

Fall 11-1-2015

How is Response to Intervention Doing? A Self-Study Approach

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How is Response to Intervention Doing? A Self-Study Approach

By

Mary Daloia

A capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

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Abstract

Response to Intervention is a multi-tiered intervention system being used in schools throughout the entire nation to help support struggling students. With educators obtaining jobs as academic intervention system providers and a large number of students receiving specific interventions, it is imperative that RTI is being checked for its effectiveness. This self-study was conducted to see how the personal efforts of an AIS provider were working. Over a six-week period, the researcher used the daily instruction and observations to search for three items: key components of RTI, which methods work during instruction and what needs to be improved. Although this is a relatively small lens to focus in on, this study is the beginning to an on-going need for RTI to be assessed. Assessing this program helps to make sure students are receiving the most effective and beneficial instruction to obtain success. This self-study gives insight to what many RTI providers are experiencing on a daily basis.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In today's schools, students know how important being proficient in both English Language Arts and Mathematics is. Daily conversations occur among students, administrators, educators, specialists, and aides, about these subjects, specifically. The conversations strongly indicate how much emphasis is put on teaching these proficiencies throughout the course of a school year. In 2001, No Child Left Behind was signed into law to hold teachers accountable, to create nation-wide testing, and to find ways to improve all levels of education (Hyslop, 2013). This law raised the standards required of all schools, administrators, educators and students. As a result, visible change came about in the school systems in various areas. No Child Left Behind implemented new standards, requirements, testing and preventative support through out the nation. While in office, George W. Bush reissued the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004. With the resurgence of this law the shifts in education continued to occur (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Along with new standards came new ways to label and classify students as learning disabled. IDEIA laws were a call for help for students who needed extra support throughout their school day. The programs were created to help address the academic needs of students in their early years. (Fuchs & Fuchs). The program Response to Intervention (RTI) was created as a result of the changes IDEIA brought about. According to the researchers working for the Center on RTI at American Institutes of Research, RTI is a tiered system that increases in intensity as the student moves from tier to tier (Jackson & Elledge, 2012). It combines assessment and intervention to help struggling students maximize their level of achievement. RTI was also created to help identify the difference between struggling and learning disabled

students. School districts across the nation are adopting their own programs with the government being the driving force behind the movement.

Problem Statement

Educators today are required by the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to hold their students to higher expectations (National Governors Association, 2010). CCLS require students to keep up with the rigorous work and criteria that educators are teaching in their classrooms (Waite, 2007). The standards prepare students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate high school (Waite). As the standards are implemented and increased, students who may be struggling continue to fall further behind in their academics. Massive learning gaps can be created for these struggling students, which can cause turmoil throughout their educational career as the standards continue to rise. An ever-increasing need exists to both raise the bar for the quality of work being taught and to increase support so that all students can succeed. This is where the program RTI comes into play. However, even with the support this program has the potential to give, there are still concerns. One major concern is the viability RTI has to do the job it was created and intended to do. A number of ways can show how RTI is succeeding. By conducting a research study on this topic, I will collect evidence to show the strengths and weaknesses of this program.

Significance of the Problem

Response to Intervention was created to help those students in need of extra support during the day. It is imperative that the additional support being provided for students is scientifically based, valuable, and of high quality for the students. If the students do not receive quality instruction, then they will continue to go through school at

a disadvantage. As the expectations of children in school continue to rise, it is up to us as educators to meet the growing needs of our students. Throughout the country, individual districts in the participating 47 out of 50 states have the option to choose which methods and instructional practices they will use (Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014). With the lack of one accepted form of RTI, teachers, specialists, administrators, and school officials are tailoring the intervention to suit the students' individual needs. Some researchers have found that this lack of conformity causes research findings on RTI to be inaccurate (Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009). Due to this lack of conformity, it is difficult to say whether or not a school's methods actually work, making it difficult to address the efficiency of the program as a whole.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to see if I, a second year Academic Intervention System (AIS) provider, achieved the goals of RTI and what it is intended to accomplish. An AIS provider works in the school building to give extra support in smaller settings to those struggling students. Providers teach students using various styles of service such as pull out, when students leave the room, or push-in instruction, when the provider enters the classroom to give extra support. It is my intent to explore my capabilities and achievements as an educator in this program. I worked daily with students who needed extra support in order to help them thrive in their classrooms. My goal was to use this study to help guide my instruction and methods that I used day to day with my students. I hoped this study would enable me to see if my role in RTI was beneficial to my students' progress overall. By engaging in this study, I hoped to help and/or show others how effective RTI is and what can be improved upon in a small scale. As an Academic

Intervention System provider, this research sought to answer whether or not my instructional practices, methods and efforts worked.

As the researcher of this self-study, I was the largest source of data. I was the major supplier for both the actual data and the collection of it. Data collection consisted of daily observations and weekly journaling. I also used and reflected on peer reviews and self-evaluations.

Rationale

This study can be helpful in multiple ways. Being a self-study, this research can help me to become a better educator in both small and large group settings. Specifically, working in ELA and Mathematics allows me to focus on skills in my work as an AIS provider. By reflecting and researching how I am doing as an educator can also help others in this occupation. The information in the study will allow and require me to take a deeper and more concentrated look into my everyday practices as an AIS provider. After completing the study I hope to share this with other AIS providers. Sharing my results can give them an opportunity to relate and address the concepts I have specifically focused on during the duration of my research.

Study Approach

The majority of this self-study relies heavily on the analysis of my daily practices, which includes the methods and strategies that I utilize while teaching. Qualitative data will be provided by my journal entries, observations, self-evaluations and peer evaluation that I need to conduct this research. The data will also encompass how I can help to provide support for students in the past, present and future.

Data for this study was collected for six weeks. During this time I used multiple teaching materials, techniques and strategies to help further support the students that I work with. Various strategies help to meet the multiple learning styles that students embody. Finding which methods provide the most support is the overall goal of using diverse strategies.

By conducting a self-study, I had to reflect, through my own point of view, upon conversations and daily interactions I had with my students. My daily lesson plans guided my instruction for the different materials and strategies that would be used in the lesson. The lessons planned for the students lasted anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes for both reading and math support. The majority of the materials taught in the lessons consist of re-teaching but with extra support on specific topics. The focus of lessons containing multiple strategies is to help the students struggling with specific areas to obtain a better understanding.

The multiple forms of data collection will help to answer the research question at hand. The data will help to indicate how successful my practices as an AIS provider are.

Literature Review

Response to Intervention (RTI) was created in 2004 to help students struggling with everyday concepts and skills being taught in the classroom. Educators noticed that students who faced daily academic challenges for long periods of time were never reaching their full potential. RTI addresses these students' needs by providing additional support throughout the day in various ways. The recent shifts and creation of new educational programs required more teachers and educators to be trained and qualified for additional support (Barrio & Combes, 2014).

