

Fall 2012

# Educator's Perceptions of the Implementation and Effectiveness of Response to Intervention Measures

Sheila Stepp Nugent

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.latech.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Elementary Education Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

**Educators' Perceptions of the Implementation and Effectiveness of  
Response to Intervention Measures**

by

Sheila Stepp Nugent, B.A., M.Ed.

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

November 2012

UMI Number: 3534291

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

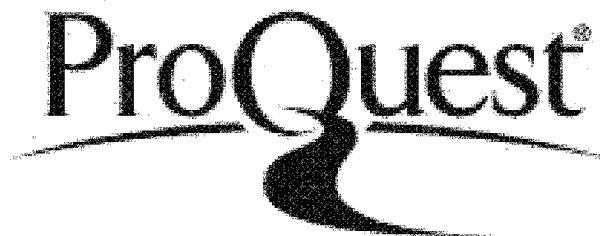


UMI 3534291

Published by ProQuest LLC 2012. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

September 28, 2012

Date

We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision  
by Sheila Stepp Nugent

entitled Educators' Perceptions of the Implementation and Effectiveness of  
Response to Intervention Measures

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Pauline Leonard  
Supervisor of Dissertation Research

Pauline Leonard  
Head of Department  
Education Curriculum, Instruction, & Leadership  
Department

Recommendation concurred in:

Louis Dorman

Dorothy Schwen

Matthew McInerney  
Advisory Committee

Approved:

Louis Dorman

Director of Graduate Studies

Pauline Leonard  
Dean of the College

Approved:

Wendy McConathy  
Dean of the Graduate School

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in their schools. The study used a mixed-methods research design. Data were collected through multiple-choice and open-ended surveys administered to elementary English language arts general education teachers, special education teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade, and administrators in seven elementary schools. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks. Qualitative data were analyzed by the researcher to determine similarities and differences among the written responses. All data were gathered during the 2011-2012 school year. Teachers' responses were divided into two groups: (1) general education teachers, and (2) special education teachers. Administrator data were analyzed as a separate group. The findings of the study showed that there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of RTI interventions in increasing student achievement, the depth of implementation and level of rigor used to incorporate RTI into instruction, the value of teacher collaboration in implementing RTI, and the validity of RTI in determining possible candidates for special education services. There was a statistically significant difference in teachers' and administrators' perceptions as to the amount of time required to incorporate RTI into their instructional time; special education teachers stated that they

would like to have more time in RTI interventions. Participants provided additional insight into their answers by providing explication of their perspectives.

### APPROVAL FOR SCHOLARLY DISSEMINATION

The author grants to the Prescott Memorial Library of Louisiana Tech University the right to reproduce, by appropriate methods, upon request, any or all portions of this Dissertation. It is understood that "proper request" consists of the agreement, on the part of the requesting party, that said reproduction is for his personal use and that subsequent reproduction will not occur without written approval of the author of this Dissertation. Further, any portions of the Dissertation used in books, papers, and other works must be appropriately referenced to this Dissertation.

Finally, the author of this Dissertation reserves the right to publish freely, in the literature, at any time, any or all portions of this Dissertation.

Author Julia S. Wugent  
Date 10/16/12

### **Dedication**

It is impossible to convey with mere words how deeply I appreciate my family and friends for their unending support and love throughout my doctoral studies and dissertation process. First, I must thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for none of this could not have occurred without His blessings, grace, and providence. To my beloved husband Kevin, for his encouragement, love, patience, and faith, I owe more thanks than can be expressed. You have been my source of comfort and strength, and I appreciate your selflessness and support. To my parents, thank you for your love and encouragement, for believing in me, and for instilling the importance of hard work, determination, and drive. To my family and friends, I thank you for your words of encouragement and your excitement as you share in this important event in my life. I love and appreciate each and every one of you.



## **Table of Contents**

Table of Contents .....	vii
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures .....	xiii
Acknowledgements .....	xiv
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Problem .....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Justification of the Study .....	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Methodology .....	13
Research Design .....	14
Instrumentation.....	16
Data Analysis .....	16
Definition of Terms .....	16
Summary .....	19
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	20
The Introduction of Response to Intervention .....	20
Description of Response to Intervention .....	22
Use of Response to Intervention.....	27

Response to Intervention and Special Education .....	30
Perceptions of Response to Intervention .....	36
Teachers' Perceptions of Response to Intervention.....	38
Teachers' Perceptions of RTI as a Tool for Special Education Referrals .....	40
Administrators' Perceptions of Response to Intervention .....	45
Educators' Perceptions of Collaboration in RTI Implementation .....	46
Problems with Response to Intervention .....	48
Chapter Three: Methodology/Procedures.....	53
Research Design .....	53
Research Questions.....	54
Null Hypotheses .....	55
Population and Sample.....	56
Instrumentation.....	59
Pilot Study .....	60
Data Analysis .....	61
Procedural Details and Data Collection .....	62
Limitations of the Study.....	63
Chapter Four: Results .....	64
Preliminary Actions and Pilot Study .....	64
Organization of Data Analysis .....	67
Data Analysis .....	69
Research Question #1 .....	69
Research Question # 2.....	71

Research Question # 3.....	76
Research Question # 4.....	81
Research Question # 5.....	89
RTI Programs .....	99
Chapter Five: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations.....	101
Conclusions and Implications .....	101
Research Question # 1.....	101
Research Question # 2.....	103
Research Question # 3.....	104
Research Question # 4.....	105
Research Question # 5.....	107
Recommendations .....	108
Summary .....	110
References.....	111
Appendix A: Letter to Administrators at Pilot Study School .....	127
Appendix B: Survey for Administrators at Pilot Study School .....	129
Appendix C: Letter to Teachers at Pilot Study School .....	133
Appendix D: Survey for Teachers at Pilot Study School .....	135
Appendix E: Rubric for Panel to Establish Validity of Administrator Survey .....	140
Appendix F: Rubric for Panel to Establish Validity of Teacher Survey .....	142
Appendix G: Letter to Elementary ELA and Special Education Teachers .....	145
Appendix H: Survey for Elementary ELA and Special Education Teachers .....	147
Appendix I: Letter to Elementary Administrators.....	152

Appendix J: Survey for Elementary Administrators.....	154
Appendix K: Outline of Survey Questions and Methods of Analysis .....	158
Appendix L: Letter to Superintendent of "Woodland Parish School District" .....	161
Appendix M: Email from Superintendent of "Woodland Parish School District" .....	163
Appendix N: Approval from Human Use Committee.....	165

### **List of Tables**

Table 1.	Racial Demographics of Woodland Parish and Surrounding Parishes .....	57
Table 2.	2007 – 2010 Socioeconomic Demographics of Woodland Parish and Surrounding Parishes .....	58
Table 3.	Statistical Data from Pilot Study .....	66
Table 4.	Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of RTI in Increasing Student Achievement.....	69
Table 5.	Teachers' Perceptions of the Evidence of Effectiveness of RTI in Increasing Student Achievement.....	70
Table 6.	Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Depth of Implementation of RTI in Classroom Instruction.....	72
Table 7.	Teachers' Perceptions of the Level of Rigor in RTI Implementation .....	74
Table 8.	Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence the Depth or Level of Rigor in RTI Implementation.....	75
Table 9.	Educators' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Required to Implement RTI .....	78
Table 10.	Educators' Perceptions of Factors that Influence Amount of RTI Time...	80
Table 11.	Educators' Perceptions of Level of Teacher Preparedness to Make Special Education Referrals .....	82
Table 12.	Educators' Perceptions of the Validity of RTI as Tool for Special Education Referrals .....	84

Table 13.	Training that Teachers Have Received to Make Special Education Referrals Based on RTI Data .....	86
Table 14.	Educators' Perceptions of Indicators of the Validity of RTI as a Referral Tool.....	88
Table 15.	Teachers' Perceptions of the Frequency of Teacher Collaboration .....	90
Table 16.	Teachers' Perceptions of Availability of Opportunities for Teacher Collaboration.....	91
Table 17.	Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence the Value of Teacher Collaboration.....	93
Table 18.	Teachers' Perceptions of Ways or Circumstances in Which Teachers Collaborate.....	94
Table 19.	Educators' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Teacher Collaboration on RTI Implementation.....	96
Table 20.	Educators' Perceptions of the Frequency of Teacher Collaboration.....	98
Table 21.	RTI Programs Used in Parish of Study .....	100

**List of Figures**

Figure 1.	Illustration of Response to Intervention Tiers of Intervention .....	24
-----------	--	----

### **Acknowledgements**

There is no way that I could have successfully completed my doctoral studies without a strong support system comprised of a group of caring, knowledgeable people who deserve my unending appreciation. First, I would like to thank my LEC professors. To my major professor, Dr. Lawrence Leonard, I am deeply indebted for your guidance and help throughout my doctoral studies. Thank you for answering my countless questions, for your patient guidance and support, and for inspiring me to complete this project to the best of my ability. To my doctoral committee members, Dr. Lanie Dornier, Dr. Nanthalia McJamerson, and Dr. Dorothy Schween, I am sincerely grateful for your guidance and advice, and I appreciate your words of wisdom and direction tremendously. I would also like to thank Dr. Bob Cage, who offered excellent assistance from the development of the proposal to the proposal defense.

To the superintendent, principals, and teachers of the participating school district, I thank you for your assistance in completing this project. You were so cooperative and helpful, and I appreciate your participation more than words can say.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jenny Blalock and Dr. Sue Barfield for being my “comrades in arms” as we completed our LEC journeys together. Because you paved the way, you helped to make my dissertation process an easier one. Thank you for your guidance and advice.



## **Chapter One: Introduction**

In April 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education submitted the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* to the United States Department of Education concerning the ineffectiveness of the nation's school systems and the decline of American education as a whole. The Commission proposed strategies to improve students' education and to make instruction more meaningful and effective. Some of the tenets proposed by the Commission were more rigorous standards, higher expectations of students, and more effective use of instructional time and techniques (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In the ensuing years, school systems implemented programs designed to address the issues of ineffectiveness that were highlighted by *A Nation at Risk*. During the 1980s and 1990s, states began developing academic standards and standards-based testing, and legislation was passed which required that states receiving federal aid have higher standards and standardized tests in certain grades (U. S. Department of Education, 2008). One legislative act that went into effect after the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* was the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, a law which mandated that all students exit certain grade levels having demonstrated competency in English, mathematics, science, foreign language, government, economics, civics, history, geography, and the arts (Hunt, 2008). The Goals 2000: Educate America Act was followed by the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, an act which increased the number of grades to which the

standardized tests were administered and which strengthened the accountability tied to those test results (U. S. Department of Education, 2008). However, while *A Nation at Risk* was progressive in the call for assessments that would provide baseline data and identify students' needs, traditional standardized tests were not effective in identifying individual needs of struggling students (Casey, Bicard, Bicard, & Nichols, 2008).

*A Nation at Risk* also addressed classroom management in relation to academic learning time (Casey et al., 2008). The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) recommended that classroom instructional time should consist of better classroom management and improved organization of the school day. The Commission also suggested that additional time should be scheduled to meet the needs of struggling students, gifted students, and other pupils who need more instructional diversity than can be accommodated during the conventional school day.

Legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) built upon this theory, recognizing the necessity of the implementation of methods that would address students' needs, provide individualized instruction, and determine whether a student meets the criteria to receive special education services. IDEIA (2004) recommended that school districts use a research-based intervention program for these purposes. As a result, many school systems around the country, including some districts in Louisiana, began using Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies to meet students' needs, promote academic achievement, and identify students for special education services (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.).

**Problem**

As mentioned previously, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 which informed the United States Department of Education of the decline of the American educational system. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) stated the following alarming statistics:

- In the United States, about 13 percent of 17-year-old students were considered to be functionally illiterate. Among minority youth, functional illiteracy ran as high as 40 percent.
- Achievement on standardized tests in high school grades was lower than that 26 years prior to the study.
- Scores on the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) had declined steadily from 1963 to 1980. Average scores had dropped over 50 points on the verbal component and over 40 points on the mathematics component during that time period.
- Many 17-year-old students did not possess higher-order thinking skills that were necessary for educational success. Nearly 40 percent of those students could not draw inferences from written material, 20 percent could not write a persuasive essay, and nearly 66 percent could not solve a multi-step math problem.

Fifteen years after the release of *A Nation at Risk*, school systems were still wrestling with the daunting task of competently educating students and meeting students' needs. According to a report entitled *A Nation Still at Risk: An Educational Manifesto*, issued by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (1998), U. S. students placed 19<sup>th</sup> out of 21

nations in mathematics and 16<sup>th</sup> out of 21 nations in science on the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). Advanced students scored even lower, finishing in last place in physics. According to the report, this evidence indicated that American students still lagged behind the rest of the industrialized world in critical subjects vital to the future of the country. The Foundation's report went on to state that, in the 15 years since *A Nation at Risk* was published, over 10 million high school seniors could not read at a basic level, over 20 million could not solve basic mathematics problems, and almost 25 million did not know basic American history information. Furthermore, over six million students dropped out of high school altogether in that time period.

In 2008, twenty-five years after *A Nation at Risk* was published, researchers found that American students still struggled in their education. According to Sticht (2008), 30-year trend data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed little, if any, improvement in reading for nine-year-old students and no improvement whatsoever for thirteen- and seventeen-year-old students. Schools continued to graduate thousands of functionally illiterate students. According to Bridgeland et al., as cited in *A Nation Accountable* (U. S. Dept. of Education, 2008), four out of every ten young adults who did not graduate from high school received some kind of public relief in 2001. Additionally, a student who dropped out of high school was eight times more likely to go to prison as a person with a high school diploma.

The U. S. Department of Education echoed these concerns in a 2008 report entitled *A Nation Accountable: Twenty-Five Years after A Nation at Risk*. According to the report, of 20 children born in 1983, six did not graduate high school on time. Of the 14 that did graduate high school on time, 10 started college but only 5 earned a

bachelor's degree by 2007. The statistics for minority students in inner cities were even more staggering: one-half of minority inner-city students did not graduate from high school on time. In 2006, nearly 60 percent of high school dropouts over the age of 25 were either unemployed or were not participating in the workforce at all.

After *A Nation at Risk* was published, the United States Department of Education passed many legislative acts designed to improve education and increase academic achievement for both regular education and special education students. Further emphasis was placed on improving special education services when Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (Public Law 104-446) (IDEIA, 2004). As a part of this reauthorization, Congress mandated changes in the way struggling students were to be screened for special education services. In the past, students qualified for special education through a discrepancy-based model which required a grade-level difference of 1.5 to 2 years between expected student achievement and actual student performance to identify students as learning disabled (Hoover, Baca, Wexler-Love, & Saenz, 2008). One of the problems with the discrepancy model was that educators were unable to identify students as learning disabled in a timely manner. Often, students struggled through several elementary grades before the discrepancy was significant enough to warrant special education services (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005). The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act required school systems to evaluate students for possible learning disabilities through a research-based intervention program. One such intervention program is Response to Intervention (RTI), a program that uses students' responses to

high-quality instruction to guide educational decisions, providing students with early intervention before failure occurs (Casey et al., 2008).

Response to Intervention strategies are currently being used in some school districts in Louisiana to determine each student's areas of academic weakness. Using this method, teachers address academic needs immediately, rather than waiting for students to fail before responding to their needs. RTI is also being used by some districts' special education departments as a screening tool to determine whether students are candidates for special education services (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.). Because RTI is used as both an intervention method and a screening tool for special education, it is important to determine the fidelity and rigor to which RTI is implemented and the attitudes of those who are implementing the program.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Because Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies have been newly implemented into the curriculum in the school district of focus, this study was an initial effort in the examination of educators' perceptions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention strategies. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators concerning the effectiveness of RTI interventions in increasing student achievement. The study also focused on the depth of implementation and the level of rigor that classroom teachers and special education teachers used to incorporate RTI programs into their instruction. In addition, the study focused on general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceptions regarding the amount of time required to incorporate RTI into their instruction. It also investigated the perceptions of general education teachers,

special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies. Finally, the study probed teachers' opinions as to whether RTI is a valid tool in determining possible candidates for special education services.

### **Justification of the Study**

Response to Intervention strategies take tremendous effort on the part of the teachers to competently implement these interventions into their classroom instruction. Much of the success or failure of the RTI interventions depends upon the teachers' perceptions of the value, need, and importance of such behavioral modifications, as well as upon the effort that teachers use in implementing the program into their instructional routines (LaRocco & Murdica, 2009). According to Reeves, Bishop, and Filce (2010), RTI "risk(s) becoming yet another educational experiment with possibilities for lasting success, but doomed to future failure because of poor implementation and a lack of fidelity to its important constructs" (p. 34). Swigart (2009) states that teachers' opinions of RTI may influence the implementation of interventions in their classrooms. The researcher asserts that RTI may not be implemented effectively if teachers do not view RTI as a beneficial process that will improve instruction and increase achievement. According to Stuart, Rinaldi, and Higgins-Averill (2011), the Response to Intervention model relies on a collaborative planning and intervention framework that requires general and special education teachers to plan, reflect, and solve problems through teacher collaboration. Educators who become frustrated with teacher collaboration or who do not use collaboration in their implementation of RTI are not considered to be implementing

the program to the fullest extent. It is essential, therefore, to determine educators' perceptions as to the value of teacher collaboration.

Response to Intervention served dual purposes in some Louisiana school districts as an intervention method for struggling students and as a screening tool to determine whether students qualify for special education services. Therefore, it was vitally important to assess the rigor and fidelity with which the program is being implemented in classrooms and to determine the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators concerning this program.

### **Conceptual Framework**

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act was passed in 2004, educators were provided with a new way to identify pupils with academic problems and a method of evaluating students with possible learning disabilities (Walker-Dalhouse et al., 2009). Response to Intervention was built upon the idea of individualized or differentiated instruction, strategies that restructure the traditional classroom to meet the abilities and needs of diverse students (Subban, 2006). Because Response to Intervention strategies are intended to provide students with differentiated and individualized instruction in the classroom, many educators believe that RTI reduces the large numbers of culturally or linguistically diverse students in special education or students experiencing difficulties because of inadequate instruction instead of a learning disability.

Multiple researchers and theorists over time have contributed to what is now commonly known as Response to Intervention. Alfred Binet, a minister of public instruction in France, worked with Theodore Simon to "explore the possibility of using different structured tasks to differentially diagnose and prescribe educational programs



for students who might not profit from regular classroom instruction” (Deno, 2003, p. 184). Although his work was subsequently used to develop the Stanford-Binet intelligence scale, the original purpose of Binet’s work was to identify more effective programs for educating students, rather than excluding them (Deno, 2003). Binet and Simon (1916) studied the methods through which children develop their intelligence. One of the areas that the researchers studied was the effect of pedagogical methods on intelligence. According to the authors:

The pedagogical method consists in making an inventory of the total knowledge of a subject, in comparing this total with that of a normal subject, in measuring the difference, and in finding if the difference in the knowledge of a subject is explained by the insufficiency of scholastic training. (p. 70)

Binet and Simon believed that it was essential that students with learning disabilities be correctly identified. They pointed out that many administrators purposefully misidentified students as learning disabled so that they would not have to deal with these students. According to the authors, “[The school administrators] seem to reason in the following way: ‘Here is an excellent opportunity for getting rid of all the children who trouble us,’ and without the true critical spirit, they designate all who are unruly, or disinterested in the school” (p. 169). Today, Response to Intervention calls for educators to “reliably and validly indicate the true cause of poor student progress” to correctly identify struggling students as learning disabled and to intervene for those students who simply require extra instruction to reach academic success (Elliott, 2008, p. 10).

