

FEATURE ARTICLE

A Few Remarks on Response to Intervention

*Sharon Vaughn, University of Texas
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University of Colorado*



Sharon Vaughn

Response To Intervention (RTI) has been proposed as a viable alternative to prevent learning difficulties and to provide data to support decision-making for the identification of Learning Disabilities (LD). Furthermore, RTI provides a framework for the delivery of high quality, core reading instruction and more intensive interventions to students who are learning fundamental academic skills. While the majority (80%) of students identified as LD have a disability in reading (National Research Council, 1998), RTI can also be used for the prevention of math and behavior problems (cf., L. Fuchs, 2005; Walker, Horner, Sugai, Bullis, Sprague, Bricker, & Kaufman, 1996).

The RTI framework as applied to academic difficulties is based on two key assumptions. First, those applying an RTI framework presume that there are a set of essential components that are systematically taught to students so they can develop a strong base in academic areas such as reading and math (Fuchs, 2005; Gresham, 2002; Jenkins & O'Connor, 2002). Second, in this framework, disability is thought to fall along a continuum from poor reading/math to superior reading/math with biological, instructional, and environmental influences having some bearing on proficiency at all levels (Fletcher, et al., 2002; Shaywitz, Fletcher, Holahan, & Shaywitz, 1992).

Rather than imposing a discrete set of characteristics in which someone is judged either to have or not to have a reading disability, a cut point is used to differentiate those who need help from those who do not. If reading proficiency is normally distributed across all students, then poor readers would fall at the tail end of the distribution. This tail would represent those students who read at substantially lower levels than would be expected given their reading instruction, age, and grade level. This view of reading disabilities uses a dimensional representation rather than a categorical one to operationalize struggling readers.

The dimensional view of disabilities works well in an RTI framework because the assessment of and assistance for students is based directly on academic performance (Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman-Davis, 2003; Vellutino et al., 1996). Furthermore, since assistance is for relatively brief periods, students are not part of a remediation program of indeterminate duration where exit is infrequent. In general, most RTI frameworks use progress monitoring assessments to determine who needs additional academic intervention, regardless of the cause. Students who do not demonstrate expected skills in reading for their age and grade level at specific times during the year are considered at-risk for academic failure and are provided with additional support in their area of need. Furthermore, those students who fail to make adequate gains when they are provided with high quality instruction and interventions are likely to need ongoing intensive intervention and would be candidates for referral for special services (e.g., special education).

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DLD Opens the Golden Gate — Join us in San Francisco Nov. 3-4, 2006

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A Few remarks on Response to Intervention

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RTI may take many forms. One model that has been used effectively in reading is a tiered approach (e.g., University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency, 2005). For example, Tier I is the prevention element. It is perhaps the most important element since effective primary intervention provides the means for reducing risk by assuring all students are "on track" from the beginning. Students who do not make adequate progress are provided additional instruction in Tier II for a short period of time (e.g. 10-12 weeks). The goal of Tier II is to identify students and target their intervention so that their progress is accelerated and additional intervention is minimized. For other students, progress continues to be slow and assessment data suggests that they are not responding adequately to the core reading instruction, even with additional specialized support. Students who require Tier III intervention are likely to need ongoing support to be successful in the general education curriculum even when they have gained a strong foundation in early reading skills.

In summary, RTI frameworks seek first to prevent academic failure and then, for those students who do not respond to intervention, further assessment data linked to instruction are used to accurately identify those students who may require special education services. In this way, many students who might not be appropriately placed in special education programs, but still fail to achieve in reading or math, can receive the support they need to improve academically within an RTI framework.

A Teacher's View

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The concept of Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI) is good in theory. However, with the concept come certain problems with implementation. There are many unanswered questions. Some of the questions are about the technological aspects such as the student assessments and interventions. What is the role of technology? Other questions involve what level of academic success determines intervention and how much intervention is appropriate? What is considered appropriate intervention and what level of progress is deemed acceptable? Is the general education teacher responsible for instructional intervention or is the special education teacher responsible? RTI provides help for students by working with all students in a class, using frequent

assessments, and implementing interventions that are specific for the individual child. Again, who is responsible for that? As previously mentioned, in theory the concept is good. Still, many questions need to be answered.

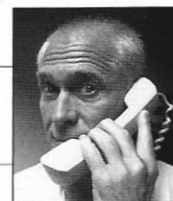
Jasmine McGarr

Primary Emotionally Disturbed Classroom

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This past year I attended RTI training with some of my fellow teachers. The number one comment made was would general education teachers accept RTI and would they do the necessary work. Sometimes general education teachers rely too greatly on special education teachers to resolve all problems with students who are struggling. With RTI these teachers will have to take more ownership of their struggling students. General education teachers have a concern that it is just one more thing on their already full plates. I think a major struggle will be convincing and getting general education teachers to realize the value that RTI holds for all students.