Since RTI was created, educators and researchers analyzed the program to discover the success and areas of improvement. The literature explains the intentions of RTI, what the program consists of, the various ways the program is being used in schools across the nation, and the overall sentiment that surrounds this program.

Research on RTI has as many different themes as it does viewpoints. In this review of literature, I will discuss RTI, how the program is being used in schools, and how teachers currently feel about this new intervention system.

What is Response to Intervention?

The research thus far has shown that RTI offers improved approaches to assessment allowing educators to help children they *know* are struggling. Created in 2004, the program was a response to the demanding shifts from No Child Left Behind, the increasing numbers of students being classified as Learning Disabled, and the resurgence of IDEA (Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009). As stated, RTI was created to meet multiple components and goals. The components consisted of scientifically based core curriculum, universal screening, progress monitoring, and multiple tiers in which decisions are made about student progress (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). Along with these components, RTI has two main goals. The first goal is to serve as a multi-tiered approach for early intervention. The second goal is to provide an alternate approach for students to be classified as Learning-Disabled (LD) (Hughes & Dexter). As an instructional framework, RTI was created to give struggling students early intervention in order to avoid special education in the long run (Hughes & Dexter). Although RTI has clear and concise goals, consisting of many different aspects makes it a multi-layered and multi-purpose program.

Two approaches are accepted when discussing RTI: standard protocol and problem solving. The two different approaches represent different criteria when it comes to decision making as well as the specifics for each student (Griffiths, VanDerHeyden, Parson, & Burns, 2006). Griffiths et al. state that the standard protocol approach is a design based on intensive research to help struggling students. This type of approach helps to determine, evaluate, and devise a way to help address specific reading struggles that children are having (Griffiths et al., 2006). The problem solving approach is the method when research is based on observing student outcomes in field trials where RTI rules were used to help students with their reading difficulties. According to studies, both methods supplied valuable information when the time arrived to implement RTI in schools. The standard protocol showed with the right services, students might not need to be labeled as learning disabled but instead may require the use of different instructional practices to help them succeed. The problem-solving method showed students responded to interventions, and the data and information that is received from these services are extremely helpful to improve student outcomes (Griffiths et al., 2006). The Problem solving method includes a four-step process that educators use to get their information. Step 1 is when educators identify effective programs to use with students. Step 2 is to determine what may be wrong with the program. Step 3 is using progress monitoring to decide whether or not the program is effective. Step 4 is to create an individualized program for students based on the data that was collected (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins, 2012). In multiple forms of research it states not to keep these two methods defined but to bring the data they provide together to make it more useful. Gerzel-Short and Wilkins have said the fundamental variables from both methods will come together to play an

integral part in RTI. The variables Gerzel-Short and Wilkins refer to include an effective multi-tiered system to give students the resources when and where they need them. In addition to this system, students receive effective implementation of services for the appropriate amount of time, and decisions that are based on data to evaluate the possible effectiveness of the interventions (Griffiths et al., 2006).

RTI has three tiers that students may or may not go through. Tier 1 is called Universal Screening. In this tier, the needs of 80%, the majority of students, are met (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins, 2012). The first tier of intervention covers core curriculum, where technically all students receive this instruction (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins). If the students do not respond successfully or continue to struggle in Tier 1, this is when they move on to Tier 2. When students are in Tier 2 they receive more intensive and targeted services because they are considered at-risk (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins). Tier 2 services reach and target about 15 % of students that did not succeed in Tier 1. If students do not respond to Tier 2 services, they then move on to Tier 3. In Tier 3, students receive highly intensive and targeted instruction as well as possible individual interventions (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins). When these 5% of Tier 3 students receive the targeted services, they can take place in various places such as the special or general education classrooms. The interventions are based on and consistent with more individualized goals (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins).

In all three Tiers, teachers are responsible for keeping up with progress monitoring. Although monitoring is more beneficial in Tiers 2 and 3, Tier 1 has its own form of progress monitoring known as universal screening. Universal screening is what helps teachers and educators locate the students struggling with general core curriculum

(Hughes & Dexter, 2011). This type of progress monitoring will generally take place three times a year including fall, winter, and spring. When using the data the universal screening provides, no specific cut off or percentage exists for all schools to adhere to when deciding which students are at risk (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins, 2012). Therefore, school districts and the research they conduct decides what percentiles to use to when considering specific students in need of services.

In addition to universal screening, progress monitoring is also completed which happens more consistently. This progress monitoring is implemented after the universal screening has targeted the struggling students. Progress monitoring assesses growth as well as the students' performance when working in intervention Tiers (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). The data received from progress monitoring is extremely beneficial as it gives teachers and staff members the ability to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention being used. The assessments also help to guide student instruction within each tier. Where universal screening is only done three times a year, progress monitoring is done weekly, biweekly, or monthly (Hughes & Dexter). Together, universal screening and progress monitoring play a major role in Response to Intervention. Both assessments help to benefit the students who are struggling the most.

Accomplishing the goals RTI created takes patience, hard work, and collaboration. This multi-tiered system has several teachers working together and using an assortment of different scientific-based methods to help their students in need. Therefore the intervention team and those involved must have constant communication. Collaboration is a key component of the RTI process (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins, 2012).

Another major element of RTI is the use of scientific based core curriculum (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). Educators use curriculum, models, and strategies that have been researched and considered scientifically based. The research in turn shows that these methods are effective. RTI is based around various methods to help ensure the struggling students are receiving the best forms of instruction possible. Hughes and Dexter have stated that using scientifically based instruction can eliminate ineffective practices. Scientifically based methods used in RTI also help with the classification of students as LD. Research shows a significant increase in the number of students being classified in previous years. The statistics went from less than 2% of students in the U.S population to more than 6% over the course of a few years (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The implementation of RTI and increase in educators using scientifically based methods have helped to identify struggling students and give them the support they need.

RTI is not a quick fix. Fidelity of implementation is a major component that can make or break its success (Werts, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014). This program was put in place to be preventative versus reactive. The program's success will be dependent on educators, administrators and other staff to be flexible, creative, and dedicated to the cause of helping their struggling students.

How is RTI Being Used in Schools?

RTI is used in many ways throughout schools all over the country. Since this program is used for multiple purposes, educators view RTI in a variety of ways within in the school building. Students within RTI will receive various support, strategies, locations, and techniques depending on their specific needs. Each district has the ability to use their resources and choose which program to use for their students. RTI therefore

requires extreme collaboration between numerous staff members to achieve the intended goals (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins, 2012). The members involved are known as the RTI team. This team is in charge of organizing, monitoring, grouping, instructing and assessing the students who are considered at risk. How the team accomplishes the goals in a cohesive manner relies heavily on the creativity, flexibility and collaboration of all of those involved.

