School Librarians and Response to Intervention

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Abstract

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a three-tiered model of instruction that increases learning for all students. RtI meets the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act to provide research-based instruction and interventions for students as needed. RtI is supported with federal funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and federal Race to the Top grant funding.

School districts nationwide are adopting RtI. For this study school librarians in schools that practice RtI participated in an online survey. Results indicate that seven processes are needed to implement RtI programs. Sixty-two percent of the surveyed librarians have a role in one or more of these processes. The school librarian's involvement differs depending on which processes are supported. Data demonstrate that, in support of RtI activities, librarians have opportunities to lead and assist teachers and to impact student achievement through each of the seven processes: getting started, training staff, planning interventions, assessing students, scheduling interventions, implementing interventions, and evaluating the RtI program.

Introduction

A growing body of research demonstrates the effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RtI) in improving student performance (Gersten et al. 2009; National Implementation Research Network 2011). As a result RtI is gaining support among educators and legislators throughout the United States. As of July 2011, forty-eight states have an RtI task force, and forty provide training in RtI. RtI is practiced in 70 percent of the elementary schools nationwide, in 47 percent of the middle schools, and 30 percent of the high schools (Institute of Education Sciences 2011).

RtI meets the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) to provide research-based instruction and interventions that help all students achieve grade-level expectations. RtI is supported with federal funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). It aligns with the requirements for federal Race to the Top grant funding (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 2011). The goal of RtI is to increase learning for all students and to identify those students who need additional, more intensive instruction (Fuchs and Deshler 2007, 131).

School librarians are searching for ways to participate in Response to Intervention programs. The need for traditional library services and resources continues in schools with RtI. However, school

librarians may expand their roles as they participate in the processes required to implement RtI successfully. Little is available in the research literature about the role of school librarians in RtI schools. A scattering of articles urge school librarians to seek out training to build expertise on RtI and the resources that support it (Cox 2010; Gavigan and Kurtts 2010; Harris 2006; "Response to Intervention" 2011; Vandenbroek 2010). For the implementation process, the articles advise librarians to reinforce classroom learning when students are in the library, provide enrichment for students, and differentiate instruction through the use of technology. Librarians are encouraged to use personal learning networks to support and encourage teachers.

This is a preliminary study designed to gather data on the ways RtI is currently impacting the work of school librarians. It describes results from a survey and follow-up phone interviews with school librarians in schools where RtI is being implemented. The data revealed seven processes needed for RtI and the opportunities these provide for librarian involvement.

Components of Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a three-tiered model of instruction and instructional intervention that uses evidence-based practice, systematic data collection, and data-based decision making (Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed. 2010a). RtI has been practiced in special-education programs for many years and in some districts has recently expanded into a school-wide initiative (Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed. 2011). It incorporates research-based instructional strategies, student-centered personalized instruction, and a high level of collaboration among school personnel to meet the instructional needs of individual students (Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed. n.d. and 2010b).

RtI builds clear connections between curricular, instructional, and behavior-management decisions and learner outcomes (Mellard 2010; National Center on Response to Intervention 2010). It requires a school-wide organizational framework that allows educators to use data to make decisions about instructional practice and curriculum. Whenever RtI is implemented as a school-wide initiative, it changes the work of everyone involved, including school librarians.

RtI employs data about students gathered from tests and other performance measurements. Components include screening of all students, monitoring progress, designing instruction in various tiers (or levels) of intensity, and relying on rules based on data for decision making. Instruction, assessment, and intervention are provided in a three-level system that maximizes student achievement and reduces behavior problems. RtI catches issues early and provides individual students with the supports they need to learn the content before moving on to new learning objectives.

Intervention occurs during blocks of time set aside in a school day, when students are divided by instructional needs and sent to work with teachers and other school personnel. Students who learned the content successfully in the first tier of instruction engage in enrichment activities during this period. Other students receive re-teaching of the content they did not learn in the first tier of instruction. Students identified as needing more intensive instruction work with various experts on individualized learning activities during the intervention period.

RtI is typically implemented first in the elementary grades. Although also beneficial in secondary education (Duffy 2007), it is more challenging to implement in secondary schools because of the

nature of student schedules. Its implementation is often supported and guided by a school's professional learning community (DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour 2005). The subject areas most commonly targeted are reading, followed by math, with other subjects added as teachers' expertise with RtI develops. Instructional strategies vary from highly programmed to more imaginative curricula, although, ideally, all strategies are research-based. Successful RtI programs provide intense training to teachers and other school personnel involved (Kurns and Tilly 2008).

