building leadership teams from a cluster of schools so that teams can learn from one another and create a practice community that can support innovation. The academies should be offered in sequence, spaced four weeks apart so that some application can occur between sessions, and that there is a plan for coaching on-site between academies.

The modules include:
Professional Learning Principles

NCCRESt has a set of Professional Learning Principles for work with educators who work in practice, policy, and research settings. These principles emerged from a variety of research traditions, particularly those focused on sociocultural perspectives. As a lens for understanding human learning, sociocultural perspectives help us understand the relationship between individual psychological characteristics, identification with and mastery of specific cultural and linguistic heritages, and the contexts in which learning occurs. This perspective offers us a way of understanding the interaction between the tasks or activities that focus learning and the various ways that the tasks may be understood and valued by learners. Finally, the kinds of intellectual and affective tools that learners bring to tasks, or the kinds of tools they may need to develop, are also influenced by the nature of tasks and the learners' own cultural and psychological characteristics. This framework is particularly useful as the United States navigates the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of our school-age population. Our principles have been influenced by research from the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) as well as the National Staff Development Council.

PRINCIPLE 1: Professional Learning is focused on improving learning within a diverse, multicultural community. The diverse, multicultural context that characterizes most contemporary communities must be grounded in the outcomes, content, and activities of any professional learning activity.

PRINCIPLE 2: Professional Learning engages educators in joint, productive activity through discourse, inquiry, and public practice. Effective professional learning is reached by continuous, collaborative interaction with colleagues through discussion, knowledge development and understanding, and directed inquiry around practice.

PRINCIPLE 3: Professional Learning is a facet of daily practice, not a compartmentalized activity. Since professional learning is embedded within practice, it becomes part of daily discourse, shared discussions about student learning and student products, as well as more formalized mentoring and coaching, meetings, study groups, and examination of evidence from inquiry cycles.

PRINCIPLE 4: Professional Learning results in improved learning for students who have been marginalized from the academic and social curricula of the US public school system. Professional learning scaffolds teacher learning so that the influence of individual cultural identity and values on individual and systems practices are understood, mediated by expanding professional knowledge of the sociocultural dimensions of learning, and its impact assessed through student involvement and performance in academic and social curricula.

PRINCIPLE 5: Professional Learning influences decisions about what is taught and why. Since professional learning is generative, educators’ knowledge will expand and become more complex as it develops. It is expected that professional learning will result in examination and improvements to the content and process of instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

PRINCIPLE 6: Professional Learning is focused on the diffusion of professional knowledge to build sustainable educational communities focused on improving learning outcomes for students and their families who are culturally and linguistically diverse. As educators gain knowledge, they also have the responsibility for sharing and mentoring others both in the practice of professional learning and in the expanded knowledge that comes from such activity.
Academy Abstract:
This academy presents Response to Intervention (RTI) as a culturally responsive model for ensuring evidence-based, high-quality opportunities to learn in inclusive settings for all students, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. While culturally responsive RTI models have the potential to address issues of disproportionate representation for minority students in special education programs by providing access to curriculum and instructional practice grounded in research that attends to the powerful role of culture in teaching and learning, these models also hold promise in ensuring that diverse learners are provided with more robust educational opportunities.

Academy Outcomes:
As a result of the activities and information shared at this Leadership Academy, module participants will:

• Become familiar with the basic structures and features of culturally responsive RTI with a focus on ensuring that general education provides robust, high quality opportunities to learn for all students
• Get acquainted with research that supports literacy instruction for learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse
• Learn to strengthen general education systems to meet the needs of diverse learners through educators’ professional learning towards culturally responsive practices

Academy Agenda:
Review the agenda, noting the structure of the academy (lecture, activities, question-answer period, break time, assessment), and process for answering participant questions.

**Introductions, Greetings, & Warm-Up**
15 min

**Activity 1:** Opportunities to Learn
30 min

**Lecturette 1:** Foundations of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention
20 min

**Activity 2:** Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities
30 min

**Break**
10 min

**Lecturette 2:** Structure and Components of a Culturally Responsive Early Intervening and Universal Interventions Tier
15 min

**Activity 3:** Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Interventions
25 min

**Leave-taking and Feedback**
30 min

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**Tips for Facilitating Leadership Academies**

**Facilitator Note**

You may be reading this because you are leading the professional learning efforts around this module at your school, district, or educational site. Each Facilitator Manual provides detailed information about every aspect of an academy from the academy outcomes through the academy content and, finally, evaluations. In most cases, you will follow the same process when presenting every academy: (1) Introduction to NCCRESt Academies; (2) Academy Overview; (3) Academy Session; (4) Self-evaluation; and (5) Academy Evaluation.

Please make sure that you prepare for each academy by reviewing all the materials: Facilitator Manual, lecturette presentation, lesson plans, activity handouts, and participant materials. More than likely, there are lots more notes provided for each Academy Session than you may need to present this module effectively. We have covered extensively the content provided in this Academy, so that even someone who is not very familiar with the topic is able to facilitate a community’s learning around the topic. If you have questions or comments about this or any other academy, please contact NCCRESt. We welcome your questions, suggestions, and feedback.

Before delving into the flow of the academies, please read through the following tips that can help you and your participants get comfortable and maintain focus on learning and growing. We hope that you enjoy facilitating these learning opportunities as much as we have.

**TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED:** Before participants arrive, set up the room at a comfortable temperature and with table and chair arrangement that is conducive to communication. Introduce the academy facilitators, and provide an overview of NCCRESt and sponsors of the academy. Talk a bit about what a Leadership Academy is, its structure, how it is designed, and present the academy topic and outcomes. Explain the roles the facilitators will play and have participants introduce themselves and briefly tell what they’d like to learn or take away with them at the end of the academy, focusing on what would be useful to them in their practice. This should take no longer than 15 minutes. You are provided with a PowerPoint to lead this introduction.

**TIPS FOR MOVING THINGS ALONG:** Included in the academy is a time schedule for activities—stick to it! Each activity has a built in timer, simply click to the next slide when you finish reading the instructions, the timer will keep you on schedule so you won’t have to watch the clock. Try to begin and end on time, and instead of scheduling multiple breaks, invite people to get up to stretch, get a drink or use the bathroom as needed. During discussions, try not to let one person dominate the conversation or go off on tangents that are narrowly focused on their own experiences. To “cut people off” politely, ask others what they think or ask a question to get the discussion moving in a different direction.

**TIPS FOR MANAGING ACTIVITIES:** Before beginning an activity, briefly review the activity with the group and discuss its purpose. Read through the tasks and look over supporting materials. Ask if there are any questions. If necessary, have each group select a person who will take notes and report to the larger group the outcomes of their discussion or work. While the participants are working in their small groups, circulate from group to group to make sure they are on task and to answer any questions. Be available if a group gets stuck, but don’t interfere in the group process unless they need assistance.
TIPS FOR LECTURETTES: Practice timing yourself so you don’t run over the allotted period. Copies of the PowerPoint slides and facilitator notes are provided in this manual. Each slide is accompanied by a lecturette icon (as seen on the right), a pause for questions and answers is identified by a question icon (seen below in the “tips for participant questions” section), and a stop sign icon indicates a participant activity.

TIPS FOR PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS: Paper is included in the participant materials for note-taking. Urge participants to jot down notes and save their questions for the Q and A periods so the academy does not run over the allotted time.

TIPS FOR LEAVE-TAKING: To wrap things up, ask people to take a minute to think about what they learned during the academy. Ask the participants to complete the self-assessment and share their thoughts and any last words. Use the overhead or chart paper to record what they say as a way to highlight new learning and congratulate the group on their hard work. Ask participants to complete the Academy Evaluation before they leave as a way to improve future academies.
Special Facilitation Tips for Talking About Potentially Emotional Topics:

Facilitating conversations about culture, race, power, and privilege requires a set of skills that may be different from other facilitation/training experiences.

To lead such conversations requires that you, as the facilitator:

1. Have read sufficient background material from the reference list provided in the academy.
2. Have a well developed understanding of your own identity and culture, and be willing to share those experiences with others.
4. Are able to remain objective and not take comments personally (compassionate detachment) and utilize active listening.

These topics often stir up strong emotions and reactions. Be prepared to diffuse and redirect anger or attacks, and support individuals who are struggling with feelings of guilt, shame, anger, sadness, and defensiveness.

Tips for facilitating difficult conversations:

1. Don’t ignore a conflict between participants if one arises, for such a situation will not disappear on its own. Invite participants to respectfully share and explore each point of view in order to ensure they are heard.
2. Recognize and acknowledge how the conflict is affecting others in the group. Invite group members to share emotions, thoughts, and solutions.
3. Encourage each member to allow others to be heard in the group.
4. Create a work environment in which healthy conflict is encouraged. Conflicts can enhance discussion by spurring productive discussions and engaging participants emotionally.
5. Set clear expectations about how participants should approach sensitive topics. For example, create a group norm that conflict around ideas and direction is expected and that personal attacks are not tolerated.
6. Reward, recognize, and thank people who are willing to take a stand and support their position.

*If you think you have some growing you need to do on any of the above items, please spend some time on the following websites before moving on to facilitate the Academy*

Resources:

http://humanresources.about.com/od/managementtips/a/conflict_solue.htm

http://humanresources.about.com/cs/conflictresolves/l/aa071002a.htm
Academy Materials
You should have these materials prior to conducting the Academy:

• FACILITATOR’S MANUAL

• ACADEMY LECTURETTES and access to a PowerPoint presentation system

• PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS. Handouts are provided as an Appendix and contain the Leadership Academy overview and agenda, activity handouts, self-assessment and academy evaluations and resources. (Handouts can be copied double sided and in black and white).

