Title of Session: Special Education Forum - RTI
Moderator: Paul Bohac
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Room: Special Education Forum Group

BJB2: why don't we start with intros, Paul?

PaulDB: Works for me

JeffC: don't we all know each other by now?

BJB2: because Leo is new to this group, Jeff

JeffC: oh... sorry

PaulDB: I don't know anything about Leo

BJB2 . o O (we're networking, silly ;-))

BJB2: Jeff and Leo and I were just in a discussion about social networking

LeoL: I'm a drummer currently teaching academics in a school for E/D adolescents

JeffC thought *everybody* knew Leo!

BJB2: Leo is also taking classes for special ed

LeoL: hehe Leo doesn't know Leo

PaulDB: I am a retired Correctional Education Administrator with a background in Special Education (for those who don't know me)

BJB2: and I'm a retired correctional ed teacher

PaulDB: Well, last month we spent time talking about IEP's and the new RTI approach. Is that a topic we want to further discuss tonight?

PaulDB: Or is there something more pressing we should address?

JeffC is the resident wiseguy here.

BJB2: sorry that we didn't get back some of the people who were here for the last discussion, Paul. RTI can be confusing

LeoL: Many of my students are involved with probation, some from corrections

PaulDB: Yes, especially with the effort to "institutionalize" the program.

JeffC: how many of your teachers are on probation, Leo?

LeoL: none at the moment

PaulDB: Hope it stays that way!!

LeoL: as far as

JeffC: hehe... well... I was thinking Jersey... ok... I'll shut up.

BJB2: Leo at one time lead a discussion on using music across the curriculum, Paul

PaulDB: Actually, working with kids on probation can be more hazardous than working with other population groups.

BJB2 agrees with Paul

LeoL: RTI is response to intervention?

BJB2 nods to Leo

PaulDB: Yes

LeoL: k.. reading up now

BJB2: I've put a folder of resources in this group room

PaulDB: Think about as a formal Pre-referral activity.

PaulDB: Only more detailed and specific, but with the same intended outcome.

PaulDB: Actually, what it does is place the regular education teacher in the "drivers seat" as it relates to the kind of content in the IEP.

LeoL: ok .. universal screening... ID the kids w/ problems

LeoL follows Paul

PaulDB: More than "screening", it involves the development and implementation of "intervention" plans prior to the actual referral of the kid for further evaluation.

LeoL: yeah.. I'm catching on..

LeoL: nice plan

PaulDB: To a large extent, it should provide the regular classroom teacher with an opportunity to define if not refine, the basis for making the referral.

LeoL . o O (glad he followed Bj in here. Has Paul, BJ, Jeff, like a 3 on 1tutoring session)

BJB2: Maryann gave an example during her classroom assessment of a student who was not understanding math...

JeffC isn't here to tutor... just make weird comments.

PaulDB: It could even help identify ineffective teaching strategies by the regular ed teacher, but that is not something we would want to discuss.

BJB2: so the teacher gave the child a set of blocks and had them show 17

BJB2: the child lined the blocks in a horizontal row

LisaSt joined the room.

PaulDB: Hello Lisa

BJB2: when asked to show another way to show 17, the child lined the blocks vertically...

LisaSt: Hi Paul

BJB2: had no concept of 5 + 12 = 17

BJB2 . o O (or any other combination)

BJB2: would that be a kind of RTI, Paul?

BJB2 waves hi to Lisa

LeoL: maybe addition just never occurred to the student?

LisaSt: Sorry I'm late-can someone catch me up?

PaulDB: It would be a start, but it depends on what the teacher was trying to do.

BJB2: we're discussing Response to Intervention (RTI), Lisa

LisaSt: Thanks

PaulDB: For example, was the teacher trying to learn if the child recognized "17" as a number concept or as a "set"?

BJB2 will have to re-look at the transcript!

LeoL: a number concept would be 5+12?

BJB2 . o O (Maryann explained it much more clearly)

PaulDB: More importantly, there was no "intervention" identified.

LeoL: an intervention would be to show 4 +13, 5 +12, then see what happened next?

PaulDB: For example, if the lesson was focused on numbers, an assessment of the child's knowledge could have been attempted by asking the child to demonstrate 17.