Established Advantages

Schools that implement RtI experience a variety of benefits to students, teachers, and parents, including reducing the impact of substandard instruction and the need for remediation. Students arrive at school with varying levels of preparation (Mellard 2010). Some start out well prepared, while others arrive with multiple gaps in knowledge and missing skills, both problems that must be addressed. Identifying the knowledge gaps and missing skills in a timely manner helps these students to catch up and keep up with their peers.

Mellard (2010) cited data that suggest remediation costs nearly twice as much as initial instruction. The economic impact follows students to college if they struggle to catch up by taking developmental classes that don't apply toward their degrees (Parsad, Lewis, and Greene 2003). Focusing attention on helping students learn the content at the same time as their peers avoids the need for remediation later.

When RtI guides practice, school personnel provide the best possible instruction for every student (Mellard 2010). Teachers use data on student performance to diagnose problems and design solutions for individual students. Teachers employ research-based instructional practices and continually monitor their own teaching practice, basing their judgments on student performance and behavioral data. Educators' focus on proven instructional strategies and use student performance and behavioral data to ensure students get the help they need when they need it. They receive consistently good instruction, and they avoid both academic and behavioral difficulties.

Teachers receive ongoing and useful feedback on their instruction. They know from the data collected when their instruction is successful. They have the advantage of working in teams with other teachers and school personnel rather than facing teaching challenges in isolation. The teams collaborate on instructional decisions for each student based on student-performance data and research on best practice.

Parents also benefit from RtI in schools. They receive information early and in an ongoing manner about their child's progress (Swartz, Geraghty-Jenkinson, and Franklin-Guy 2011, 11). Teachers communicate with the home about the curriculum, instructional practices, support parents can provide, and student performance.

The RtI Model

RtI is divided into three levels of instructional activity, called tiers (Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed. 2010a; National Center on Response to Intervention 2010; Shapiro n.d.); see **Figure 1**. Tier 1 is regular instruction in the classroom. About 80 percent of the student population should learn the content well enough to progress to the next part of the

curriculum. If fewer than 80 percent meet the established learning goals, teachers know their instructional practice needs to be reconsidered and refined.

Tier 2 is the standard treatment protocol. It targets the 20 percent of students who did not learn the content in tier 1. They receive additional instruction, which may be differentiated, scripted, structured, and explicit. They may learn in small groups or receive individualized tutoring. This tier should provide successful learning for an additional 15 percent of the students.

Tier 3 is for problem-solving intervention. It is for the remaining 5 percent of students who have not yet learned the content in the previous two tiers. Students in tier 3 receive individualized instruction provided by instructors operating at very high levels of expertise and creativity. Tier 3 students may or may not be identified as needing special-education supports (Fuchs and Deshler 2007).

Figure 1. The Three RtI Tiers
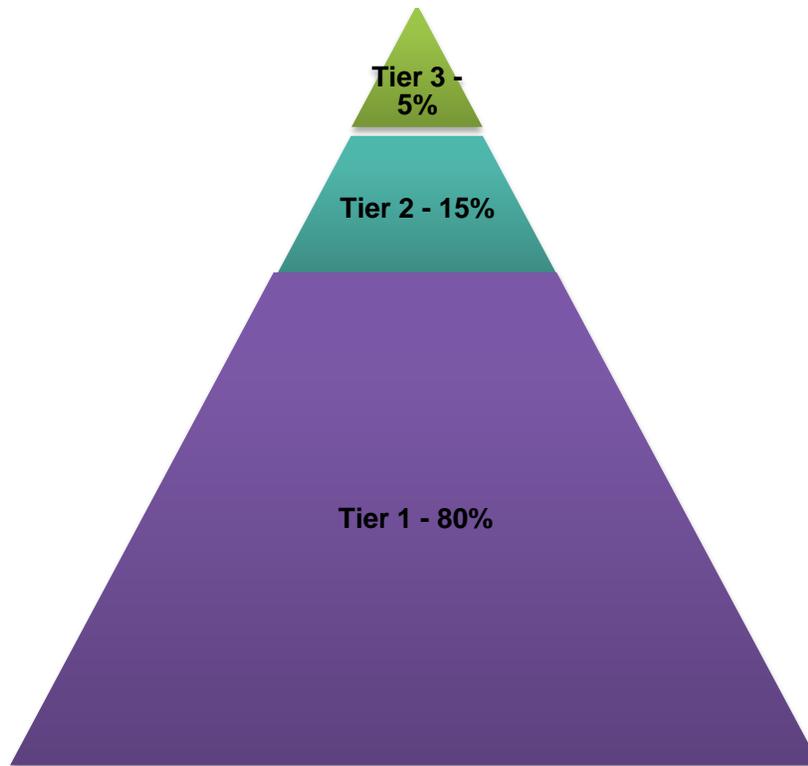
Fidelity
To make effective data-driven decisions, teachers use research-based strategies for interventions and implement them with fidelity. Fidelity, as it relates to RtI, implies that interventions are implemented as intended and that a data system is used to measure student outcomes from the interventions. Teachers and other school personnel have data that demonstrate that students are screened effectively, student learning is measured with care, and instructional decisions are based on data (Johnson et al. 2006, 4.2). The educators responsible for interventions are identified and are held accountable for student learning. They document their instruction with specificity, describing operations, techniques, and components used. Interventions are linked to improved outcomes.