• NAME TAGS (Make sure you have broad tipped felt pens for name tags so that people write their names in large print that can be read from a distance).

• CHART PAPER

• MARKER

• TAPE

• STICKY NOTES
Academy 1
Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention (RTI) Models
Academy Overview

Spend some time introducing yourself, the module sponsors, and the Leadership Academy to the participants. The overview provides you with Leadership Academy background information, this academy’s purpose and outcomes, and the agenda. If time allows, ask participants to introduce themselves by letting others know where they are from and their roles and responsibilities within their buildings.

FACILITATOR MATERIALS

Overview PowerPoint

TIME LIMIT

15 minutes

Academy 1: Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention

This academy investigates NCCRESt’s framework for culturally responsive RTI.

Introduction

Introduce the academy facilitators (your position and background, and co-facilitators, if any) and the school or district that is sponsoring the academy.

Introduction

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education. The mission of NCCRESt is to close the achievement gap between students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their peers, and to reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. As a result of the work of NCCRESt, we expect to see an increase in the use of prevention and early...
intervention strategies, a decrease in inappropriate referrals to special education, and an increase in the number of schools using effective literacy and behavioral interventions for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. As part of our work, we link existing general education reform networks with special education networks. We also synthesize existing research into products that are made accessible in both print and electronic versions. These publications support the efforts of professionals, families, researchers, advocacy organizations and others involved in the work to create culturally responsive, inclusive school communities.

What’s in an Educational System?
Before you can act systemically, you need to know what aspects of a system you need to involve. NCCRESt has developed a conceptual framework for understanding culturally responsive educational systems that identifies three key elements that comprise an educational system: the people, the practices, and the policies.

People are key since educational systems are created to educate people, infants, children, adolescents, and adults. Educational systems employ people. Teachers and other school practitioners work together to create effective learning communities for the students they serve. School leaders and other administrators help to keep the system flowing so that students enter, progress and graduate, and teachers and other personnel are recruited, hired, coached, evaluated and retired in a constantly flowing process.

Policies help to guide the people side of the work. They are created to maintain the learning process and reduce the amount of effort expended on activities other than learning, like getting supplies to the classroom, deciding which students are assigned to which teachers, and making sure that there are enough books, desks, classrooms and buildings to house all the students. Policies help parents and students know what to expect, what is expected from them and how the school calendar will flow from the time that school opens until the end of the school year.

Practices are what people do. They include simple things like how students are greeted at the beginning of the year to how reading is taught in the classroom to how assessment occurs. While policies regulate the spheres in which people operate, much of daily practice is up to the people who do the work: students and school practitioners alike. Practices also include how teachers interact with one another, their supervisors, and the building leadership. The practices of administrators at central administration affect the lives of school personnel and the choices they make to involve themselves in decision-making.

When we talk about making a system culturally responsive, we mean that people, policies, and practices need to be assessed in terms of the degree to which they permit or impede culturally responsive action.

Facilitator Note: Allow 10 minutes for this lesson on educational systems.
What are Culturally Responsive Educational Systems?

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the belief that we live in a society where specific groups of people are afforded privileges that are not accessible to other groups. By privileging some over others, a class structure is created in which the advantaged have more access to high quality education and later, more job opportunities in high status careers. This leads to socio-economic stratification and the development of majority/minority polarity. We can turn the tide on this institutionalized situation by building systems that are responsive to cultural difference and seek to include rather than exclude difference.

Students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can excel in academic endeavors if their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development. These systems are concerned with instilling caring ethics in the professionals that serve diverse students, support the use of curricula with ethnic and cultural diversity content, encourage the use of communication strategies that build on students’ cultures, and nurture the creation of school cultures that are concerned with deliberate and participatory discourse practices. Moreover, culturally responsive educational systems create spaces for teacher reflection, inquiry, and mutual support around issues of cultural differences.

Leadership Academies: NCCRESt helps educators develop leadership skills for culturally responsive practice through leadership academies. The academies are designed to be used by local researchers and professional developers who are invested in collaborating with schools. The goal of this collaboration is to build more culturally responsive schools that successfully educate students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The approach includes careful
consideration of the content for professional development, adult learning principles, and selection of teams from schools and districts that can support their colleagues’ learning and practice. In this way, professional development can build on converged needs, create a sense of common purpose and extend the creativity and skill of practitioners. NCCRESt specifically works with school districts and state education agencies to build information systems that help leadership teams focus on goals for instructional, curricular, and cultural improvement. NCCRESt also works toward empowering action research agendas among school professionals.

Roles
Explain the roles the facilitators will play. Have participants introduce themselves and briefly tell what they’d like to learn or take away with them at the end of the Academy, focusing on what would be useful to them in their practice.

Outcomes
As a result of the activities and information shared at this Leadership Academy, module participants will:
* Become familiar with the basic structures and features of culturally responsive RTI with a focus on ensuring that general education provides robust, high quality opportunities to learn for all students.
* Get acquainted with research that supports literacy instruction for learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse.
* Be able to strengthen general education systems to meet the needs of diverse learners through educators’ professional learning towards culturally responsive practices.

Agenda
Review agenda with participants.
Activity 1: Opportunities to Learn

Handouts for this activity, along with facilitator instructions, are provided on the following pages.
Activity 1: Opportunities to Learn

In this activity, participants will identify and discuss opportunities that promote learning. This activity provides a forum to discuss current opportunities provided for student learning across the continuum from classroom level to the school level. After reading each vignette, reflect on each of the guiding questions.

Facilitator’s note: While participants may not yet be familiar with the concept of “Opportunities to Learn” it is not necessary for participation in this activity. We will present the concept in detail in the lecturette that follows this activity.

Complete Activity Takes 30 Minutes

Guiding Question: How does each of these vignettes illustrate opportunities to learn and missed opportunities to learn?

We list several questions to help move your thinking forward. After you address each question, reflect on these two interrelated issues: Who benefits? Who does not benefit?

- How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?
- Does the teacher use students’ unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?
- How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?
Vignette 1

The final bell rings for Ms. Kilpatrick’s third period Math class as students wait outside the door for their teacher to arrive. The students, ranging from 6th to 8th grade, receive special education due to learning or emotional disabilities. This class is at the lowest level within the school wide math curriculum the district adopted to address students’ low scores on the statewide achievement test. Ms. Kilpatrick arrives nearly 10 minutes late and lets the students into the classroom. As she puts away her materials from her previous class in another building, the students move to take their seats, chatting amongst themselves.

Ms. Kilpatrick passes out a worksheet for the day’s lesson and begins copying the problems to the board. As she does this, she states that they will be covering the addition and subtraction of positive and negative integers. She calls on the student on in the first row to give her the first step for solving problem 1. He stumbles through his response as the other students continue to talk around him. Angel and Pilar sit in the back row, speaking softly to each other in Spanish. After he supplies the correct response, Ms. Kilpatrick hastily fills in the rest of the problem, including the answer, and asks the next student in the row to tell her the first step for problem 2. Beven calls out to ask how to do the problem on his calculator and Ms. Kilpatrick says that he must save his questions until he is called on to do a problem. As she writes the answer for the fourth problem, Ms. Kilpatrick tells the class they must show all their work to receive credit.

- How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?
- Does the teacher use students’ unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?
- How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?

Reflections
Vignette 2

The third graders in Mrs. Arbenz’s class are into their third week of the thematic unit “Birds Around the World.” The class has a number of students who are struggling with decoding and comprehending the third grade basal readers her school district requires her to use as part of the reading curriculum, so Mrs. Arbenz has included a number of activities and additional nature books and magazines to scaffold (provide guided support) students’ motivation and literacy skills. Students have participated in several activities including bird watching, examining bird feathers, and making bird feeders. Mrs. Arbenz teaches using several literacy strategies: identifying new vocabulary and key words, activating prior knowledge, questioning, and summarizing.

In today’s lesson on graphic organization, Mrs. Arbenz stands at the front of the room holding up index cards with bird names and pictures of habitats that represent the different categories of birds (e.g. wetlands, arctic, desert, etc.). William and Maki are sitting in the back row and cannot see the pictures, but they try to follow along based on what is being said. Fernando raises his hand to comment on the birds of San Juan, where he is from, and Mrs. Arbenz reminds him that they are talking about birds, not cities.

- How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?
- Do teachers use students’ unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?
- How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?

Reflections
Vignette 3

Mr. Yusuf’s high school junior government students are hard at work on their latest class projects. A couple of weeks ago, Saria asked why the bilingual program she participated in since freshman year was discontinued. Mr. Yusuf changed his original plan to study branches of government to respond to the class’s interest in Saria’s inquiry. Currently, the students are divided into five groups of four to study landmark Supreme Court cases around education and civil rights. Several students are using the computers in the back of the room to research the history of their cases. Others sit at the tables pouring over textbooks and library books they have just brought back from the school library. Mr. Yusuf moves from group to group checking students’ progress and answering questions. He reminds students to refer to the assignment guidelines and grading rubric that he reviewed at the beginning of class as they plan their projects.

Elante’s group has decided to hold a mock trial. Mr. Yusuf suggests that they look back at their notes from the previous unit when the superior court judge visited as they plan. Alec, Mihn, Olivia, and Joaquin will write a paper and create a PowerPoint presentation for the class. Micah’s group has gone to the media lab to check out equipment so that they can make a video for their project. Saria’s group chooses to hold a panel discussion about how their case has influenced their own educational opportunities and challenges, and invite family and community members to share their own educational experiences.