Binet's work in determining the need for alternative methods of student assessment provided the foundation for Stanley Deno's work in special education. Deno (2003) developed the theory of Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), a model that was based on the idea that special education teachers could use repeated testing or methods of measurement to formatively evaluate and improve their instruction. Deno, along with his research partners Lynn Fuchs and Phyllis Mirkin, advocated using CBM to frequently measure student growth and modify or change instruction based on these results, thereby using data-driven decision-making to improve instruction (Buffum, Matto, & Weber, 2009). Currently, the Curriculum-Based Measurement model is used with Response to Intervention and other individualized instruction programs to provide a baseline from which goals are established and growth is measured. Such measurements may be used to enhance instruction, assist teachers in making data-driven decisions, and aid educators in screening students for special education services (Deno, 2003).

Another theorist that contributed to the evolution of Response to Intervention was the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Subban, 2006). According to Subban, Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development led directly to the development of differentiated instruction. Vygotsky defined the Zone of Proximal Development as the difference between a student's actual development level and his potential development level. Wood and Wood (1996) defined the Zone of Proximal Development as "the gap between what a given child can achieve alone, their [sic] 'potential development as determined by independent problem solving', and what they [sic] can achieve 'through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'" (p. 5). According to Subban, in order to develop this zone, students must actively interact

with their instructors or with knowledgeable peers. The teacher's role "becomes one of purposeful instruction, a mediator of activities and substantial experiences allowing the learner to attain his or her zone of proximal development" (p. 937).

Subban (2006) contends that Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development has implications for current teachers. Social interaction, engagement between the teacher and the student, meaningful instruction, scaffolding, and student ability are elements that should be considered when developing instructional strategies for students. Huebner (2010) posits that the Zone of Proximal Development affects differentiated instruction in various ways, stating:

...[S]olid research does validate a number of practices that provide the foundation of differentiation. These practices include using effective classroom management procedures; promoting student engagement and motivation; assessing student readiness; responding to learning styles; grouping students for instruction; and teaching to the student's zone of proximal development." (p. 79)

Differentiated instructional techniques, such as RTI, can be used to facilitate the learning process.

The implementation of Response to Intervention strategies in school settings relies on several points that contribute to the effectiveness of these methods: (1) assessment or diagnostics; (2) differentiation of instruction or pedagogy; (3) collaboration among educators; and (4) professional development or preparation. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), Response to Intervention should be based on data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals [§300.309(b)(2)]. According to Wixson and

Valencia (2011), IDEIA does not provide specific information on assessment, but it is clear that an effective RTI program must rely upon data gathered through screenings, formative progress monitoring, benchmark progress monitoring, and summative outcome assessments. Wixson and Valencia further state that gathering data through these assessments enables teachers to identify students' needs and to assess their progress and the appropriateness of RTI interventions and targeted instruction. Lipson, Chomsky-Higgins, and Kanfer (2011) state that assessment should be used not only to determine students' needs at a particular time but also as diagnostic tools to gather longitudinal data. By developing diagnostic profiles for students, teachers can plan research-based interventions for long-term educational needs.

The second facet of effective implementation, differentiation of instruction or pedagogy, is a major component of RTI. Response to Intervention is based on the three tiers of intervention (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.), with differentiated instruction being initiated in Tier 1 and continuing to Tiers 2 and 3 if difficulties persist. Instruction is focused on students' needs and is delivered in group settings and time allotments specifically tailored to increase student achievement. According to O'Connor and Simic (2002), intense and differentiated instruction that is data-based and implemented effectively and appropriately can resolve reading difficulties.

The third facet of effective implementation is that of collaboration among educators. According to Mahdavi and Beebe-Frankenberger (2009), implementing RTI requires excellent collaboration among general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. The authors further state that

effective collaboration among teachers and stakeholders facilitates fidelity of implementation, sustainability of the program, and rigor in implementing interventions.

The final facet of effective implementation is that of professional development. According to Hawkins, Kroeger, Musti-Rao, Barnett, and Ward (2008), teachers must receive appropriate training for RTI to be successful. Professional development can influence teachers' classroom practices significantly and lead to improved student achievement. In addition, effective professional development can provide educators with a means to directly apply what they have learned to their classroom instruction (American Educational Research Association, 2005). Walker-Dalhouse et al. (2009) state that professional development is essential when implementing any systemic change in educational programs. The authors further state that classroom teachers need sustained support in their efforts to monitor student progress, to determine the effectiveness of their instruction, and to determine how to use data to modify their instruction.

### **Methodology**

The study sample was taken from "Woodland Parish School District" (not the actual name of the district), a school district located in a rural parish in north-central Louisiana. This district was chosen as the focus of this study because it was representative of the surrounding area in terms of racial makeup, socioeconomic status, and rural development. Because Woodland Parish School District was representative of the region in which is located, it should serve well as a sample from which inferences can be made of the area as a whole. Woodland Parish School District was also considered to be an educationally progressive district. The district was chosen in the past to pilot new educational initiatives. Recently, Woodland Parish School District was chosen to pilot-

test the new teacher evaluation models that will be used with Louisiana Act 54 initiatives, also known as the “value-added” initiative. For the purpose of this research, all Kindergarten through fifth grade general education teachers of English Language Arts (ELA), special education teachers, and administrators in seven elementary schools in the district were surveyed to determine their perceptions of RTI procedures, implementation, and teacher collaboration. English Language Arts teachers were chosen for the study because the Woodland Parish School District had implemented several Response to Intervention methods in Kindergarten through fifth grade ELA classes. Data were collected through surveys comprised of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

### **Research Design**

The following questions guided this study:

- 1) What are general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement?
- 2) What depth of implementation do general education and special education teachers use to incorporate RTI into their classroom instruction?
- 3) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction?
- 4) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services?

- 5) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies?

Based on these questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- Hypothesis 1 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement between general education teachers and special education teachers.
- Hypothesis 2 - There is no statistically significant difference in the depth of implementation in which RTI is incorporated into classroom instruction between general education teachers and special education teachers.
- Hypothesis 3 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.
- Hypothesis 4 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.
- Hypothesis 5 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

**Instrumentation**

Data were collected through printed survey questionnaires comprised of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. General education ELA teachers, special education teachers, and administrators were surveyed about their perceptions concerning the implementation and effectiveness of RTI interventions by choosing an answer or rubric score that best described their opinions or beliefs. Each respondent then had the opportunity to explain his or her answers more fully by answering open-ended questions that followed each multiple-choice item.

**Data Analysis**

Data were collected and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for data analysis. Survey questionnaires were collected and Likert scores from the multiple choice questions were entered into the software program. Results were analyzed using non-parametric methods. On the teachers' surveys, data from questions one and three were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test. Data from survey questions seven, nine, eleven, and thirteen were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks and were compared to questions one, three, five, and seven on the administrators' survey. Data from questions two, four, five, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, and fifteen on the teachers' survey and questions two, four, six, eight, and nine on the administrators' survey were analyzed through qualitative means; the researcher identified commonalities and differences in and among the subgroups.

**Definition of Terms**

1. Response to Intervention (RTI) - a program that "uses students' responses to high-quality instruction to guide educational decisions, including decisions about the



efficacy of instruction and intervention, eligibility for special programs, design of individualized education programs, and the effectiveness of special education services. In that way, it allows for early intervention without waiting for students to fail before providing necessary services and support” (Casey et al., 2008, p. 594).

2. Intervention – to provide “at risk” students with enhanced opportunities to learn, possibly including, but not limited to, additional time exposed to the core curriculum in small groups, other supplementary instruction, or special education (Dickman, 2006, p. 2).
3. Progress Monitoring – brief measures of specific skills that are administered to determine if the student receiving intervention is responding as intended. They are administered frequently, at least once every two weeks (Dickman, 2006, p. 2).
4. Tier 1 Intervention – general education of a research-based core curriculum. All students are screened at this tier to determine if they are responding appropriately to instruction before they experience any significant failure (Dickman, 2006, p. 2).
5. Tier 2 Intervention – early intervening services; an increase in the time and intensity of a student’s exposure to the core curriculum. Implemented when the student does not appear to respond appropriately to Tier 1 instruction (Dickman, 2006, p. 2)
6. Tier 3 Intervention – intensive intervention; may include students who have been found eligible for special education services and students who do not qualify for such services. Students receive intense instruction through various practices.

Students are progress-monitored every two weeks, and interventions are adjusted and continued based on the outcome of progress-monitoring (Dickman, 2006, p. 2).

7. Student Achievement – For the purposes of this study, student achievement was defined as the amount of student growth on LEAP, iLEAP, and ELA unit tests.
8. Collaboration – When partners collaborate, they interact frequently with the explicit goal of sharing decision-making to achieve mutual goals. They pool resources and share responsibilities, establish a common framework and language, and develop well-defined relationships and mutual trust among members (Mohammed, Murray, Coleman, Roberts, and Grim, 2011, p. 6).
9. Depth of Implementation – the extent to which RTI is executed or employed in instruction.
10. Rigor – the level or depth of understanding, questioning, application, and production in relation to classroom instruction and student learning
11. Regular or General Education Teacher – For the purpose of this study, a regular education or general education teacher is defined as one who teaches English language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies to typically developing elementary students in Kindergarten through fifth grade.
12. Special Education Teacher – For the purpose of this study, a special education teacher is defined as one who teaches students with intensive academic needs that cannot be met by the general education program.

13. School Administrator - Specially certified educator whose job is to direct and manage daily operation of all programs in a particular school; may also be known as principal, assistant principal, and/or coordinating teacher.

### **Summary**

In order to determine the effectiveness of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process in Louisiana schools and its effect on the progress of students, opinions and perceptions of those who incorporate the process in schools (i.e., the general education ELA teachers, special education teachers, and administrators who oversee instruction) were collected from selected educators and analyzed. According to Fuchs and Deshler (2007), failure to ask questions about the factors that contribute to the implementation of RTI may prevent practitioners from fully understanding what it actually encompasses. The factors that contribute to RTI's success or failure are as important to identify and understand as the components of the method itself, as will be established in the literature review contained in Chapter 2.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

### **The Introduction of Response to Intervention**

Since the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), educational reform has remained a dominant theme in school systems across the United States (Sansosti & Noltemeyer, 2008). After *A Nation at Risk* was published, policy changes related to both general education and special education, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, were enacted with the intent to improve the American education system. Perhaps the most notable of these changes was the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which required schools to strive for improvement in student achievement through the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices by highly qualified educators (Sansosti & Noltemeyer, 2008; Greenwood et al., 2011). Further emphasis was placed on improving special education services in 2004 when Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (Public Law 104-446) (IDEIA, 2004). As a part of this reauthorization, Congress mandated changes in the way in which struggling students are screened for special education services. In the past, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) required schools to use a “discrepancy model” (Gresham, 2001) that required a grade-level difference of 1.5 to 2 years between expected student achievement and actual student performance to identify students as learning disabled (Hoover, Baca, Wexler-Love, & Saenz, 2008, p. 2). One of the problems with the discrepancy model, also called the “Wait and Fail” method

(Hoover et al., 2008; Gersten & Dimino, 2006), was that educators were unable to identify students as learning disabled in a timely manner, often having to wait until a student was well into upper elementary grades before the discrepancy was significant enough to warrant special education services (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005). The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act bypassed the “Wait and Fail” method and allowed school systems to implement alternative means of assessing learning disabilities (Hoover et al., 2008; Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2009). According to IDEIA (2004):

In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures described in paragraphs (2) and (3). (p. 60)

Both the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 emphasized the importance of providing high-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction and interventions by highly qualified teachers. In addition, these acts held schools accountable for the academic success and for meeting state grade-level requirements of all students regardless of ability level. Because of these advanced requirements, many school systems, including some districts in the State of Louisiana, turned toward Response for Intervention methods, also called Responsiveness to Intervention methods or RTI, to monitor student progress and increase achievement for both general and special education students (Klotz & Canter, 2007;

Hollenbeck, 2007; Harlacher, Walker, & Sanford, 2010; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009).

### **Description of Response to Intervention**

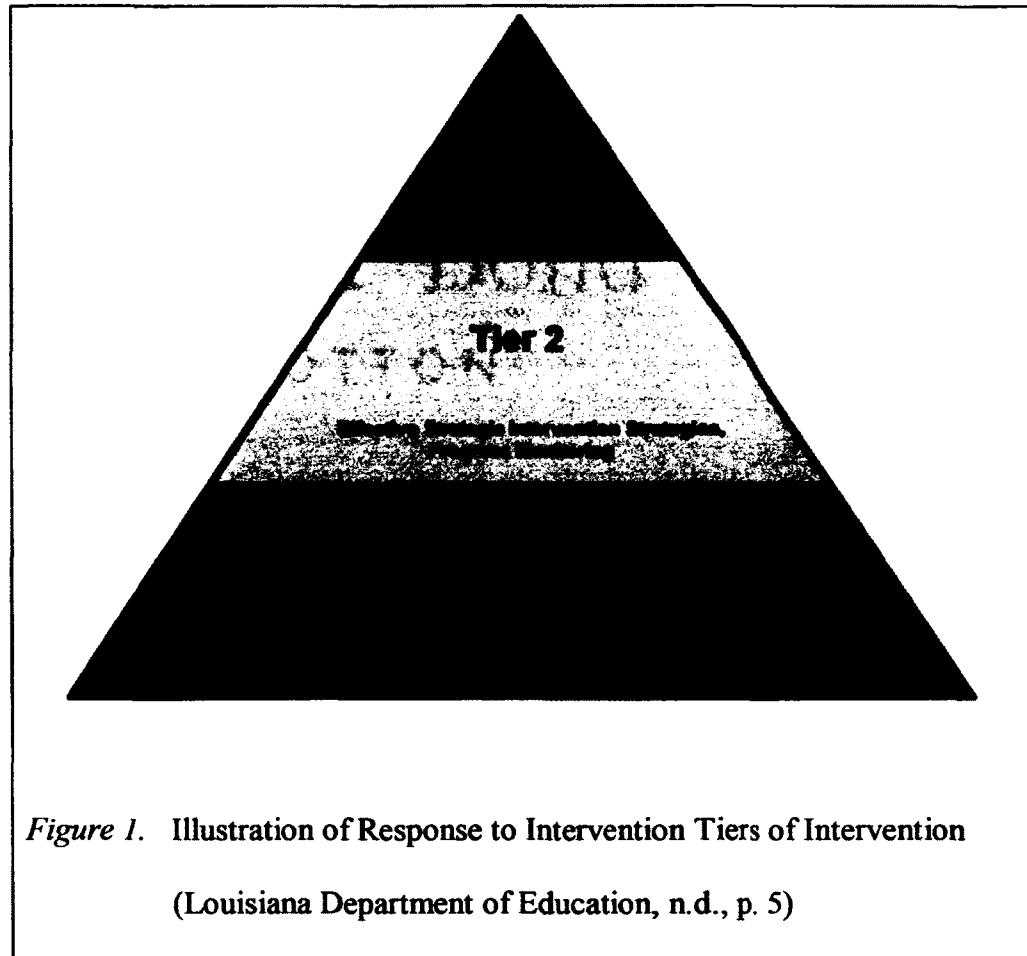
Response to Intervention (RTI) serves as a method for providing high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student needs. Furthermore, educators use students' learning rate over time and students' level of performance to make educational decisions (Tilly & Kurns, 2008, slide 3). While RTI is a means of providing early intervention to all students at risk for failure (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2006), it is also viewed by many education systems as a tool for identifying learning disabilities (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2009). According to Janczak (2008), RTI is designed to provide students with support and remediation when they first show signs of struggling. Janczak also states that information for special education eligibility can also be gathered by assessing students' responses to those interventions. Response to Intervention strategies are used in both reading and mathematics instruction. It is a process that aims to shift educational resources away from the classification of disabilities and toward high-quality instruction and evaluation (Dickman, 2006). Additionally, general education and special education teachers can work together to analyze student data, make data-driven decisions, and employ appropriate instructional interventions for each student's needs (Hoover et al., 2008). According to Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, and Young (2003), successful implementation of interventions requires collaboration among all educators, not just those involved in the process of determining eligibility of special education services.

Response to Intervention focuses on a multi-tiered approach in order to provide educational services for all children (Harlacher et al., 2010; Gersten et al., 2008; Johnson

et al., 2006; Janczak, 2008; Sawyer, Holland, & Detgen, 2008; Gentry, 2010). Turnbull, Turnbull, and Wehmeyer (2010) identified four components of successful RTI implementation.

- the implementation of high-quality, research-based instruction and behavioral supports in general education settings
- universal (school-wide or district-wide) screening of academics and behavior to determine which students need closer monitoring or additional interventions
- multiple tiers of increasingly intense, research-based interventions matched to student needs
- continuous monitoring of student progress to determine if students are meeting their goals

In the elementary grades, RTI is implemented through instruction in the general education classroom. Instruction is based on tiers, or levels, of student achievement (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Illustration of Response to Intervention Tiers of Intervention  
(Louisiana Department of Education, n.d., p. 5)

The first stage of core instruction is referred to as Tier 1 instruction (Hughes & Dexter, 2011; Gersten et al., 2008). In Tier 1, high-quality, evidence-based instruction is provided to all students in a class by a highly qualified instructor (Gersten et al., 2008). Some research refers to this as “primary prevention,” (Johnson et al., 2006; Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2009), which is comprised of the core instructional program along with classroom routines for differentiating instruction, accommodations for all students, and problem-solving strategies that address areas which may interfere with student performance. In Tier 1, students may take part in a universal screening three times a year, with monthly progress monitoring by the instructor (Marston, 2005; Hughes &



Dexter, 2011). Progress monitoring is defined as the method by which teachers determine if students are benefitting from the instructional program. Progress monitoring is also used to identify students who are not making adequate progress or who are not learning through typical Tier 1 instruction (Hughes & Dexter, 2011). Students who fail to respond to core instruction would then enter Tier 2 interventions.

Tier 2 interventions incorporate supplemental small-group instruction and tutoring into the classroom (Gersten et al., 2008; Fuchs, L. S. & Fuchs, D., 2006) and focuses on specialized interventions and frequent progress monitoring. This is often referred to as “strategic interventions” (School District of Lee County, 2009, p. 9) or “secondary prevention” (Johnson et al., 2006; Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2009), where students receive small-group instruction and progress is monitored more frequently, such as every two weeks (Butler & Baugh, 2007). On average, five to fifteen percent of students need Tier 2 interventions (Johnson et al., 2006; School District of Lee County, 2009). In Tier 2 interventions, students who have mild deficits in skill areas may receive 20 to 45 minutes more instructional time each day than do those students in Tier 1 in small groups made of approximately six to eight students. Educators may use a standard treatment where all students in the group receive the same instruction, or the students may receive individualized instruction that is tailored to meet students’ individual needs (Harlacher et al., 2010). In Tier 2 intervention, assessment is the foundation of the supplemental instruction and is specific to students’ needs (Butler & Baugh, 2007). Much of RTI assessment is dynamic because it depends upon students’ rate of learning. Teachers use the data from the assessments to determine whether they need to change their instructional methods or curriculum matter (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2006). Progress is

documented by the classroom teacher and/or intervention specialist so that data can be analyzed to determine the students' rates of success (Butler & Baugh, 2007). Assessment and intervention serves two purposes: "to provide struggling students with early, effective instruction and to provide a valid means of assessing learner needs" (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2006, p. 95). Assessment also helps educators to determine whether additional intervention time or strategies are needed. Strategic interventions are intended for short-term, immediate implementation; however, students may remain in Tier 2 as long as they are making progress. Once students reach success on a delineated benchmark, they may no longer require Tier 2 interventions. However, if students have not made adequate progress after strategic interventions have been implemented with fidelity, then the student may require intensive interventions at Tier 3 (School District of Lee County, 2009).