A well-implemented program includes evaluation for fidelity and sustainability. Such a program requires multiple years to develop and is based on teachers' working together (as in a professional learning community) to build consensus. The school day includes time to collaborate on ways to meet the needs of students in all tiers of instruction, including time to collect and analyze data. Planning time is also needed to continually improve teaching, assessment, and data management. Ideally, teachers and other school personnel in RtI schools receive generous professional development to support their individual sense-making, behaviors, values, attitudes, norms, and expectations.

Method

This preliminary study is part of a longitudinal study planned to uncover and track how school librarians support teachers and students in schools that practice RtI. This report is the first in a sequence of three biennial surveys. A mixed-methods approach was chosen as the research design. Mixed-methods research involves the collection and analysis of two types of qualitative data in this study. Creswell and Clark have argued that by combining different approaches to a research problem, a better understanding of the problem results, because the weakness of one approach is balanced by the strength of the other approach (2007).

In this study, the mixed-methods approach presented the researchers with a way of obtaining different but complementary data about RtI with the potential to merge or to compare and contrast data (Creswell and Clark 2007). No centrality measures were used with the data, but numeric tallies were made for several types of data. The survey results are based on responses from a non-random, opt-in, online sample of librarians in schools that practice RtI. Since the data are based on a non-random sample, a margin of error cannot be computed, and the results are not generalizable.

The first survey announcement, with a link to the survey, was distributed to school librarians in Missouri via the Missouri Association of School Librarians membership forum. Also, a survey announcement with a link was shared more widely with school librarians across the nation via the LM_NET listserv. The online survey was conducted in spring 2011. The survey consisted of three questions and a request for contact information for respondents willing to be interviewed.

Respondents were asked the following:

1. How has RtI changed what you do?
2. What is your role working with each of RtI's three levels?
3. How do you collaborate with teachers in the RtI process?

In addition, for the purposes of information about RtI in the State of Missouri, respondents were asked if they lived in Missouri. Forty-two were from Missouri, and twenty-five respondents were from other states. Additional demographic information, such as whether the librarians were full-time or part-time and the grade levels of their buildings, was not gathered with this preliminary survey, which was exploratory in nature. Survey results were collected in a spreadsheet. Of the sixty-seven respondents who provided completed surveys, two were not school librarians. Their responses were removed from the data set.

Two types of qualitative data on the phenomenon of RtI and its impact on school librarians were

used to corroborate qualitative results and findings: (1) an online survey with open-ended questions directed solely at librarians in schools that are implementing RtI and (2) follow-up phone interviews with survey respondents to gain additional data on the context of RtI activities and to verify preliminary findings from the survey.

Data were analyzed according to the grounded theory method. Using open coding, survey data were analyzed to find "leads, ideas, and issues in the data themselves" (Charmaz 1988, 113). This coding is "the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory" (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 3). From the open codes, a preliminary conceptual ordering was generated, related to types of collaboration, and the data were reorganized based on this ordering and reanalyzed.

Following this second analysis of survey data, questions for the phone interviews were designed to explore the context of collaboration more deeply. Fifteen survey respondents who provided e-mail addresses were sent e-mail requesting an interview. Seven of these replied. The interviews were conducted, and the transcripts added to the data set.

This second phase of the data collection was an in-depth interview that consisted of nine open-ended questions:

1. Tell the story of how RtI started at your school.
2. How is RtI being implemented? For example is it in all subjects or just math and reading?
3. How has RtI changed what you do?
4. What resources do you use in RtI-related activities?
5. How do you integrate RtI with other instruction?
6. What is your role working with each of RtI's three levels?
7. Tell us about a time when you were involved with RtI-related activities.
8. How do you collaborate with teachers?
9. What additional resources, services, or support would you like to have in administering RtI?