• How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?
• Does the teacher use students’ unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?
• How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?

Reflections
Lecturette 1: Foundations of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention (RTI)

This lecturette presents NCCRESt’s definition of what it means to be culturally responsive and then applies cultural responsiveness to the core principals and processes of Response to Intervention Models. Participants are introduced to the concept of “Opportunities to Learn” and think about the ways that cultures converge and are created within the local context of classrooms. The lecturette will build on Activity 1. It provides the basis for Activity 2.

Facilitator Materials
Lecturette 1 PowerPoint

Outcomes Met in Lecturette 1

As a result of participating in Lecturette 1, participants will:

- Become familiar with the elements and structure of culturally responsive RTI models:

- Learn about the foundations of high quality learning opportunities, particularly for learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse

Complete Lecturette Takes 20 Minutes

Presentation Overview
NCCRESt’s position on RTI challenges us to think critically about research-based practices and culturally responsive education as they apply to Response to Intervention. In this lecturette, we present an overview of Response to Intervention as an educational model for ensuring all students have appropriate and responsive opportunities to learn. Then, we place culture and equity concerns at the forefront as we learn about the foundations of high quality learning opportunities, ongoing assessment of student learning, and educational decision-making: all important components of a culturally responsive RTI model. This way, we can better ensure that the INTERVENTION in Response to Intervention really supports high quality learning opportunities for all students, through curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational decisions that consider the essential role of culture and language in learning and teaching.
Agenda

We will start by reviewing NCCRESr’s definition of what it means to be culturally responsive and then apply our understanding of cultural responsiveness to the core principals and processes of Response to Intervention frameworks. Then, we will be more formally introduced to the concept of “Opportunities to Learn,” which we started to think about in our first activity. Finally, we will think about the ways that cultures converge and are created within the local context of classrooms.

Culturally Responsive is…

To be culturally responsive is to value, consider, and integrate individuals’ culture, language, heritage, and experiences to lead and support their learning and development. Culturally responsive educators use their understanding of the experiences lived by students in the design of instruction and interventions (Boesch, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1992).

As educators, we are committed to ensuring that all children learn and achieve to the best of their ability. Often, misunderstandings about the role of culture in behavior, communication, and learning lead to assumptions about children’s abilities to be successful in school. An awareness and understanding of the role of culture in the classroom, and the different values and behaviors that may accompany culture can remove unintentional barriers to a child's success. NCCRESr’s position is that culturally responsive practices should inform everything that takes place within RTI frameworks.

Now we will spend some time learning the basics of Response to Intervention, commonly called RTI, from NCCRESr’s perspective, which brings issues of culture and equity to the forefront of our discussion. For more in-depth professional learning opportunities on Culturally Responsive Practices, see our Professional Development Module entitled, Understanding Culture, Academy 1, Lecturette 2: What is Cultural Responsivity?
Many of you may be familiar with RTI. It is a particular framework for delivering high quality curriculum, instruction and assessment services to all students, with additional supports for students considered to be struggling. The big idea is that all students are provided with research-based instruction and proactive social supports in the general education classroom, and their progress is assessed on an ongoing basis. Students who do not demonstrate expected progress when they are assessed are provided with research-based supports, or interventions, that are considered more intensive.

Interventions are provided at increasing levels of intensity and individualization, and consider the context in which the student is learning, like classroom interactions, curriculum, school discipline policies, etc. The use of a triangle to depict RTI models is to illustrate that as students receive more intensive supports, the ratio of students to the total school population who require these supports should lessen.

The first tier of RTI, the Universal Interventions tier, includes supports for all students in a particular education setting, such as a school. The main idea behind this tier is that when all students are universally provided with curriculum and instruction that is culturally responsive, there will be less students who require more significant supports due to academic or behavioral challenges.

This foundational tier of culturally responsive RTI models ensures that all students are provided with high quality learning opportunities. These include curriculum, materials, and instruction, as well as proactive social supports that consider the strengths students of diverse backgrounds bring to schools, as well as their needs, consideration of strengths teachers bring, as well as what supports teachers need in order to teach all students. In other words, Culturally Responsive RTI models must be based on students having received an adequate “opportunity to learn” (Klingner, 2006).

Pugach and Warner (1996) provide guidelines for curriculum reform that consider the strengths and needs of all students. Consideration of these guidelines will support the development of culturally responsive curriculum and instruction in the Universal Interventions tier of culturally responsive RTI frameworks.

- Provide in-depth coverage of content with less emphasis on facts.
- Challenge students to think critically and creatively and to solve problems.
- Embed the acquisition of skills in more meaningful and authentic activities.
- Provide students with the skills necessary to work collaboratively and foster peer relationships.
- Foster high self-esteem and self-management skills.
- Provide experiences that address affective, physical, cognitive, and
communicative skills.

- Integrate key concepts across subject areas.
- Tap students’ prior learning, cultural background and experiences, and interests.
- Involve high-interest, non-sexist, multicultural experiences.
- Establish a clear focus and essential long-term outcomes for all students.
- Allow for differences in the manner in which students interact with and learn the curriculum and demonstrate their learning.
- Expand opportunities for student learning in their current and future lives (home, community, vocational, recreational, and postsecondary environments).

Culturally Responsive RTI

Based on ongoing assessments of the appropriateness of curriculum and instructional practices, learning environment, student progress, and the assessment practices themselves some students are moved into the next tier in order to receive more intensive supports for their learning and behavior. This is generally called the **Secondary interventions** tier.

Remind participants of vignette 2 from the first activity, and ask them to think about Mrs. Arbenz, whose students were anticipating in the thematic unit, “Birds Around the World.” What kind of supports would Mrs. Arbenz need in order to support Fernando, the student from San Juan, at Tier 2, in the event that Fernando was having difficulty keeping up with the pace the rest of the class in learning new vocabulary? Encourage participants to stay focused on Mrs. Arbenz, not Fernando, in determining appropriate supports.

Culturally Responsive RTI

Some students may benefit from specialized instruction that because of the nature of its intensity requires that students are determined to be eligible for special education so that it can be sustained over time. This accounts for practices that take place in the **Tertiary Interventions** tier.

Some RTI frameworks add a fourth tier of intervention, within which specialized instruction (i.e., special education) is provided. Within four tier frameworks, the tertiary tier includes another level of high intensity interventions for specific students identified as struggling and not responding favorably to interventions provided within lower level tier.
Regardless of tier, however, we promote an inclusive model for supporting student learning across tiers. Consider the following questions as applied to Mica, an African American high school student with profound deafness who receives Tier 3 special education interventions and supports in the inclusive general education classes he attends.

What types of supports do you think Mica may receive?
Who provides supports?
What professional learning is necessary for supports to be successful?
What types of human and financial resources are necessary to build and sustain supports?

Now that we’ve presented an overview of the tiers of a culturally responsive RTI framework, we will start by examining more closely what we envision as the guiding assumptions that provide the foundation for this framework.

In order to be culturally responsive, however, RTI frameworks should be based on a theory of how culture mediates learning processes. Much of current school practice and the normative curriculum are responsive to the dominant culture in society, yet they are generally not responsive to communities whose cultural practices differ from mainstream culture (Ladson Billings, 1995). However, research suggests that culturally responsive instruction and interventions can be designed and implemented to support learning (Au, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2001a, 2001b). Also, not only are culturally responsive RTI frameworks are based on the premise that all instruction should be evidence based, but that the evidence should be collected in the contexts of teaching and learning. While experimental studies can point to which instructional approaches are most effective under certain conditions, they do not provide information that can help us understand essential contextual variables that contribute to the effectiveness of an approach, or increase our awareness of implementation challenges, or provide information about the circumstances under which a practice is most likely to be successful (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). However, experimentally controlled interventions are typically recommended as the best option for practitioners. Culturally responsive RTI frameworks are grounded in research conducted within the complex educational settings that schools are, with teachers and students who represent the vast diversity of our school populations.

Finally, as the field continues to consider how RTI should be implemented, not enough attention has focused on the role of classroom teachers. Variability in classroom instruction is to be expected, based on differences across teachers, curricula, and the wider school context. Considering there is substantial variation in teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions, it is unrealistic to assume that all teachers will be able to implement interventions in such a way that we can have confidence they are providing students with an adequate opportunity to learn. When children are struggling, school personnel should first consider the possibility that they are not receiving adequate
instruction before it is assumed they are not responding because they have deficits of some kind (Harry & Klingner, 2005). By looking in classrooms, we can tell a great deal about teachers’ instruction, the activity, and the ways teachers and students interact. On-going analyses of general education classrooms should be an essential component of RTI models (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). However, we must also ensure such examinations focus on classroom cultures and connect what occurs in the classroom with influences across the educational system, instead of assuming that interventions and instruction have been done and done well just because best practices have been indentified.

RTI: Creating New Hope & Opportunities to Learn

Culturally responsive RTI frameworks have great potential for creating and ensuring students’ opportunities to learn in classrooms and schools that value and are responsive to them. This is another chance to examine and address the diverse strengths and needs of students and families, of teachers in practice, and of the systems that support them.

What do we mean by opportunities to learn? They include not only access to key resources such as qualified teachers, funding, relevant and rigorous curriculum, but also factors related to the nature and implementation of school activities such as culturally meaningful task criteria, teacher-student shared understandings of the purpose of tasks and activities, and culturally inclusive participation frameworks in the classroom.