Students who show a substantial need for continued support in order to achieve critical goals are to receive Tier 3 support, the most concentrated level of interventions (Harlacher et al., 2010). Approximately five percent of students fall into this tier (Johnson et al., 2006). Tier 3 of RTI is also referred to as "intensive interventions" (School District of Lee County, 2009, p. 10) or "tertiary prevention" (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2009). Students in Tier 3 support receive instruction in groups of four or fewer students. The instruction is intense and explicit and focuses more on students' individual needs (Harlacher et al., 2010). Intensive interventions are designed to accelerate the students' rate of learning by increasing the frequency and duration of interventions (School District of Lee County, 2009). Monitoring of student performance still occurs every two weeks; however, the length of interventions can be significantly longer than

Tier 2 interventions (Marston, 2005). Data are gathered through progress monitoring and assessments and are used to identify success and failure in instruction. If students still experience difficulty after receiving intensive interventions, they may be evaluated for possible special education services (Gersten et al., 2008). Students who are successful at Tier 3 and no longer need intensive interventions may return to Tier 1 or Tier 2 interventions (School District of Lee County, 2009).

The ideal end result of Response to Intervention methods is a continuous course of action in which educators measure students' growth continuously and modify instruction according to the students' needs (Harlacher et al., 2010). Because information can be gathered quickly through assessment, educators may employ interventions immediately so that students can receive assistance as soon as they begin to struggle. RTI also creates opportunities for general educators and special educators to collaborate and share understanding and knowledge to assist students (Gersten et al., 2008).

### **Use of Response to Intervention**

Though it is considered a relatively new concept, Response to Intervention and multi-tiered instructional interventions are becoming increasingly common. This is attributed in part to the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, which encouraged school systems to use a scientific, research-based intervention system to help prevent gaps in achievement and to identify learning disabilities (Gersten et al., 2008; Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). Many researchers have stated that RTI strategies are preventative and proactive in nature (Mask, Solmonson, & Welsh, 2011). While educators are using RTI to provide remediation for at-risk students, many school systems are also using the program to identify students who may need special

education services. According to Wanzek and Vaughn (2008), RTI shows promise for providing both early intervention and identification of students with reading difficulties and learning disabilities.

However, RTI can be used for more than just identifying students who may qualify for special education services. Response to Intervention can also be used to provide rigorous, challenging instruction so that students may exceed rather than simply meet state standards. Enriching, engaging experiences can be provided to students at the Tier 1 level so that students learn to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and apply information that they have learned (Buffum, Matto, & Weber, 2010). According to Turnbull et al. (2010), in order to provide students with increasing degrees of instruction, students must receive instruction based on the following concepts:

- more explicit instruction involving the systematic teaching of critical skills that enable the student to be more successful in mastering a subject;
- more intensive instruction involving a higher frequency of instructional opportunities than is typically provided in general education classrooms; and
- more supportive instruction involving more precise scaffolding in order to (1) sequence skills and (2) provide more precise prompts to use necessary learning strategies.

Another potential advantage of RTI and multi-tier interventions is that struggling students are provided with assistance in learning how to read early in their school careers. With the “discrepancy model,” many students were not provided with additional assistance in reading until they were officially diagnosed as having a specific learning

disability, a lingering process that often resulted in the student reaching second or third grade before he or she was identified. According to Gersten et al. (2008), students who were weak in reading in the early elementary grades tended to stay weak in reading throughout their educational careers. Response to Intervention strategies help to distinguish between those students who suffer from a learning disability and those whose achievement problems are due to issues such as a lack of prior instruction (Klotz & Canter, 2007).

Another important aspect of Response to Intervention is that of parental involvement. Involving parents in all phases of RTI interventions is a key aspect of a successful program (School District of Lee County, 2009). Parental involvement should be characterized by consistent, meaningful, and organized communication between instructors, administrators, and parents in regard to student progress and achievement. With this type of communication, parents are able to assist in the learning process and are able to be involved in decision-making to increase their children's academic success (Johnson et al., 2006; Klotz & Canter, 2007). This can be done through traditional methods such as parent-teacher conferences or meetings; however, whatever method is used, parents should be notified of student progress on a regular basis (School District of Lee County, 2009).

Teacher collaboration is another important characteristic of RTI. Student achievement may be increased when general and special education instructors brainstorm to find interventions, discuss instructional strategies, and work with each other to address student needs. Professional growth can occur when teachers work together to improve student achievement (Mask et al., 2011). According to Gersten et. al. (2008), RTI shows

potential for serious ongoing collaboration between special education and general education instructors and administrators because the collaboration is based on data and the shared understanding of the importance of correct student identification and support.

According to the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (2006), an RTI model that has been successfully implemented into a school setting can be characterized by several key features:

- a. students receive high-quality, research-based instruction from qualified staff in their general education setting;
- b. general education staff members assume an active role in students' assessment in the curriculum;
- c. school staff conducts universal screening of academics and behavior;
- d. school staff implements specific, research-based interventions to address the students' difficulties;
- e. school staff conducts continuous progress monitoring of student performance (i.e., weekly or biweekly) for secondary and tertiary interventions and less frequently in general education;
- f. school staff uses progress monitoring data and explicit decision rules to determine interventions' effectiveness and necessary modifications; and
- g. systematic assessment is made regarding the fidelity or integrity with which instruction and interventions are implemented.

### **Response to Intervention and Special Education**

In the past, when a student struggled in the regular education setting, the typical first response of educators was to refer the student for special education testing (Buffum

et al., 2010). However, the discrepancy-based model used for special education referrals, sometimes called the “wait and fail” method, often delayed help for students who required assistance immediately (Gersten & Dimino, 2006). According to Greshem (2001) the discrepancy-based approach used four methods to determine eligibility for special education services:

- deviation from grade level;
- expectancy formulas (a comparison between a child’s expected and observed grade level);
- simple standard score difference (between IQ and achievement measured on standardized tests); and
- standard regression analysis (attempting to account for measurement errors in the simple difference method). (p. 2)

Each method had a number of drawbacks. In particular, a major controversy centered on the use of IQ in the identification process. According to Greshem (2001), IQ tests contributed very little reliable information for planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional interventions. Greshem further states:

The most serious flaw in the current process [the discrepancy model] is the absence of a direct link between assessment procedures used for identification and subsequent interventions that might be prescribed on the basis of these assessment procedures. What appears to be needed is an approach to defining [learning disabilities] that is based on how students respond to instructional interventions rather than on some arbitrarily defined discrepancy between ability and achievement. (p. 3)

When Response to Intervention was recommended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), educators found a method of helping students as soon as they began struggling academically. While RTI can be successfully employed to assist students who show signs of academic distress, the program is also commonly used as a diagnostic tool to identify learning disabilities and provide remediation for special education students (Torgesen, 2007). In a joint report, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (2006) stressed the importance of RTI as an instructional strategy in general education classrooms. However, the associations also called for the special education and general education communities to join together to use RTI as a tool in working with struggling students and using data to make better decisions about which children should be referred for special education services.

Using RTI as a basis for special education referrals is not a new practice. Early models, such as those by Deno and Gross (1973) defined several essential elements of an effective response-to-intervention method. Such elements included:

1. criteria for ensuring that students had substantial deficits in basic skills for which special services were required; these deficits are defined by the degree to which they were behind the expected performance levels of that grade on measures such as Curriculum-Based Measurements or other screening tools;
2. goals for interventions that would demonstrate significant progress toward classroom achievement levels; and
3. the need for special education based on the failure of a student to achieve success from efforts aimed at significantly reducing skill deficits.



According to Barnett, Daly III, Jones, and Lentz, Jr. (2004), these early criteria were the precursor for what is now known as Response to Intervention. They involved providing meaningful educational experiences before students are admitted to special education, using systematic, data-driven decision making, and proving that special education would be necessary for the student to find academic success by employing intervention strategies that meet students' needs at the first sign of struggling.

In order to consider a student for special education services, data must be collected through the RTI process and analyzed to determine students' ability and levels of need. According to Hoover (2010), all classroom instruction and progress monitoring information must be collected as evidence of essential prereferral documentation. This includes:

1. evidence from universal screenings done in Tier 1 interventions;
2. evidence from implementation of preventative instruction completed in Tiers 1 and 2; and
3. evidence from implementation of intensive interventions completed in Tier 3 interventions, along with, in some cases, formal referrals.

Hoover states, "When properly implemented, response to intervention is integral to making effective special education referral and eligibility decisions" (p. 290).

According to a report prepared by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005), Response to Intervention methods can provide both data for more effective and earlier identification of students with learning disabilities and a systematic method to ensure that students experiencing educational difficulties receive support and intensive instruction in a more timely manner. The Committee also states that three

major developments in the field of special education led to the recommendation of Response to Intervention as a promising approach for the identification of learning disabilities.

First, as mentioned before, educators were concerned that the ability-achievement discrepancy method was an inadequate tool in identifying students with learning disabilities. Mesmer and Mesmer (2008) found that the discrepancy model often led to an over-identification of minority students. Second, special education was often used to serve struggling students who did not actually have learning disabilities. Fuchs et al. (2003) expounded on this, stating that the IQ-achievement discrepancy model often arbitrarily assigned the label of "learning disabled" to students and, in many instances, unfairly withheld services from students who came from low-income homes. Students from a low socioeconomic status often had relatively low IQ scores that were insufficiently different from their low achievement scores; the discrepancy between the two scores was too inadequate for the students to qualify for special education services. The researchers further stated that in the 1980s and 1990s, educators became frustrated that increasing numbers of misidentified students were leading to escalating special education expenses. According to Kavale, Holdnack, and Mostert (2006), the use of the discrepancy model resulted in the over-identification of specific learning disabilities (SLD), resulting in an increase of about 150%. SLD-identified students now represent over half of the special education population and over five percent of all students in school. An RTI approach may reduce referrals for special education services by providing intense instruction and meaningful interventions in the general education setting, thereby distinguishing between students whose poor performance is caused by a

lack of prior knowledge and those students who have learning disabilities and, therefore, need specialized instruction (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005).

A third major development in RTI stemmed from the abundance of recent research on reading difficulties. According to the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, several studies by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development have demonstrated that well-designed intervention approaches result in significant improvements for students with early reading problems. Lyon et al. (2001) was cited in the report by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005) as stating that early identification and prevention programs could reduce the number of students with reading problems by up to 70%. These findings strongly suggest that early intervention in basic reading skills is important in the elementary grades for establishing a strong base of knowledge in reading (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005).

According to L. S. Fuchs and D. Fuchs (2009), the effectiveness of Response to Intervention as a method for identifying learning disabilities is not yet known. The researchers state that switching from the discrepancy-based method to the use of RTI in the special education identification process is likely to produce two important shifts in the area of learning disabilities:

First, with RT, the academic deficits of student with [learning disabilities] should become more severe, more highly associated with neurobiological bases, and even more challenging to remediate. Second, RTI should shift the population of [learning disabilities] toward identification of students whose low achievement is

commensurate with their IQ and away from students whose achievement, although not necessarily low, is discrepant from the high IQ. (p. 43)

Torgesen (2007) maintains that the validity of RTI as a diagnostic tool for identifying students with learning disabilities depends on the quality of the interventions being implemented in a school or school district. If students do not receive high quality instruction and effective interventions, then far too many students will be falsely judged to have learning disabilities. The RTI model is designed to provide strong instruction from the classroom teacher and support this instruction with rigorous interventions as needed. According to Torgesen, when RTI is implemented strongly, the method is more likely to correctly identify students who have learning disabilities. If the approach is not implemented properly, then students may be incorrectly identified as needing special education services.

### **Perceptions of Response to Intervention**

Response to Intervention approaches vary from district to district, but RTI is most commonly implemented using one of two approaches (Stuart, Rinaldi, & Higgins-Averill, 2011). The “problem-solving” approach uses interventions that target each student’s individual needs. The “standard treatment” approach uses one consistent intervention that is selected by the school or district to address multiple students’ needs. Both approaches use tiers of intervention and universal screening for all students. Because the school or district often governs the approach used in RTI, teachers may feel that they are no longer able to choose their own methods of instruction and intervention. Shirley and Hargreaves (2006) state that educators may feel that they “are no longer the drivers of reform, but the driven” (p. 2). Furthermore, the opinions and perspectives of teachers

might not be explored often in studies and reports. According to Darling-Hammond (2009, as cited in Stuart et al., 2011), the perspectives of educators are “seldom presented and sparingly considered in the research literature” (p. 56).

Swigart (2009) stated that teachers’ views of RTI may influence the implementation of interventions for both general and special education students. The researcher asserts that RTI may not be implemented effectively by classroom teachers if teachers do not view RTI as a beneficial process that will increase students’ achievement and improve teachers’ instruction. Swigart further states that teachers may feel that the RTI process is difficult to implement effectively. McCormick (2010) states, “When a new teaching method or process comes about, such as RTI, some teachers resist change while others jump in with full enthusiasm” (p. 3).

To implement any new program with success, teachers must embrace the program, examine their own practices, and, if needed, modify their instruction (LaRocco & Murdica, 2009). Changes in thinking and practice can elicit reluctance and uncertainty, so administrators should assess and examine teachers’ concerns, opinions, and perspectives when implementing change. According to Fullan (1989), in order for programs to be implemented with fidelity, the new methods must be introduced into the environment with support and follow-up, encouragement, and clarity so that expected behaviors can be communicated and addressed. Fullan asserts, “Changes in attitudes, beliefs, and understanding tend to *follow* rather than precede changes in behavior” (p. 24).

According to Fechtelkott (2010), because RTI has only recently become a major focus in the educational systems in many states, it is important to determine the

knowledge and perspectives concerning implementation and collaboration of teachers and administrators as they begin to use RTI in their schools. Fechtelkottter states that although a research base regarding the necessary components of RTI is growing, many questions remain unanswered regarding the implementation of RTI in schools and school districts. He further states that, given the lack of research regarding the current practices of RTI in schools, additional research on the perspectives of those who implement RTI into instruction is imperative so that administrators and district officials can more clearly identify the needs, perspectives, and roles of educators as they implement RTI in their schools.

Researchers have demonstrated that teacher efficacy is important to the success of educational programs for both teachers and students (Nunn, Jantz, and Butikofer, 2009). Such educational practices as persistence, enthusiasm, and willingness to initiate and maintain educational innovations can affect the influence of a program on student achievement and behavioral outcomes. Therefore, it is essential that teachers' perceptions of RTI are documented to provide evidence and data for successful future implementations of RTI in school districts.

#### *Teachers' Perceptions of Response to Intervention*

As RTI is increasingly implemented in schools, the attention of researchers has turned to the process of implementation and the impact that it may have on teachers and support personnel (Nunn & Jantz, 2009). Effective methods of implementation can potentially develop successful, skilled teachers who are capable of dealing with difficult academic and behavioral concerns in their classrooms. According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfork-Hoy, & Hoy (1998, as cited in Nunn & Jantz, 2009):

One important indicator of how teachers perceive their empowerment to influence positive learning outcomes is 'teacher efficacy.' Simply, this concept refers to the belief that the teacher is effective in controlling positive outcomes of learning and behavior as a result of their actions. (p. 599)

Nunn and Jantz further stated that teacher efficacy is affected by the efficiency with which teachers are capable of creating successful academic and behavioral experiences for their students. In turn, students whose teachers possess a high level of efficacy show a higher level of academic achievement. In their study, Nunn and Jantz explored the relationship between the implementation of RTI and the self-efficacy of teachers. Data were gathered from 429 K-12 teachers, administrators, and support staff. The researchers found that as students demonstrated success through grades, skills, and attitudes, teachers experienced a positive level of self-efficacy; teachers felt that their instructional and motivational methods accounted for the positive changes in learning and behavior. Nunn and Jantz determined that teachers related their levels of efficacy with their involvement and level of skill in implementing RTI in their classrooms.

In another study, Nunn et al. (2009) studied elements of teachers' efficacy in RTI implementation and outcomes expected from the implementation of RTI. The researchers gathered data from 429 teachers, administrators, and support staff who had been trained in an RTI initiative over a period of four years. The educators received five days of training in RTI best practices, which included school-based assignments and implementation support using RTI skills. Each participant completed two measures that examined the relationship of teacher efficacy and RTI outcomes. The results of the study showed that increases in teacher efficacy were associated with perceptions of improved

outcomes of intervention, satisfaction with results, a collaborative team process, and data-based decision-making. These results are relevant given the time, expense, and human resources that are being used in implementing the Response to Intervention model in schools.

Another aspect to consider is teachers' perspectives of the use of RTI in classroom instruction. Response to Intervention has been touted as a tool used to identify students who may qualify for special education services. However, teachers may not realize that RTI may be implemented to meet the needs of struggling students who may not qualify for special education. According to Fectelkotter (2010), the greatest potential benefit of RTI may lie in its capability to address the needs of all students regardless of any educational disability. Fectelkotter surveyed teachers to determine their beliefs on the uses of RTI in their districts and found that the majority of the study population believed that RTI was used only as a prereferral system. This finding supports the idea that many educators are confused as to the intended use of RTI, either as a tool for early intervention or as a screening system for special education services. Fectelkotter's study also indicates a need to determine teachers' opinions and perceptions as to the uses of RTI in their classrooms.

#### *Teachers' Perceptions of RTI as a Tool for Special Education Referrals*

Response to Intervention strategies can be used to help struggling students bridge gaps in their knowledge base before those gaps become too significant. However, another major use of RTI is that of a screening tool for special education services. According to Justice (2006), Response to Intervention is "an evidence-based initiative that seeks to redefine how reading disabilities are identified and addressed within the



public school system” (p. 285). Justice further states that RTI provides a practical alternative for identifying children who have learning disabilities and for differentiating between children with experientially based and cognitively based reading disabilities. Because RTI can be used to determine students’ eligibility for special education, it is vital for administrators to determine teachers’ perceptions of how RTI can be used in this capacity. According to Jackson, Pretti-Frontczak, Harjusola-Webb, Grisham-Brown, and Romani (2009), successful application of Response to Intervention requires a strong team approach that includes general education teachers, special education teachers, family members, related service providers, and administrators to build strong communities of support and to apply the principles of RTI in students’ education.

The use of RTI in identifying students for special education services may present problems for teachers, thereby influencing their opinions on the effectiveness of the program in evaluating students. One factor that may influence teachers’ perceptions is the educators’ levels of training in progress monitoring and intervention (Shinn, 2007). School districts must provide training to broaden knowledge bases and skill sets so that educators can understand what constitutes high-quality interventions, potential barriers to the use of such interventions, and the application of interventions in screening for possible learning disabilities.

Lane, Pierson, Robertson, and Little (2004) studied teachers’ views on prereferral interventions and teachers’ perceptions about receiving direct assistance in implementing interventions. The researchers found that the majority of teachers in the population sample believed that interventions targeted important goals, contained acceptable procedures of intervention, and were implemented with a high degree of fidelity.

However, only 47% of the participants rated the outcomes of interventions as “highly desirable.” The discrepancy between desired and obtained expectations appeared to rest within the implementation of RTI. The researchers state that the absence of demonstrations and follow-up may hinder the prereferral intervention process. The researchers further stated that “the true test of most interventions is the outcomes associated with the interventions” (p. 436.) In the study, the majority of students who received interventions from the prereferral intervention team remained in general education but still experienced difficulties in their classes. Only four percent of the students functioned without difficulty in the general education setting. The remaining students were referred to or placed in special education services. The researchers suggested that teachers are generally more satisfied with the goals and procedures of the interventions but less satisfied with student outcomes.

Slonski-Fowler and Truscott (2004) studied general education teachers’ perceptions of the prereferral intervention team process. The researchers found that there are three critical junctures that can serve as either barriers or facilitators to teachers’ active participation in prereferral problem solving and intervention implementation. Teachers were likely to withdraw from the prereferral process, either actually or functionally, when they perceived that the teams “(a) devalued their input in the problem-solving process; (b) recommended disconnected, vague, or redundant interventions to address the problems presented; or (c) were unaccountable for outcomes and follow-up on recommendations” (p. 31). Teachers’ beliefs that the prereferral intervention teams devalued their professional input were often based in the team members’ failure to review the students’ work samples or listen to the teacher’s opinions of students’ difficulties. In

addition, communication and problem-solving efforts between teachers and the prereferral intervention team were diminished substantially because teachers believed that the team did not value their input and participation. In response, teachers disengaged from the process by neglecting to implement RTI strategies and by failing to refer students for interventions until the students' problems were severe enough to warrant testing. The researchers state that, presumably, teachers would have responded in a more positive manner if the team appeared to more highly value the teachers' opinions and input.