BJB2 . o O (the kid was in the 7th grade and failing math)

PaulDB: Depending on what the child did (horizontal or vertical stacking) would indicate a possible lack of understanding of the task.

BJB2: "Denise: Maybe he was thinking about it spatially, versus quantity"

BJB2: "Maria: That's the problem, that many times the teachers don't take (or don't have) the time to notice these things."

BJB2: "Maryann: yes, he was thinking that way. and when we talked about quantity, like show me 17 in other quantities he could not do it either. Yes, he had the two combined"

PaulDB: Clarification of the task such as what Leo suggested, could be an "intervention" to determine how to present the task assignment.

RaulS joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Raul

RaulS: hello

BJB2: we're discussing RTI (Response to Intervention)

RaulS: Sorry I'm late but my poetry reading ran a bit long

LeoL: ty Paul

PaulDB: If the child did not understand the concept of 17, that would be evident if Leo's suggestion did not result in a satisfactory answer/task performance.

LeoL feels somewhat competent... rare

BJB2: is RTI related to task analysis?

PaulDB: Intervention would then begin at the point where the "child's understanding" was evident.

PaulDB: YES!!!

PaulDB: Asking a child to perform a task usually occurs after some sort of instruction is provided.

PaulDB: When a child cannot perform the task, some sort of analysis is to be performed to try and determine the cause for the child's inability to perform.

PaulDB: Part of the process for determining the child's inability to perform is based on the sequence of steps, or the requisite level of knowledge, or the physical capacity to perform the assigned task.

PaulDB: Task analysis allows one to break the task down into its most elemental steps.

BJB2 remembers that from the course Paul taught ;-)

BJB2: Raul and Lisa, any comments?

PaulDB: Once completed, the "intervention" is implemented to help the child move forward. If the initial intervention is not successful, another is tried.

RaulS: just trying to get caught up

PaulDB: RTI asks for each such intervention to be document and the results are also to be documented.

BJB2: only flaw in that process is that if you have a large class, how are you supposed to be able to fine tune that individualization?

LisaSt: Frankly, I have been out of the system for awhile and am out of my league. I am getting back into the system as a school psychologist so I am interested just to follow the conversation about RTI- that came after I left.

BJB2: Lisa, there are some RTI resources listed under featured items on the welcome screen

PaulDB: That is where the process begins to unravel, unless one is able to conceptualize an "instructional group".

LisaSt: Thanks-I'll definitely take a look

PaulDB: By that I mean that there will be several students in a class who do not seem to perform like the others.

RaulS: are we talking about special in the classroom or self-contained

BJB2 thinks this works in either situation, Raul, although self-contained would already have IEPs

LeoL: At the risk of getting off the path, and if I'm way off ignore me, but is there a structural similarity to ABA

PaulDB: We are talking about a regular ed classroom where one or more students are being considered for referral for special education evaluation.

PaulDB: Leo, I am not familiar with ABA. Please explain.

LeoL: applied behavior analysis

PaulDB: Very similar in terms of intended outcomes just a different focus (behavior versus academic performance).

LeoL: thank you

LeoL: RTI makes sense

PaulDB: Remember, IDEA requires that a pre-referral be completed on every youth suspected of needing spec ed services.

LeoL . o O (and I can't really tell with my students where behavoir ends and acdemics begins)

PaulDB: RTI is just a formal method of conducting and structuring that pre-referral process.

PaulDB: Leo, I would suggest that achievement precedes accomplishment.

LeoL: I don't understand

PaulDB: When a child begins to achieve success in the classroom, their behavior tends to improve.

LeoL: yeah!

LeoL . o O (that's what I came up with too!)

PaulDB: Most discipline problems in the classroom occur because the child is getting frustrated at not being able to perform like his/her peers.

LeoL: yes You can get them to line up (if that's what you're aiming for) but that doesn't engage them

LeoL: engage them first

LeoL: ok sorry to get you off track

PaulDB: The teacher begins to focus on the child, if progress does not occur, the teacher can become frustrated and that is transmitted to the child who in turn becomes more upset.

LisaSt: Although I think it's true about achievement, I think impulse control can trip up kids who are not struggling academically

PaulDB: Getting back to RTI, cooperative learning groups can help a lot in beginning to identify where the child is having a problem.