Guiding Assumption of CulturallyResponsive RTI: Rejection of Deficit Labeling of Students

Within existing RTI models, interventions are delivered to students who are considered to be struggling, and decisions within RTI models to move students to more intense and individualized levels of intervention are often contingent on them being labeled as “at-risk”. Although this term is used to label students who are identified as needing additional supports, it is a term that places emphasis on the student as the place where the problem lies. We see this as problematic, because it is an approach to sorting students based on deficits that educators perceive them as having, and ignores the contexts of schools that may contribute to students’ learning struggles. This is often called the “deficit model” for explaining students’ learning struggles, and this is a model that we reject.

NCCRESt views the occurrence of students’ learning struggles as a possible situational outcome linked to practices and systems that are not providing them with adequate opportunities to learn. When we think of students who are struggling in this way, rather than as at-risk, it serves as a call to explore, rethink, and reform how opportunities for students to learn are supported within each RTI tier.
Guiding Assumption of Culturally Responsive RTI: Inclusive Intervention Delivery

We promote an inclusive model for delivering interventions across tiers, as well as special education services so that students are supported in their learning in general education environments. We promote this as essential to educational systems that provide equitable, rather than segregated access to academic and social learning opportunities. This means that schools must be designed with supports within general education classrooms that allow this to happen, like additional staff members who have received adequate professional development support, and ongoing support for teachers’ learning to teach diverse learners. This differs from some RTI frameworks that propose students are provided with interventions outside of the general education classroom, by individuals other than the students’ general education teachers.

Special and general educators who support inclusive education often engage in co-teaching and coaching relationships where both work together to support all students in general education classrooms. General educators and special educators have overlapping and different areas of expertise in working with diverse populations of students, and co-teaching and coaching provide forums for special and general educators building on each other’s strengths. The National Institute for Urban School Improvement has published a professional learning module on the topic of co-teaching, as well as one on the topic of inclusive schooling. Both can be found on http://urbanschools.org/professional.html


Two basic versions of RTI are the problem solving framework and the standard protocol framework. NCCRESt’s culturally responsive RTI framework is more closely aligned with the problem solving framework, in which challenges of students who are struggling are addressed by implementing research-based intervention that is grounded in students’ sociocultural factors and unique strengths and needs. The problem solving framework rejects the notions that specific student characteristics dictate what intervention will work, and that specific interventions will be effective for all students belonging to a specific group such as race, gender, social class, etc. (Fuchs, et al., 2003). But in order to be culturally responsive, before “problem solving” about interventions that are appropriate for a student who is struggling, culturally responsive teachers consider the cultural variations in her or his classroom to respond to before even considering students’ struggles as insufficiencies in children’s learning or behavior. This consideration includes anchoring curriculum...
and instruction, as well as any additional supports provided, in understanding of
students’ sociocultural characteristics, and in how those characteristics may impact
learning and performance. For example, there is lots of research that shows how
particular forms of questioning (e.g. *naming questions* such as, “what is that?” or *why
questions* like, “why did you come up with that answer?”) that are problematic for
students from working class, low-income, or certain racial or ethnic communities,
because they are very different from questioning styles students are used to in their
homes and communities (Delpit, 1995, Heath, 1983). This extends into things like
thinking about how literacy is presented and for what purpose, uses of mathematics
and science in lessons as grounded in daily life activities of students and their families,
expectations for and norms of social interaction between children or between adults
and children, and the use of familiar cultural objects or scenarios as instructional
materials (e.g. teaching ratio through the use of popular trading cards that students
value, or learning about poetry through the use of music traditional to students’ family
background).

### Core Processes within Culturally Responsive RTI

This is how we envision the cycle of what happens within every tier of Culturally
Responsive RTI. This cycle never ends, but is always moving around and working
towards the central goal of supporting student learning through high quality
learning opportunities, or *opportunities to learn*. Systematic assessment of whether or
not these are being provided is part of the
cycle of what happens in Culturally Responsive RTI. We will discuss how to carry out
these assessments in our next Academy.

Also in this cycle is that student learning is continuously assessed as part of everyday
classroom practice, as well as through formal assessments, with focus on questions of
how curriculum and instruction matches student values, culture, and background,
extends what they already know and hold as important, and build from the
perspective that students bring into the classroom. These assessments are varied in
format and are appropriate to the populations they are used with and the contexts
they are used in. The data collected through assessments are applied to decision
making related to curriculum, instruction, materials, ways of participating in class,
needs for educators’ and staff’s professional learning, and even down to how
classrooms and schools are physically set up and time is scheduled. The overall point
of this cycle is that high quality learning opportunities are not a one size fits all
approach. To be truly “high quality” there must be processes built in systems of
classrooms and schools for flexing and adapting on the basis of ongoing and multiple
forms of assessment of student learning. In the remaining slides of this lecturette, we
will talk about where to look for high quality *opportunities to learn* across an educational
system and areas to consider as you are looking, to how classrooms and schools are
physically set up and time is scheduled.

The overall point of this cycle is that high quality learning opportunities are not a one-
size fits all approach. To be truly “high quality” there must be processes built in
systems of classrooms and schools for flexing and adapting on the basis of ongoing and multiple forms of assessment of student learning. In the remaining slides of this lecturette, we will talk about where to look for high quality opportunities to learn and areas to consider as you are looking. We will address the other points in this cycle in academies 2 and 3 of this module.

Assessing & Addressing Opportunities to Learn
In order to continuously address and assess the appropriateness of opportunities to learn, we need to look at the educational system as a whole, as well as its parts. NCCRESt has developed a framework for thinking about educational systems as a way to engage in positive change. The picture on the bottom right of this slide illustrates this model, which can be found on our website. The picture in the center of this slide highlights the levels of educational systems from this framework within which opportunities to learn exist, given that the conditions within these levels support such opportunities. Within each of these levels there are individuals, as well as policies, practices, and materials that individuals engage with as they interact. In the deficit model which we talked about when we asserted that students should not be thought of as at-risk, the student was the unit of analysis for understanding why learning or behavior struggles occur. Instead, the analysis of high quality learning opportunities needs to be on the systems, schools, classrooms, and the ways individuals and objects within them interact, because RTI is not just about individual students: it is an entire educational framework that is applied at all levels of the system in order to create intended results. Think, for example, about how curriculum may be chosen at the district level for subject areas such as literacy or math. While the district personnel responsible for selecting curriculum based on thorough analysis of its robustness, research base, and responsiveness to the population of students served by the district, the analysis should not stop there. Whether or not the curriculum is appropriate for students at individual schools and classrooms should continue with building administrators, teachers, and specialists (e.g. speech and language pathologists) making local determinations, through collection and interpretation of student learning, as to whether or not the curriculum supports student learning. The selection and analysis of curriculum as a tool for providing high quality opportunities to learn should permeate every level of the nested system.
Focus on the Classroom

The classroom system is the most immediate environment in which student learning and positive socialization can be supported and occurs. Within classrooms, there is a convergence of and creation of cultures: what students and teachers bring with them, what is already there, and the work that those in classrooms do together. This creation and convergence of cultures occurs at the system and school level as well. Within culturally responsive systems, schools, and classrooms, multiple levels of support converge to create opportunities to learn for all students. If we examine more closely the classroom as the space where students have the potential to succeed or struggle as learners and in their social connections to peers and teachers, we are able to see how cultures of students and teachers come together with the culture of schooling that is already there, and that a new and ever changing culture is created in the work that students and educators do together. In order to broaden where we look for and how we think about students who are struggling with their learning, behavior, or emotional well-being, we need to engage in dialogue about how culture is central to learning. Culture doesn’t just shape what kids come to school being able to do, but also what teachers come to schools being able to do, what and how they teach, and how schools and systems assess student progress and make educational decisions.

More specifically, when students and their families enter schools and classrooms, they enter educational environments with histories of doing things in certain ways. For example, patterns, routines, and rituals have already been established. At the school or district level, some examples of what’s already there include school/community relations, physical environment and function of the school building and grounds, who leads and how leadership is shared, and the structure and use of time. These examples are also applicable to classrooms with slight modifications: teacher/family relations, the physical environment of the classroom, what languages other than English are represented visually, literature materials available to students, expectations for noise levels, routines for leaving and entering the classroom, and the languages utilized in academic and social conversations?

Assessing & Addressing Opportunities to Learn

Things to consider at the classroom level that create and impact students’ opportunities to learn are opportunities for family participation in teaching and learning in ways which value and integrate into teaching and learning families’ thoughts, values, and opinions, group practices and professional development for teachers around robust and culturally responsive instruction, learning standards and assessment that are individualized to student strengths and needs, and teaching design and practice that fosters collaborative relationships between educators with different
areas of expertise around teaching diverse learners. For example, if you think about learning standards for students learning English, how are they determined and do they reflect a knowledge and understanding of the language skills and abilities that students who speak languages other than English come to school having, and build upon these strengths and abilities? How does the attitudes and pedagogy portrayed by the teacher show students that he/she sees their home languages as strengths? How can the classroom culture that values and utilizes students’ home language be built together by the teacher and the students?