Educators must follow a process to assure the right students are chosen for RTI based on specific needs. Those involved can be anyone from a general or special education teacher, a reading specialist or another school staff member that has been brought aboard for this program. Schools that have adopted the RTI model must start with the universal screening. After they have administered screening to all students in Tier 1, students who are considered at-risk due to their scores then move on to Tier 2. Here, specific team members, such as the special education teachers and the specialists, are responsible for more intensive instruction as well as progress monitoring (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). If students do not respond to the specific interventions, then they move to Tier 3. In this tier, the services increase in both frequency and intensity. If they continue to be non-responsive to RTI, students are then looked at for LD classification (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). The RTI process shows how the program is used for both early preventative intervention as well as a multistep progression of how some students get classified for special education.

Teachers and staff implement RTI in various ways within their school. Due to no clear guidelines or requirements for what specific scientific based methods need to be used, the choice is left up to the districts throughout each state (Gerzel-Short & Wilkins,

2012). Therefore methods, practices, instruction, and location can be different from district to district. Those chosen for the RTI team in each school run the program instruct and provide the services to ensure its effectiveness. The team takes responsibility to help these struggling students improve and succeed. Interventions can take place in the general education classroom, the special education classroom or another separate location. Along with varying locations, size is also a factor when deciding interventions. The struggling students may stay in the classroom and receive extra support, they may be put into a small group, or they may receive services individually depending on the severity of their needs (Griffiths et al., 2006). Level of need will be the deciding factor as to where and what services students need. If the student is in Tier 1, a majority of these services will take place in the classroom. The general education teacher will most likely provide the services but another member from the RTI team may also become the instructor during the intervention. Research shows students should remain in Tier 1 for at least eight weeks to see what types of progress they make (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). If the students continue to struggle within the classroom under Tier 1 services, they move to Tier 2. This tier consists of more intensive services that can be provided in the general or special education classroom. After progress monitoring and servicing takes place for an allotted amount of time, students will either remain in Tier 2 for further instruction, go back to Tier 1 due to successful progress, or move onto Tier 3 if there is a lack of progress (Fuchs & Fuchs). In this tier, students receive more intensive instruction. Tier 3 is where the RTI team will decide how to best support the student going forward.

Having the right staff and the right methods are just a small part of RTI. Logistics such as fitting the interventions into everyone's schedules as well as assessing the

frequency and duration of the extra services must also be addressed. The RTI team needs to be able to think practically. Flexibility, collaboration and patience also play a major factor into the application of this program.

The utilization of RTI varies from school to school with-in the different districts. While there is some conformity in certain elements of the program, there are other aspects that are left to each school to develop as they see fit.

How do Educators Feel about Response to Intervention?

Educator response to RTI has been varied. Some welcome the change RTI brings about and show willingness to embrace the new techniques and processes. Conversely there are some educators who struggle with the challenges that implementing a new program inevitably create. Some educators can see both the benefits and the challenges and tend to be more in the middle of the road in their perspective.

Research has shown that teachers see benefits such as intervening early, using differentiated instruction, identifying specific student needs, increased professional development, increased accountability and increased collaboration just to name a few (Werts et al., 2014). Benefits are what help educators to work through any challenges that may come to the surface while working through RTI. With this program, teachers and students are able to learn in various ways that can be helpful to their progress in academics or instructional practices.

Alongside the benefits, the program has inevitable challenges. Teachers have found a few barriers to cause RTI to be somewhat challenging; lack of time, extra paperwork, lack of training, lack of collaboration, and heavier workloads (Werts et al., 2014). The barriers listed are the major challenges teachers have found but are not limited

to these examples. Over the past decade, responsibilities and requirements for teachers have grown tremendously often making it difficult for teachers to overcome their negative feeling towards RTI. Educators perceive the program as another requirement or burden added to an already stressful workload. Some teachers however see both the benefits and challenges realizing they will have to accommodate as much as possible if they truly want their students to succeed.

As stated before, some teachers feel as though they are not prepared to meet the demands of implementing RTI in their classroom. Many are new to the field or still in school learning how to become a teacher. Challenges such as combining the roles of special and general education teachers, management and instruction taking place in the classroom, along with deciding what methods to use, for how long, and the effectiveness of the methods are all issues RTI brings to the table. For a new teacher these challenges can often feel overwhelming. In my experience as a new AIS provider, I faced these challenges with the RTI process and all of the elements it entails.

Research was conducted to find out what concerns pre-service teachers have before entering into the real world of education. Pre-service teachers felt unprepared about the implementation of RTI and had very limited knowledge about the overall goals of the program (Barrio & Combes, 2014). Planning, collaborating, management, and diverse needs were a few of the sub concerns that Barrio and Combes found in their research study. Despite concerns, however, pre-service teachers seemed to indicate with more instruction on RTI, they would be able to meet the needs of their students through the program. Having been through undergraduate and now graduate work to obtain my teaching degree, I can empathize with these feelings and concerns.

Although research and evidence of RTI's success in schools exists, some researchers still wonder if the program is as beneficial as everyone thinks. Reynolds and Shaywitz state if consistency of RTI is not accomplished the results of whether a student is truly responding to an intervention will be difficult to determine. A number of resources feel the lack of consistency is going to play a major role in how well RTI addresses and supports its' intended populations. The lack of consistency makes it difficult to define any data coming from RTI whether a response, method, or decision for the next step (Reynolds and Shaywitz, 2009). Research seems to indicate lack of conformity is something that can be an issue as long as schools remain responsible for how they run their programs.

RTI has been utilized mainly in elementary schools across the country; however, middle schools have taken an interest in the intervention program. Middle schools have begun to take on the RTI framework after witnessing the success that has taken place in the grades below them (Prewett, Mellard, Deshler, Allen, Alexander, Stern, 2012). Research seems to indicate a growing willingness on the part of educators to adopt RTI programs as a result of the elementary level success. Studies show implementing RTI into middle schools also has its' challenges. Factors such as schedules, teaching basic and content area skills, and filling such large gaps at these ages are a few of the issues that middle school staff members are faced with (Prewett et al.). Regardless of the barriers, however, middle schools have found RTI helpful. Using screening and progress monitoring helps to gather specific data on students, which helps the educators, meet their needs (Prewett et al., 2012). Along with the middle school movement, educators are encouraging this same movement in the early childhood setting. Researchers and

practitioners feel RTI will have multiple benefits to RTI in early childhood, such as an opportunity to provide social, emotional and early literacy experiences (Greenwood et al., 2011). Exposure to RTI in early education may also help to detect issues and address them earlier on. This could avoid being unnecessarily classified or get the classification sooner in return helping the student to succeed (Greenwood et al.). RTI has apparent success with research studies providing evidence showing how the program effectively addresses the needs of struggling students of all ages.