These data were analyzed again, and a more precise conceptual ordering, related to process, emerged. In grounded theory, "bringing process into the analysis is an essential part…[of] theory building" (Straus and Corbin 1998, 163). The discovery of multiple processes related to RtI indicated structure underlying the collaborative experiences of librarians in schools implementing RtI. Data were analyzed again using focused, selective coding related to these processes.

In the next section respondents are identified by number, using the prefix "R." For example "R6" is the sixth respondent listed in the spreadsheet used to record data. Survey responses, along with transcripts of phone interviews with seven of the respondents (R6, R25, R33, R56, R65, R66, R67), formed the entire data set used for this study. Though the small number of phone interviews is a limitation, when added to the responses to the online survey, the data provided a preliminary snapshot of the school librarian's role in the adoption of RtI practices. This work will inform the next survey in this longitudinal study.

Results

The purpose of this research was to discover and identify opportunities librarians have to impact student achievement through RtI. The survey data indicate that 38 percent [N = 25 of 65] of respondents who worked in schools where RtI is practiced are not involved in RtI in any way. Sixty-two percent [N = 40 of 65] described varying levels of involvement.

Prior research on RtI indicates a need for an evaluation process that ensures fidelity. Literature on the role of school librarians in RtI schools describes their involvement with two other RtI processes: getting started and implementing interventions. The implementation process and a fourth process, assessment, are integral to RtI. Training and planning processes are described in other RtI literature. The data from respondents in this survey revealed a seventh process, scheduling, is also needed to determine when, where, and how often interventions are delivered to students and who will deliver them. Thus, seven processes (figure 2) are in operation when a school implements RtI: getting started, training staff, planning interventions, assessing students, scheduling interventions, implementing interventions, and evaluating the RtI program. When the results in this study were organized according to these seven processes, the opportunities school librarians had to participate, support, or take the lead in their schools were clarified. The subsections below describe the librarians' activities.

Figure 2. The Seven RtI Processes
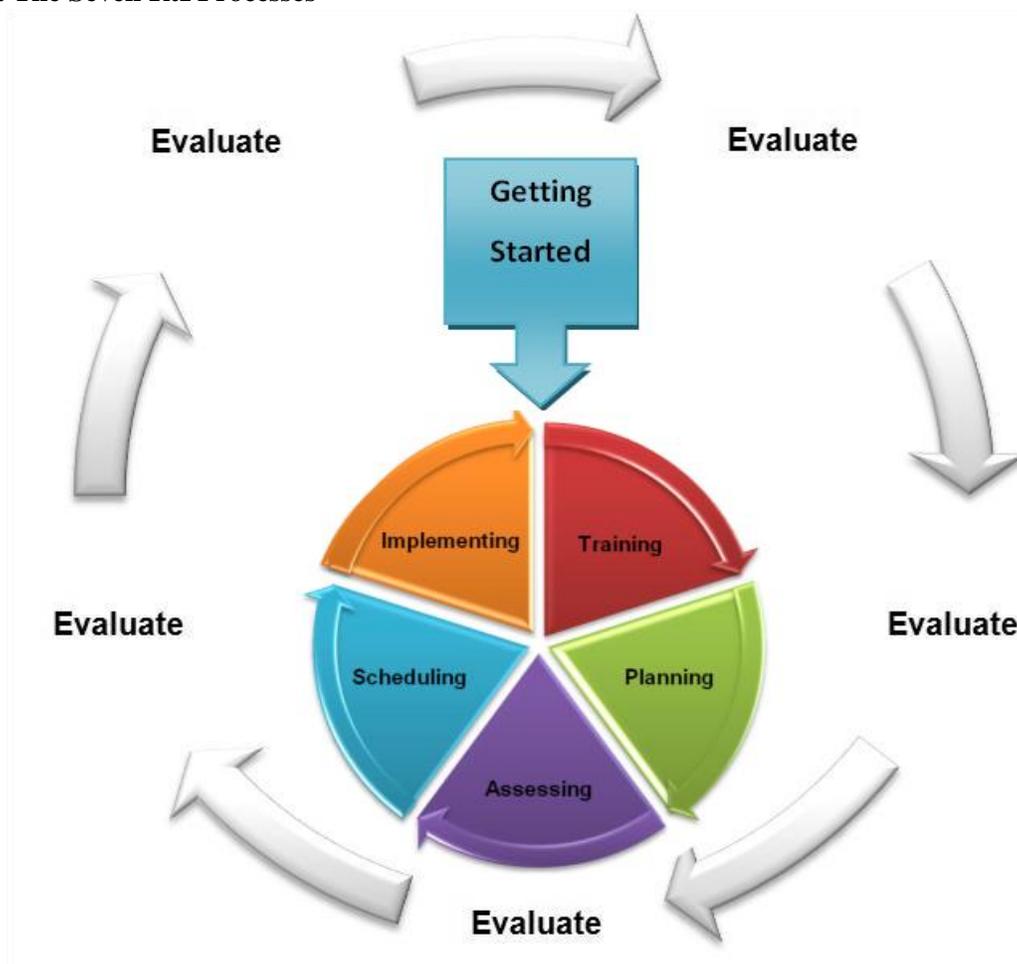
Getting Started