Message from the Past President



John Wills Lloyd

Learning Disabilities has been fraught with controversies throughout its 40+ years. There have been hullabalos about causes, assessment, treatment, and—of course—the very existence of Learning Disabilities. The present times are no exception and they illustrate the intertwined nature of these disagreements. Here is a catalogue of some of those controversies, with comments on each.

Process deficits: In the early going, some researchers and educators raised concerns about perceptual processes such as visual-motor coordination, auditory sequential memory, or figure-ground perception. Others strongly objected to employing these hypothetical constructs and questioned whether they could be assessed, let alone treated. Although emphasis on process deficits has faded substantially, one can still find people championing modern variations of them, such as "central auditory processing disorder." Moreover, some process-like constructs such as phonemic awareness have proven to be important.

Discrepancy: The concept of ability-achievement discrepancy as a defining feature of Learning Disabilities was introduced in the 1960s and came under heavy fire in the 90s. Much of the attack has been well-deserved. If discrepant and non-discrepant

Message from the Past President

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readers do not differ on important characteristics and respond equally well to effective teaching, there are problems with the discrepancy model. However, one of the features of discrepancy—distinguishing students with mental retardation from other who have low achievement—is likely to continue to be an issue for many years to come.

Inclusion: Over the four decades since Learning Disabilities began as a sub-discipline, there has been a continuing trend toward more students with disabilities spending more of their time in general education settings. Many Learning Disabilities specialists who are now nearing retirement began their careers working with students in self-contained classrooms, later helped promote mainstreaming, and then found their duties being swept along by the floodtide of inclusion. Still, some wonder why students with Learning Disabilities should be integrated into an instructional environment that has failed to meet their unique educational needs. Furthermore, some parents are almost surely going to seek even-more-restrictive placements (e.g., special schools) for their children.

In each of these cases, it seems, the controversy is unlikely to be resolved in any way approximating finality. Instead, we can look forward to further discussions of processes underlying learning, ways of discriminating among students with disabilities, and alternative placements. We may never escape them.

The most difficulty about these controversies will arise when an ardent defender of one pole on a controversy meets an advocate who is 100% committed to the opposite view. Given that the controversies are inescapable, probably the best path is to avoid adopting extreme positions. It's more sensible to understand the issues and seek to identify the relevant data that will allow Learning Disabilities advocates to identify a nuanced view.

John Wills Lloyd

Message from the 2006–2007 President



Karen Rooney

Dear DLD friends:

When I first agreed to run for vice-president of DLD, the two years before I would be president seemed far in the future; however, July 1, 2006 came faster than I could ever imagine. I have learned a great deal in the past few years by representing Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) on various committees such as the

Children and Youth Action Network, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, and the Learning Disabilities Roundtable writing group. Serving on these committees has helped me think seriously about the responsibility of being your president and about how I can represent you to the best of my ability. I am excited and very enthusiastic about helping DLD grow by taking advantage of the opportunities in the up-coming year.

This particular time is very critical for the field of Learning Disabilities. Schools are struggling with implementing the requirements of No Child Left Behind as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, and the role of teachers of students with Learning Disabilities is changing. In response to these changes, DLD's goals will focus on three major initiatives this year.

First, the major focus will be providing support for teachers of students with Learning Disabilities as the demands for high levels of expertise, collaboration and problem solving increase. Please help us meet this goal by sharing your thoughts, comments, and needs through the DLD Web site, TeachingLD.org. The Web site is the easiest way for you to communicate with the Board.

Second, it is very important for all of us to defend the construct of Learning Disabilities. Given the current emphasis on using response to intervention as a means to identify students with Learning Disabilities, it is critical that DLD be vigilant about the need for rigorous research that guides teacher preparation, instruction, and identification procedures. We will continue to seek partnerships with other organizations that have similar goals, but DLD must stay true to its mission of facilitating research-to-practice efforts and supporting teachers working in the field.

Third, DLD has an enormous amount of expertise in the areas of instruction, behavior management, and research, which puts us in the unique position of being able to provide leadership when working with other organizations, when talking with legislators, and when disseminating information about Learning Disabilities to the public. Consequently, I want DLD to move forward to a position of leadership in a way that supports teachers, and also benefits individuals with Learning Disabilities and their families.