RTI is a complex program with many goals, levels and functions. After reading the research done to gauge the effectiveness, I have a solid understanding of RTI's intended function. I see the practice of RTI daily in the classrooms I am a part of. As an interventionist, my intentions are to gather information about RTI through continued research to utilize and grow what I know as I develop my own strategies and methods in the classroom.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to research and study not only the effectiveness of RTI as a whole, but also my personal effectiveness as an interventionist. RTI has become an integral part of education and plays a major role in many students' learning. On a daily basis I am identifying issues, interacting, instructing, and helping students to improve and progress in the classroom. This is not an easy task. The responsibility to help students achieve their goals can often seem overwhelming. Some of the obstacles I face are self-created while others stem from school, students or even methods chosen to address certain situations. Regardless of their origin, my job is to identify and learn to address

each obstacle so as to provide the best level of education possible. Throughout each day my question remains: am I truly helping my students to succeed?

Participant and Positionality

This was a self-study; therefore I was the only participant. I am a 24-year-old Caucasian female currently living in upstate Western New York. I am currently working on obtaining my Masters at The College at SUNY Brockport. I graduated from SUNY Fredonia with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Education. I have two teaching certificates: General Education grades 1-6 and a certificate in Special Education grades 1-6.

After graduating from SUNY Fredonia, I went directly into a master's program. While taking classes for my master's I also was hired to be a teaching assistant in West Bridge Elementary (pseudonym). This was a yearlong position in which I worked with struggling students in Math and English Language Arts. I also helped the general education teacher with push in services. After this position was discontinued, I applied for and was hired as a reading tutor in East Bridge Elementary (pseudonym). I am currently in my second year at East Bridge as a part-time tutor. My job consists of both pull out and push-in services for struggling students. The students I work with are determined by state testing as well as school scores and grades.

As an interventionist, I am constantly questioning and engaging in self-observation in an effort to gauge my own effectiveness as an interventionist. I know my strategies are making a difference when I am instructing. Even with success I am constantly monitoring and questioning my progress with the students in an effort to learn and become a better interventionist. I designed this study to allow me to observe my

instructional practices and make informed decisions, from the data I collected, as to whether or not I accomplished the goals that RTI has created and designed.

Setting

This study took place in a town in Western New York. The school lies just beyond the city limits that the town shares borders with. This school can be considered both suburban and urban due to its location. According to the New York State Report card in 2011-2012, the school had a student population of 371. The percentage for students eligible for free lunch was 46% and reduced lunch was at 13%. The report card also shows that 61% of students are white, 12% are Black or African American, and 20% are Hispanic or Latino. These percentages show the wide variety of students walking through the doors of East Bridge Elementary on a daily and yearly basis. The students at East Bridge are in constant contact with various staff members in the building. They have continual contact with all of these adults throughout the day. Staff members consist of general and special education teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists, tutors, aides and special areas teachers.

Methods of Data Collection

To guide my data collection, I had one question that was leading the way. My research question for this study looked at whether as an AIS provider, my instructional practices, methods and efforts were effective. This question brings about the sub-question: have I accomplished the goals that RTI has created and designed to help students in need? To help me answer my research question, I picked four different ways to gather data. During the study I was writing in a journal, making daily observations, doing a self-evaluation, and I also had a peer/co-worker evaluate my teaching.

Journaling. My journaling took place anywhere from two to three times a week. I wrote down what my lesson consisted of and what I noticed about how the lesson went. In my entries I was focusing on my actions as the provider in response to how the students did with the lesson. To help with my journaling I looked to my lesson plans that I have written before I met with my groups. These two forms of observation and anecdotal notes helped to track my progress as the study progressed.

Self-evaluation. I evaluated myself as a service provider anywhere from one to two times a week. I found a trusted evaluation form and made adaptations to fit the criteria I am teaching to. I evaluated myself after I finished meeting with my groups. With the study complete, I have six self-evaluations. Self-evaluating was an opportunity for me to be honest with myself and gauge how I did compared to what I wanted to accomplish during the lessons. The self-evaluation forms are based on a 1-4 rating scale, 1 representing strong need for help and 4 representing sufficiently strong. Using this scale allowed me to give myself a ranging score dependent on my performance or use of a certain skill, strategy or technique.

Peer/co-worker evaluation. I had a co-worker come into my classroom and watch me teach a thirty-minute reading lesson to one of my daily groups. Although this was a self-study, having an outside opinion can also help me to reflect the work that I am doing on a daily basis. I adapted an evaluation form from Ohlone College. I gave the evaluation form to my co-worker the day I was observed. Once the lesson was finished, I sat down with my co-worker who evaluated me and discussed the evaluation form they filled out on my performance. The conversation with my co-worker allowed me to have a

better understanding of their ideas about my instruction. I also used the data from the peer evaluation form to help me continue on with my study.

Trustworthiness

The length of this study lasted six weeks. At the end of the six weeks I had twelve journal entries, six self-evaluation forms, and one co-worker evaluation. The forms of data collection, which were journaling, self-evaluating, and a co-worker evaluation, allowed for triangulation and created high reliability for this study. The journal entries varied from two to three pages in length depending on my day and the observations I made. They detailed my daily instructions from the time I began to the end of my day. The self-evaluations allowed me to personally take a look into my practices and required me to decide how I performed. The adapted self-evaluation forms focused on many areas of the day that aligned with my instructional practices. This evaluation form can be found in appendix A& B. As the study progressed, my evaluations gave me insight as to what themes repeat throughout my everyday methods.

My opinions and viewpoints also made a strong case in this research study. The data is gathered, organized, analyzed, and discussed further on in the study.

Findings

The main purpose of this self-study was to observe and examine my practices as an Academic Intervention System provider. My job is a direct result of the program RTI and the need for extra support for students throughout the school day. RTI's goals consist of maximizing student achievement, identifying at-risk students, and providing intervention to those who need it (Jackson & Elledge, 2014). The study was conducted to determine if I am meeting the goals of RTI. Throughout the duration of the study I

provided evidence of my everyday practices in various ways. I gathered data through observations, journaling, self and peer evaluations.

In the data I collected for six weeks, a number of themes began to become apparent. After analyzing all the data, I condensed the ideas and themes into four separate findings. First, I provided various instructional practices for the students. Second, in my research I found areas of my teaching in need of improvement. The third theme I found was what needs to be done in order to make the program successful? The last theme consisted of the key components for this job. The appearing themes from the data helped to answer the research question; as an AIS provider, how are my instructional practices, methods and efforts working?