Here’s another example of addressing high quality opportunities to learn at the classroom level of the nested educational system. In NCCRESt’s work in a middle school in the Northeast U.S., we observed the following scenario (Kozleski, Zion, & Hidalgo, 2007, p.15): In one class comprised of a culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse group of students, a lesson on interpreting text and developing an argument is taught. The teacher selected a chapter from the autobiography of the U.S. comedian, Dick Gregory, who public recognition during the U.S. civil rights movement. In this autobiography, he traces the roots of his commitment to civil rights and in one chapter, provides his first conscious experience of racism, which occurred in elementary school. Students in the class read the excerpt, “Not Poor, Just Broke,” from Gregory’s autobiography and are engaged in small groups about the room, answered a set of questions on a handout the teacher has prepared. The questions include the following, “Why did Gregory interpret this experience as racism? What evidence is provided that might have led him to make that conclusion? What do you think the teacher’s intent was in this situation? What in the text makes you think that? Have you ever experienced or witnessed a similar situation? What do you think that the group could have done in this situation? “Students in the small groups are closely reading the text, offering support from the text for their interpretation. Other students are note-taking for discussion that will occur later. There is dialogue, contention, and resolution occurring. On close observation, there are some students in the room who are unable to locate their evidence. It seems that they cannot read the text. Their fellow students help them out. The teacher is observed coaching the small groups to organize their evidence. Periodically, the teacher looks up from her small group discussions to check on the group as a whole. The students are engaged in the task. There is obvious intensity and focus. Our guide tells us, as we leave the classroom, which students in the classroom had identified disabilities. Observations like this, where students with various skill levels are engaged in the tasks and supporting one another, are made in several of the classrooms in that building, on that hallway.

Later, the teacher answered questions about her feelings toward and judgment about the success of the inclusive education mandate implemented in the district where her school is located. She says:”I actually teach an inclusion class so I have special ed children within my classroom but I don’t even look at it that way. …..they’re all children and they all learn the way they learn and I have to try to reach every one of these children in the way that they’re going to learn. I look at them all as learners and that I’ve just got to take them from one place to another and I think a lot of it has to do with expectations.”
Assessing & Addressing Opportunities to Learn

We end this lecturette with a reminder that student learning is the goal of and at the center of all educational systems and that culturally Responsive RTI frameworks center around this goal. Some questions educators at every level of the educational system have to ask themselves in order to ensure the provision of high quality opportunities to learn are: “What is the evidence that I solicit and support family participation in teaching and learning, and connect families’ thoughts to my practice?”; “What is the nature of the assessments my colleagues use and I use to gather information on students’ learning?” and; “How do my colleagues and do I understand and connect the sociocultural factors of our students to make sure teaching and practice is focused on them?”

We ensure that high quality learning opportunities are provided to all students by addressing factors at every level of the educational system that impact student learning and behavior, including factors at the state and district levels, school, and classroom levels. Within culturally responsive RTI frameworks, assessment of these opportunities to learn, and design and provision of increasingly intensive supports for students and for teachers that are informed by consideration of the types of culturally responsive questions we just mentioned, foster learning and positive environments for all students.

Agenda

In this lecturette, you learned “the basics” of culturally responsive RTI frameworks, while paying closer attention to the Universal Interventions tier. In order to ensure that all students are provided with high quality learning opportunities, and before jumping to conclusions that student learning struggles represent an ability deficit within the student, you learned about how students’ opportunities to learn can be supported within every level of a nested system at the district, school, and classroom levels. Specifically, you saw how student learning may be supported through collaborations with families and communities, curriculum and standards that are informed by the students’ sociocultural factors, strengths, and needs, and through ongoing professional learning opportunities for educators. Existing RTI models can be strengthened through processes for exploring students’ learning struggles by considering systemic issues that can contribute to learning difficulties. This includes thinking about how to provide appropriate supports, ongoing assessment of progress, and culturally responsive practices like effective language acquisition instruction, attention to the strengths and needs of students who are immigrants and migrants, and accommodations and services for students with disabilities.
Activity 2: Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities

Handouts for this activity, along with facilitator instructions, are provided on the following pages.
Activity 2: Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities

adapted from the IRIS Center Activity, Is This Child Mislabeled
Complete Activity Takes 30 Minutes

A week before school was scheduled to start, Harry Sims, the principal at Oakwood Elementary in Phoenix, Arizona, was busy at his desk. The school secretary entered his office and said, “There are some people here to see you. I think they want to enroll a student.”

Harry stood up and welcomed the visitors, two women and an eight-year old boy.

“I am Carmen Muñoz and this is Francisco,” said one of the women. The other woman quickly added, “I am Carmen’s sister-in-law, Elena. I am here to interpret for her because she speaks only Spanish—very little English. She would like to enroll Francisco in the school.”

Elena translated as Carmen talked. “Francisco was born in Hermosillo and his development was completely normal, just like the other little boys of the city. When he was four we moved to Basaseachi Falls for my work. During his schooling there, he did well in reading. At that point, Francisco, his sister and I traveled to America to join my brother.”

Harry did not know how to respond. He decided to simply welcome Francisco to Oakwood and assured Mrs. Muñoz the school staff would help him adjust to his new environment.

Francisco was placed in a third grade class with a teacher who had just received her Structured English Immersion endorsement to teach students who are English language learners. All instruction was provided in English. He made very little progress over the next few months. Francisco was essentially a non-reader in English and showed little aptitude when assessed with DIBELS; his oral reading fluency score was a 40, which indicated an “at-risk status” according to DIBELS benchmarks for third grade. Francisco’s oral language proficiency score on the AZELLA (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment) put him at the pre-emergent level of English Proficiency (levels are pre-emergent, emergent, basic, intermediate, and proficient). His teacher tried moving Francisco’s seat to the first row and assigned one of her best students to be his buddy for paired reading and word drills. When that didn’t work, she shortened his assignments. His teacher suggested to Mrs. Muñoz that perhaps Francisco had a learning disability that should be explored with testing. Mrs. Muñoz rejected the possibility, stating that she felt that her son would catch up as he became more proficient in speaking the language.

By the end of the year, Francisco had not caught up. He was still struggling with the language and had made very little academic progress. Mrs. Muñoz reluctantly agreed to have Francisco tested. When the testing was complete she met with Francisco’s teachers, the principal, and the school psychologist. The school psychologist read the evaluation results, “Francisco’s score on the Leiter, a nonverbal intelligence test often used with non-English speakers, was 105. This score falls with the Average range of intelligence. On the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities, he scored
below 75 in the areas of auditory processing, short-term memory, comprehension knowledge, and fluid reasoning; tasks that typically measure an individual’s verbal abilities. He scored in the Average range in long term processing, processing speed, and visual processing; these tasks are mostly perceptual. On the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Francisco also scored below 75 in reading, written language, and knowledge. He scored in the Average range in math.”

The school psychologist then turned to Mrs. Muñoz and her interpreter and said, “This pattern of scores, achievement scores 2 standard deviations or more below the intelligence score, is indicative of a learning disability. In addition, the equally wide gap between Francisco’s verbal and non-verbal scores supports the proposition that he has a learning disability. He would benefit from individualized and small-group instruction for part of the day in the resource room.” Everyone around the table nodded in agreement except Francisco’s mother.

Mrs. Muñoz said, “I think Francisco is just having trouble picking up the language. At home, he does fine. He seems so intelligent to me. And he never had any difficulties in Mexico. He did very well.”

“He is intelligent, Mrs. Muñoz, but he has a learning disability that is holding him back. We can help him overcome that disability and achieve his full potential by providing more individualized instruction,” the special education teacher responded. Mrs. Muñoz finally agreed to the placement.

Despite his new placement, Francisco made limited progress the next year in fourth grade. He received services in the resource room for reading and language arts. There, the special education teacher had him work on first and second grade reading material with 6 other students. However, the fifth grade proved to be a true success story for Francisco. Mrs. Muñoz and Francisco’s aunt had been talking every week about the work Francisco brought home and Mrs. Muñoz was exploring these concepts with Francisco in Spanish. Also, she was very happy with Francisco’s new resource teacher, Mrs. Evans, who was in her third year of teaching. Mrs. Evans appeared to be impressed by the diversity of the students at the school, including the large population of children of Latin descent. Mrs. Muñoz invited Mrs. Evans over to the family home for coffee and shared photos of the family’s previous home in Hermosillo. Mrs. Evans then became interested in finding out as much as she could about the culture and the background of her students in order to develop a relationship with them. She developed an especially close relationship with Francisco and Mrs. Muñoz.

Mrs. Evans worked with Francisco in a resource pull-out program for two hours every day. She also went into Francisco’s classroom three times each week for language arts in order to provide him with additional support. Francisco’s English speaking proficiency increased as well as his reading skills. The combination of resource room instruction and an inclusive language class proved to be effective.

Mrs. Evans observed first hand Francisco’s rapid academic achievement. She noted that when Francisco was introduced to a new word and its definition, he was able to retain knowledge. Although Francisco was still a quiet child and hesitant to become involved in detailed English conversations, he was very comfortable when talking socially to his peers. By the end of the year, Mrs. Evans questioned whether he would need special education services and recommended that he be retested.
After you read this case study, consider the following questions.

- What supports need to be in place to provide high quality instruction? How might it be assessed? What would you look for?

- What kinds of supports do the adults at Oakwood Elementary need in order to change patterns of refer-test-place for students who are new to the country, language, city, and school setting? What would the school district need to do to address and change this pattern?

- How is language and culture accounted for in the instruction and supports that Francisco received?

- What would appropriate supports be for a student with similar experiences to those of Francisco? How might one determine what is appropriate?