Lane, Mahdavi, and Borthwick-Duffy (2003) studied teachers' perceptions about receiving assistance in implementing interventions that were generated by the prereferral intervention team. The researchers examined two areas: teachers' expectations of the assistance provided by the prereferral intervention team, and teachers' perceptions of the need for direct support in implementing the suggested interventions. The researchers found that a majority of teachers expected to receive interventions and strategies from the intervention team to use in the classroom. Teachers also expected support in informing parents of concerns about students and receiving professional support from the team. There were differences in the sample as to the percentage of teachers who viewed the referral as the first step toward placement in special education. When asked to what degree teachers wanted support in implementing interventions, 57% of all teachers rated in-class demonstrations as highly desirable and 48% of teachers rated follow-up assistance as highly desirable. Lane et al. also queried to what extent teacher characteristics such as teaching experience or grade level taught, student characteristics such as academic concerns, behavioral concerns, and severity of academic and behavioral

problems, and initial expectations of the referral such as acquisition of interventions and professional support affected teachers' desire for implementation support. The researchers found that none of the teachers' characteristics were significantly associated with teacher desire for support; they further found that the only predictor in student characteristics was that of problem severity, and the only predictor in initial expectations of implementation support was that of the acquisition of interventions. Therefore, teachers who initially referred students with the intent of obtaining interventions to be used in the general education setting were more favorable toward implementation support. Teachers' expectations of implementation support and assistance is important to consider when employing RTI methods in schools and districts.

McKenzie (2009) states that teachers must be proactive when using RTI to determine students' need for special education services. According to McKenzie, RTI implementation must be accompanied by the opportunity for teachers to initiate special education referrals for full evaluation when the teacher suspects that a student has a learning disability. The methods in which students progress through the RTI tiers of intervention presents certain risks. Instructional modifications cannot serve as a substitute for special education services, so the RTI tiers through which students with learning problems progress and the instructional methods used to facilitate this movement must not be considered a surrogate for the full special education evaluation. Therefore, teachers must realize that they should not await the outcome of the next tier of intervention before initiating a special education referral. McKenzie adds that professional development educators must equip both general and special educators to improve identification of learning disabilities through meaningful participation in RTI.

*Administrators' Perceptions of Response to Intervention*

The perspective of principals must also be considered when determining educators' perceptions of RTI implementation in schools. Sansosti, Noltemeyer, and Goss (2010) examined administrators' perceptions of the importance of RTI practices in secondary settings and whether these practices were currently being implemented in their schools. The researchers gathered data from 482 participants, most of whom were secondary principals. The authors measured eight domains that are viewed as critical to RTI implementation: (1) the beliefs of key stakeholders; (2) the knowledge and skill of key stakeholders; (3) scheduling or structural factors; (4) the availability of intervention programs or methods; (5) district policies or district factors; (6) methods of accountability; (7) the existence of collaborative teams; and (8) communication. The researchers found that the principals recognized a difference between the importance and implementation of several critical components of RTI in their schools. Sansosti et al. state that all of the eight scales assessed were reported to be more important than they were available; this indicated that the principals understood the importance of RTI but found it difficult to implement the program into their school settings. Such a finding is significant because prior research on educational reform has indicated that, in order for the implementation of a new program to be successful, knowledge and skills in the usage of the program must be readily available (Sansosti et al., 2010).

Principals should also consider the perceptions of their teachers when implementing RTI methods into their schools. Teachers may be of the opinion that a formal RTI process is not necessary to implement effective, individualized instruction in classrooms. In a study on the practice and perception of Response to Intervention,

Martinez and Young (2011) found that RTI processes were perceived positively by educators; however, the respondents in the study reported that many teachers were already engaging in intervention activities before RTI was mandated in their school. The participants indicated a level of frustration with the RTI process because they were already implementing such strategies in their instruction. The researchers recommended that “teachers’ efforts before and during the RTI process should be acknowledged and supported” (p. 52).

Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, and Ball (2007) state that successful implementation of RTI involves: (1) knowledge of evidence-based interventions, multitiered interventions, screening, assessment, and progress-monitoring; (2) administering interventions with a high degree of integrity; (3) support and coordinated efforts across all levels of staff and leadership within the school; and (4) systems of prevention grounded in RTI methodology. Administrators can provide leadership in key areas that pertain to RTI: motivating team members, team building through collaboration, providing information about RTI best practices, and establishing effective progress monitoring methods (“Consistency and Collaboration”, 2010).

#### *Educators’ Perceptions of Collaboration in RTI Implementation*

Two key elements that are common to most successful RTI models are consistency and collaboration (“Consistency and Collaboration” (2010). Administrators play a key role in providing leadership in achieving those two elements. Consistency is achieved by providing clear definitions of the desired results and the strategies to achieve those results. Collaboration is achieved through ongoing conversations between team members who are effective in RTI practices and who are excited about new methods of

intervention. As educators continue to implement Response to Intervention in schools, collaboration between general education and special education teachers must be examined to ensure that stakeholders are working cooperatively for the best interest of the students (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). For RTI to be successful, a wide array of stakeholders such as administrators, students, parents, staff, community members, and all educators must collaborate with each other. According to Murawski and Hughes, collaboration and co-teaching offers a means of achieving RTI goals, thereby allowing educators to interact to facilitate flexibility of instructional options and provide intensive instruction for students at their points of need.

According to Nielsen, Barry, and Stabb (2008), teachers who engage in collaborative efforts are more likely to perceive themselves as effective change agents within their schools. Additionally, teachers who engage in collaborative planning of professional development and approaches for educational delivery are more likely to perceive themselves as equal partners in the educational process. As a result, teachers may become change agents of their students' educations and their own professional development, teaching, and learning.

McNamara, Rasheed, and Delamatre (2008) studied the characteristics, perceptions, and outcomes of school-based intervention teams. According to the researchers, quality interaction among team members is essential to successful team functioning. The researchers found that the functioning of intervention teams may be reflected in three areas: (1) the degree to which teams are collaborative, focused, and productive in reaching solutions for students' problems; (2) whether the team meetings are poorly run, unfocused, noncollaborative, and reflect a lack of productivity and follow-

up; and (3) the degree of decorum shown in the operation of teams, such as promptness, attendance, and mutual regard. The findings of the study suggest that aspects of the team-based intervention-planning process, such as efficiency, sharing of expertise and responsibility, data-based decision-making, and a supportive environment, may contribute to the team's success in reducing rates of unnecessary testing and special education referrals.

When implementing Response to Intervention in schools and districts, it is important to consider teachers' perceptions of collaboration among stakeholders in the RTI process. According to Mohammed, Murray, Coleman, Roberts, and Grim (2011), collaboration between general education and special education departments is crucial to successfully implement RTI into the educational process. The authors make several recommendations for educators who seek strong collaboration among their stakeholders: (1) emphasize shared goals and vision; (2) promote stakeholder engagement through appreciation of unique contributions; (3) promote systemic support; (4) promote communication and respect; (5) stay on task; (6) celebrate and promote success; and (7) tailor your process for building collaboration.

### **Problems with Response to Intervention**

As Response to Intervention is employed in schools, educators may face difficulties in implementing the program with fidelity. One of the problems that educators may face is that of time management (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005; Mask et al., 2011; Bender & Shores, 2007). Bianco (2010) states that change is never easy and often requires additional time and energy by teachers and administrators in order to achieve success. According to Scierka and Silbergliitt (2007),



one of the biggest difficulties in implementing RTI is the inflexibility of the school schedule in providing additional instructional time for those students who need extra assistance. Hall (2009) stated that, since interventional instruction is critical for students to improve academically, teachers might incorporate those interventions if a designated block of time in their teaching schedules was devoted specifically to RTI. In their longitudinal study on RTI implementation, Mask et al. found that teachers in their population sample found time to incorporate Tier I and Tier II interventions, but they faced difficulties in planning for and delivering adequate Tier III interventions.

Another challenge that educators face when implementing RTI into instruction is determining who is responsible for implementing tiers of intervention. According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (2005), general educators appear to have primary responsibility for all aspects of instruction, for monitoring instruction, for moving students among the three tiers of intervention, and for implementing intervention strategies in Tiers 1 and 2, while special educators appear to be responsible for students in Tier 3 or Tier 4, depending on the implementation plan employed at a school. However, teachers may become confused or view RTI negatively if administrators are not clear in the division and assignment of instructional duties. According to Burns and Gibbons (2008), interventions should be developed by the problem-solving team. Typically, the problem-solving team consults with the general education teacher and assists that teacher in designing interventions for students using regular education resources. Special education resources may be used to collect data and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Burns and Gibbons also state that, because the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act allows regular education students to benefit from incidental instruction, special

education teachers may deliver instruction to regular education students if their needs are similar to those of special education students in their groups.

Harlacher et al. (2010) state that another challenge within RTI is determining which instructional factors to modify within an intervention. Teachers may lack training or knowledge about important evidence-based practices that would improve RTI interventions (McCormick, 2010). Bianco (2010) found that educators were concerned about the difficulties in collecting data and using that data to implement informed, valid instruction and interventions. The National Council on Teacher Quality (as cited in Harlacher et al., 2010) found that preparation programs for general education teachers failed to provide training in research-based reading instruction. Teachers must have the foundation of knowledge upon which to make data-driven, powerful decisions about instruction and intervention. Thomas and Dykes (2011) support this, stating that both general and special educators need a solid knowledge base to implement empirically based strategies, assessment, monitoring, documentation of progress, and data-based decision-making. Teachers must have this knowledge base and a comfort level with strategies to properly support students in RTI interventions (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005).

Another problem faced in RTI implementation is that of the expenditures of resources (Mask et al., 2011; National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005). According to Vaughn et al. (2010), the question of whether Response to Intervention is worth the cost is a difficult question to answer. Based on their findings, Vaughn et al. found that using resources to focus on enhancing Tier 1 interventions and perhaps even more intensive interventions for students with reading problems was a reasonable

conclusion. However, the researchers recommended that the effects of RTI on students' reading aptitude and perhaps even dropout prevention might be worth examining before committing all resources to the program.

Another obstacle to consider is the suitability or appropriateness of Response to Intervention strategies for middle and high school students (Faggella-Luby & Wardwell, 2011). The International Reading Association Commission on RTI states, "Although many prevailing approaches to RTI focus on the early elementary grades, it is essential for teachers and support personnel at middle and secondary levels to provide their students with the language and literacy instruction they need to succeed in school and beyond" (International Reading Association Commission, 2009, paragraph 45).

According to Brozo (2010), there are several reasons why the commission's warning is valid. First, there is little research available that documents the use of RTI in the upper grades. Brozo maintains that the lack of research evidence alone should give pause to educators who demand a scientific basis for all programs. Second, the structure and culture of middle and high schools limits the feasibility of RTI. Providing whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction in middle and high school class schedules may not be possible. Third, scheduling conflicts may prevent teachers from using the tiered interventions with flexibility and ease.

Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2010) studied RTI interventions at the middle and high school level to determine the effectiveness of the model with older students.

According to the researchers, the greatest potential for accelerating the academic progress of students most at risk for failing may rely on a combination of intensive tutoring by the teacher combined with frequent progress monitoring to tailor instruction for each child's

specific needs. The researchers found that students in middle and high school may not experience the same level of success as elementary students may find. According to Fuchs et al., by the time students reach middle and high school, their academic deficits are well established. Moreover, teachers are not as capable of providing as intensive an intervention at the middle and high school levels due to a lack of time and resources. Recommendations have been made to modify RTI models in middle and high school so that outcomes are improved for students who suffer from academic deficits.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology/Procedures**

This chapter outlines the process involved in determining the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators concerning the implementation of Response to Intervention in their schools. The study focused on educators' perceptions regarding the following points: the effectiveness of RTI interventions in increasing student achievement; the depth of implementation and level of rigor used to incorporate RTI into instruction; the amount of time required to incorporate RTI into instruction; the value of teacher collaboration in implementing RTI; and the validity of RTI in determining possible candidates for special education services.

#### **Research Design**

An ex post facto study was conducted using a mixed-methods design. A *mixed-methods research design* is defined as “an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research” (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 130). Johnson et al. (2007) further posited that a mixed-methods research design “recognizes the importance of traditional quantitative and qualitative research but also offers a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results” (p. 130). Mixed methods research imports aspects of both qualitative and quantitative research in order to produce defensible and usable research findings. Mixed-method research relies on qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques to address research questions in a study (Johnson et al., 2007). Johnson et al. (2007) stated:

Furthermore, the mixed methods research paradigm offers an important approach for *generating* important research questions *and* providing warranted answers to those questions. This type of research should be used when the nexus of contingencies in a situation, in relation to one's research question(s), suggests that mixed methods research is likely to provide superior research findings and outcomes. (p. 130)

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, as cited in Lord (1973), state that the basic purpose of an ex post facto study is to discover or establish causal or functional relationships among variables. Citing Tuckman, Lord clarifies that ex post facto research is "an experiment in which the researcher examines the effects of a naturalistically-occurring treatment after that treatment has occurred rather than creating the treatment itself. The experimenter attempts to relate this after-the-fact treatment to an outcome or dependent measure" (p. 5).

### *Research Questions*

The following questions guided this study:

- 1) What are general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement?
- 2) What depth of implementation do general education and special education teachers use to incorporate RTI into their classroom instruction?
- 3) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction?

- 4) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services?
- 5) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies?

#### *Null Hypotheses*

- Hypothesis 1 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement between general education teachers and special education teachers.
- Hypothesis 2 - There is no statistically significant difference in the depth of implementation in which RTI is incorporated into classroom instruction between general education teachers and special education teachers.
- Hypothesis 3 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.
- Hypothesis 4 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.
- Hypothesis 5 - There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions

regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

### *Population and Sample*

The study sample was taken from “Woodland Parish School District” (not the actual name of the district), which is located in a rural parish in north-central Louisiana. This school district was chosen as the focus of this study because it is considered to be representative of the surrounding area in terms of rural development, racial demographics, and socioeconomic status. Consequently, it may serve well as a sample from which inferences can be made of the area as a whole. Table 1 summarizes the racial demographics of Woodland Parish in comparison to the demographics of surrounding parishes (i.e., Parishes A, B, C, D, and E).



Table 1.

*Racial Demographics of Woodland Parish and Surrounding Parishes (United States Census Bureau, 2010)*

---

Parish	White	Black	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders	Persons reporting two or more races	Hispanic or Latino
"Woodland Parish"	55.2%	40.5%	0.3%	1.7%	0	1.1%	2.5%
Parish A	68.1 %	29.8%	0.2%	0.2%	0	1.2%	1.3%
Parish B	60.4%	36.6%	0.2%	0.9%	0	1.1%	1.8%
Parish C	69.0%	27.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0	0.8%	4.2%
Parish D	47.5%	50.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0	0.8%	1.0%
Parish E	55.3%	42.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0	1.2%	1.4%

---

Woodland Parish is also considered to be representative of the socioeconomic status of the area at large. Table 2 summarizes the similarities in socioeconomic demographics among Woodland Parish and surrounding parishes.

Table 2.

*2007 – 2010 Socioeconomic Demography of Woodland Parish and Surrounding Parishes*  
*(United States Census Bureau, 2010)*

Parish	Median Household Income	Persons Below Poverty Level, Percent	Retail Sales Per Capita	Land in Square Miles	Persons per Square Mile
“Woodland Parish”	\$35,111	26.1	\$12,361	471.74	99.1
Parish A	\$35,359	17.3	\$7,594	569.18	28.6
Parish B	\$37,928	20.8	\$14,823	610.41	251.8
Parish C	\$35,269	20.8	\$6,521	876.99	25.9
Parish D	\$32,301	25.8	\$4,516	754.88	22.8
Parish E	\$29,847	23.2	\$3,947	811.27	17.7

Woodland Parish School District is also commonly considered to be an educationally progressive district, as the district has been chosen in the past to pilot new educational initiatives. At the time of the study, the school district was one of ten in the State of Louisiana that was chosen to take part in the “Trailblazer Initiative.” During the 2011-2012 school year, the district conducted pilot-tests of the new teacher observation tools that was designed to be used in conjunction with Louisiana Act 54, also known as the value-added initiative. Under this legislative act, 50% of educator evaluations will be comprised of measures of student growth, while the other 50% will be based on other measures of professional practice. This law also requires administrators to evaluate

teachers on a yearly basis, replacing the current policy of evaluating teachers every three years. Intensive support will be given to teachers who are determined to be struggling (State of Louisiana, 2011).

All Kindergarten through fifth grade general education teachers of English Language Arts (ELA), special education teachers, and administrators in seven elementary schools in the district were invited to participate in the study by completing a survey questionnaire to determine their perceptions of RTI procedures, implementation, and teacher collaboration. Teachers of English Language Arts were chosen because the school district recently mandated that Response to Intervention be incorporated into all ELA classes on the elementary level. Teachers have been using such programs as Reading A to Z and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literary Skills, also known as DIBELS, to incorporate RTI into their classrooms. Teachers have been using the Reading A to Z program to determine students' baseline reading levels and to devise interventions to remediate or enrich students' reading skills based on the pupils' progress throughout the program.

### *Instrumentation*

The survey questionnaire was comprised of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. General education and special education teachers' instrument consisted of 15 items. Questions one, three, seven, nine, eleven, and thirteen of the teachers' survey were multiple-choice items; questions two, four, five, six, eight, ten, 12, 14, and 15 were open-ended response items. Administrators responded to a survey of nine items. Questions one, three, five, and seven of the administrators' survey were multiple-choice items; questions two, four, six, eight, and nine were open-ended response items. The survey

instruments were delivered to the seven elementary schools by the researcher. A contact person was designated at each school to distribute the surveys to the teachers and administrators. Teachers and administrators responded to the surveys and returned them in unmarked envelopes to the contact person by a designated date and time. The researcher retrieved the surveys from the schools and analyzed the responses.

### *Pilot Study*

A pilot study of the two surveys was conducted at “Woodland School” (not the actual name of the school), a sixth-grade school in Woodland Parish School District. This school was chosen because the faculty and staff of the school began RTI interventions for their students at the same time as the other elementary schools in the district. Woodland School served students in sixth grade only and had a daily RTI period scheduled for all teachers. A group of general and special education teachers and administrators at Woodland School were asked to complete the two surveys (see Appendices A, B, C, and D). Respondents evaluated the surveys and made suggestions for clarification of multiple-choice and short-answer items. The researcher analyzed the results of these surveys to determine reliability.

To ensure content validity, the researcher asked an expert panel comprised of a professor at Louisiana Tech University, a curriculum strategist in Woodland Parish School District, and an RTI Coach in Woodland Parish School District to evaluate the survey instruments to determine whether the tools measured what they purported to measure. The panel evaluated the instruments to determine if the questions were valid and whether the questions measured the information needed for the study. Each of the expert panelists evaluated the test items and used a rubric to score the clarity and

comprehensibility of each test item. Each item on the rubric ranged from “very difficult to understand” to “very easy to understand” (see Appendices E and F).

### **Data Analysis**

The teachers' survey questionnaire was administered to two groups: general education English language arts teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade, and special education teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade (see Appendices G and H). The administrators' survey was administered to principals, assistant principals, and/or coordinating teachers in seven elementary schools in Woodland Parish School District (see Appendices I and J). Surveys were collected for each group, and data were collected and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for data analysis. Because the number of general education respondents (66 respondents) outnumbered the number of special education and administration respondents (14 and 12 respondents, respectively), the distribution of ranked data for each subgroup was examined and compared using non-parametric methods. The chart in Appendix K shows the questions that were compared and the method of analysis. On the teachers' survey, data from survey questions one and three were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test and compared regular education teachers' responses to special education teachers' responses. Data from questions seven, nine, eleven, and thirteen of the teachers' survey were compared to data from questions one, three, five, and seven from the administrators' survey and were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks.