To accomplish these goals, we need to have good communication within DLD. The Board needs to hear from the membership, the membership needs to know what the Board is doing and, most importantly, the membership needs to be involved to make the organization stronger. Please let us know what the Board can do for you as a member and what you can do to help DLD move forward.

Message from the 2006-2007 President

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We are all excited about the annual conference in San Francisco on November 3-4, 2006, and we hope many of you will be able to attend the conference sessions and social events. The list of speakers is very impressive and the planned socials are always a good time to meet the speakers, network with colleagues, and make new friends. The Palace is a beautiful hotel right in downtown San Francisco and is convenient to all the sights. Spaces are limited so register on the Web site as soon as you can. Please help us publicize the conference by telling your colleagues about the DLD conference and share the Web site address so they can obtain more information.

I look forward to a busy, productive year and can't wait to start! Please let me hear from you so we can work together to achieve our goals.

Best wishes!

Karen Rooney

President, Division for Learning Disabilities
Council for Exceptional Children

DLD Needs You!

Are you a classroom teacher working directly with students with learning disabilities?

The DLD Publications committee is looking for ten classroom teachers who are willing to serve on The DLD Newsletter Review Board. If you are interested, please contact Mike Gerber, DLD Publications Chair at Publications@TeachingLD.org

DLD is also looking for members willing to serve on a variety of committees and to serve as local / regional contacts for DLD. If you are interested in either option, please contact Karen Rooney, DLD President, at President@TeachingLD.org

DLD Awards & Grants

Candace S.Bos Innovative Project Grants – Awarded to teachers and support personnel of students with learning disabilities to be used as they develop creative projects to enhance instruction, curriculum, action research, and service delivery. Funding for individual projects ranges from \$100 - \$1,000.

Roads Scholarships — awarded to full-time graduate students to support travel to the DLD Annual Conference.

If you are interested in applying for a grant or scholarship, please contact Pam Stecker at PDSE@TeachingLD.org. For a complete list of awards and grants offered by DLD, please visit our website at www.TeachingLD.org/about/awards.html

The Division for Learning Disabilities' (DLD) Conference is coming to California this November!

DLD's Annual Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice Conference will be held on November 3rd and 4th, 2006 at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. This uniquely formatted conference allows participants to choose four, 3-hour long workshops on evidence-based interventions and techniques. These in-depth presentations will be conducted by research-practitioners including Anita Archer, Doug Fuchs, Mike Gerber, Charlie Hughes, Steve Isaacson, Ed Kame'enui, Cathy Kea, John Lloyd, Margo Mastropieri, Susan Miller, Pam Hudson, Nancy Cushen White and many more.

Topics include reading, vocabulary instruction, math, written expression, RTI, multicultural issues, progress monitoring, high stakes tests, transition, and study skills.

Interested persons can view the entire agenda as well as register by going to TeachingLD.org. The link to the conference is on the home page in the "New and Noteworthy Section" (and while you are on our website, check out all the resources available to teachers!) You can register on-line or you can download the application form and mail it in.

You can make reservations at the Palace Hotel at special conference rates by calling (415) 512-1111. Rates will be good until October 2, 2006.

The New York State Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children will be holding its annual convention on November 10 and 11th, 2006. The conference will be held at Albany Marriott 189 Wolf Road Albany, NY. A learning disabilities strand of presentations will be facilitated by NY DLD president, Ed Pieper and DLD secretary, Shannon Gormley. For conference information please visit NY CEC's website <http://www.nyscec.com> or e-mail NY CEC President, Margaret McLane at mclanaem@strose.edu.

DLD Subdivision Info

DLD currently has 12 active Subdivisions and one Subdivision in the process of reactivating. These Subdivisions and current contact information for each are listed to the right. If you are interested in participating at the state / province level, please contact the appropriate Subdivision President.

In addition, there are several states / provinces that are inactive, but already have written constitutions. If you are interested helping to reactivate a DLD Subdivision in your state / province, please email Elizabeth Parrett, DLD Membership Chair, at Membership@TeachingLD.org.



Photo 3 caption: DLD members are discussing the student posters at the 2006 DLD reception in Salt Lake City.

DLD Subdivision News

Florida DLD continues to have a strong focus on membership issues, with detailed plans to make contact with all members to remind them to renew their memberships. FL DLD publishes a member newsletter twice each year and presents the Bernice O'Johnson Award annually. The FL DLD Board is quite active, meeting five times each year.

Illinois DLD continues to serve as one of DLD's most active subdivisions. IDLD provided scholarships for four student leaders from Illinois Student CEC to attend the Fall 2005 Illinois CEC Convention. IL DLD continues to publish a member newsletter twice a year and maintains a page on the ICEC website. Check it out at www.ilinois.cec.org!