- Mrs. Evans learned about the cultural background of her students. How do you think this knowledge impacted her teaching? How might you begin to explore her beliefs and knowledge about her students to see if those influence the decisions that take place in the classroom?
Lecturette 2: Structure and Components of a Culturally Responsive Early Intervening and Universal Interventions Tier

This lecturette presents descriptions and examples of effective instruction and intervention within the early intervening and universal interventions tier. It provides the basis for Activity 3.

Facilitator Materials
Lecturette 2 PowerPoint

Outcomes Met in Lecturette 2

As a result of participating in Lecturette 2, participants will:

- Become familiar with the elements of robust high-quality literacy instruction for diverse learners.
- Reflect upon how educators can strengthen their practices to become culturally responsive.

Complete Lecturette Takes 15 Minutes

Lecturette 2 Structure and Components of a Culturally Responsive Early Intervening and Universal Interventions Tier

In this lecturette, we will delve deeper into Culturally Responsive RTI frameworks, as we talk about what effective instruction and intervention look like within the universal interventions tier.

Agenda

We will start by reviewing the features of culturally responsive RTI frameworks. Then, we will move to the first tier or level of culturally responsive RTI frameworks: the universal interventions tier. Next, we will focus our attention on literacy and how social interactions are set up in classrooms as we apply what we’ve learned about the first tier. Finally, we will consider ways that educators may reflect on their daily practices in order to strengthen students’ opportunities to learn.
Core Processes within RTI

In the first lecturette of this academy, we highlighted all of the elements in need of consideration within the complex nested educational system as a whole, as well as its parts: schools and classrooms in ensuring high quality opportunities to learn for all students.

We also introduced the necessity of culturally responsive, varied assessment of student learning, the data from which are applied to decision making related to curriculum, instruction, materials, ways of participating in class, needs for professional development for staff, and use of time and space.

Culturally Responsive RTI

Ensuring high quality opportunities to learn is the key feature of the first tier of RTI frameworks. So, now we will take a closer look at how to do so.

 Tier 1 of Culturally Responsive RTI: Universal Interventions

First and foremost, what happens in Tier 1 of RTI frameworks is directed at all students. The primary feature of this tier is robust instruction and supports for positive student interactions that are culturally responsive and evidence-based. This means that instruction should be delivered by knowledgeable, skilled teachers, who have the disposition to and explore and know their students strengths’ and needs, involve family in the classroom, and who are always continuing their professional learning around working with diverse learners. Teachers who know their students, involve their families, and engage in professional learning towards culturally responsive practices produce results for students who have a history of being marginalized in educational systems. Culturally responsive teachers and schools see students from diverse backgrounds as bringing the strengths and resources of their experiences to school and interventions for students who are struggling are grounded in research that considers how culture and language are instrumental in learning. Culturally responsive teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions are developed within communities of teachers committed to the improvement of their own practice. We don’t expect everyone to know everything about being culturally responsive, but that they are prepared to develop their cultural
responsiveness over time, which may result in a very substantive change in their practice as it currently exists.

Let participants know about NCCRESr’s modules on Culture and Cultural Responsiveness and Culturally Responsive Practice and Pedagogy.

**Opportunities to Learn in Tier 1**

Culturally responsive RTI frameworks create the social space to determine if and then make sure that every student has the opportunities to learn that s/he needs. The strengths and needs of students who are learning English and students from culturally diverse, as well as majority, English-speaking backgrounds are considered.

The big idea here is that we have to think about what classrooms and schools need to do to make sure all students have been provided with the best opportunities to learn. With that, let’s talk about what high quality learning opportunities look like within the first tier of RTI frameworks, using the area of literacy as an example. We will weave in examples of how positive student interactions are supported within Tier 1, as well.

**Robust Evidence-Based Literacy Curriculum & Instruction in Tier 1**

When determining what counts as evidence in evidence-based instruction, culturally responsive RTI frameworks consider research on the roles of culture, language, social interaction, institutions, and cognition. We can start by thinking about how literacy is defined and how schools may use certain definitions of literacy without even acknowledging that there are many ways of thinking about it. For example, to some, literacy may be defined as a group of specific reading skills. These skills include what is commonly called decoding, or in other words, being able to read out loud correctly, a certain number of words a minute, with expectations for how many based on only the grade level a student is in. To others, literacy may be defined as students being able to make meaning out of what they read. There have always been tensions about these views on literacy and/or reading, but more recently, researchers and practitioners have come to be aware of the balances that need to be struck between explicit instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic code, language and vocabulary development, reading for meaning and a strong emphasis on cultural relevance and students’ prior knowledge, interests, motivation, and home language with frequent opportunities to practice reading and other literacy activities with a variety of rich materials, in meaningful contexts.

There are many ways of engaging students in literacy and recognizing the many forms of literacy that students bring from home. We may have heard people say that students come to school with “no language” or that “parents never read” to them. What does this assume about students and families? What does this assume about the strong
language and literacy practices that go on in homes of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that have been documented through research time and time again? These assumptions sell students and families short and define language and literacy in a narrow way- and one that most closely matches what has already been done for, and isn’t necessarily effective with, students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

Curriculum is more than meets the eye. There are lots of hidden things about it, and things that teachers decide for themselves within the contexts of their classrooms. Even when the same standardized curriculum is used across all classrooms, it will look, and be enacted very differently. The social organization of learning, of students and teachers engaging in learning together will look very different in different settings, even when the same curriculum is used. For example, what hidden curriculum is alluded to when desks are arranged in rows, and students must raise their hands before speaking, and all speaking by students during instructional time, unless indicated by the teacher, must be directed to the teacher? How do these arrangements privilege certain ways of behaving, while setting up environments in which other ways of interacting are considered problematic? One element to consider in this example is that the teacher is in charge of all classroom communication around learning. What other elements of the hidden curriculum do you think this type of classroom set up indicates? Are you able to think of a classroom that you loved to be in when you were a student? What was it about the social organization of learning that made it a place you remember so fondly? What elements of the hidden curriculum did you relate to and find comfortable and enjoyable?

Robust Evidence-Based Literacy Curriculum & Instruction in Tier 1

Robust evidence based instruction that is culturally responsive considers reading as not only a skills-based approach, but also as a social activity. Additionally, “If the social participation structure is familiar to students, then performing with new academic content is less alienating. On the other hand, if the academic content is familiar or engaging, then students may be willing to try out new ways of interacting and using language” (Mehan et al., 1995, p. 132). Think about how literacy as a social activity has the potential to foster positive social interactions among students and between students and teachers.

Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole (2000) studied schools across the U.S. where many students were considered from low-income households. They noted several characteristics of schools where students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds showed excellent reading outcomes: small group instruction, application of phonics instruction within authentic literacy activities, questioning and participation structures that promoted higher-level thinking, and home involvement. This study showed the effectiveness of systematic approaches that incorporate both the skills-based and the social, inquiry-based, and authentic approaches for thinking about and engaging in literacy.
Robust Evidence-Based Literacy Curriculum & Instruction in Tier 1

One way to approach literacy curriculum, instruction, and intervention is through the use of thematic units. This is supported through research, like that of Mehan, Okamoto, Lintz, & Wills (1995). Thematic units allow content to be built upon over time, and English vocabulary is strengthened by many opportunities to practice in different types of academic tasks with the same central theme.

Pressley, and others (2001 and 2001), and Castro (1994) supported the use of thematic units with students learning English in order to make explicit and strong connections across the curriculum.

Culturally Responsive Literacy Intervention in Tier 1

Culturally responsive intervention in Tier 1 includes both reading and second language instruction, which draws on and connects to the prior knowledge of struggling readers. There should be an emphasis on explicit instruction in word identification, phonological awareness, and vocabulary instruction, structured opportunities to use and practice language, within highly supportive and engaging learning environments (e.g., those in which teachers select and incorporate student responses, ideas, examples, and experiences into lessons, and modify instruction for students as needed). Also, what would the norms be for verbal communication and noise level in a classroom where such an emphasis existed? There may be lots of chatter, movement, and various ways of grouping students in order to encourage participation. How might the behavioral expectations of this type of classroom environment, instead of classrooms where independent work, quiet, and working “on paper” contribute to teachers’ expectations and interpretation of student behavior?

For example, Philips (1983) examined power relationships created by the norms set up around talk in classrooms, particularly for Native American students. Philips found that norms around talk in the Navajo Nation and European American teachers’ expectations for Native American students’ participation were in conflict, and that because of this conflict, teacher interpreted long periods of time during which students were silent as evidence that students were not learning.
Student performance in the general education environment can be assessed in culturally responsive ways through observation of students in the context of their classrooms, interacting with teachers and other students in order to consider how context impacts performance. These are some things for culturally responsive teachers to reflect upon at Tier 1. How is learning measured? How do you know if students have been taught effectively and what students actually know and have learned?

Progress monitoring tools, such as mid- and end-of-unit pencil and paper and computerized assessments, short discussions between student and teacher or observations of discussions between students aimed at assessing comprehension of a topic or short story, are used to measure student learning, but must also be used to assess the effectiveness of instructional and curricular materials and practices. While progress monitoring tools are important resources for assessing student learning, they must simultaneously be utilized to assess appropriateness of instruction and curriculum. If not, low scores or lack of progress over time on progress monitoring tools by one or more students may be misinterpreted to mean that the student’s or students’ failure to “respond to intervention” in the first tier of RTI is indicative of a learning problem of some kind. By locating the problem within the student, rather than examining the relationship between low achievement and/or lack of progress on progress monitoring tools, students’ opportunities to learn are not even considered.

