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

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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.
Academy Abstract:
This academy presents Response to Intervention (RTI) as a culturally responsive framework 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 frameworks 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 Instruction**  
25 min

**Leave-taking and Feedback**  
30 min
Academy Overview

Academy 1:
Overview of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention

Introductions
Facilitators and Sponsors

www.nccrest.org
Introductions
National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems
NCCREST
www.nccrest.org

What’s in an Educational System?

People
Practices
Policies
This slide was left blank so that your facilitator(s) are able to add any content relevant to their purpose or mission in leading this academy.
Leadership Academies

Roles
Outcomes

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

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Agenda

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Introductions, Greetings, &amp; Warm-Up</td>
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<td>Activity 1: Opportunities to Learn</td>
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<td>Lecturette 1: Foundations of Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention (RTI)</td>
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Activity 1: Opportunities to Learn

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.

Activity Takes 30 Minutes
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:

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 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?
- 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 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. Yusef 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 NCCRESr’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.

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
Agenda

What Does it Mean to be Culturally Responsive?

Culturally Responsive RTI Frameworks

Core Processes

Opportunities to Learn

Focus on the Classroom

Culturally Responsive is...

the valuation, consideration, and integration of individuals’ culture, language, heritage and experiences leading to supported learning and development.
Culturally Responsive RTI

- Culture
- Secondary Interventions
- Universal Interventions
- Tertiary Interventions

Equity
Culturally Responsive RTI

Practice and pedagogy consider culture’s role in teaching and learning.

Research is conducted in cultural contexts.

Implementation happens in the complex setting of classrooms.

Universal Interventions

Secondary Interventions

Guiding Assumption of Culturally Responsive RTI: Creating New Hope & Opportunities to Learn
Guiding Assumption of Culturally Responsive RTI: Rejection of Deficit Labeling of Students

- At-Risk Students

Guiding Assumption of Culturally Responsive RTI: Inclusive Intervention Delivery

- Interventions
- Special Education
- General Education Classroom

“We assert that the emphasis on the student’s response to an intervention or interventions, shift to an emphasis on the importance of the interventions as responsive to the child,” (Harris-Murri, King, & Rostenberg, 2006, p. 9.)
Addressing Opportunities to Learn: A Nested System

Focus on the Classroom

Cultures in the Classroom

What students & teachers bring with them
What's already there
The work people do together

The Classroom Culture
Classroom Cultures
Activity 2: Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities

Participants will apply their prior and new knowledge to the assessment of needs and design of supports for a student and his teachers.

Activity Takes 30 Minutes
Activity 2: Assessing High Quality Instruction and Learning Opportunities

adapted from the IRIS Center Activity, Is This Child Mislabeled

Read the following case study.

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.

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.
Agenda

- Culturally Responsive RTI Model
- Early Intervening and Universal Interventions
- Literacy Example
- Educator Reflection

Core Processes within RTI

- Culture
- Equity
- Assess Student Learning
- Provide High Quality Learning Opportunities
- Tune Instructional Decisions
- Universal Interventions

Student Learning

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Culturally Responsive RTI

Tier 1 of Culturally Responsive RTI: Universal Interventions

Robust Evidence-Based Instruction

Culturally Responsive Intervention

Teachers Who Produce Results for Diverse Students

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Opportunities to Learn in Tier 1

- Provide High Quality Learning Opportunities
- Assess Student Learning
- Tune Instructional Decisions

Culture
Equity

Robust Evidence-Based Instruction
Culturally Responsive Intervention
Teachers Who Produce Results for Diverse Students

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Robust Evidence-Based Literacy Curriculum & Instruction in Tier 1

- Beyond isolated reading skills
- Other curricular dimensions
  - funds of knowledge
  - hidden curriculum
  - social organization of learning

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

Reading is not only a skills-based approach... ...it is a social activity

Small group instruction

Application of phonics within authentic literacy activities

Questioning and participation promoted higher level thinking and home involvement

Thematic units

Build content over time

Strengthen vocabulary with many practice opportunities with same theme

Allow for strong connections across the curriculum
 Culturally Responsive Literacy Intervention in Tier 1

- Students’ prior knowledge
- Explicit instruction
- Supportive environment
- Structured practice

Build content over time
Strengthen vocabulary with many practice opportunities with same theme
Allow for strong connections across the curriculum

Results-Producing Teachers in Tier 1: Utilizing Progress Monitoring Tools in Culturally Responsive Ways

Culturally Responsive Educators’ Reflections

Teachers Who Produce Results for Diverse Students

How do I measure: Teaching? Learning? What students already know?
Results-Producing Teachers in Tier 1: Utilizing Progress Monitoring Tools in Culturally Responsive Ways

Do I need to:
Change the organizational structure of my classroom in order to accommodate more intensive literacy instruction?
Add more verbal sound in general or other kinds of experiences throughout the day to build sound symbol relationships?
Change the materials that students read or talk about in order to make them more meaningful to them?

Culturally Responsive RTI

Provide High Quality Learning Opportunities
Tune Instructional Decisions
Assess Student Learning
Secy. of Interventions

Student Learning

Culturally Responsive Educators' Reflections
Teachers Who Produce Results for Diverse Students

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Activity 3 (Slide 45)
*Handouts for this activity are provided on the following page.

Activity 3: Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Interventions

This activity will introduce participants to information about culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Activity Takes 30 Minutes
Activity 3: Designing Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction

This activity will introduce participants to information about culturally responsive literacy instruction. Your facilitator will lead you in this activity.

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

Thank you for your participation!
Academy 1 Self-Assessment

This is a non-graded, anonymous self-assessment. Take 10 minutes to complete the following questions taken from the content of this academy. After that time the group will have the opportunity to share answers. Note that occasionally we collect these self-assessments to measure the effectiveness of the academy.

1. Where do we focus our analysis in order to continuously address and assess the appropriateness of opportunities to learn for students in RTI frameworks, particularly students who are culturally and linguistically diverse?

2. What are some (at least three) examples of robust evidence-based literacy curriculum & instruction in Tier 1 of Culturally Responsive RTI frameworks?

3. How can participation in general education classrooms be set up in order to promote positive social interactions amongst students and between students and teachers?
**Academy 1 Evaluation**

This evaluation gives NCCRESt’s module developers a chance to see how the academy is being received and allows them to improve it as needed.

I am a
- General Ed Teacher
- Administrator
- Special Ed Teacher
- Parent
- Paraprofessional
- Other

I am affiliated with a(n):
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

Please let us know how useful you found the topics:

- **Activity 1**
  - Poor: 1 2 3 4 5
  - Great

- **Activity 2**
  - Poor: 1 2 3 4 5
  - Great

- **Activity 3**
  - Poor: 1 2 3 4 5
  - Great

Self evaluation
- Poor: 1 2 3 4 5
- Great

Three things I learned that made me go... **AH HAHH**!

If I were on the next academy team I would...

As a result of participating in this academy, I am going to...
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. 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.