Missouri DLD recently held their Summer Conference in Columbia, MO. The conference is co-sponsored annually with

Missouri CEDS. MO DLD also co-sponsored a Spring Conference with Missouri State CEC.

New York DLD sponsored a full-day presentation on Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement on the Thursday before NY State CEC Convention in November 2005, which was designated as Division Day. Dr. Kathy Freytag, a NY DLD officer, served as the presenter.

South Carolina DLD conducted a mini-conference on instruction and pedagogy aimed at help students with learning disabilities. Two speakers were invited to present. The first speaker, Dr. Pam Stecker from Clemson University, spoke on applying PALS Reading in Grades 2-6. The other speaker, Dr. Brad Witzel from Winthrop University, spoke on elementary and middle school math instruction for students with learning disabilities. Both sessions were direct training sessions presented in hands-on fashion so that teachers could experience and practice the instruction before implementing them in their own classrooms. There were 50 participants.

Utah DLD continues to be in need of active DLD members willing to serve as officers, committee chairs, and board members. If you are interested, please contact current president Dan Elbert at Delbert@pcschoos.us.

Wisconsin DLD distributes a newsletter to its members four times each year. It also maintains an active website. Check it out at www.uwsp.edu/education/wdld!

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VIRGINIA (Cindy Siira, csiira@gcc.vccs.edu)

WISCONSIN (Dayle Upham, dupham@uwsp.edu)

UPCOMING DLD SUBDIVISION EVENTS

Illinois DLD Annual Meeting & Townhall Meeting on DLD

When: Nov. 3 or 4, 2006

Where: Hyatt Hotel, Schaumburg, IL

To register: Contact Sue Miller at 847-244-8025

South Carolina DLD Pre-Conference on Evidence-Based Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities

When: Fall 2006

Where: Myrtle Beach, SC

For more info: Contact Paul Riccomini at pjr146@clermson.edu or

864-656-5992

South Carolina DLD Pre-Conference on Evidence-Based Practices

When: February 2007

Where: Hilton Head, SC

For more info: Contact Robin Fish at fishre@clermson.edu or 864-656-6968

Committee News

Children & Youth Action Network (CAN) Update

Judy B. Engelhard, CAN Coordinator

FINAL IDEA REGS Expected in August 2006

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is reviewing the final IDEA 2004 regulations, with an anticipated release date in August. These regulations direct the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) signed by President George W. Bush in December, 2004.

Annual CAN Meeting at CEC Headquarters

Judy Engelhard represented DLD at the annual meeting of the CAN Coordinators held July 15-18 at CEC headquarters in Arlington, VA. As part of the meeting, Judy carried CEC's message up to Capitol Hill through visits to several congressional offices; appropriations recommendations and mandatory full funding for IDEA, including professional development under Part D, were key points discussed.

The annual meeting is designed to provide CAN coordinators with knowledge of grassroots advocacy techniques and an understanding of the latest federal legislation/policies that will impact children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. Presentations

and discussions included a focus on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the formulation of CEC's recommendations to Congress. We will provide more information on NCLB to you as these recommendations are finalized.

Give DLD Your Recommendations for The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Please let Judy know if you have specific recommendations regarding NCLB that you wish DLD to consider; also, if you have examples of the positive or negative impact of NCLB on students with learning disabilities, we would like to know that as well so DLD will be prepared to represent you. Email Judy at can@teachingLD.org and put "NCLB comments" in the subject line.

Sign-Up to Receive Policy Updates

If you would like to receive weekly updates from the CEC Policy Unit, please email Judy at jengelha@coastal.edu and include your preferred email address.

Executive Director

DIVISION FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES



www.TeachingLD.org

The Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) announces a search for an Executive Director.

The Executive Director is a part-time position with the Division for Learning Disabilities, a 6,500-member organization affiliated with the International Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). This is a three-year, renewable position; start date for the appointment is negotiable. Review of applications will begin 15 September 2006; the position is open until filled.

The Executive Director of DLD oversees activities related to public policy, professional opportunities, professional liaison work, meetings, and other activities related to the interests of DLD. The responsibilities of the Executive Director include serving as a representative of DLD at various professional meetings and activities, seeking professional and development opportunities for the organization, writing grant proposals, and seeking alternative funding. The Executive Director also will be responsible for organizing board meetings, conferences, and other division activities. The person seeking this position will be expected to attend board meetings and division activities, and, therefore, must have a schedule that allows for periodic travel. Familiarity with the field of Learning Disabilities is necessary, and experience with students with Learning Disabilities is preferred. The Executive Director will be required to maintain active membership in CEC and DLD.