The researcher also analyzed qualitative data gathered by the test instruments using methods of qualitative content analysis. On the teachers' survey, data from survey questions two, four, five, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, and fifteen were analyzed

through qualitative means; the researcher identified commonalities and differences in and among the subgroups. On the administrators' survey, data from survey questions two, four, six, eight, and nine were analyzed through qualitative means; the researcher identified commonalities and differences among responses. Because administrators did not actively administer RTI themselves, question one on the administrators' survey was slightly modified to reflect the administrators' perceptions of the amount of time spent on RTI interventions by the teachers. The researcher used content analysis to identify emergent themes and areas of emphasis among the written responses on the survey. The researcher also determined the extent to which themes related to each other in meaning and significance of the responses.

#### *Procedural Details and Data Collection*

Prior to data collection, the researcher gained permission from the district superintendent to conduct the study (see Appendices L and M). In addition to obtaining formal consent, the researcher solicited a contact person from each elementary school to oversee administration of the surveys at the participating schools. The researcher communicated data collection and confidentiality procedures with each of the contact people. To ensure uniformity in survey administrations, a letter from the researcher with specific instructions was included with the survey questionnaires that were given to each respondent (see Appendices G and I).

To encourage honest responses from teachers and administrators, participant anonymity was assured. Data were treated as group data; the distribution of the ranked data was examined for each subgroup, and the subgroups were compared using nonparametric methods of analysis using the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis

Analysis of Variance of Ranks methods. To further protect participant confidentiality, as required by the Louisiana Tech University Institutional Review Board, codes were used instead of participant names to organize data throughout the study, and respondents' names were not required on any document.

Data were collected through surveys comprised of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. General education ELA teachers, special education teachers, and administrators relayed their perceptions about implementation and effectiveness of RTI interventions by choosing an answer that best describes their opinions or beliefs. Each respondent then had the opportunity to explain his or her answers more fully by answering open-ended questions that followed each multiple-choice item.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was conducted with certain identified limitations. At the time of this research, Response to Intervention was a relatively new form of instruction and assessment in Louisiana. Because RTI was still being regulated and established, there were no set requirements to govern the implementation of Response to Intervention in the State of Louisiana. For this reason, the study was limited to seven elementary schools in one school district in north-central Louisiana. The study was restricted to seven elementary schools in Woodland Parish School District. The participant sample was limited to general education teachers of English language arts in Kindergarten through fifth grade, special education teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade, and school principals, assistant principals, and/or coordinating teachers of the seven elementary schools chosen for this study. Because the population of each subgroup was small, population size may also be considered to be limitations of the study.

## **Chapter Four: Results**

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators concerning the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) in their schools. The study focused on educators' perceptions of RTI in relation to the following: the effectiveness of RTI interventions in increasing student achievement; the depth of implementation and level of rigor used to incorporate RTI into instruction; the amount of time required to incorporate RTI into instructional time; the value of teacher collaboration in implementing RTI; and, the validity of RTI in determining possible candidates for special education services. Two surveys comprised of both multiple-choice and open-response questions were administered to the participants of the study. The general education and special education teachers received the same survey questionnaire, and school administrators received a shorter, similar survey questionnaire that correlated directly to the teachers' surveys. The quantitative data from the surveys were treated as group data, and the distribution of the ranked data was examined for each subgroup. The subgroups were compared using two nonparametric methods of analysis, the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks methods. Qualitative data were analyzed to determine similarities and differences in responses to the open-ended questions on the surveys.

### **Preliminary Actions and Pilot Study**

Before conducting the study, the researcher applied to the Human Use Committee



at Louisiana Tech University to gain consent to conduct the study. After obtaining formal approval to conduct the study (see Appendix N), the researcher completed a pilot study of the two research instruments at “Woodland School” (not actual name of school), a sixth-grade school in “Woodland Parish School District” (not actual name of district). This school was chosen because the administrators and teachers implemented a system of RTI interventions for their students at the same time as the Woodland Parish School District began to require elementary schools to incorporate RTI in their instruction. Woodland School served students in sixth grade only and had a daily RTI period scheduled for all teachers. A group of general and special education teachers and administrators at Woodland School were asked to complete the two surveys (see Appendices A, B, C, and D). Participants responded to the surveys and also made suggestions for clarification of multiple-choice and short-answer items. Table 3 shows the results of the pilot study.

Table 3

*Statistical Data from Pilot Study*

Survey Item	<u>Reg. Ed</u> (N=3)		<u>Sp. Ed</u> (N=1)		<u>Admin.</u> (N=1)		Significance
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 1	4.000	.000	4.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	F=1.000, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 3a	3.500	.707	2.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	F=.667, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 3b	3.000	.000	3.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	F=1.000, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 3c	4.000	.000	3.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	F=.667, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 3d	4.500	.707	2.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	F=.667, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 7/ Admin. Survey, Ques. 5	3.500	.707	3.000	N/A	4.000	N/A	F=.472, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 9/ Admin. Survey, Ques. 7	4.500	.707	3.000	N/A	5.000	N/A	F=.325, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 11/ Admin. Survey, Ques. 1	3.500	.707	3.000	N/A	5.000	N/A	F=.325, p>.05
Teachers' Survey, Ques. 13/ Admin. Survey, Ques. 3	4.000	.000	4.000	N/A	4.000	N/A	F=1.000, p>.05

Note: Reg. Ed = Regular Education; Sp. Ed = Special Education; Admin. = Administrators

The results of the pilot study were used to determine the reliability and validity of the testing instruments. After analyzing the participants' responses, the researcher determined that there were no significant differences in data among the participants and subgroups. Based on the lack of differences in data, the researcher determined that the test items were reliable. Participants were also asked to evaluate the research instruments

to determine the overall appropriateness of the test items. Using a rubric, participants chose the rating on a Likert scale that best described the clarity and comprehensibility of each survey item. The Likert scale was scored on a five-point rating system, from (5) very easy to understand to (1) very difficult to understand. Because all participants scored all survey items as (4) easy to understand or (5) very easy to understand, it is reasonably concluded that the surveys as a whole were understandable by all participants. Based on these scores, the researcher concluded that the survey instruments were valid and, therefore, appropriate for the study.

### **Organization of Data Analysis**

The results of this study are organized and presented in correlation with the research questions that were formulated. The survey questionnaires addressed the research questions posed in this study, and a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses helped to illuminate the quantitative survey data for each area of research. The results are addressed in the order in which the research questions are presented, as follows:

- 1) What are general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement?
- 2) What depth of implementation do general education and special education teachers use to incorporate RTI into their classroom instruction?
- 3) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction?

- 4) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services?
- 5) What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies?

Participants completed surveys comprised of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Each administrator, special education teacher, and regular education English Language Arts (ELA) teacher in Kindergarten through fifth grade in the seven elementary schools received a printed survey questionnaire. The surveys were completed, sealed in unmarked brown envelopes, and returned to a designated contact person at each school. The survey population consisted of 109 general education teachers, 23 special education teachers, and 14 administrators. Of that population, 66 general education teachers, 14 special education teachers, and 12 administrators completed and returned surveys to their school contact persons. After collecting the completed surveys from all seven schools, the researcher tabulated the results and entered the quantitative data into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for data analysis. Each respondent was arbitrarily assigned a number (1, 2, 3, etc.) as an anonymous code of identification, and each respondent was labeled as either a general education teacher, special education teacher, or administrator.

## Data Analysis

### *Research Question #1*

The first research question was: “What are general education teachers’ and special education teachers’ perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement?” The surveys prompted regular education and special education teachers to respond to the following question: “In your professional opinion, how effective is Response to Intervention in increasing student achievement?” Participants responded using a Likert-type scale whereby each response was assigned a certain value, that is: (5) Very effective; (4) Somewhat effective; (3) Neither effective nor ineffective; (2) Somewhat ineffective; and (1) Very ineffective (see Appendix H, item 1). Table 4 summarizes the statistical results of this research question.

Table 4

### *Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of RTI in Increasing Student Achievement*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents who considered RTI to be effective	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	91	4.09	.518	F=.220 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	93	4.14	1.027	

With a mean rating of 4.09 ( $SD=.518$ ), 91% of regular education teachers indicated that RTI was effective in increasing student achievement (i.e., answers of “very effective” and “somewhat effective”). Nine percent of regular education teachers responded that RTI was neither effective nor ineffective in increasing student

achievement. With a mean rating of 4.14 ( $SD=1.027$ ), 93% of special education teachers indicated that RTI was effective in increasing student achievement (i.e., answers of “very effective” or “somewhat effective”). Seven percent of special education teachers responded that RTI was not effective in increasing student achievement (i.e., answers of “somewhat ineffective” or “very ineffective”).

The Mann-Whitney U data analysis indicated that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .220,  $p>.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions concerning the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement between general education teachers and special education teachers.

To further explain their responses, both groups of teachers were asked, in open-ended question format, their opinions as to any evidence or indicators that they may have experienced in relation to the effectiveness of RTI in increasing student achievement (see Appendix H, item 2). The response data from this query is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

*Teachers' Perceptions of Evidence of Effectiveness of RTI in Increasing Student Achievement*

Evidence or Indicators	<u>% of Respondents</u>	
	Regular Education	Special Education
Progress in Reading A-Z Levels	36	57
Progress in reading grades on report cards	29	N/A*
Progress in students' reading ability	18	50
Little to no progress or growth evident	27	21

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Thirty-six percent of regular education teachers and 57% of special education teachers stated that they had seen progress and increases in Reading A to Z levels, and 29% of regular education teachers commented that their students had shown growth or progress in reading grades. Additionally, 18% of regular education teachers reported having seen improvement in students' reading ability, while 50% of special education teachers had witnessed progress or growth in students' reading ability. Fifteen percent of regular education teachers reported an increase or growth in students' report card grades.

However, in contradiction with the Likert-scaled data collected in survey item 1, 27% of regular education teachers and 21% of special education teachers stated that little to no progress was evident from students' interventions. Teachers commented that factors such as oversized intervention groups, a lack of support personnel to assist in RTI implementation, and problems with the intervention program itself needed to be addressed in order for students to receive successful interventions. Additionally, special education teachers noted that some students were not mastering skills that had been covered extensively in RTI interventions and that the RTI programs were not effective for all students.

### *Research Question # 2*

The second research question studied was, "What depth of implementation do general education and special education teachers use to incorporate RTI into their classroom instruction?" Regular education and special education teachers were asked to read two survey questionnaire statements (i.e., items 3c and 3d on the teachers' survey) addressing common aspects of RTI and then indicate the extent to which each characteristic was evident in their school and/or classroom instruction. Participants

responded to the statement using a Likert scale ranging in value from (5) Always or Almost Always to (1) Never or Hardly Ever (see Appendix H, items 3c and 3d).

Respondents were asked to relate whether they incorporated all components of the mandated RTI programs into his or her classroom instruction (see Appendix H, item 3c). The results of the query are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

*Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Depth of Implementation of RTI in Classroom Instruction*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents with full or nearly full implementation	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	68	3.97	1.066	F=.283 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	69	3.61	1.211	

On item 3c of the teachers' survey, 68% of general education teachers stated that they incorporated all components of RTI programs into their instruction all or most of the time (i.e., ratings of 5 or 4). Eleven percent of general education teachers responded that they never or infrequently incorporated all components of RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., ratings of 1 or 2). Twenty-one percent of general education teachers stated that they sometimes incorporated all components of RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., rating of 3).

The same question was posed to special education teachers. When asked if the respondents incorporated all components of the mandated RTI programs into their classroom instruction, 69% of special education teachers stated that they incorporated all



components of RTI programs into their instruction all or most of the time (i.e., ratings of 5 or 4). Twenty-three percent of special education teachers responded that they never or infrequently incorporated all components of RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., ratings of 1 or 2). Eight percent of special education teachers stated that they sometimes incorporated all components of RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., rating of 3).

Using the Mann-Whitney U data analysis format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the two groups of teachers and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .283,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted: There is no statistically significant difference in the depth of implementation in which RTI is incorporated into classroom instruction between general education teachers and special education teachers.

The second statement to which teachers were asked to respond was whether the participants were incorporating RTI strategies into their classrooms with “rigor” and “fidelity.” Again, respondents replied to the statement using a Likert scale where responses ranged in value from (1) Never or Hardly Ever to (5) Always or Almost Always (see Appendix H, item 3d). Table 7 outlines the results of the survey item.

Table 7

*Teachers' Perceptions of the Level of Rigor in RTI Implementation*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents with rigor and fidelity in all or most RTI interventions	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	71	4.11	.930	F=.697 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	86	4.00	.960	

When asked if the respondents incorporated RTI strategies into their classroom instruction with rigor and fidelity, 71% of general education teachers stated that rigor and fidelity was found in their RTI incorporation all or most of the time (i.e., ratings of 5 or 4). Five percent of general education teachers responded that rigor and fidelity was never or infrequently used to incorporate RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., ratings of 1 or 2). Twenty-four percent of general education teachers stated that they sometimes incorporated RTI programs with rigor and fidelity into their instruction (i.e., rating of 3).

Special education teachers were also asked about the rigor of RTI interventions (see Appendix H, item 3d). When asked if the respondents incorporated RTI strategies into their classroom instruction with rigor and fidelity, 86% of special education teachers stated that rigor and fidelity was found in their RTI incorporation all or most of the time (i.e., ratings of 5 or 4). Fourteen percent of special education teachers responded that rigor and fidelity was never or infrequently used to incorporate RTI programs into their instruction (i.e., ratings of 1 or 2).

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 4.11 out of 5.00, and the mean of the answers from special education teachers was 4.00.

Using the Mann-Whitney U data analysis format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the two groups of teachers and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .697,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted: There is no statistically significant difference in the depth of implementation in which RTI is incorporated into classroom instruction between general education teachers and special education teachers.

To further determine their perspectives, both groups of teachers were asked in open-response format to describe the factors that influenced the depth or level of implementation that is used to incorporate RTI into their instruction (see Appendix H, item 6). The data from this query is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

*Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence the Depth or Level of Rigor in RTI Implementation*

Factors	% of Respondents	
	Regular Education	Special Education
Students' needs and progress in interventions	32	N/A*
Not enough time within school day to properly implement RTI	27	14
All aspects of RTI are fully utilized	14	N/A*
State curriculum requirements and district programs interfere with RTI time	11	N/A*
Scheduling and classroom management interferes with RTI	9	N/A*
Special education teachers are familiar with RTI format	N/A*	9
Students' ability levels and behavior affects outcome of RTI	N/A*	36

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Thirty-two percent of general education teachers stated that their RTI strategies and depth of implementation depended upon the students' needs and progress in interventions. Twenty-seven percent of general education teachers indicated that there was not enough time within the school day to implement RTI strategies with depth and rigor. Eleven percent of regular education teachers stated that state curriculum requirements and numerous district programs interfered and took time away from RTI. Nine percent of teachers stated that scheduling and classroom management issues interfered with RTI. Only 14% of general education teachers indicated on the open-ended question that they fully utilized all components of RTI and staff support to implement RTI with rigor and fidelity.

When asked what factors influence the depth of RTI implementation (see Appendix H, item 6), 43% of special education teachers stated that they were familiar with the RTI format due to their special education training and practices. One teacher stated, "It's what I do all day," indicating that RTI interventions closely resembled her daily special education teaching. Thirty-six percent of special education teachers commented that the students' ability levels and/or behavior affected the outcome of RTI interventions, and 14% percent stated that there was not enough time to properly implement RTI interventions.

### *Research Question # 3*

The third research question studied was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction?" The survey instrument asked teachers the following question: "Which of the following statements

best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) in your classroom instruction?" The respondents chose from the following statements the one that best described their professional opinions (see Appendix H, item 11):

- I would like to spend much more instructional time on RTI strategies (value of 5).
- I would like to spend a little more instructional time on RTI strategies (value of 4).
- I spend the appropriate amount of instructional time on RTI strategies (value of 3).
- I would like to spend a little less instructional time on RTI strategies (value of 2).
- I would like to spend much less instructional time on RTI strategies (value of 1).

Administrators were asked the same question, but in a slightly varied format. On their survey, administrators were asked the following question: "Which of the following statements best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) in classroom instruction?" The administrators chose one of the following statements that best described their professional opinions (see Appendix J, item 1):

- I would like for teachers to spend much more instructional time on RTI strategies. (value of 5)
- I would like for teachers to spend a little more instructional time on RTI strategies. (value of 4)
- Teachers spend the appropriate amount of instructional time on RTI strategies. (value of 3)

- I would like for teachers to spend a little less instructional time on RTI strategies.  
(value of 2)
- I would like for teachers to spend much less instructional time on RTI strategies.  
(value of 1)

The results of the research question are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

*Educators' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Required to Implement RTI*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that spend appropriate time on RTI	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	54	3.01	.832	
Special Education (N=14)	50	3.57	.646	F=.033 p<.05
Administrators (N=12)	83	3.00	.426	

Twenty-three percent of regular education teachers stated that they would like to spend more instructional time on RTI strategies (i.e., value of 4 or 5). Fifty-four percent of general education teachers stated that they spend the appropriate amount of time on RTI (i.e., value of 3), while 23% commented that they would like to spend less time on RTI strategies (i.e., value of 1 or 2). Eighty-three percent of administrators stated that, in their opinion, teachers spent the appropriate amount of time on RTI. Eight percent of administrators commented that they would like for teachers to spend more time on RTI (i.e., value of 4 or 5), while eight percent of administrators stated that they would like for teachers to spend less time on RTI strategies (i.e., value of 1 or 2).

Special education teachers differed from regular education teachers and administrators in their views of the amount of time required for RTI interventions. Fifty percent of the special education teachers stated that they would like to spend more time on RTI interventions (i.e., values of 4 or 5), and the remaining 50% of respondents commented that they spend the appropriate amount of time on RTI strategies (i.e., value of 3).

The mean of the responses submitted by the general education teachers was 3.01 out of 5.00. The mean of the answers from administrators was 3.00, and the mean of the answers from special education teachers was 3.57. Using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the three groups and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .033,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected: There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

In a related follow-up item in open-ended format, participants were asked to describe the factors or circumstances that influence their opinions concerning the amount of instructional time required by RTI methods (see Appendix H, item 12, and Appendix J, item 2). Table 10 outlines the results of this research question.

Table 10

*Educators' Perceptions of Factors that Influence Amount of RTI Time*

Factors	<u>% of Respondents</u>		
	Reg. Ed.	Sp. Ed.	Admin.
Not enough time within school day	41	N/A*	N/A*
Not enough time to meet state requirements and implement district programs	41	36	17
RTI is not effective in assisting struggling students	14	N/A*	N/A*
More time needed for RTI interventions	N/A*	36	N/A*
Designated RTI time each day	N/A*	N/A*	33
RTI is beneficial and improves student achievement	N/A*	N/A*	25
RTI takes away from classroom instruction time	N/A*	N/A*	17

Note: Reg. Ed. = Regular Education; Sp. Ed. = Special Education; Admin. = Administrators.

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Forty-one percent of regular education teachers stated that there was not enough time in the day to implement RTI strategies effectively. Forty-one percent of regular education teachers also indicated that they did not have enough time to meet the state curriculum requirements and implement instructional programs mandated by the district, so the time designated for RTI interventions was taken up by the instruction of the state requirements and district programs. Fourteen percent of regular education teachers stated that RTI was not effective in assisting struggling students; teachers stated that high-achieving students grew, but struggling students did not show growth.

Thirty-six percent of special education teachers stated that more time was needed for RTI interventions. Thirty-six percent of special education teachers also commented that there were many demands on teachers, including the excessive amount of time



required to plan for RTI interventions, to document student progress, and to complete extensive paperwork involved in such documentation. Further, the school district required that many other instructional programs be conducted along with RTI.