Various Instructional Practices

RTI has several intended goals to help students succeed. One of the major components of RTI is providing responsive intervention to students based on individual needs (Jackson & Elledge, 2014). Any goal or intention of the program becomes mine when I take on the occupation of an AIS provider. The educators must understand what the job entails but must also apply the knowledge during instruction. Applying their understanding makes for effective instruction. Throughout the six-week observing and data collection phase, I noticed multiple practices the students were receiving from my instruction. The application of various techniques depended on the students, material being taught, and how long the instruction lasted. Throughout journal entries and the other forms of data collection, practices can be consistently found.

Although I frequently used various techniques, some were used more than others. Manipulatives was one form of practice I used a plethora of times during my instruction.

Over time and experience, I have found this type of instructional technique is extremely helpful to students. When using the Leveled Literacy Intervention System, I instruct students in word work lessons. During this specific portion of my teaching I constantly used different items to help keep the students engaged and learning. In my journal entries, such as on Monday October 25th, 2014 I documented myself using word cards for students to manipulate. In the entry I stated how I had the students use word cards to sort the words we practiced into different categories. Being able to hold and personally look at each word while doing the activity allowed for the students to interact at an individual level.

Another instructional practice I used frequently was modeling, shared and guided teaching. This practice comes from the gradual release of responsibility theory. Students take the responsibility of working independently at a gradual pace with the teacher beginning with all of the responsibility (Fisher & Frey, 2008). Using specific strategies allowed the students time to learn with support and then begin to work independently. Student independence will come once they have had enough guided instruction from the teacher. In my peer evaluation the observer made a note on my form about how I use the gradual release of responsibility as an instructional tool. She wrote on the form, “The instructor has a good use of varying teaching strategies. She started the lesson by modeling how the students should be looking for key information in the text about their specific topic. She then worked with the students to find an important fact and had the students explain how essential the fact is. When she felt confident, she let the students work on their own as she circulated them individually.” This note shows how I used

modeling, shared and guided teaching to help the students grasp the concept or task at hand.

My research also showed my use of note taking strategies as other forms of instructional practices during specific lessons.

<u>Instructional Practices</u>	<u>Journal Entry Date</u>	<u>How many times mentioned</u>
Leveled Literacy Intervention	Journal Entry (10/25/14)	5
Multiple steps	Journal Entry (10/25/14)	7
Re-reading for a purpose	Journal Entry (10/30/14)	3
Fluency/poem practice	Journal Entry (10/30/14)	6
Manipulatives	Journal Entry (11/3/14)	10+
Technology- iPads, videos	Journal Entry (11/14/14)	4
Prompting & Reminding	Journal Entry (11/14/14)	8
Graphic Organizers	Journal Entry (11/14/14)	3
Modeling, guided, shared	Journal Entry (11/17/14)	10+
Anecdotal notes	Journal Entry (11/17/14)	2
Revisiting & Reviewing	Journal Entry (11/18/14)	7
Running Reading Records	Journal Entry (11/18/14)	5
Group/partner discussions	Journal Entry (12/1/14)	7
Read a-loud, shared reading	Journal Entry (12/1/14)	4
Independent work	Journal Entry (12/2/14)	8
Flashcards and word cards	Journal Entry (12/4/14)	6
Writing activities	Journal Entry (12/4/14)	5
Immediate feedback	Journal Entry (12/5/14)	2
Note taking strategies	Journal Entry (12/5/14)	9

Figure 1. Various Instructional Practices Used in Instruction. This figure illustrates the multiple different techniques that I found in my data collection. The figure details the various pieces of evidence that I found

throughout my collection of data. The chart shows different practices that I used with the students, when I recorded to have used it during my practices, and how many times I found it in my data.

With the shifted increase in student learning standards, children are expected to read a text and take out the important information to help them understand the reading.

Educators have found the importance of giving students multiple strategies to support the various learning styles they all possess. Throughout the data collection, I provided and practiced several different note-taking strategies for the students. All students responded differently depending on how they learn. A few of the strategies I used during my instruction consisted of sticky notes, highlighting, and graphic organizers. Some strategies were used more frequently than others depending on the lesson, time constraints and efficiency. The overall purpose was to teach the students how to use the strategy and then practice to work towards independence when using it. By making the students take notes in a variety of ways, it holds them responsible for understanding the text they are reading along with keeping them engaged.

The detailed instructional practices above are just some of the frequently and most commonly used examples I found in my evidence. In a figure that follows, I record all of the various practices I found in my journal entries.

Figure 1 shows the varied numerous accounts of the differentiated instruction I give to my students on a daily basis. Over the six weeks of data collection, students received multiple forms of teaching. The data shows the main priority of RTI is being met within my instruction. I am meeting the needs of various learning styles of all my students. The practices I used were pulled from various sources. My sources consisted of materials I learned in previous schooling, ideas I came up with depending on the lesson, and ideas referred to me by my fellow colleagues. Knowing how to correctly use various

instructional practices in my groups or classroom is essential to being an efficient AIS provider. Students responding and progressing with the use of my differentiated instruction is one way to see how the practices are essential to my teaching. Whether I initially know what practices to use, or if I must rely on others for support, I am capable and willing to use multiple forms of instruction to teach my students.

Areas in Which I Need to Improve

During my research, I reflected on how I did as an AIS provider. Throughout the collected data, examples of my positive teaching attributes can be found. Along with my strong qualities, the data also shows areas in need of improvement. As an educator, improvement is not only beneficial for those in the field but also the students' teachers come in contact with on a daily to yearly basis. Evaluation forms are a type of data collection I used in the research study. Looking over the complete evaluation forms, I found common themes from the self-assessments. The evaluations highlight specific techniques and practices within certain areas in need of improvement. The areas consist of immediate feedback for students, instructional methods, and pacing.

One common theme was the need for immediate feedback to my students. Immediate feedback refers to an instructor giving the student some type of response after they have answered a question or given a response. On a majority of my self-evaluation forms, I gave myself either a 2 or 3 on the rating scale. Although not the lowest scores possible, this area never receives a sufficiently strong rating. When I evaluated myself on November 17th, 2014 I wrote an anecdotal note under this area on the evaluation form. The anecdotal note says, "Immediate feedback system should be put in place for particular activities and learning moments." Then on December 4th, 2014 I made another

comment on a self-evaluation that addressed my feedback to students. I rated myself a two that day for providing students with immediate feedback. I wrote in the comment box “Feedback is improving but still needs work. Specific feedback for the children will help them the most.” Giving students immediate feedback is extremely beneficial to their continual progress. Improvement on delivering effective feedback would be beneficial for the students and instructors.