During the start-up process, school and district administrators decide how to present the RtI process to parents and teachers and how to budget for resources. Respondents [N = 10 of 65] cited ways RtI was initiated in their schools. The first step was to build expertise. As one respondent noted, "There are lots of gurus" (R56). **Mike Mattos** and **Pat Quinn** were mentioned specifically as experts whose resources were used by administrators as they started looking at RtI. In Missouri, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) invited administrators representing a small number of districts to attend five information sessions at the DESE office at the state capitol. One respondent worked in a district that had administrators who attended these DESE sessions.

Two respondents noted that getting started is a multi-year process. One mentioned that the process was started last year to prepare for the current year. Another is in the third year and stated that she and the other teachers are still learning. "Everyone has a different idea of how it is supposed to run" (R65). A third respondent described how his district was creating a paper trail to determine how widely implemented RtI was in the district.

One of the respondents mentioned that her district created curriculum plans for RtI. This respondent served on the curriculum committee. Four respondents mentioned being involved in RtI work with district-level planning committees.

Training

According to respondents [N = 8 of 65], school personnel needed a process of ongoing training as they identified new student needs and discovered new strategies for addressing them. Some districts offer professional-development days devoted to RtI. One respondent reported that her district provided an online course on RtI. Another reported that all of the teachers in his building were trained at a state-funded professional-development center.

It was noted by three respondents that their schools used a professional learning committee (PLC) format for training. One noted that the PLC joined with the school's professional-development committee to determine how to implement RtI. Another served on a PLC leadership committee whose members worked with department committees to provide RtI training to teachers.

Respondents described how they provided teachers with RtI training in the school library. One mentioned training teachers to enter data and run reports in the RtI assessment system; another mentioned training teachers to use report data. A respondent at the high school level mentioned that he teaches all the teachers in his building to search for readings by Lexile levels. Another explained that, through implementing RtI at her high school, she taught a teacher to recognize that "textbooks are written at 1200–1400 level" (R33), well above the reading level of most of the students. Another librarian mentioned that he offers suggestions for how to teach units for all three tiers of RtI. He does this by presenting lesson plans to teachers, then sharing ideas with them. In a similar vein, another respondent mentioned that she works with teachers to brainstorm interventions.

Planning

Like the training process, the planning process is also continual as students' needs change daily, requiring new ways to allocate staff and resources. According to respondents, planning for RtI

takes a considerable amount of time. For 45 percent of our respondents [N = 29 of 65], planning took place during plan periods and department team meetings. Three respondents described planning with their professional learning communities (PLCs). Sometimes the planning is formal: "Bi-weekly collaboration sessions are required" (R2). Sometimes the planning is impromptu: Conversations take place over lunch and in the hall. One respondent reported e-mailing teachers to find out what they are doing in class so library instruction can be tied in during RtI time. Another reported, "I usually 'invite' myself to a scheduled meeting if I think I have something that would be of interest" (R6). A third respondent explained, "The library is in the area where the specials classrooms are, and teachers have to walk by when they take classes to specials. This is a time for impromptu planning" (R65). One respondent remarked that in her building less time is required for planning because the teachers already know and trust each other. "They know what each other brings to the table" (R66), so short planning times work well.

The respondents reported planning with all teachers in the building. Planning covered topics such as the types of interventions needed and who will provide them. Respondents who indicated they were from elementary schools worked with grade-level teams in reading, math, and writing. One responded, "I go to grade-level chairs and ask about pacing guides to align library activity" (R67). Another explained, "So far, I have just helped teachers by working individually on [students'] reading progress and goals" (R56). Another specified that he meets with Title I and special-education teachers. One respondent described how she recommends RtI intervention programs and provides bibliographies for teachers. Another respondent mentioned meeting with administrators and other specialists for tier 2 intervention: "The music teacher collaborated, too, and taught poetry and choral reading, repetition, rhymes; it was fun" (R66). The next year those students were reading on grade level. One respondent reported that she collaborates with other librarians in the district to share ideas.