According to the responses on the open-ended items, 33% of administrators stated that there was a designated time each day where teachers were required to conduct RTI interventions. Twenty-five percent of administrators indicated that RTI was beneficial for students and improved student achievement. Seventeen percent of administrators stated that there were many demands placed on the teacher that may have impacted how RTI was conducted in the classroom, including extensive record-keeping and data collection. Seventeen percent of administrators commented that RTI required substantial time to conduct, time that was often taken away from classroom instruction.

#### *Research Question # 4*

The fourth research question to be studied was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services?" On the teachers' survey instrument, general education and special education teachers were asked, "To what extent do you feel prepared to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions?" (see Appendix H, item 7). Participants responded to the question using a Likert-type scale where each response was assigned a certain value, that is: (5) very prepared; (4) somewhat prepared; (3) neither prepared nor unprepared; (2) somewhat unprepared; and (1) very unprepared. Table 11 summarizes the data derived from this survey question.

Table 11

*Educators' Perceptions of Level of Teacher Preparedness to Make Special Education Referrals*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that are prepared to make referrals based on RTI data	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	82	3.97	.822	F=.131 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	58	3.67	.987	
Administrators (N=12)	75	3.50	1.000	

When asked how prepared they were to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions, 82% of regular education teachers stated that they felt prepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of "very prepared" and "somewhat prepared"). Twelve percent of regular education teachers responded that they felt neither prepared nor unprepared to make recommendations for special education services, and six percent indicated that they felt unprepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of "somewhat unprepared" and "very unprepared"). Fifty-eight percent of special education teachers stated that they felt prepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of "very prepared" and "somewhat prepared"), while 25% responded that they felt neither prepared nor unprepared to make recommendations for special education services. Another 17%

indicated that they felt unprepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of “somewhat unprepared” and “very unprepared”).

Administrators were asked a slightly different form of this question. They were asked, “In your professional opinion, how prepared are teachers to make referrals for special education services based upon the students’ responses to RTI interventions?” (see Appendix J, item 5). According to the survey responses, 75% of administrators stated that teachers were prepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of “very prepared” and “somewhat prepared”). Eight percent of administrators responded that teachers were neither prepared nor unprepared to make recommendations for special education services, and 19% indicated that teachers were unprepared to make such recommendations (i.e., answers of “somewhat unprepared” and “very unprepared”).

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 3.97 out of 5.00. The mean of the answers from special education teachers was 3.67, and the mean of the answers from administrators was 3.50. Using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the three groups and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .131,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

Teachers and administrators were queried further on their perspectives as to the validity of RTI as a tool for special education screening. On both the teachers’ and administrators’ survey instruments (see Appendix H, item 13, and Appendix J, item 3,

respectively), participants were asked, "In your professional opinion, how valid is Response to Intervention (RTI) in determining which students need special education services?" Participants responded to the question using a Likert-type scale where each response was assigned a certain value: (5) very valid; (4) somewhat valid; (3) neither valid nor invalid; (2) somewhat invalid; and (1) very invalid. Table 12 outlines the results of the research question.

Table 12

*Educators' Perceptions of the Validity of RTI as a Tool for Special Education Referrals*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that indicated that RTI is valid as referral tool	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	80	3.86	.959	F=.360 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	69	3.84	.864	
Administrators (N=12)	100	4.25	.452	

Eighty percent of regular education teachers stated that RTI was a valid tool to use in making special education referrals (i.e., answers of "very valid" and "somewhat valid"). Eight percent of regular education teachers responded that RTI was neither valid nor invalid, and 12% felt that RTI was not a valid tool for special education recommendations (i.e., answers of "somewhat invalid" and "very invalid").

The same question was posed to special education teachers and administrators. Sixty-nine percent of special education teachers stated that RTI was a valid tool to use in making special education referrals (i.e., answers of "very valid" and "somewhat valid").

Twenty-three percent of special education teachers responded that RTI was neither valid nor invalid, and eight percent felt that RTI was not a valid tool for special education recommendations (i.e., answers of “somewhat invalid” and “very invalid”).

Administrators were unanimous in their responses: 100% of administrators stated that RTI was a valid tool to use in making special education referrals (i.e., answers of “very valid” and “somewhat valid”).

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 3.86 out of 5.00. The mean of the answers from special education teachers was 3.84, and the mean of the answers from administrators was 4.25. Using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the three groups and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .360,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the validity of RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

To expound on their responses, participants were asked two open-ended questions to qualify their answers. General and special education teachers were asked to describe the training that they have received to prepare to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions (see Appendix H, item 8). Administrators were asked to describe the training that their teachers have received to make such recommendations (see Appendix J, item 6). The results of the survey question are given in Table 13.

Table 13

*Training that Teachers Have Received to Make Special Education Referrals Based on RTI Data*

Training Experiences	<u>% of Respondents</u>		
	Reg. Ed.	Sp. Ed.	Admin.
No training	41	57	25
Based on teaching experience	15	14	N/A*
Training from district	14	N/A*	N/A*
Information gained from outside sources	12	N/A*	N/A*
Training in college classes	N/A*	64	N/A*
Teachers need more training in usage of data	N/A*	N/A*	58
Teachers "learn as they go"	N/A*	N/A*	17

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Forty-one percent of general education teachers and 57% of special education teachers stated that they had not received any training to make recommendations for special education services based on results of RTI interventions. Fifteen percent of regular education teachers and 14% of special education teachers commented that their teaching experience assisted them in making recommendations. Fourteen percent of general education teachers stated that they had received training from the district via inservices and workshops, while 12% of teachers commented that they gained information from outside sources, such as specialized training and asking questions of pupil appraisal, special education teachers, and coordinating teachers in order to make recommendations. Sixty-four percent of special education teachers stated that they were trained in their college classes to make recommendations for special education services. Several special education teachers commented that RTI should not be used as the single

indicator of need for special education services; instead, they suggested that it should be used in conjunction with other data to make referrals. Other special education teachers stated that RTI was an unclear process and that results vary depending on the size of the RTI group.

According to the information gathered on the administrators' survey, 25% of administrators stated that their teachers had not received training to learn how to make recommendations for special education based on data from RTI interventions. Fifty-eight percent of administrators stated that teachers needed to receive training in order to learn how to correctly use and document RTI data as it related to special education; they further commented that adequate training had not been provided by the parish. Seventeen percent of administrators stated that they learned "as they go" and as they experienced the situations in their schools. One administrator stated, "We do six weeks of interventions, are told not to accept that data, told to do six more weeks, and on and on, and the students are not getting special education services."

Participants were also asked to describe the evidence or indicators that they have experienced that supports their opinions as to the validity of RTI in determining needs for special education services (see Appendix H, item 14, and Appendix J, item 4). Table 14 summarizes the results of the query.

Table 14

*Educators' Perceptions of Indicators of the Validity of RTI as a Referral Tool*

Indicators	% of Respondents		
	Reg. Ed.	Sp. Ed.	Admin.
No evidence	26	29	N/A*
Ineffective RTI programs	23	N/A*	N/A*
Data collected from RTI are used to make referrals	N/A*	N/A*	50
RTI data proves that students have lacking or weak skills in reading	N/A*	N/A*	42
Data from RTI used to track academic progress	N/A*	N/A*	17
RTI data discussed at SBLC meetings	N/A*	N/A*	17

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Twenty-six percent of regular education teachers and 29% of special education teachers did not respond or could not provide evidence that supports RTI as a valid tool in making referrals for special education. Twenty-three percent of general education teachers stated that the RTI programs employed within the district were ineffective and did not improve comprehension or promote progress. Special education teachers made various comments. Such comments included the following: "Regular education teachers are not keeping accurate, up-to-date information on Tier 1, 2, and 3 students."; "RTI is valid, but other measures should be used as well."; "Special education screening should be based on other factors besides RTI."; "A red flag shows if progress is not made after a long period of time." Special education teachers also indicated that factors such as a lack of time in the classroom, an increased number of instructional programs mandated by the



district, students' lack of prior knowledge, and a lack of parental support contribute to the students' lack of growth.

Administrators were also asked to describe the evidence or indicators that supported their opinions as to the validity of RTI as a tool for making special education referrals. Fifty percent of administrators stated that the data collected through RTI interventions were used to make recommendations for services. Forty-two percent of administrators commented that RTI data proved that students have lacking or weak skills in reading. Seventeen percent of administrators stated that data from RTI strategies were used to track academic progress, and 17% of administrators commented that RTI data were discussed at monthly School Building Level Committee (SBLC) meetings.

#### *Research Question # 5*

The fifth research question to be studied was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies?" On items 3a and 3b of the teachers' survey, regular education and special education teachers were asked to read two statements addressing the frequency and value of teacher collaboration and then indicate the extent to which each characteristic was evident in their school and/or classroom instruction. Participants responded to the statement using a Likert scale where responses ranged in value from (5) Always or Almost Always to (1) Never or Hardly Ever (see Appendix H, items 3a and 3b).

The first statement to which teachers were asked to respond was, "I collaborate on a regular basis with special education teachers and general education teachers on RTI strategies." The results of the research question are outlined in Table 15.

Table 15

*Teachers' Perceptions of the Frequency of Teacher Collaboration*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that collaborate all or most of the time	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	41	3.07	1.219	F=.486 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	36	3.36	1.150	

Forty-one percent of general education teachers stated that they collaborated with regular and special education teachers all or most of the time (i.e., rating of 5 or 4).

Thirty-five percent of general education teachers responded that they never or infrequently collaborate with regular and special education teachers (i.e., rating of 1 or 2). Twenty-four percent of general education teachers stated that they sometimes (i.e., rating of 3) collaborate with regular and special education teachers.

The same question was asked of special education teachers. When asked how frequently respondents collaborate with regular and special education teachers, 36% of special education teachers stated that they collaborate with regular and special education teachers all or most of the time (i.e., rating of 5 or 4). Fourteen percent of special education teachers responded that they never or infrequently collaborate with regular and special education teachers (i.e., rating of 1 or 2). Fifty percent of special education teachers stated that they sometimes (i.e., rating of 3) collaborate with regular and special education teachers.

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 3.07 out of a possible score of 5.00, and the mean of the answers from special education teachers was 3.36. Using the Mann-Whitney U data analysis format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the two groups of teachers and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .486,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies between general education teachers and special education teachers.

The second statement to which teachers were asked to respond was, "I have ample opportunities to collaborate with other teachers." Again, respondents replied to the statement using a Likert scale where responses ranged in value from (1) Never or Hardly Ever to (5) Always or Almost Always (see Appendix H). The results of the question are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

*Teachers' Perceptions of Availability of Opportunities for Teacher Collaboration*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that have ample opportunities to collaborate	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	45	3.35	1.259	F=.320 $p > .05$
Special Education (N=14)	29	3.00	1.177	

When asked if the respondents had sufficient opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, 45% of general education teachers stated that they collaborated with other teachers all or most of the time (i.e., rating of 5 or 4). Twenty-seven percent of general education teachers responded that they infrequently or never collaborated with other teachers (i.e., rating of 1 or 2). Twenty-seven percent of general education teachers stated that they sometimes (i.e., rating of 3) collaborated with other teachers.

Special education teachers were also asked to respond to this question. When asked if the respondents had sufficient opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, 29% of special education teachers stated that they collaborated with other teachers all or most of the time (i.e., rating of 5 or 4). Thirty-six percent of special education teachers responded that they infrequently or never collaborated with other teachers (i.e., rating of 1 or 2). Thirty-six percent of special education teachers stated that they sometimes (i.e., rating of 3) collaborated with other teachers.

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 3.35 out of 5.00, and the mean of the answers from special education teachers was 3.00. Using the Mann-Whitney U data analysis format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the two groups of teachers and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .320,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies between general education teachers and special education teachers.

To gain additional insight about their perspectives, both groups of teachers were asked to describe the factors that influence their opinions concerning the value of

collaborating with other teachers (see Appendix H, item 4). The results of the query are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

*Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence the Value of Teacher Collaboration*

Factors or Indicators	<u>% of Respondents</u>	
	Regular Education	Special Education
Not enough time to collaborate	44	50
No set time for regular education and special education teachers to collaborate with each other	N/A*	36
Learn new RTI strategies	47	N/A*
Learn which strategies are effective or ineffective	36	N/A*
Special education teachers collaborate with regular education teachers to discuss progress	N/A*	43

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Forty-four percent of general education teachers and 50% of special education teachers stated that there was not enough time to collaborate with other teachers. Thirty-six percent of special education teachers further stated that there was no set time or opportunities for regular education and special education teachers to collaborate. Forty-seven percent of regular education teachers commented that they had learned new ideas and strategies for intervening with struggling students. Thirty-six percent of general education teachers stated that, through collaboration, they had learned what strategies are effective or ineffective and they learned what other teachers are doing in their interventions. Forty-three percent of special education teachers stated that they

collaborated with regular education teachers to discuss what materials to use, what activities to incorporate, and to determine the rate of students' progress.

Teachers were also asked to describe the ways in which they collaborated with teachers in regard to the implementation of RTI (see Appendix H, item 5). The outcomes of this research question are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

*Teachers' Perceptions of Ways or Circumstances in Which Teachers Collaborate*

Ways or Circumstances	% of Respondents	
	Regular Education	Special Education
Discuss methods or strategies of interventions	67	N/A*
Meet infrequently after school or at recess	24	N/A*
Meet during weekly grade level meetings	21	N/A*
Infrequently or never collaborate	N/A*	29
Meet during meetings, faculty meetings, and planning periods	N/A*	29
Share RTI materials with other teachers	N/A*	14
Ask other instructors about interventions	N/A*	14

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Sixty-seven percent of regular education teachers stated that they discussed methods of intervention, what strategies are effective or ineffective, ideas and suggestions for difficult interventions, ways to intervene on specific skills, and/or RTI activities. Twenty-four percent of general education teachers commented that they met infrequently after school or at recess with other teachers, while 21% of teachers stated that they met during their weekly grade level meetings.

Special education teachers were also asked to describe how they collaborated with other teachers. Twenty-nine percent of special education teachers commented that they infrequently or never collaborated with other teachers. Twenty-nine percent of special education teachers stated that they met with other teachers during meetings, faculty meetings, and planning periods. Fourteen percent of special education teachers reported that they shared RTI materials with other teachers, and 14% of special education teachers asked other instructors about the interventions that they incorporated in class.

General education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators were also asked the following question: "In your professional opinion, how effective is teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies?" (see Appendix H, item 9, and Appendix J, item 7, respectively). Participants responded to the question using a Likert-type response system where each response netted a certain value: (5) very effective; (4) somewhat effective; (3) neither effective nor ineffective; (2) somewhat ineffective; and (1) very ineffective. Table 19 outlines the results of the research question.

Table 19

*Educators' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Teacher Collaboration on RTI Implementation*

Teacher Subgroup	% of respondents that consider teacher collaboration to be effective	Mean	SD	Significance
Regular Education (N=66)	88	4.20	.684	F=.519 p>.05
Special Education (N=14)	77	4.23	.973	
Administrators (N=12)	92	4.33	.888	

When asked about the effectiveness of teacher collaboration in implementing RTI interventions, 88% of regular education teachers stated that collaboration was effective in implementing RTI strategies (i.e., answers of “very effective” and “somewhat effective”). Two percent of regular education teachers responded that collaboration was ineffective (i.e., answers of “somewhat ineffective” or “very ineffective”), and 11% of general education teachers stated that collaboration was neither effective nor ineffective in implementing RTI interventions (i.e., answer of “neither effective nor ineffective”).

The same question was posed to special education teachers. Seventy-seven percent of special education teachers stated that collaboration was effective in implementing RTI (i.e., answers of “very effective” or “somewhat effective”). Eight percent of special education teachers responded that collaboration was not effective in implementing RTI strategies (i.e., answers of “somewhat ineffective” or “very ineffective”). Fifteen percent of special education teachers stated that collaboration was



neither effective nor ineffective in implementing RTI interventions (i.e., answer of “neither effective nor ineffective”).

Administrators were also questioned about their views of the effectiveness of collaboration in implementing RTI interventions. Ninety-two percent of administrators stated that collaboration was effective in implementing RTI strategies (i.e., answers of “very effective” and “somewhat effective”). Eight percent of administrators responded that collaboration was ineffective in implementing RTI methods (i.e., answers of “somewhat ineffective” or “very ineffective”).

The mean of the answers submitted by the general education teachers was 4.20 out of 5.00. The mean of the answers from special education teachers was 4.23, and the mean of the answers from administrators was 4.33. Using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks format in SPSS, the researcher analyzed the responses of the three groups and found that the statistical significance in the difference between the two groups was .519,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained: There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies among general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators.

To solicit additional insights about their Likert-scale responses, participants were asked to describe how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies. The data from this query is summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

*Educators' Perceptions of the Frequency of Teacher Collaboration*

Ways or Circumstances	% of Respondents		
	Reg. Ed.	Sp. Ed.	Admin.
Regular education teachers <u>infrequently</u> meet with special education teachers	27	14	N/A*
Regular education teachers <u>rarely or never</u> meet with special education teachers	20	43	25
No time allotted for regular education teachers to meet with special education teachers; must meet in spare moments or after school	12	36	N/A*
Regular education teachers meet daily or very often with special education teachers	11	21	N/A*
Regular education teachers and special education teachers meet as needed or during SBLC meetings	9	N/A*	N/A*
Regular education teachers and special education teachers meet as needed, or coming or going throughout the day	N/A*	N/A*	33
Regular education teachers and special education teachers meet on a weekly basis	N/A*	N/A*	25

\* = asterisk indicates that no respondents in this subgroup listed this factor as an indicator

Twenty-seven percent of general education teachers stated that they met infrequently with special education teachers, and 20% responded that they never met with special education teachers. Twelve percent of regular education teachers stated that there was no time allotted to meet with special education teachers and that they had to meet in spare moments or after school. Eleven percent of general education teachers stated that they met daily or very often, and nine percent commented that they met as needed or during an SBLC meeting with special education teachers.

Forty-three percent of special education teachers stated that they rarely or never met with regular education teachers. Thirty-six percent stated that they met as needed, coming or going through the classrooms or hallways, during class time, or “on the fly”. Twenty-one percent of special education teachers responded that they met with general education teachers on a daily basis, while 14% commented that they did not meet often enough.

Administrators were also asked to describe how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies (see Appendix J, item 8). Thirty-three percent of administrators stated that teachers met as needed, in passing, coming or going through classrooms or hallways, or before or after school. Twenty-five percent of administrators responded that regular and special education teachers rarely or never met, while 25% stated that the teachers met on a monthly basis. Twenty-five percent of administrators stated that teachers met on a weekly basis to discuss RTI interventions.

### *RTI Programs*

All respondents were asked to indicate from a prepared list the programs or methods of RTI that were being used in their schools (see Appendix H, item 15, and Appendix J, item 9). Table 21 outlines the programs used in the seven schools and the percentages of respondents that used the programs.

Table 21

*RTI Programs Used in Parish of Study*

Programs	% of Respondents
DIBELS	90
Reading A to Z	95
Daily intervention time / IB4E	5
Words Their Way	5
Small Group Instruction	5

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations**

The final chapter of this research report draws conclusions from the findings of the study, discusses the results of the data, and recommends areas for further research. Sixty-six general education teachers, 14 special education teachers, and 12 administrators gave their opinions as to the implementation and effectiveness of RTI strategies in their schools by completing and returning printed surveys to their school contact persons. The findings and conclusions are arranged in order of the presentation of the research questions.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

#### *Research Question # 1*

The first research question was, "What are general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) in increasing student achievement?" Based on the multiple-choice question on the survey, 91% of regular education teachers and 93% of special education teachers believed that RTI was effective in increasing student achievement. When asked to describe the evidence or indicators that support their answers and their beliefs as to the effectiveness of RTI, many teachers commented that progress and increases in Reading A to Z levels, reading grades, and reading ability were evident. However, 27% of regular education teachers and 21% of special education teachers stated that little to no progress was evident from RTI interventions. This evidence is contradictory to such an overwhelmingly positive impression of RTI that teachers gave on the multiple-choice

question. Teachers also gave many factors that interfere with effective RTI implementation, such as:

- large numbers in intervention groups;
- a lack of staffing to implement RTI; and
- issues with the RTI programs themselves.