The area of instructional methods also received mid-marks on the completed evaluations from the study. Instructional methods refer to how and what a teacher is using to instruct his or her students. Multiple forms of instruction fall under this specific category to be evaluated on. In the area of instructional methods, I ranged from 2-3 rating scale marks throughout all of my self-assessments. Each week the specific concerns get different marks depending on my instruction the day I assessed myself. Intended learning outcomes are an example of instructional methods I received mid-marks for. The data showed I appeared to be inconsistent when it came to informing the students of the intended outcomes. On December 7th, 2014 I wrote, “I need to do better with pointing out and describing what the students will be learning in the following lesson.” This quote also ties into the need of incorporating the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for the students as well. If I incorporated the CCLS more consistently for my students to see in daily lessons then I would be accomplishing multiple tasks. Improving this area of instruction would give students a daily objective and give my lessons a focus. CCLS being a major component of everyday instruction, requires students to have an understanding of what is expected to achieve and why. On November 3rd, 2014 I wrote an additional note about my instructional methods. I wrote, “Be sure to get across the

purpose as well as the concept the students will be learning. This will be beneficial to start and even end the lesson with restating the objectives.” Before every lesson, I already know what the purpose is and what I intend for the students to take from it. What I need to work on is stating daily objectives to students. It benefits the students in a variety of ways such as engagement and reasons for wanting to learn.

Along with my self-evaluations, a fellow colleague observed one of my lessons to gather data for the study. Once my colleague finished my observation, we discussed the evaluation form they filled out. Pacing is an area my colleague pointed out in need of improvement. Pacing in education refers to how fast or slow one is teaching a lesson. Using the correct pace is important for the students because some need more time than others to understand the instruction or what is being asked of the students. On the evaluation form she wrote, “At times, you rush through to get to the next activity or even vocabulary word during word study. Take the time for the students to understand the material to help you build upon future lessons.” The self-evaluations also revealed pacing an area I need to improve on. On December 2nd, 2014 I wrote, “Work on slowing certain aspects of the lesson down to make sure the students truly understand what you are teaching them.” Pacing will come with time, practice and mastery of certain topics. Although I do not always struggle with pacing, I could benefit from improvement in this area.

What Needs to be Done to Make RTI Successful?

While doing this research study, I thought, “I can’t be the only one who is wondering how they are doing as an RTI provider.” This brought me to another finding: What needs to be done? For RTI to be successful, it takes more than the simple task of

instructing to truly achieve the intended goals. Throughout my research I make note of several steps to further achieve progress for students, as well as for myself. I found assessing, preparing the material, and teaching the students with instructional tools would all be beneficial to students making notable progress.

Assessing. Assessing students is one theme I continuously found in the collected data. Frequently administering formal and informal assessments on students is needed to uphold the intentions and goals of RTI. On Thursday October 30th, 2014 I speak of assessing a student using a Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Assessment. The journal entry says, “I work with a student one-on-one to assess their progress. Using LLI’s assessment as a form of progress monitoring allows me to see how the students are doing with oral reading, fluency, and comprehension.” My quote not only describes the purpose of assessment it also specifies what specific aspects of reading are being assessed. On Tuesday November 18th, 2014 I have another entry discussing assessment. I wrote, “I was able to take down notes about how to instruct the student in the future during their assessment.” The anecdotal notes I wrote in my journal entries show multiple ways assessments are beneficial to the instructor both short and long term.

Preparing the students. Preparing and supporting students for the materials and instruction in the classroom is another element needing to be accomplished. Children chosen to be in the RTI program need further support to be successful in the classroom. Throughout my research I made multiple notes of how I help to achieve this goal. The instruction I provided for the students was based on their needs as well as the material being used in the classrooms. One way I helped to achieve this goal was by communicating and working with the cooperating classroom teachers. By working

together, we as educators were able to discuss instruction happening in the classroom and what would be helpful to happen during the AIS service time. I frequently emailed and had conversations with teachers about specific topics. Some students I shared with other educators. For example, a special education teacher and I shared multiple students to provide them the most support possible. On Tuesday November 18th, 2014 I wrote, “This group of students is shared with another teacher in the building, therefore our instruction revolves around each other.” The quote shows how cooperating together is beneficial to preparing the students.

Teaching with instructional tools. Teaching with and using instructional tools is another way I helped prepare students for the classroom. Many times I use the same type of learning gadgets classroom teachers use during my instruction time. Multiple reasons lead me to using this method. One reason is for preparing the students for when they work in their classrooms. By using the same or similar learning gadgets, students had a better chance of succeeding with the material being taught in the room. On Friday November 14th, 2014 I wrote, “Today we used a graphic organizer to get our thoughts together before writing. Having students use these can prepare them for the classroom as well as their future school work.” The use of these tools has long and short-term benefits. Consistency from classroom to AIS instruction was another way I found myself preparing the students in my research. Being consistent allowed the students to hear and see similar things to help them solidify their understanding of a certain topic or technique. In my journal entry on Tuesday November 18th, 2014 I wrote, “The important piece is reminding the students to use the same process when solving math problems. Consistency

from the instructor is extremely key in helping the students earn success.” On a daily basis I made sure to use similar instructing tools to support my students.

Key Components of the Program

Researchers, founders, creators, and educators have completed a vast number of studies to find what truly drives this program to make it work. After completing my research study I have found a few key components allowing RTI to be successful. The first key component I found was differentiating instruction. Throughout my data, I had a large amount of evidence showing how I differentiated my instruction on a daily basis. The purpose of this program is helping students who need extra support learning and mastering the materials being taught in the classroom. Therefore students require varied types of instruction such as, being retaught differently, receive extra repetition, given helpful tools to understand concepts, or mixture of all the options together. Regardless of what the students need, the RTI provider must decide what is required and create instruction based on the determined needs. Once my data was collected, I created a tally chart of themes.

One of the themes that came to the forefront was the use of different instructional methods. After going through all my journal entries, I tallied a grand total of 165 various methods I used throughout my data-collecting phase of this study. This theme had the largest number of tallies by far compared to the others. Along with the tally chart, my peer evaluation also had evidence of me using differentiated instruction. In two sections of the peer evaluation, my coworker made note of my differentiated instruction and how it was used. She wrote, “The instructional methods used in the lesson helped to support the students learning and understanding. Methods seemed to be thought out, instructor

seems to know her students and what they need.” Differentiating instruction is a very important key concept when it comes to RTI. Varying the types of instruction used in a lesson helps the students in the program succeed.