Assessing Students

At the heart of Response to Intervention is the need to assess students regularly. Respondents [N = 18 of 65] explained that this process is done through universal testing [N = 6 of 65] or whenever a teacher notices that a student is not keeping up with instruction. Assessment also occurs during interventions to determine if instruction is working. For a respondent at a school where screening was universal, assessment was conducted "three times a year, which requires the library to be closed for a week at a time" (R6). A high school librarian explained that she gets a list of reading levels from eighth-grade teachers and uses them to target students for intervention in the library during freshman year.

Assessment is done with the help of computer software. In this study librarians mentioned using Scholastic Reading Counts, Renaissance Learning products, Study Island, and AIMSweb systems. These systems provide testing services, data storage, progress monitoring, and several types of progress reports. The data from the reports are used as a topic of discussion in PLCs and other collaborative planning meetings.

Four librarians indicated they are technology leaders in their schools because they use technology to track student progress during RtI. One respondent explained that he has an AIMS web manager account and "can get into everyone's records and reports" (R65). The principal is the other person with a manager account. He "prints reports from STAR reading and math assessment every quarter" (R65). A high school librarian explained that she collects data from peer tutors and makes charts so that all students see their progress. Two respondents described

how they taught teachers to enter data and run reports. However, one respondent noted that he did not have access to view student data.

Scheduling Interventions

Once students who need interventions are identified, teachers schedule a time and a place for interventions to occur. Thirty-four percent [N = 22 of 65] of respondents mentioned scheduling, although the survey questions did not address this. A variety of scheduling practices for RtI were described. In two cases the RtI period is thirty minutes in the morning. One respondent specified it was late morning as students who need RtI might arrive to school late, and it was important that they not miss this period. Another takes students in the afternoon, working with them for twenty minutes at 3:00. A third said, "I am now an interventionist each morning for 30 minutes" (R24). A fourth said that every other week he has a class. A fifth respondent met with students three times weekly.

Data from this study indicated that scheduling individual students for RtI is dynamic. As soon as students are brought up to grade level, they can be moved to enrichment during the RtI period. In addition, new problems might be spotted at any time, and students are moved to an intervention class during RtI time. For this reason, tools are useful for maintaining a schedule of where students are and who they are with during the RtI period. One respondent reported using an Outlook calendar to help teachers with scheduling, while another reported, "I match students and teachers on a spreadsheet" (R22).

The library schedule can vary throughout the year in an RtI school. One respondent explained, "[The schedule for] Wednesday changes each week…." This year we will have one time with higher kids for a few weeks, then have a tier 2 or tier 3 group" (R65). Another reports, "Every 2–3 weeks students are reassessed and groups changed accordingly" (R64). One librarian described how sometimes teachers make specific requests for help with students; for example, "she plans… and I just appear to help her" (R49).

Implementation

The implementation of RtI can be as simple as re-teaching content or as complicated as requiring extensive intervention with trained professionals. Sixty percent of librarians in this RtI study [N = 39 of 65] had implemented interventions or enrichment related to the three RtI tiers. Implementing RtI in the library involved a variety of activities.

Several respondents reported that they found resources to be used for readers who need intervention. One described that he found resources around a theme for teachers, and also provided readers' advisory and homework help. Another reported she "obtained many high interest-low reading level books for teens…and assists students in finding something appropriate and interesting to read for their intervention class" (R46). A third said, "I assist with program book selection" (R3). Having data, it is possible to "Look closer at what books go into a [student's] hand; make sure they are the appropriate reading level, and that students are not being overly challenged" (R6).

With RtI, respondents noted that basic literacy skills might be taught in the library. One respondent reported that she used scripted quick-reads with students who struggle with reading. Another reported that he has struggling beginners repeat back to him whatever they were reading. He worked on fluency and comprehension, and "listens to them read, and has them

reread" (R66). Another explained how now, with RtI, she worked more on comprehension and depth of knowledge. She explained that she mentors by "talking with students and having them do critical thinking" (R67). She noted that nothing was assessed during this activity. Instead she concentrated on giving students choice, enrichment, and having students take risks.

Respondents described other enrichment activities. One librarian reported, "I will be working with above-grade-level readers in the 2nd grade. We are going to do author studies..." (R20). One respondent explained how he could use higher-level books for RtI: "Students are more willing to take a risk and read something different" (R67). One described how he integrated Web 2.0 tools during the RtI period. Another explained how she used technology to "help kids go farther." During her RtI enrichment period, "one teacher does a film class, another does a cultures class, another fantasy football" (R56).