Overall, the teachers appeared to believe that RTI is effective, but many did not support this opinion with reported evidence that they had witnessed. The teachers apparently “felt” or “believed” in the value and usefulness of Response to Intervention, but they were unable to support their opinions with concrete data or other evidence. Consequently, it is concluded that teachers may need more insight or training into how to assess and draw conclusions from data gathered through RTI interventions for the purpose of determining student growth and achievement. If teachers could glean more information about their students’ abilities and needs through such data, they may be able to use RTI in a more effective manner. It is also recommended that educators establish succinct methods of defining students’ needs so that those needs may be adequately addressed during interventions. Because teachers reported such diversity in students’ responses to RTI procedures, it is further recommended that educators continue to search for research-based methods of effective intervention. Hughes and Dexter (2011) support this assertion, stating that educators should use research designs that clearly establish a causal relationship between the implemented RTI program and the desired outcomes. According to Fuchs and Fuchs, because teachers use an assortment of procedures and methods in RTI settings, unreliable results are derived from these differing methods. Educators must develop a common approach to define and address students’

nonresponsiveness to interventions. This will aid teachers in finding more effective methods of intervention while also assisting in identifying students who need special education services (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 2006).

### *Research Question # 2*

The second research question was, "What depth of implementation do general education and special education teachers use to incorporate RTI into their classroom instruction?" The results of the survey indicated that 68% of regular education teachers and 69% of special education teachers felt that they incorporated all aspects of RTI programs all or most of the time. Further, 71% of general education teachers and 86% of special education teachers indicated that they felt they incorporated RTI interventions with rigor and fidelity. These two findings support each other and provide verification for the conclusion that a majority of general and special education teachers appeared to incorporate RTI to the fullest extent in their classrooms. However, 11% of regular education teachers and 23% of special education teachers stated that they never or infrequently incorporated all aspects of RTI programs into their instruction all or most of the time. Furthermore, 21% of regular education teachers and 8% of special education teachers stated that they sometimes incorporate all aspects of RTI into their instruction. These statistics are interesting because they somewhat contradict other statistical results which states that 33% of administrators have incorporated a designated RTI time in their schools. From answers to open-ended questions, it can be concluded that certain factors may interfere and prohibit all teachers from fully incorporating RTI into their classrooms, such as:

- varying needs of students;
- limited time within the classroom to complete RTI interventions;
- classroom behavior management; and
- demanding state curriculum requirements and district instructional programs.

Hughes and Dexter (2011) stated that factors such as extensive and ongoing professional development, administrative support, teacher buy-in, and adequate time for coordination appeared necessary for the success of RTI programs. Consequently, it is concluded that, if RTI is to be conducted to the fullest extent, all schools should provide a designated time during the day for RTI when teachers are assisted by other faculty members in incorporating RTI interventions. Furthermore, schools or districts should provide training in how to manage classroom behaviors and routines when conducting RTI interventions. These administrative support structures may improve the implementation of RTI into classroom settings.

### *Research Question # 3*

The third research question was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the amount of time needed to incorporate RTI into classroom instruction?" Twenty-three percent of general education teachers and eight percent of administrators stated that they would like for more time to be spent on RTI interventions. This is contradictory to the opinions of the special education teachers, of whom 50% stated that they would like to spend more time on RTI interventions. Fifty-four percent of regular education teachers, 50% of special education teachers, and 83% of administrators stated that teachers reportedly spent the appropriate amount of time on RTI interventions.



According to the data drawn from the open-ended questions, 41% of general education teachers and 36% of special education teachers felt that there was not enough time in the day for RTI interventions, a conclusion that supports findings for the second research question mentioned previously. Teachers and administrators also stated that many demands were placed on the teachers' time, including:

- requirements for state curriculum and district instructional programs;
- increased amount of record-keeping and data collection; and
- the excessive amount of time needed to plan RTI interventions.

McCormick (2010) also found that the participants of her study expressed frustration concerning the amount of time needed to effectively implement RTI interventions, the difficulty of fitting RTI interventions into an already full schedule, and a lack of support needed to implement RTI with fidelity. Consequently, it is recommended that administrators provide support, instructional time or scheduling, and classroom resources for teachers to effectively implement RTI strategies. Also, if districts mandate that RTI be used in the schools, then district personnel should analyze the programs, decide on the most effective instructional programs to incorporate into classroom instruction, and discard any instructional programs that are not effective or may absorb instructional time without delivering academic success. It is also recommended that all classroom personnel, such as paraprofessionals or aides, be trained in RTI methods so as to assist classroom teachers in delivering RTI interventions.

#### *Research Question # 4*

The fourth research question was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the validity of

RTI as a tool in determining which students need special education services?" Eighty-four percent of regular education teachers, 58% of special education teachers, and 75% of administrators felt that teachers were prepared to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions. However, 41% of regular education teachers, 57% of special education teachers, and 25% of administrators stated that teachers had not received any training to make such recommendations. In addition, 58% of administrators stated that teachers need to receive training in order to learn how to use RTI data for these recommendations. According to participants' responses, teachers tended to rely upon their teaching expertise and training in college classes to make recommendations for special education services. It is interesting that only 58% of special education teachers felt prepared to use RTI data to make special education referrals, a matter in which special education teachers may be expected to be well-versed due to their specialization in this area of education. Another interesting factor is that 100% of administrators felt that RTI was a valid tool to use in making special education referrals, in contrast to 69% of special education teachers who regularly complete and implement special education referrals throughout the school year.

Hoover (2010) stated that, in order to meet the needs of learners through RTI, educators need to make a significant paradigm shift in how learning problems are perceived, identified, assessed, and addressed. This shift would require educators to be trained to successfully screen students and analyze data for early identification of at-risk or struggling students. Hoover further recommended that schools and school districts establish an effective process for developing and implementing special education eligibility procedures through the use of RTI.

It is therefore recommended that, if districts plan to use RTI as a screening tool for special education services, then all teachers should be trained in how to document results of RTI interventions and analyze data from interventions to make recommendations for special education. Furthermore, school districts should have set guidelines for schools to follow in order to make recommendations for special education so that students receive special education services in a timely manner.

*Research Question # 5*

The fifth research question was, "What are the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and school administrators regarding the value of teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention strategies?" Forty-one percent of general education teachers and 36% of special education teachers stated that they frequently collaborated with other teachers. Furthermore, 35% of regular education teachers and 14% of special education teachers commented that they seldom or never collaborated with other teachers. When asked about the number of opportunities to collaborate, 45% of general education teachers stated that they frequently collaborated with other teachers; only 29% of special education teachers stated that they collaborated frequently with other teachers. Twenty-seven percent of regular education teachers and 36% of special education teachers indicated that they seldom or never have opportunities to collaborate.

Because the responses between the two groups (i.e., teachers and administrators) were so similar, the analysis from SPSS did not discover a statistical significant difference in the reported opinions of the groups. However, based on the large percentage of teachers that selected "infrequently" or "never", there is an evident need for

opportunities for teachers to collaborate on RTI interventions. A particular area of concern is the opportunities for general education teachers to collaborate with special education teachers. Eighty-eight percent of regular education teachers, 77% of special education teachers, and 92% of administrators stated that they believed collaboration is effective in implementing RTI. McCormick (2010) also found that educators desired more time to collaborate with colleagues. Danielson, Doolittle, and Bradley (2007) stated that, in order to improve student performance, critical features of high-quality professional development, including such structures as teacher networks and study groups, should be implemented into schools. Murawski and Hughes (2009) stated that collaboration allows general educators who lack training in differentiated instruction to gain knowledge and support from other professionals who desire the same outcomes of student success.

According to the results of this study, it strongly appears that a lack of time is a key deterrent in teacher collaboration. Therefore, because of its importance in RTI implementation, districts and school administrators should provide support and schedule times for teachers to collaborate with each other. Teachers may benefit greatly from having a daily or weekly period in which to meet with other regular education or special education teachers.

### **Recommendations**

If this study were to be replicated, it would be beneficial if a larger group of teachers and administrators was included in the study. The small number of participants in this study was found to be limiting. However, the unequal populations were not

considered to be a limitation of the study, as the unequal numbers are proportionally reflective of the overall educator populations that truly exist in elementary schools.

Also, it is recommended that more open-ended questions be considered if a similar study were to be undertaken, as respondents tended to give much more valuable information in the written portions of the surveys. Furthermore, if this study were to be replicated, it would be beneficial to compare the perceptions of teachers and administrators from different school districts in separate parishes or counties. This would allow researchers to gather data from a variety of educational experiences and school settings.

Because Response to Intervention (RTI) is still a new concept in many school districts, much research still needs to be conducted in this field of study. The researcher recommends that the area of teacher collaboration and RTI implementation continue to be studied in the future. For those educators interested in implementing RTI into their instructional programs, scheduled opportunities for teacher collaboration, specifically between regular education and special education teachers, should also be considered, so that teachers may gain knowledge and learn various methods of implementation from educators with expertise in those areas.

Also, the researcher suggests that RTI interventions and special education services should be considered as an area of study for future research reports or for educational theorists, in order to learn more about how school systems determine needs for special education services when using RTI as a screening tool. Much research should also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of RTI as a screening tool in verifying learning disabilities as compared to past screening methods. It is also recommended that

research be conducted to determine the rigor, fidelity, and methods through which teachers are trained to use RTI data in screenings for special education services.

Finally, the researcher would recommend that other researchers study the correlation between RTI interventions and student achievement to determine the impact of RTI on students' high-stakes testing programs. It may be important to not only clarify the effect of RTI in increasing the academic achievement of at-risk students but also determine the effect of RTI experiences in intensifying the scholastic success of on-level or above-level students.

### **Summary**

Response to Intervention is a fast-growing, multifaceted method of meeting students' needs in an ever-changing society. Much research should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of such a vast, complex method of student intervention so that educators can be made aware of how RTI can be used to achieve student growth and progress. Because RTI focuses on students' individual needs, it may be the best way to meet those needs before students begin to struggle. The challenge is for school districts and educators to continue to identify and utilize the best RTI techniques to use for their students.

### References

- American Educational Research Association (2005). Teaching teachers: Professional development to improve student achievement. *Research Points: Essential Information for Education Policy*, 3(1), 1-4.
- Barnett, D. W., Daly III, E. J., Jones, K. M., & Lentz, Jr., F. E. (2004). Response to Intervention: Empirically based special service decisions from single-case designs of increasing and decreasing intensity. *The Journal of Special Education*, 38(2), 66-79.
- Bender, W. N., & Shores, C. F. (Eds.). (2007). *Response to Intervention: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Bianco, S. D. (2010). Improving student outcomes: Data-driven instruction and fidelity of implementation in a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*, 6(5), article 1. Retrieved October 15, 2011, from <http://abbyowens.wiki.westga.edu/file/view/Improving+Student+Outcomes.pdf>
- Binet, A., & Simon, T. (1916). *The Development of Intelligence in Children*. Baltimore, MD: Williams and Wilkins Company. Retrieved October 12, 2011, from [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2eIJAAAAMAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA5&dq=alfred+binet&ots=h\\_io6-keri&sig=B1d\\_OuQfAA\\_9S1d\\_oh3BEWfQKlc#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2eIJAAAAMAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA5&dq=alfred+binet&ots=h_io6-keri&sig=B1d_OuQfAA_9S1d_oh3BEWfQKlc#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Bradley, R., Danielson, L., & Doolittle, J. (2005). Response to Intervention. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 38(6), 485-486.

- Brozo, W. G. (2010). Response to Intervention or responsive instruction? Challenges and possibilities for Response to Intervention for adolescent literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(4), 277-281.
- Buffum, A., Matto, M., & Weber, C. (2009). *Pyramid Response to Intervention: RTI, Professional Learning Communities, and How to Respond When Kids Don't Learn*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Buffum, A., Matto, M., & Weber, C. (2010). The WHY behind RTI. *Educational Leadership*, 68(2), 10-16.
- Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. (2008). *Implementing Response-to-Intervention in Elementary and Secondary Schools: Procedures to Assure Scientific-Based Practices (School-Based Practice in Action)*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.
- Butler, J., & Baugh, B. (2007). *Response to Intervention: Beginning to bring it all together for everyone in K-12 through assessment*. Presentation at the Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Retrieved on September 19, 2011, from [http://www.wsascd.org/downloads/annual\\_conf\\_archives\\_2007/rti.pdf](http://www.wsascd.org/downloads/annual_conf_archives_2007/rti.pdf)
- Casey, L. B., Bicar, D. F., Bicar, S. C., & Nichols, S. M. C. (2008). A much delayed response to *A Nation at Risk*: Recent innovations in general and special education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(8), 593-596.
- Consistency and collaboration. (2010, October). *Reading Today*, 28(2), 37.



- Danielson, L., Doolittle, J., and Bradley, R. (2007). Professional development, capacity building, and research needs: Critical issues for Response to Intervention implementation. *School Psychology Review, 36*(4), 632-637.
- Deno, S. (2003). Developments in curriculum-based measurement. *The Journal of Special Education, 37*(3), 184-192.
- Deno, S., & Gross, J. (1973). The Seward-University project: A cooperative effort to improve school services and university training. *Instructional Alternatives for Exceptional Children, 104*-121. Arlington, VA. Council for Exceptional Children.
- Dickman, G. E. (2006). RTI and reading: Response to Intervention in a nutshell. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy, Special Conference Edition*. Baltimore, MD. International Dyslexia Association. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/14596>
- Elliott, J. (2008). Response to Intervention: What and why? *School Administrator, 65*(8), 10-12.
- Faggella-Luby, M., & Wardwell, M. (2011). RTI in a middle school: Findings and practical implications of a Tier 2 reading comprehension study. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 34*(1), 35-49.
- Fechtelkott, C. J. (2010). Response to Intervention in the schools: A survey of current practices and teachers' perceptions in two states (Master's thesis). Retrieved September 24, 2011, from <http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2010/2010fechtelkotterc.pdf>

- Fuchs, D., & Deshler, D. D. (2007). What we need to know about Responsiveness to Intervention (and shouldn't be afraid to ask). *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 22*(2), 129-126.
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2006). Introduction to Response to Intervention; What, why, and how valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*(1), 93-99.  
doi:10.1598/RRQ.41.1.4
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2009). Responsiveness to Intervention: Multilevel assessment and instruction as early intervention and disability identification. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(3), 250-252. doi:10.1598/RT.63.3.10
- Fuchs, D., Mock, D., Morgan, P. L., & Young, C. L. (2003). Responsiveness-to-Intervention: Definitions, evidence, and implications for the learning disabilities construct. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 18*(3), 157-171.
- Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (2006). A framework for building capacity for Responsiveness to Intervention. *School Psychology Review, 35*(4), 621-626.
- Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (2009). On the importance of a unified model of Responsiveness to Intervention. *Child Development Perspectives, 3*(1), 41-43.  
doi: 10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00074.x. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2819728/pdf/nihms88704.pdf>
- Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Compton, D. L. (2010). Rethinking Response to Intervention at middle and high school. *School Psychology Review, 39*(1), 22-28.

- Fullan, M. G. (1989). *Implementing Educational Change: What We Know.* Report prepared for World Bank. Retrieved October 19, 2011, from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/1989/07/01/00009265\\_3960929042553/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/1989/07/01/00009265_3960929042553/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf)
- Gentry, R. (2010, February). *Response to Intervention: See Johnny run.* Paper presented at the 2010 Annual CEC Conference in Jackson, Mississippi. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED509170.pdf>
- Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C. M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., & Tilly, W. D. (2008). Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to Intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades. A practice guide. [NCEE 2009-4045]. Washington, D. C. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti\\_reading\\_pg\\_021809.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf)
- Gersten, R., & Dimino, J. A. (2006). RTI (Response to Intervention): Rethinking special education for students with reading difficulties (yet again). *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(1), 99-108.
- Greenwood, C. R., Bradfield, T., Kaminski, R., Linas, M., Carta, J. J., & Nylander, D. (2011). The Response to Intervention (RTI) approach in early childhood. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 43(9), 1-22.
- Gresham, F. (2001, August). *Responsiveness to Intervention: An alternative approach to the identification of learning disabilities.* Paper presented at the Learning Disabilities Summit: Building a Foundation for the Future in Washington, D.C.

- Hall, S. L. (2009). *Create Your Implementation Blueprint: Avoiding Implementation Pitfalls*. RTI Action Network website. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/getstarted/develop/create-your-implementation-blueprint-avoiding-pitfalls>
- Harlacher, J. E., Walker, N. J. N., & Sanford, A. K. (2010). The "I" in RTI: Research-based factors for intensifying instruction. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 42(6), 30-38.
- Hawkins, R. O., Kroeger, S. D., Musti-Rao, S., Barnett, D. W., & Ward, J. E. (2008). Preservice training in Response to Intervention: Learning by doing an interdisciplinary field experience. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(8), 745-762. doi:10.1002/pits.20339.
- Hollenbeck, A. F. (2007). From IDEA to implementation: A discussion of foundational and future responsive-to-intervention research. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 22(2), 137-146.
- Hoover, J. J. (2010). Special education eligibility decision making in response to intervention models. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(4), 289-296. doi:10.1080/00405841.2010.510752
- Hoover, J. J., Baca, L., Wexler-Love, E., & Saenz, L. (2008). National implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI): Research summary. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from <http://www.spannj.org/pti/NationalImplementationofRTI-ResearchSummary.pdf>
- Huebner, T. A. (2010). Differentiated instruction. *Educational Leadership*, 67(5), 79-81.

- Hughes, C. A., & Dexter, D. D. (2011). Response to Intervention: A research-based summary. *Theory Into Practice*, 50(4), 4-11. doi:10.1080/00405841.2011.534909
- Hunt, J. W. (2008). A Nation at Risk and No Child Left Behind: Déjà vu for administrators? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(8), 580-585.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-476 (1990). Retrieved on November 7, 2011, from <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/3319.pdf>
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-446 §614 (2004). Retrieved on September 24, 2011, from <http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl108-446.pdf>
- International Reading Association Commission on RTI (2009). *IRA commission on RTI: Working draft of guiding principles*. International Reading Association website. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from <http://www.reading.org/General/Publications/ReadingToday/RTY-0902-rti.aspx>
- Jackson, S., Pretti-Fronczak, K., Harjusola-Webb, S., Grisham-Brown, J., & Romani, J. M. (2009). Response to Intervention: Implications for early childhood professionals. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 40(4), 424-434.
- Janczak, T. M. (2008, September). Response to Intervention: An overview [Powerpoint presentation at Professional Development Schools Consortium]. West Seneca, NY. Retrieved September 25, 2011, from <http://www.buffalostate.edu/pds/documents/RTI%20Powerpoint.ppt>

- Johnson, E., Mellard, D. F., Fuchs, D., & McKnight, M. A. (2006). Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI): How to do it [RTI Manual]. Lawrence, KS. National Research Center on Learning Disabilities. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED496979.pdf>
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 112-133. doi: 10.1177/1558689806298224. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from <http://mmr.sagepub.com/content/1/2/112.full.pdf+html>
- Justice, L. M. (2006). Evidence-based practice, Response to Intervention, and the prevention of reading difficulties. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 37*(4), 284-297.
- Kavale, K. A., Holdnack, J. A., & Mostert, M. P. (2006). Responsiveness to Intervention and the identification of specific learning disability: A critique and alternative proposal. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 29*, 113-127.
- Klotz, M. B., & Canter, A. (2007). Response to Intervention (RTI): A primer for parents. Bethesda, MD. National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from [http://learn.shorelineschools.org/echolake/mbest/documents/rti\\_for\\_parents.pdf](http://learn.shorelineschools.org/echolake/mbest/documents/rti_for_parents.pdf).
- Kratochwill, T. R., Volpiansky, P., Clements, M., & Ball, C. (2007). Professional development in implementing and sustaining multitier prevention models: Implications for Response to Intervention. *School Psychology Review, 36*(4), 618-631.