Another key component of RTI is communication. All the educators and staff members involved in this program should be continuously discussing the students’ progress and needs. The children in this program are coming from their classrooms to work with another educator or staff to get extra support. Without communication between the multiple instructors, it would be difficult to truly know how the student is responding to the program. Throughout my research data, I found myself constantly checking in and discussing my students with their other teachers. Communication was initiated by any of the various educators sharing the same students. The two main forms of communication used was either emailing or face-to-face conversations. My journal entries document many occasions where I communicated with other educators. On November 12th, 2014 I wrote, “Today, the special education teacher and I met to speak about the students we share. Since we both service the same group of third and fourth graders, we like to meet and discuss progress, needs, and types of instruction being used with the students. The open communication we had helped us to stay on top of our students and give them the best instruction they could receive. Then on Thursday October 30th I wrote, “Today I sent an email to one of the fourth grade teachers about a student I service from her classroom. I wanted to get her opinion on how one student is performing in the classroom.” Having this constant type of communication with a fellow teacher is not only beneficial to the teacher but the student as well.

Monitoring and assessing is another key component to RTI. By monitoring and assessing, the instructor is able to remain updated on the students' progress as frequently as they feel necessary. An educator has several ways they can choose to assess their students. Whether they choose formal or informal, the assessment will give the instructor valuable information about the student. The information could provide how to instruct the student in the future, what the student has improved on, and even potentially lead the student out of the program due to his or her success. Regardless of what information it provides, monitoring and assessing is an essential component to RTI. Throughout my data collection, multiple pieces of evidence showed me using and or administering assessments. On November 17th, 2014 I document my experience assessing a fourth grade student. In my journal entry, I wrote, "I take notes down as the student reads to me and then answers comprehension questions. This is all within one Leveled Literacy Intervention assessment. The student is reading aloud a familiar text and then answers specific questions about, beyond, and within the text." The journal entry documents me using a formal assessment on a student to gather information on them. Informal assessment is another form of monitoring students when working with them. This allows the teacher to do on the spot assessments of their students. Informal assessment is just as important because it gives you in the moment data on students you are working with. Throughout my data collection, I found pieces of evidence that showing how I used informal assessments. On Tuesday November 18th, 2014 I had an entry stating, "I prompted the students as they shared and discussed their ideas to help them think deeper. This is an area many of the students need help with. At the end of the discussion I had each student tell me what they thought the message of the text was." Asking my students

a comprehension question and having them respond orally allowed me to see how they were thinking. Whether a formal or informal assessment, the instructor must frequently monitor the students. Their progress or further support will come from the data, therefore making assessment a key component of RTI.

The purpose of this self-study was to analyze and evaluate my effectiveness as an AIS provider. By gathering data through observations, journaling, self-evaluations and peer evaluations, I was able to discover various ways I support my students. My first finding was assessment being critical to discovering how my practices were impacting my students. As a reflective practitioner, I have found areas in which I need to improve to grow as an educator. My research has also shown what steps need to be taken for the program to be successful. Additionally, I have discovered through my research what key components make RTI function. These findings have further allowed me insight into the effectiveness of myself as an AIS provider.

Conclusions & Implications

As a teacher conducting research, I wanted to create a study revolving around the question: are my instructional methods, practices and efforts effective? This research question guided the study over a six-week period in the search for answers and evidence. In this chapter I included my conclusions to the data I gathered throughout my research based study. My conclusions show what I have taken from the collected data and what steps I should take as a result of this self-study.

An AIS provider requires preparation, training and learning, just like any other profession, to be an efficient educator. This self-study supplies data clearly supporting reasons to have steps to prepare future educators and specifically AIS providers. The

conclusions I gathered from my data consist of the need for professional development, college preparation courses, and required observations for AIS providers.

Professional Development Needed

As educators, staying up to date on the latest techniques, methods of teaching, and practices being used in classrooms across the nation is extremely important. Professional development courses have been created for teachers to attend to gather this important information. Requiring teachers to meet a certain amount of professional development hours, gives them the opportunity to see and hear about new and upcoming methods. It will be up to the teachers to use the methods in their classroom to best support their students. As a part time employee, my fellow AIS providers and I are not required under our occupation to meet an hourly requirement of professional development. Specific topics pertaining to RTI would have an extremely large benefit to AIS providers. My interactions along with my findings show it would be beneficial for RTI/AIS providers to have an hourly requirement to meet in professional development classes. As an extra support educator, having access to the same types of courses would help to improve AIS teaching methods and practices. Throughout my research study, I am continuously using various strategies and techniques to help my students succeed. Although I have a number of methods to use, I am always looking for various strategies to see if they fit my students' needs better. A requirement to go to professional development would help me to collaborate and learn from others what is being researched and used in various schools.

An hourly professional development requirement for AIS providers' would be beneficial when trying to find a full time position. The more learning opportunities available from workshops will allow AIS providers to become more experienced when

landing full time positions. Putting professional development on a résumé would be seen as a positive attribute to a potential administrator. As a candidate, a potential teacher would be able to discuss the experience in these courses and what they have learned from them. AIS providers would also be able to portray how this knowledge could be used in the classroom. The information gained from development workshops could help the transition into becoming full time teachers. Overall, professional development has multiple benefits for both teachers and students. It allows the teachers to be using the best forms and concepts of instruction while students reap the benefits from this knowledge.

A Mentorship Program for New AIS Providers

When newly hired teachers begin working, a mentor is assigned to them. Veteran teachers, those who instructed for multiple years, are chosen to work with a new teacher in a variety of ways. Mentors serve as an outlet for new educators to ask questions, clarify, and receive advice about anything in need of understanding. Having a mentorship program in place is extremely beneficial to new teachers. New, full time teachers are given their mentors in the beginning of the year to allow for an easier transition into their position. New and veteran teachers are required to meet multiple times throughout the school year to assess the progress of new educators. Along with required meetings between the assigned veteran and new teacher, occasional meetings with the building principal would also take place. The building principal covers general information during the scheduled meetings along with answering any building level questions the new hire needs clarified.

AIS providers are typically not provided with a mentor when they are hired. A majority of providers are hired as part-time employees in a school building. This is one

reason why AIS support is not given a mentor. After doing this research study and holding the position of an AIS provider for two years, a mentor for this occupation would be extremely beneficial. Given the chance to meet with a veteran teacher to ask questions, check on progress and clarify particular parts of the job would be helpful to any new hire. As a new employee, knowing who to speak to when a question arises relieves a small pressure. Having a specific person to reach out allows for an easy line of communication between a new and veteran employee. Although bonds and relationships are formed with other coworkers due to the nature of teaching, a mentor represents a trustworthy person to look to for advice. Being an AIS provider requires a large amount of communication and collaborating at all times. A mentor can help guide new employees through their first year, getting acclimated to the building and the members who work within those walls. Implementing this program for new AIS providers would proactively make sure the support being provided is effective and efficient.