Evaluating the RtI Program

The final process, that of evaluating results to determine if RtI is successful school-wide, meaning all students are achieving at grade level, was mentioned by five [N = 5 of 65] of the respondents. This research indicated that the process of evaluation is less developed than the other six processes. Respondents stated that there was no set way to review teacher interventions and compare strategies that help students learn. As one respondent explained, there is "no data on how this is working. Hopefully the school will make AYP next year" (R6). Another reported, "There is a hodgepodge of what works….Continually evaluate. If it's not working, try a different way….Everybody is willing to work together to find what works" (R66).

Issues and Benefits of RtI

Issues and challenges related to RtI were identified by respondents to this study, as were several benefits. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents [N = 25 of 65] indicated that they feel they are not involved with the RtI effort in their schools: "I have not been asked to participate" (R19), and "Basically the [librarian] is ignored" (R24). A chief complaint reported by librarians who are involved with RtI is that it is still new to schools and many processes have not been mastered yet; "Everyone has a different idea of how RtI is supposed to run. People don't agree on who should be the interventionist within the tiers" (R65).

The librarian and other specials teachers were trying to figure out where they fit in: "I'm given no directions on what to do with [tier 1 students], so I treat them as a gifted and talented group" (R38). Because of their expertise with technology, a couple of the librarians complained they were used mainly for testing or data entry.

One respondent remarked that his school does not have sufficient resources. He would have liked to have enough books to interest all levels of students. However he calls this a "pipe dream" (R25) because there were over two hundred students in his school who need tier 2 or tier 3 interventions.

Two respondents expressed skepticism about the longevity of RtI. "Teachers question how long RtI is going to last" (R67). Another commented: "This is a rung on an evolutionary ladder in education. It won't go away for at least 3 years" (R56).

However some respondents found benefits to implementing RtI. One said that because RtI placed emphasis on literacy, increased value was placed on the librarian's position in her school. One

described how RtI promoted reading, which aligns with ALA/AASL standards for school librarians (ALA 2010).

Respondents [N = 5 of 65] noted that librarians and teachers were more aware of the range of reading levels. Others noted that they have more contact with students [N = 7 of 65]. They knew who the struggling readers were. One respondent explained that she recognized students who received intervention because she had worked with them before. Others explained benefits this way: "Now that I know which kids struggle, I try to let them spend more time with me" (R6). "We are making data available now, something we didn't do very easily in the past" (R56). "Before, in a regular day, you couldn't give that individual attention to students" (R67).

RtI also provided interventions that were more private for students. Since all students were assigned to an RtI period, "The kids are really accepting. [Students receiving interventions] are not looked down upon. Second- and third-graders are not so aware of who has a learning deficit" (R6). One librarian summarized the benefits of RtI: "RtI opened my eyes to the absolute needs a lot of these kids have" (R25).

Summary and Discussion

Response to intervention (RtI) is practiced in 70 percent of the elementary schools nationwide, in 47 percent of the middle schools, and 30 percent of the high schools (Institute of Education Sciences 2011). Respondents to this preliminary survey were school librarians who described their involvement in RtI schools. Though 38 percent of the respondents indicated they have not found opportunities to contribute to RtI initiatives in their schools, 62 percent have.

Analysis of survey results found that RtI entails the operation of seven processes. Each process presents a different set of opportunities for school librarians to become involved with RtI. The processes are: getting started, training staff, planning interventions, assessing students, scheduling interventions, implementing interventions, and evaluating the RtI program.

When starting RtI, respondents described the first step as building the expertise of administrators and teachers. For some, outside training was used to prepare a leadership team to bring expertise back to the school. Four school librarians in this study described how they took a leadership role in the start-up process by becoming involved in planning committees and curriculum committees.

Respondents described how the training process continues after RtI is underway. As with the process of getting started, continued professional development came from both external and internal sources. One librarian took an online course on RtI; another mentioned a state-funded agency that provided training. Professional learning communities (PLCs) were mentioned by three respondents. Librarians participated in the PLCs but also found other opportunities to provide training for teachers. For example, two mentioned teaching teachers how Lexile levels work. Also RtI requires extensive data collection and reporting, and two respondents, being technology leaders in their schools, were able to help teachers use RtI data systems to track student progress.

Planning was described by respondents as a process that is ongoing and occurs on both formal occasions, such as committee meetings, and informal occasions, such as hall conversations. For 45 percent of the respondents, RtI planning created opportunities for librarians to collaborate

with classroom teachers, specials teachers, special education staff, or reading specialists. During planning meetings with grade-level and content-area teams, student progress was discussed and ideas were shared for the types of interventions needed and who will provide them.