DLD's Executive Director receives a stipend of \$30,000. There is no benefits package for the position.

Interested individuals may review a description of the organization at TeachingLD.org (<http://TeachingLD.org>). Applicants should submit a letter of intent, vita, and names of three references to Kathleen Marshall, Ph.D., Vice President, Division for Learning Disabilities. Electronic mail to VicePresident@TeachingLD.org. All materials and inquiries should be sent electronically.

12 July 2006 DLDSeeksExecutiveDirector2.doc

Why Should You Belong to DLD?

You'll be part of the largest international professional organization focused on learning disabilities. You'll receive this newsletter!

PLUS, you'll receive:

- **Learning Disabilities Research and Practice.** DLD's scholarly journal presents current research in the field of learning disabilities and provides information about research-based practices for teachers. Published 4 times per year.
- **Current Practice Alerts.** Alerts provide an authoritative resource about the effectiveness of current practices intended for individuals with learning disabilities. A joint publication of DLD and the Division for Research (DR).
- **Members Only Website.** The DLD Members Only Website offers multimedia Teaching Tutorials designed by leading experts in the field of learning disabilities on effective, research-based teaching techniques; Hotsheets summarizing effective teaching practices; dialogues with leading researchers and award-winning teachers; conversations with DLD leadership; and full text of all DLD publications.
- **Reduced Annual Conference Fee.** DLD's annual conference, "Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice," focuses on methods that have been validated through research with students with LD and provides in-depth instruction in small workshop settings.
- **DLD is a division of the Membership in CEC** is required to join DLD.

DLD-Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Committee Update

What's in Store for 2006-2007:

- New multicultural session at the 2006 DLD conference in San Francisco
- Exploring co-sponsorship of a research strand with DDEL, TED, and CEC's Diversity Standing Committee for the CEC Conference
- **Marva Collins Diversity Scholarship:** This new award is for a special education teacher who has made a significant impact on the lives of children and youth with learning disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Please consider applying! The award is a \$200 stipend and free registration to the DLD National conference! You can find nomination details on www.teachingld.org.

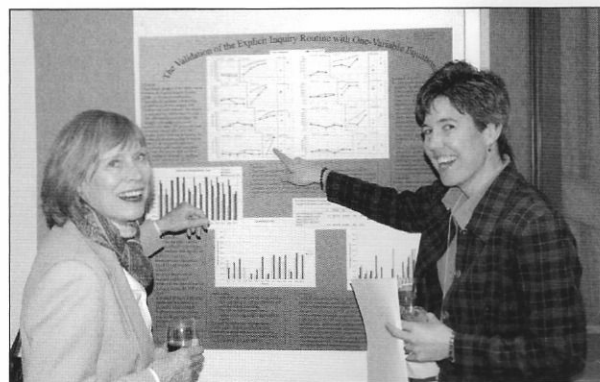


California Association of Resources Specialists and Special Education Teachers (CAR+) presents... Our 26th Annual Convention

The CARSP+ Annual Convention will be held February 22-24, 2007 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. February 22 will be the "Pre-Convention" Day, featuring 1/2 day and full day classes presented by Anita Archer, Kandis Lighthall, Susan Simmons, Renee Dawson, Priscilla Harvell, Ann England, and Rebecca Steinberger! Topics include Reading, Autism, Assistive Technology, Transition, and Collaboration. February 23-24 will be convention days, featuring a keynote by Anita Archer, and workshops by Patty Schetter, Susan Simmons, Kathleen Whelen Gioia, Allan Lloyd-Jones, Diana Blackmon and more! Full convention details, including registration information, will be available in August, 2006. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, or you have any other questions, please contact CARS+@rdlent.com. Information will also be available at www.carsplus.org or you can register for the convention online at www.rdlent.com.

DLD Student Members

The 2006 student poster session in Salt Lake City was a great success with 11 student presenters from several universities across the United States. Students had the opportunity to present their research on individuals with learning disabilities and network with DLD members. The DLD Executive Board has announced that the second annual student poster session that will be held during the DLD Reception at the 2007 CEC Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Please consider submitting a research proposal on individuals with learning disabilities for the 2007 student poster session!



Susan Osborne, 2005-2006 DLD Past President, is discussing student presenter Amy Scheuermann's poster on the Validation of the Explicit Inquiry Routine with One-Variable Equations at the 2006 DLD reception in Salt Lake City.

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