PaulDB: That is true Lisa, but impulse control is oftentimes a reflection of unidentified frustration, anger, or depression.

LisaSt: Absolutely

PaulDB: As a result, if attention can be focused more on achievement and more efforts devoted to help the child achieve and less on conduct, the behavior can begin to be more self-controlled than other-controlled.

PaulDB: In a cooperative learning group, the teacher assigns the task, then helps the group members determine how the task is to be sub-divided.

PaulDB: Of course, if it is an elementary class in the early grades, the teacher may have to assign task to various group members.

PaulDB: The emphasis is on group success and cooperative efforts to accomplish the task.

BJB2: cooperative learning groups would require a certain amount of social skills, would they not?

PaulDB: Teacher's monitoring of the group effort will reveal a lot about how each member of the group is able to work on the task and to work with the other group members.

BJB2 nods

PaulDB: Information thus obtained could go a long way towards helping the teacher identify an "intervention" for one or more of the group members.

LeoL: Like Bj suggested, you'd have to account for differing levels of social skills in the group.. might skew the researchers perceptions

LeoL: the co-op activity is a screening then yes?

PaulDB: True about differing levels of social skills exhibited, but knowledge of child development milestones and characteristics should minimize the skewing of perceptions.

LeoL: understood

PaulDB: Cooperative groups can be both an instructional activity while also a screening activity. It is the skill of the teacher that will make it so.

PaulDB: I am a big believer in cooperative learning activities because it allows for the natural socialization between and among kids. It also allows the teacher an opportunity to observe their students in a way not possible in a straight lecture setting.

BJB2: good point, Paul!

RaulS: I completely agree with that

LeoL: So is RTI a process with a beginning and an end, or is it a teaching practice?

LeoL: I'm leaning toward process

PaulDB: Also, kids working with kids (peer to peer tutoring) can provide a level of explanation that the teacher may not have considered. Not to mention that kids talking with each other will use language and expressions the teacher may not know.

BJB2: before we wrap this discussion, a reminder that the Special Ed Forum will meet again on January 12

BJB2: Leo, did you get your questions answered?

BJB2: Lisa and Raul, any questions or comments?

LeoL: I sure got a lot of them answered Bj

PaulDB: Remember, RTI has two parts: Response-what the child does; and Intervention-what the teacher does.

LisaSt: Thank you all-very interesting and informative

LeoL: I'm still looking to see process or practice

BJB2: if you haven't joined this group, you might want to do that. A reminder is posted for upcoming chats

PaulDB: Leo, RTI is a process, but it is one that can be integrated into the art and science of teaching because it speaks to the teacher activities that facilitate student learning.

LeoL: Ok. good .. I feel like teaching

LeoL: thanks Paul

PaulDB: Basic educational paradigm involves instruction, guided practice, independent practice, evaluation.

RaulS: this is the first time I've heard about these methods. I'm looking for things to help me in the classroom next year and I like what I read tonight

BJB2: thanks, Paul.

BJB2: Raul, please do join this discussion in January!

PaulDB: RTI is about the selection of an intervention when the instruction, practice and guided practice did not result in acceptable evaluation performance.

BJB2: Paul always does such a good job

LeoL: So RTI is usually outside the paradigm

LeoL: but can be used inside?... good teaching

PaulDB: No, I prefer to think of RTI AS the paradigm but with a more specific purpose.

RaulS: well I'll have my reading done for next time then, Jan 12

LeoL: ok, nice distinction thanks

BJB2 waves goodnight.

RaulS: I have to take a final exam in 5 min so I must go

BJB2: good luck, Raul!

LeoL: good luck Raul

PaulDB: We use it to help identify children for referral for Special education evaluation. But in its more basic form, as teachers we use it almost everyday in the classroom.

LeoL: Thanks again Paul

LeoL: yes we're saying the same thing I think

PaulDB: Good luck Raul!!

PaulDB: We are Leo.

BJB2 hugs Paul and Leo goodnight. Happy holidays.

LeoL: Happy Holidays, and Thanks again Paul

PaulDB: Happy Holidays to each of you!!

LeoL: ciao Jeff