The assessment process is continual in an RtI school. Six respondents mentioned that assessment is universal for their students; however, these and others described how teachers might call for the assessment of individual students. Student data are stored, measured, tracked, and reported using software applications suitable for use with RtI. Assessment data are used to assign students to interventions and to monitor student progress. Assessment data might be available to respondents, teachers, and administrators, though this varied. For example, one respondent mentioned not being allowed to view data, and another reported having management-level administration rights to the RtI assessment system.

Thirty-four percent of the respondents described the scheduling process that determines when interventions for students are delivered. Information provided by respondents related to when interventions were offered. For example, two respondents described how a thirty-minute class was set up every morning for students; another mentioned scheduling twenty minutes a day in the late afternoon. Though the time period might be stable from semester to semester, scheduling individual students to receive RtI interventions is dynamic as students' needs change frequently. Respondents described how they might see enrichment students in their library one week and struggling readers the next. Two respondents described how they used computer applications to help with scheduling.

Sixty percent of respondents were involved in some way with the RtI implementation process in their schools. Respondents described how, by having data available and students grouped by ability, they were able to tailor library activities to student abilities. Librarians in this survey provided a range of learning activities. Some taught basic reading skills to struggling readers. Three respondents mentioned providing access to books at appropriate reading levels. One provided enrichment by teaching Web 2.0 applications to students, another by doing author studies, and another by offering students more challenging books.

A small number of respondents, 8 percent, mentioned that a process is needed for evaluating how well RtI is working in schools. None of the librarians taking this survey described an operational evaluation process. One respondent described how an evaluation process would oversee how well interventions are working and present evidence for strategies that are successful. Another respondent mentioned how an evaluation process could provide opportunities for collaborative inquiry that could lead to improving the way RtI is implemented in the school.

Issues and challenges related to RtI include the lack of participation on the part of many school librarians. Also, RtI is new to the respondents to this survey. One school librarian felt that it was still unclear how RtI is supposed to run. Another mentioned the lack of resources in his school. However, benefits from RtI were noted by respondents. Three noted how having data helped them know the range of reading levels and which students were struggling. Seven respondents noted that RtI gave them more contact with students. One respondent noted that because RtI places emphasis on literacy, it aligns with AASL standards, and the position of the librarian has become more valuable.

Conclusion

This study describes how Response to Intervention (RtI) provides opportunities for school librarians to become involved in an integral way with the mission of a school to improve student achievement. Prior research identified different processes that are needed to implement RtI. This research found that implementing RtI involves seven processes: getting started, training staff, planning interventions, assessing students, scheduling interventions, implementing interventions, and evaluating the program. Understanding how librarians are involved with these processes provided insight into the many roles of the school librarian in an RtI school.

This study found that the resources and services provided by librarian in RtI schools are, for the most part, familiar ones, such as providing appropriate reading materials for students, collaborating with teachers to create successful lessons, and finding new and exciting ways to employ technology in teaching. However, the research also found that the seven RtI processes present new opportunities to provide resources and services. For example, if RtI is new to a school or district, librarians can be involved in the initial curriculum planning. Also, RtI requires ongoing professional development, as new problems, new tools, and new types of interventions arise. Some of the librarians in this study, as teacher leaders, became part of the ongoing training process. RtI requires continual planning to match interventions to student needs. Forty-five percent of the respondents in this study took part in the RtI planning process in their schools in some way. The scheduling process includes matching times and teachers with student placement during the RtI period. The assessment process involves the use of specially designed software applications. Some librarians in this study took the role of technology leaders in this process, maintaining RtI systems, training teachers, and providing reports.

The process for implementing RtI interventions provided the most opportunities for the school librarians in this study to be involved. RtI occurs in designated class periods and is provided to students grouped by need. Thus, library activities that occurred during an RtI period differed, depending on the level of intervention needed. For students in tier 1, who did not require additional instruction, the RtI period was used for enrichment. For students in tiers 2 and 3 interventions in the library included basic literacy instruction and reading practice. An evaluation process could lead to improvement in this and the other five processes.

This study provided insight into of how RtI affords school librarians opportunities for more collaboration. RtI reveals which students struggle academically and provides data that indicate the level of help they need. This study provides examples of how school librarians are involved in the seven processes that lead to student success through RtI. The benefits of RtI for librarians include having data on student reading levels and having time to give students the individual attention they need.

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