There are many decisions educators must make in Tier 1, based on information he/she has or is able to gather that have the potential to really improve learning for all students. These decisions are about how learning is supported in that classroom. For example, when a teacher uses assessment data to determine that a student or students appears to be struggling in literacy related activities, she or he should ask:

How is literacy presented in ways that resonates with this child’s previous and home experiences? In what ways have I listened to the student tell me about their learning? To what extent have I provided the student with opportunities for practice and feedback and if this student needs that what does it mean about how I have to organize reading?

The important educational decisions that teachers make then, are about what goes on in the general education classroom, not about which students need to go elsewhere to
receive intensive support. These decisions might include:

Do I need to change the organizational structure of my classroom in order to accommodate more intensive literacy instruction?

Do I need to add more opportunities for students to verbally practice sound symbol relationships and are there other kinds of experiences I can incorporate throughout the day to build sound symbol relationships?

Do I need to change the materials that students read or talk about in order to make them more meaningful to them?

Are standards for reading fluency the same for ELLs as they are for non-ELLs at a particular grade level?

Related to the decisions about reading fluency standards for students who are English language learners, many schools have the same benchmarks set for students who are ELLs and non-ELLs on the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency test, which is a commonly used progress monitoring tool. Scores below the benchmark are often the sole criteria for moving students to a more intensive tier within RTI models. Based on what you know and what you have learned, take a moment to consider whether you think this is appropriate.

Finally, if educators monitor student progress and find that the number of students who are not progressing is disproportionate relative to those who are, instruction for all students must be improved— instructional changes should not be considered as interventions for struggling students, but rather as “interventions for the instruction.”

Many progress monitoring resources are available on the internet. If participants have questions about Progress Monitoring tools, you may want to refer them to the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, found at www.studentprogress.org. We will discuss progress monitoring in more depth, and provide NCCRESt’s position on what it is and includes, in the next Academy.

Culturally Responsive RTI

In our next lecturette, we will look more closely at monitoring student progress in culturally responsive ways. This form of assessment, often called progress monitoring, provides data essential in making decisions about which students would benefit from more intensive supports generally provided within the second tier of culturally responsive RTI models.
Agenda
Here is what we’ve accomplished during this lecturette. Now we will move on to an activity that will apply what we’ve learned to designing culturally responsive literacy instruction within the Universal Interventions Tier.

Activity 3: Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Interventions
Handouts for this activity, along with facilitator instructions, are provided on the following pages.

Leave Taking
Please have participants complete the self-and academy evaluations.
Activity 3: Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Interventions

This activity will introduce participants to information about culturally responsive literacy instruction. See Activity 3 instructions below.

Complete Activity Takes 25 Minutes

Reading:
Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction
NCCRESt Practitioner Brief Series
Author: Tandria Callins

Jigsaw Activity
1. Whole group of participants will need to be divided in groups of four. Count off by fours will move the process forward quickly.
2. In groups of four, each participant will receive a portion of a reading based on Culturally Responsive Literacy instruction, authored for NCCRESt by Tandria Callins.
3. Each member in a group will receive a portion of the reading to learn and then teach to the rest of the group.
4. Participants leave base groups and meet in expert groups based on their assigned portion.
5. Expert groups discuss reading and brainstorm ways to present their understanding to their base group.
   a. Thinking about your own practices, can you build from the reading and provide examples from your own teaching and experiences as connected to literacy instruction and social norms for your classroom?
   b. How might you engage your group members to extend beyond the reading to think about culturally responsive approaches in your own teaching?
6. Expert members return to their base group to teach their portion of the reading and to learn from other expert members of their base group.
Section 1 Reading

Introduction

Instructional practices that address issues of culture and language hold the greatest promise for helping culturally and linguistically diverse learners to become successful readers (Beaulieu, 2002). The challenge for today’s teachers is to include those elements of curricula that will optimize learning for students while maintaining their cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Lipman, 1995). In order for culturally and linguistically diverse students to reach their full potential, instruction should be provided in ways that promote the acquisition of increasingly complex knowledge and skills in a social climate that fosters collaboration and positive interactions among participants. Such classrooms are inclusive in their emphasis on high standards and outcomes for all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Important features of such settings include high expectations, exposure to academically rich curricula and materials, approaches that are culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate, use of instructional technologies that enhance learning, and emphasis on student-regulated, active learning rather than passive, teacher-directed transmission. In addition to using effective methods and materials, teachers should possess cross-cultural communication skills and develop clear understandings of their culturally and linguistically diverse students (Garcia & Dominquez, 1997 as cited in Obiakor & Utley, [2001]).

Importance of the Teacher

Literacy instruction is the focus of this brief because recent studies reaffirm that to improve literacy instruction, we must examine teaching expertise rather than expect a panacea in the form of materials (Block, Oakar, & Hurt, 2002), or blame the students, the parents, or social class. Teaching ability, over and above reading programs, is the major contributor to students’ literacy success (Duffy, 2001; Knipper, 2003; Willis & Harris, 2000).

Importance of Multiple Forms of Literacy

In order for culturally and linguistically diverse students to become productive members of society they need to be fully functional participants in literate communities. Literacy is pervasive not only in school but in the workplace, home, and community (Au et al., 1995). Literacy is defined as the “ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text, in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context” (Au, 1993). This definition can be deciphered to illustrate the following instructional implications in multicultural settings:

- Willingness to use literacy. First, this definition addresses one’s willingness as well as one’s ability to use literacy. This feature is important, because students of diverse backgrounds may have the ability to use literacy but be unwilling to do so.

- Reading and writing. Second, one of the implications for literacy instruction is that teachers will want to give an equal emphasis to reading and writing and to look at ways that instruction of one can strengthen the learning of the other. Teachers should encourage students of diverse backgrounds to use strengths in their home languages as the basis for becoming proficient in reading and writing in English.
Section 2 Reading

Importance of Multiple Forms of Literacy (continuation)

• Constructing meaning. Third, reading and writing are used to construct meaning through interactions among the reader, the text, and the social text. This view of reading and writing reminds us of the importance of the background knowledge that students bring to the task. A reader’s background knowledge strongly influences variations of interpretations of text due to differences in the prior knowledge or cultural schemata students bring to the reading task.

• Printed text. Fourth, the definition of literacy described here refers to the student’s ability to work with the printed text, which distinguishes it from “cultural literacy” or “computer literacy.” The teacher’s reading aloud of literature and collaborative writing provide opportunities for literacy learning.

• Social context. Finally, the social contexts of the home and community often prepare students of diverse backgrounds to learn in ways quite different from those expected by the school. Students of diverse backgrounds often experience literacy in social contexts vastly different from those typically found in schools. The teacher’s goal is to enable students of diverse backgrounds to use literacy successfully in mainstream social contexts, as well as in the contexts of their homes and communities by modifying the social context of instruction so that lessons can be more effective for students of diverse backgrounds.

Importance of Early Reading Success
Significant societal gains can come from early reading success. For example, the National Reading Panel (2000) cites information published by the National Right to Read Foundation outlining the societal costs of illiteracy:
• 85% of delinquent children and 75% of adult prison inmates are illiterate.
• 90 million adults in the United States are at best functionally literate.
• The cost to taxpayers of adult illiteracy is $224 billion a year in welfare payments, crime, job incompetence, lost taxes, and remedial education.
• U.S. companies lose nearly $40 billion annually because of illiteracy.

The “chicken-egg” logic here is that if you teach a child to read he or she will be less of a strain on society because he or she will be less likely to be on welfare, commit a crime, skip work, fail to pay taxes, and need remedial education (Willis & Harris, 2000).

Culturally and linguistically diverse students are the targeted population for improved literacy instruction because they continue to be overrepresented in special education programs. Of the six million children in special education, half of those who are in special education are identified as having a specific learning disability. In fact, this group has grown more than 300% since 1976. Of those with specific learning disabilities, 80% are there simply because they haven’t learned how to read. Thus, many children identified for special education—up to 40%—are there because they were not taught to read (President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).
Section 3 Reading

Importance of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

A research synthesis of the literature suggests that providing literacy instruction that is culturally responsive promotes high achievement among culturally and linguistically diverse students (Brown University, 2003; Gay, 2000; Hale, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nichols, Rupley, & Webb-Johnson, 2000). Culturally responsive literacy instruction is instruction that bridges the gap between the school and the world of the student, is consistent with the values of the students’ own culture aimed at assuring academic learning, and encourages teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the learning needs of all students. Teachers who demonstrate culturally responsive pedagogy:

• Communicate high expectations. There are consistent messages, from both the teacher and the whole school that students will succeed, based upon genuine respect for students and belief in student capability.
• Use active teaching methods. Instruction is designed to promote student engagement by requiring that students play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.
• Facilitate learning. Within an active teaching environment, the teachers’ role is one of guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant, as well as instructor.
• Have positive perspectives on parents and families of culturally and linguistically diverse students. There is ongoing participation in dialogue with students, parents, and community members on issues important to them, along with the inclusion of these individuals and issues in classroom curriculum and activities.
• Demonstrate cultural sensitivity. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.
• Reshape the curriculum. A reshaped curriculum is responsive to students’ interests and backgrounds.