Required Observations Needed

One form of data collection I used was evaluations, both self and peer. Using evaluations is a valuable example of obtaining information on how effective people are performing in their occupation. In most fields, employees are required to be observed or evaluated while working to grade their techniques, abilities, and methods. Administrators in this position are looking for positives and areas of improvement of the particular employee being evaluated. Teaching is one profession requiring mandatory observations happening at least twice a year depending on the employee's job status. The school principal is required to observe each teacher in the building teaching a lesson to their class. The teacher fills out a reflection piece after the lesson while the principal writes up

an observation document for the teachers to see once complete. Currently, part-time AIS providers are not required to have an observation completed during the school year. After concluding this study, I believe it should be a requirement for part-time educators to also have an observation conducted before the school year is complete.

Observing part-time AIS providers would be beneficial to multiple groups. Having an evaluation done would be extremely helpful to the educator being observed. The purpose of the observation is to see how effective instructor is, what they are doing well and what can be improved on. If part-time AIS providers were required to be observed at least once a year, they would be able to benefit and improve from this experience. The administrator, specialist, or educational staff member chosen to do the observation can provide valuable information the teacher can use to improve or continue in their instructional practices. This evaluation would also be beneficial to the administrator or staff member who completes the form. The information gathered from the observation would provide data on the instructors currently work in the building. It is important to know how teachers are doing in their classrooms. Teachers are responsible for the succession of the students, therefore making the evaluators responsible for giving the students the best teacher to provide the best instruction. The data allows the observer to relay helpful feedback to the teacher being observed. It can also help the administrator see what types of practices are being used in the building, areas in need of improvement and what practices are successful. Lastly, the students benefit from teacher observations. Although the children are not being truly observed, the reason their teacher gets evaluated is because of them. Students deserve the best educators and the most effective instructional practices; required observations help to achieve these goals.

Implications for My Teaching

After conducting this study, I have gained a deeper understanding of myself as an educator and it will have a positive impact on my future instruction. I have benefitted from the research and findings from this study in multiple ways.

Taking the time to look at my own instruction has given me a whole new outlook on what I do on daily basis. In a field where it can be extremely discouraging due to various outside factors I have no control of, it is easy to feel helpless or ineffective. This study has shown me as an educator, three years out of college, I have learned and accomplished quite a bit in this short time period. Although I have gained valuable insight, I also look forward to my continued journey as a growing educator. On a daily basis I communicate with fellow educators about shared students, differentiate my instruction to meet the needs of all my students, instruct based determined needs of the students, give feedback to help students continue progressing, and opportunities for students to take a risk in their own personal learning. The ability to improve and grow is something driving my desire for teaching year after year.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conducting this research allowed me to take a deeper look into RTI and gather data on it. The data I gathered has led me to two recommendations for future research on this topic. The two recommendations consist of a longer time period for the research and having the study contain student samples.

Longer Period of Time for Study

This self-study took place over a six week time period. Conducting this study over a longer time period, while assessing my practices, could have allowed me to find deeper or possibly more findings within the data collected. During the time I conducted this study, the school had off multiple days or meetings took place causing interrupted instruction. If the study was completed over a longer time period, the interruptions may have been less detrimental to the study.

Having the Study Contain Student Samples

This research was conducted as a self-study to specifically look into my own personal practices as an AIS provider in result of RTI. I decided not to include student work or student participants to focus in on my practices overall. If this study were done again, I would look into obtaining and using student work to get a different perspective. If other participants were used, I could look to their progress as a determining factor to the research question. This would alter many components of the study but would give even more in depth findings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine how my instructional practices, techniques and methods were working as an AIS provider. I began discussing the importance of RTI caused by the shift in instructional standards due to the CCLS. I then reviewed the literature currently circulating about RTI and the effect on schools across the nation. My data collection was then presented along with the various findings I produced from my data. Lastly I provided the conclusions I obtained from the findings and the data provided. As a self-study I took a deep look into my personal teaching

methods and looked for the positives and areas of need. This study gives researchers another way to look at how educators are responding to RTI.

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Appendix A

OHLONE COLLEGE
PEER EVALUATION SUMMARY FORM A

Faculty member evaluated: _____ [] Contract Faculty
[] Permanent

Summary prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Other Peer Group member(s): _____

I. Comments on Characteristics

Please consider the following characteristics in assessing the performance of the faculty member. Indicate if the characteristic is not applicable or observable.

- a. Organization of classroom activities
- b. Clarification of objectives
- c. Knowledge of subject
- d. Teaching techniques
- e. Communication skills
- f. Ability to arouse interest in subject matter
- g. Interaction with students
- h. Other

II. Specific Strengths

Please comment on the specific areas and abilities in which the faculty member excels.

III. Suggestions for Improvement

Please indicate specific areas on which the faculty member could focus his/her attention in the coming semester(s).

IV. Overall Summary of Performance

Signatures: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

OHLONE COLLEGE
PEER EVALUATION SUMMARY FORM B

Faculty member evaluated: _____ [] Contract Faculty
[] Permanent

Summary prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Other Peer Group member(s): _____

Rating Scale: 1 = Below standards/consultation needed 2 = Average - acceptable standards 3 = Commendable - exceeds standards 4 = Excellent	NA = Not Applicable NO = Not Observed
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Using the above rating scale, circle the appropriate rating.

I. STUDENT CONTACT

1. Displays mastery of subject matter	1	2	3	4	
NA NO					
2. Uses current subject matter	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
3. Meets instructional objectives of curricula	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
4. Plans/organizes presentation	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
5. Uses a variety of techniques; lecture, demonstration, video, discussion	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
6. Uses examples to clarify concepts	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
7. Includes relevant material/activities	1	2	3	4	
NA NO					
8. Uses time efficiently	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
9. Is skilled in use of instructional equipment	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
10. Enforces appropriate classroom behavior	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
11. Has good eye contact	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					
12. Is perceptive and responsive to class dynamics	1	2	3	4	NA
NO					

13. Demonstrates vitality/enthusiasm NO	1	2	3	4	NA
14. Uses voice effectively NO	1	2	3	4	NA
15. Generates interest/elicits participation NO	1	2	3	4	NA
16. Moves smoothly from topic to topic NO	1	2	3	4	NA
17. Promotes a climate of mutual respect NO	1	2	3	4	NA
18. Encourages open exchange of ideas NO	1	2	3	4	NA
19. Encourages critical thinking & analysis NO	1	2	3	4	NA
20. Shows sensitivity to needs/interests of a NO	1	2	3	4	NA
diverse group of students, i.e. age, cultural, working, etc.					
OTHER:					
21a. _____ 4			1	2	3
21b. _____ 4			1	2	3