Provide culturally mediated instruction. Instruction is characterized by the use of culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content.
• Promote student controlled classroom discourse. Students are given the opportunity to control some portion of the lesson, providing teachers with insight into the ways that speech and negotiation are used in the home and community.
• Include small group instruction and cooperative learning. Instruction is organized around low-pressure, student-controlled learning groups that can assist in the development of academic language (Brown University, 2003; Gay, 2000; Hale, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nichols, Rupley, & Webb-Johnson, 2000).
Section 4 Reading

Importance of Skills, Reading for Meaning, and Multicultural Literature

The most effective approach to literacy instruction requires both explicit skill instruction and engaging literacy activities such as reading children’s literature and writing for real-life purposes. Approaches in which systematic skill instruction is included alongside an emphasis on reading for meaning, language instruction, and connected reading result in higher reading achievement. Teachers who frequently use multicultural children’s literature integrate reading and writing across the curriculum, and teach skills in the context of meaningful literacy experiences. Students acquire comprehension, spelling, and language skills that are commensurate with students across the country (Cantrell, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Nichols et al., 2000).

Multicultural literature is literature that focuses on people of color (i.e., African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans), on religious minorities (i.e., Amish or Jewish), on regional cultures (i.e., Appalachian or Cajun), on the disabled, and on the aged. However, the focus of this paper is on multiethnic literature that deals with peoples of diverse backgrounds in the United States, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Harris (1992) points out that historically, literature written by and for these groups of people generally lies outside of the literary canon, recommended book lists, and the elementary school curriculum. Multiethnic literature, as part of a literature-based reading program, can be used in the classroom to affirm the cultural identity of culturally and linguistically diverse students and to develop all students’ understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Integrating diverse cultural literature across the reading and writing curriculum helps students discover the intricacies of language as well as the histories and cultures of various ethnic groups. This view of literature is one of the new patterns of instruction that can facilitate school literacy development of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Au, 1993; Harris, 1992; Norton, 2001).

Final Thoughts

Culturally and linguistically diverse students are not receiving a free and appropriate education when teachers are not implementing instructional strategies that optimize student achievement or positively reinforcing their cultural identity. It is not deemed free because society will have to pay for their illiteracy when they are placed on welfare, commit a crime, or require remedial education. Neither is it appropriate when students who come from diverse backgrounds continue to be left behind. No reading program, legislative mandate, or high stakes test can ever replace the power and influence that a teacher possesses to improve student achievement. Teachers who embrace culturally responsive literacy instruction will serve as a catalyst for improved reading achievement among students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.
Leave Taking

Leave Taking, Part 1: Self Assessment

Facilitator Materials
None

Participant Materials
Self Assessment

Activity Purpose
The self assessment provides the participant with an objective means of evaluating the knowledge and skills gained in this academy.

Activity Time Limit
10 minutes

Facilitator Note
None

Activity
Have participants complete the Self Assessment (located in Participant Handouts). Remind groups that their assessments will be collected for module assessment purposes and they do not need to put their names on the assessments.

Academy 1 Self Assessment

This is a semi-graded, anonymous self assessment. Take 10 minutes to complete the following questions taken from the contents of this academy. After this time, the group will have the opportunity to discuss answers. Below are some additional questions that can be used to collect these self assessments to measure the effectiveness of the academy.

1. Where do we focus our attention in order to continually address and assess the appropriateness of opportunities to learn for students in K-12 frameworks, particularly those who are culturally and linguistically diverse?

2. What are some (at least three) examples of student-centered literacy curriculum & instruction in Title I of Culturally Responsive ELL frameworks?

3. How can partnerships with educational institutions be set up in order to promote positive relationships among students and between students and teachers?
Leave Taking, Part 2: Debrief

Facilitator Materials
Chart paper, overhead, or presentation slide

Participant Materials
Self Assessment

Activity Purpose
This activity gives participants a chance to compare their evaluation answers.

Facilitator Note
None

Activity Time Limit
10 minutes

Activity
Return to whole group and ask participants to share their responses. Use an overhead or chart paper to record what they say as a way to highlight new learning, and congratulate the group on their hard work.
**Leave Taking, Part 3: Academy Evaluation**

**Participant Materials**

_Academy Evaluation_

**Activity Purpose**

This activity provides feedback for developers from module participants.

**Activity Time Limit**

10 minutes

**Facilitator Note**

Collect the _Academy Evaluations_ and return them to the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems.

**Activity**

Have participants complete the _Academy Evaluation_ (located in Participant Handouts). This evaluation gives the module developers a chance to see how the academy is being received and allows them to improve it as needed.
Resources

The IRIS CENTER http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu

The intent of the IRIS center is to provide a supportive approach in preparing teachers to meet the needs of all students in inclusive settings. This online website offers technical assistance in professional learning through Star Legacy modules, with one of the modules dedicated entirely to RTI. The website also offers case studies, information briefs, and activities designed to enhance the understanding of a broad range of contexts such as disabilities, differentiated instruction, diversity and reading.


This article provides a foundation of the discussion on responsiveness-to-intervention (RTI) as an alternative to the achievement discrepancy model for diagnosis of LD. It describes the two basic versions of RTI: the “problem-solving” model and the “standard-protocol” approach. It also reviews empirical evidence bearing on their effectiveness and feasibility, and concludes that more needs to be understood before RTI may be viewed as a valid means of identifying students with LD.


The authors examine educational risk with specific attention to language minority students and discuss factors that appear to be associated with their enhanced achievement. They discuss different contexts that influence the achievement of language minority students such as the student and family context, and the school context.


This article discusses an alternative approach to ED identification using a research based intervention. Response to intervention is outlined, as is the appropriate way to implement the intervention with integrity in order to determine if a student has adequately responded to it.


The authors suggest that a cultural-historical approach can be used to help move beyond the assumption that general traits of individuals are attributable categorically to ethnic group membership. The suggested approach focuses on individuals’ and groups’ experiences rather than traits attributed to a particular group.

The purpose of this article is to present an argument for the need for culturally responsive Response to Intervention (RTI) as an approach for reducing disproportionate minority representation in Special Education Programs for Students with Emotional Disturbances.


In this chapter the authors discuss the variability that is to be expected when conducting school-based research, as well as the importance of not over-generalizing research findings. They also describe issues related to treatment fidelity, the feasibility of transferring an instructional model from one setting or context to another, and implementation challenges. They share their concerns about the inadequate descriptions of participant samples, and leaving English language learners out of research studies. They ask what counts as evidence when conducting educational research. Finally they discuss the role of culture in learning, and then finish with a description of what culturally responsive first tier instruction might look like.


This article is an introduction and outline for a special issue dedicated to creating a forum in which emergent scholarship on the differences between second-language acquisition and learning disabilities (LD) could be disseminated. The article discusses the need for this forum because of the increasing number of English language learners (ELLs), the inappropriate referrals of ELLs, and the difficulty in distinguishing between second language acquisition and LD.


The authors present a cultural framework for addressing the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education. They introduce a culturally responsive educational system that affects policies, practice, and people. The goal is to assist school personnel in providing evidence based culturally responsive interventions and strategies.


Author’s abstract: Part of a special section on current issues in special education and reading instruction. A four-tier Response to Intervention (RTI) model for culturally and linguistically diverse students is described. RTI has the potential to enhance educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students and reduce their disproportionate representation in higher education. The first tier of this RTI model provides culturally responsive, quality instruction with ongoing monitoring of progress in the general education classroom. The second tier provides intensive support that supplements the core curriculum to students identified by progress monitoring. The third tier continues intensive support, in combination with referral to a child study team or teacher assistance team. The fourth and final tier provides special education tailored to individual student needs.

This article attempts to challenge notions about the intersection of culture and teaching that rely solely on micro-analytic or macro-analytic perspectives and proposes a culturally relevant theory of education. The pedagogical practices of eight master teachers of African American students were investigated to provide a way to define and recognize culturally relevant pedagogy.

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring  [www.studentprogress.org](http://www.studentprogress.org)

This U.S. Department of Education Funded Center provides information on and examples of student progress monitoring for a variety of stakeholder within educational systems: parents, family members, administrators, and educators.


This article is a meta-analysis of 30 studies that dealt with learner characteristics that influence the treatment effectiveness of early literacy interventions. The primary learner characteristics that influenced the treatment responsiveness of early literacy interventions (in order of magnitude) were rapid naming, problem behavior, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, memory, IQ, and demographics.


This chapter describes an alternative approach to language arts instruction that includes scaffolding strategies, effective pedagogy, and dual language instruction for English language learners with learning disabilities who are included in general education classes. These approaches are outlined and examples are given.
References Cited


Glossary

Culture
A body of learned beliefs, traditions, principles, and guides for behavior that are shared among members of a particular group.

Culturally Responsive
To be culturally responsive is to value, consider, and integrate individuals’ culture, language, heritage and experiences leading to supported learning and development.

Early Intervening
Services meant to bolster the achievement of students before they are officially referred for special education.

Opportunities to Learn
Students’ access to teachers who are well-prepared and qualified to teach diverse learners and who are committed to teaching all students within the general education classroom environments, schools and grade levels that are organized to allow for maximal student attention, multiple options for courses that are rigorous and varied in content, culturally responsive effective instructional strategies, access to a variety of culturally responsive relevant instructional materials, curricular content that is culturally responsive, meaningful and of sufficient breadth, and finally, a social climate for learning that is informed by students themselves.

Response to Intervention
A model for delivering high quality curriculum, instruction and assessment services to all students, with additional supports for students considered to be struggling, and for teachers in order to provide those supports. Response to Intervention (RTI) supports high quality learning opportunities for all students, through curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational decisions that consider the essential role of culture and language in learning and teaching.