- Lane, K. L., Mahdavi, J. N., & Borthwick-Duffy, S. (2003). Teacher perceptions of the prereferral intervention process: A call for assistance with school-based interventions. *Preventing School Failure, 47*(4), 148-155.
- Lane, K. L., Pierson, M. R., Robertson, E. J., & Little, A. (2004). Teachers' views of prereferral interventions: Perceptions of and recommendations for implementation support. *Education and Treatment of Children, 27*(4), 420-439.
- LaRocco, D. J., & Murdica, P. (2009). *Understanding Teachers' Concerns about Implementing Response to Intervention (RTI): Practical Implications for Educational Leaders*. Paper presented at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Educational Research Association Conference. Rocky Hill, CT.
- Lipson, M. Y., Chomsky-Higgins, P., & Kanfer, J. (2011). Diagnosis: The missing ingredient in RTI assessment. *Reading Teacher, 65*(3), 204-208.
- Lord, H. G. (1973). *Ex Post Facto Studies as a Research Model*. Special report for Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED090962.pdf>
- Louisiana Department of Education (n.d.). *Louisiana's Response to Intervention [RTI] implementation plan*. Baton Rouge, LA. Retrieved September 18, 2011, from <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/16839.pdf>
- Louisiana Department of Education (2009, September). *RTI and math* [Webinar]. Retrieved September 25, 2011, from [http://media.louisianaschools.net/webinars/rti/20090928\\_RTI\\_00.html](http://media.louisianaschools.net/webinars/rti/20090928_RTI_00.html)

- Mahdavi, J. N., & Beebe-Frankenberger, M. E. (2009). Pioneering RTI systems that work: Social validity, collaboration, and context. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 42*(2), 64-72.
- Marston, D. (2005). Tiers of intervention in Responsiveness to Intervention: Prevention outcomes and learning disabilities identification patterns. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(8), 539-544.
- Martinez, R., & Young, A. (2011). Response to Intervention: How is it practiced and perceived? *International Journal of Special Education, 26*(1), 44-52.
- Mask, P. R., Solmonson, L., & Welsh, K. (2011). A second longitudinal snapshot of RTI implementation in Texas public elementary schools. *National Social Science Journal, 35*(2), 112-124. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from [http://www.nssa.us/journals/pdf/NSS\\_Journal\\_35\\_2.pdf#page=114](http://www.nssa.us/journals/pdf/NSS_Journal_35_2.pdf#page=114)
- Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2005). Feasibility and consequences of Response to Intervention: Examination of the issues and scientific evidence as a model for the identification of individuals with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(6), 525-531.
- McCormick, M. M. (2010). Practitioners' perceptions of the implementation of a Response to Intervention model (Master's thesis). Retrieved September 26, 2011, from [http://www.sierranevada.edu/UserFiles/file/TED/THESES\\_SU\\_10/McCormick.pdf](http://www.sierranevada.edu/UserFiles/file/TED/THESES_SU_10/McCormick.pdf).
- McKenzie, R. G. (2009). Obscuring vital distinctions: The oversimplification of learning disabilities within RTI. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 32*(4), 203-215.



- McNamara, K., Rasheed, H., & Delamatre, J. (2008). A statewide study of school-based intervention teams: Characteristics, member perceptions, and outcomes. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 18*(1), 5-30. doi:10.1080/10474410701864107
- Mesmer, E. M., & Mesmer, H. E. (2008). Response to Intervention: What teachers of reading need to know. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(4), 280-290. doi:10.1598/RT.62.4.1
- Mohammed, S. S., Murray, C. S., Coleman, M. A., Roberts, G., & Grim, C. N. (2011). *Conversations with Practitioners: Supporting State-Level Collaboration Among General and Special Educators*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Murawski, W. W., & Hughes, C. E. (2009). Response to Intervention, collaboration, and co-teaching: A logical combination for successful systemic change. *Preventing School Failure, 53*(4), 267-277.
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education & Council of Administrators of Special Education (2006, May). *Response to Intervention and problem-solving: An administrator's perspective*. Retrieved September 26, 2011, from <http://www.casecec.org/pdf/rti/RtI%20An%20Administrator's%20Perspective%201-061.pdf>
- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983, April). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. A report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education. Washington, D. C. Retrieved September 27, 2011, from <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>

- National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005, June). Responsiveness to Intervention and learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 28, 249-260.
- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities. (2006). Core concepts of RTI [Web site]. Retrieved December 16, 2011, from <http://www.nrcld.org/about/research/rti/concepts.html>
- Nielsen, D.C., Barry, A.L., & Staab, P.T. (2008). Teachers' reflections of professional change during a literacy-reform initiative. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(5), 1288-1303.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110 (2001). Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
- Nunn, G. D., & Jantz, P. B. (2009). Factors within response to intervention implementation training associated with teacher efficacy beliefs. *Education*, 129(4), 599-607.
- Nunn, G. D., Jantz, P. B., & Butikofer, C. (2009, September). Concurrent validity between teacher efficacy and perceptions of Response to Intervention outcomes. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 36(3), 215-218.
- O'Connor, E. A., & Simic, O. (2002). The effect of Reading Recovery of special education referrals and placements. *Psychology in the Schools*, 39(6), 635-646.
- Reeves, S., Bishop, J., and Filce, H. G. (2010). Response to Intervention (RtI) and tier systems: Questions remain as educators make challenging decisions. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 76(4), 30-35.

Sansosti, F. J., & Noltemeyer, A. (2008). Viewing Response-to-Intervention through an educational change paradigm: What can we learn? *The California School Psychologist, 13*, 55-66.

Sansosti, F. J., Noltemeyer, A., & Goss, S. (2010). Principals' perceptions of the importance and availability of response to intervention practices within high school settings. *School Psychology Review, 39*(2), 286-295.

Sawyer, R., Holland, D., & Detgen, A. (2008). State policies and procedures and selected local implementation practices in Response to Intervention in the six Southeast region states [Issues and Answers Report, REL 2008-No. 063]. Washington, D. C. U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL\\_2008063\\_sum.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL_2008063_sum.pdf)

School District of Lee County (2009, August). Response to Intervention manual. Fort Meyers, FL. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from [http://studentservices.leeschools.net/RTI/pdf/District%20RtI%20Manual%2010\\_09JWK.pdf](http://studentservices.leeschools.net/RTI/pdf/District%20RtI%20Manual%2010_09JWK.pdf)

Scierka, B. J., & Silberglitt, B. (2007). Implementing RTI school schedules: A unique challenge for RTI. *NASP Communiqué, 36*(1), 18-4. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from [http://learn.shorelineschools.org/echolake/mbest/documents/implementing\\_rti.doc](http://learn.shorelineschools.org/echolake/mbest/documents/implementing_rti.doc)

- Shinn, M. R. (2007). Identifying students at risk, monitoring performance, and determining eligibility within Response to Intervention: Research on educational need and benefit from academic intervention. *School Psychology Review, 36*(4), 601-617.
- Shirley, D., & Hargreaves, A. (2006). Data-driven to distraction. *Education Week, 26*(6), 32-33.
- Slonski-Fowler, K. E., & Truscott, S. D. (2004). General education teachers' perceptions of the prereferral intervention team process. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 15*(1), 1-39.
- State of Louisiana (2011). Compass. Retrieved May 22, 2012, from <http://www.louisianaschools.net/compass>
- Sticht, T. G. (2008). A nation still at risk. *Reading Teacher, 26*(1), 29.
- Stuart, S., Rinaldi, C., & Higgins-Averill, O. (2011). Agents of change: voices of teachers on Response to Intervention. *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 7*(2), 53-73. Retrieved September 26, 2011, from [http://www.wholeschooling.net/Journal\\_of\\_Whole\\_Schooling/articles/7-2%20Stuart%20et%20al.doc](http://www.wholeschooling.net/Journal_of_Whole_Schooling/articles/7-2%20Stuart%20et%20al.doc)
- Subban, P. (2006). Differentiated instruction: A research basis. *International Education Journal, 7*(7), 935-947.
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2009). Responsiveness-to-Intervention and school-wide positive behavior supports: Integration of multi-tiered system approaches. *Exceptionality, 17*, 223-237. doi:10.1080/09362830903235375

- Swigart, A. E. M. (2009). Examining teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Response to Intervention (Master's thesis). *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects*, paper 51. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/51>.
- Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (1998). *A Nation Still at Risk: An Educational Manifesto*. Washington, D. C. Report retrieved October 9, 2011, from ERIC database. (ED 422 455)
- Thomas, S. B., & Dykes, F. (2011). Promoting successful transitions: What can we learn from RTI to enhance outcomes for all students? *Preventing School Failure*, 55(1), 1-9.
- Tilly, W. D., & Kurns, S. (2008). Response to Intervention: General overview and implications [Web conference Powerpoint presentation]. Portsmouth, N.H. Center on Instruction. Retrieved September 23, 2011, from a link at <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/webex-rti-in-math-an-introduction>
- Torgesen, J. K. (2007). Using an RTI model to guide early reading instruction: Effects on identification rates for students with learning disabilities. Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from [http://www.fcrr.org/science/pdf/torgesen/Response\\_intervention\\_Florida.pdf](http://www.fcrr.org/science/pdf/torgesen/Response_intervention_Florida.pdf)
- Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., & Wehmeyer, M.L. (2010). *Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools*. 6th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- United States Census Bureau (n.d.) *Louisiana QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau* [website]. Washington, D.C. Retrieved December 18, 2011, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22000.html>

United States Department of Education (2008). *A Nation Accountable: Twenty-five Years*

*After A Nation at Risk* [report]. Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 9, 2011,

from <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/accountable/>

Vaughn, S., Cirino, P. T., Wanzek, J., Wexler, J., Fletcher, J. M., Denton, C. D., ...

Francis, D. J. (2010). Response to Intervention for middle school students with reading difficulties: Effects of a primary and secondary intervention. *School*

*Psychology Review*, 39(1), 3-21.

Walker-Dalhouse, D., Risko, V. J., Esworthy, C., Grasley, E., Kaisler, G., McIlvain, D.,

& Stephan, M. (2009). Crossing boundaries and initiating conversations about

RTI: Understanding and applying differentiated classroom instruction. *Reading*

*Teacher*, 63(1), 84-87.

Wanzek, J., & Vaughn, S. (2008). Response to varying amounts of time in reading

intervention for students with low response to intervention. *Journal of Learning*

*Disabilities*, 41(2), 126-142. doi:10.1177/0022219407313426

Wixson, K. K., & Valencia, Sheila W. (2011). Assessment in RTI: What teachers and

specialists need to know. *Reading Teacher*, 64(6), 466-469.

Wood, D., & Wood, H. (1996). Vygotsky, tutoring, and learning. *Oxford Review of*

*Education*, 22(1), 5-16.

## **Appendix A**

### **Letter to Administrators at Pilot Study School**

\_\_\_\_\_, 2012

Dear Fellow Educators,

I am a doctoral student in the *Louisiana Education Consortium*, and I am studying the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the implementation of Response to Intervention in the seven elementary schools in [REDACTED] Parish. In an effort to establish population validity on the administrators' survey to be used in my research, I have selected a group of educators to provide feedback on the instrument. You were selected because of your school's commitment to RTI best practices and your experience with RTI implementation.

Attached, please find the administrators' survey designed to assess the opinions and perceptions of teachers regarding several aspects of RTI implementation. You are asked to (1) complete the survey, and (2) evaluate the overall appropriateness of the entire survey. Please return the survey to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, and I will pick it up from your school. Please understand that all steps will be taken to ensure anonymity. Also, the results from your school will not be included in the study; this is simply a pilot study to test for validity.

Thank you for taking time to assist me in my research endeavors. I truly appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,

Sheila S. Nugent  
sheilasnugent@aol.com



## **Appendix B**

### **Survey for Administrators at Pilot Study School**

**Survey of Administrators' Opinions Regarding Response to Intervention**

This survey is designed to determine administrators' opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in their schools.

Please note:

- Lincoln Parish School Board has defined **Response to Intervention (RTI)** as the practice of providing systematic, research-based instruction and interventions that meet student needs and ensures effectiveness of instruction and interventions through progress monitoring.
- Lincoln Parish School Board has implemented **Response to Intervention (RTI)** through such programs as DIBELS, Reading A to Z, IB4E, and other enrichment/intervention programs.

Before responding to the questions, please mark the box next to the appropriate description of your job position:

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal or Coordinating Teacher

---

1) Which of the following statements best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) into classroom instruction?

- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **much more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend a **little more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "Teachers spend the **appropriate amount** of instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend a **little less** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **much less** instructional time on RTI strategies."

2) Regarding question # 1, what factors or circumstances influence your opinion concerning the amount of time required to implement RTI strategies?

---

---

---

3) In your professional opinion, how valid is Response to Intervention (RTI) in determining which students need special education services?

- ☐ Very valid
- ☐ Somewhat valid
- ☐ Neither valid nor invalid
- ☐ Somewhat invalid
- ☐ Very invalid

4) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 3?

---

---

5) In your professional opinion, how prepared are teachers to make referrals for special education services based upon the students' responses to RTI interventions?

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

6) Regarding your answer to Question # 5, what training have teachers received concerning recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions?

---

---

7) In your professional opinion, how effective is teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

**8) Regarding your answer to Question # 7, how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9) What Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies are currently being used in your school? (Please check all that apply.)**

- ☐ DIBELS
  - ☐ Reading A to Z
  - ☐ IB4E or similar enrichment/intervention program
  - ☐ Other (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!*

## **Appendix C**

### **Letter to Teachers at Pilot Study School**

\_\_\_\_\_, 2012

Dear Fellow Educators,

I am a doctoral student in the *Louisiana Education Consortium*, and I am studying the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the implementation of Response to Intervention in the seven elementary schools in [REDACTED] Parish. In an effort to establish population validity on the teachers' survey to be used in my research, I have selected a group of educators to provide feedback on the instrument. You were selected because of your commitment to RTI best practices and your experience with RTI implementation.

Attached you will find the teachers' survey designed to assess the opinions and perceptions of teachers regarding several aspects of RTI implementation. You are asked to (1) complete the survey, and (2) evaluate the overall appropriateness of the entire survey. Directions are provided at the top of the page. Please return the survey to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, and I will pick it up from your school. Please understand that all steps will be taken to ensure anonymity. Also, the results from your school will not be included in the study; this is simply a pilot study to test for population validity.

Thank you for taking time to assist me in my research endeavors. I truly appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,

Sheila S. Nugent  
sheilasnugent@aol.com

## **Appendix D**

### **Survey for Teachers at Pilot Study School**

**Survey of Teachers' Opinions Regarding Response to Intervention**

This survey is designed to determine teachers' opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in their schools.

Please note:

- Lincoln Parish School Board has defined **Response to Intervention (RTI)** as the practice of providing systematic, research-based instruction and interventions that meet student needs and ensures effectiveness of instruction and interventions through progress monitoring.
- Lincoln Parish School Board has implemented **Response to Intervention (RTI)** through such programs as DIBELS, Reading A to Z, IB4E, and other enrichment/intervention programs.

Before responding to the survey, please mark the box next to the appropriate description of your job position:

- ☐ General education classroom teacher
- ☐ Special education teacher

---

**1) In your professional opinion, how effective is Response to Intervention (RTI) in increasing student achievement?**

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

**2) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 1?**

---

---

---



3) Please read the following statements addressing common aspects of RTI, and then use the five-point scale on the right of each item to indicate the extent to which it is evident in your school and/or classroom instruction.

<b>Aspect of RTI</b>	<b>Extent of Implementation</b>
a) I collaborate on a regular basis with special education teachers and other general education teachers on RTI strategies.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
b) I have ample opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
c) I incorporate <u>all components</u> of the mandated RTI programs into my classroom instruction.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
d) I am incorporating RTI strategies into my classroom with <u>rigor</u> and <u>fidelity</u> .	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>

4) Regarding your answers to parts a and b, what factors or circumstances influence your opinions concerning the value of collaborating with other teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Regarding your answers to parts a and b, in what ways do you collaborate with teachers in regard to implementation of RTI? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) Regarding your answers to parts c and d, what factors influence the depth or level of implementation that you use to incorporate RTI into your instruction? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) To what extent do you feel prepared to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions?

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

8) Regarding your answer to Question # 7, what training have you received to prepare to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9) In your professional opinion, how effective is teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

10) Regarding your answer to Question # 9, how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) Which of the following statements best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) into your classroom instruction?

- ☐ "I would like to spend **much more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **a little more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I spend the **appropriate amount** of instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **a little less** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **much less** instructional time on RTI strategies."

12) Regarding question # 11, what factors or circumstances influence your opinion concerning the amount of instructional time required by RTI methods? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13) In your professional opinion, how valid is Response to Intervention (RTI) in determining which students need special education services?

- ☐ Very valid
- ☐ Somewhat valid
- ☐ Neither valid nor invalid
- ☐ Somewhat invalid
- ☐ Very invalid

14) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 13?

---

---

15) What Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies are currently being used in your school?

(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ DIBELS
- ☐ Reading A to Z
- ☐ IB4E or similar enrichment/intervention program
- ☐ Other (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!*

## **Appendix E**

### **Rubric for Panel to Establish Validity of Administrator Survey**

**Rubric for Panel to Establish Validity of Administrator Survey**

**Directions:** For each of the test items on the attached surveys, please circle the number on the Likert scale that best describes the clarity and comprehensibility of the question.

Question # 1	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 2	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 3	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 4	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 5	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 6	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 7	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 8	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>
Question # 9	<div>5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1</div> <div>Very easy to understand</div> <div>Very difficult to understand</div>

## **Appendix F**

### **Rubric for Panel to Establish Validity of Teacher Survey**



Question # 6	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 7	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 8	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 9	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 10	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 11	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 12	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 13	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 14	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>
Question # 15	<p>5 ——— 4 ——— 3 ——— 2 ——— 1</p> <p>Very easy to understand                      Very difficult to understand</p>



## **Appendix G**

### **Letter to Elementary ELA and Special Education Teachers**

\_\_\_\_\_, 2012

Dear Elementary ELA and Special Education Teachers,

As part of my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana Tech University, I am conducting research into the implementation of Response to Intervention in the seven elementary schools in [REDACTED] Parish. All general education ELA teachers and special education teachers in [REDACTED] Parish's seven elementary schools are invited to complete this survey regarding your opinions and perceptions of several aspects of RTI implementation. I have received permission from the [REDACTED] Parish School Board to conduct my research in these schools.

Please be aware that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure your anonymity. By completing and submitting the survey, you are indicating that you understand the purpose and methods of the study. Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary, and your participation or refusal will not affect your relationship with Louisiana Tech University in any way. You may withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions without penalty. Your responses will be kept confidential and the results of the study will be freely available to you upon request. Your decision to participate is greatly appreciated.

Please complete the attached survey, place it in the accompanying envelope, and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. I will pick up the surveys from your school on that date. Thank you for taking time to assist me in my research endeavors. I truly appreciate your help!

Sincerely,

Sheila S. Nugent  
sheilasnugent@aol.com

## **Appendix H**

### **Survey for Elementary ELA and Special Education Teachers**

**Survey of Teachers' Opinions Regarding Response to Intervention**

This survey is designed to determine teachers' opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in their schools.

Please note:

- Lincoln Parish School Board has defined **Response to Intervention (RTI)** as the practice of providing systematic, research-based instruction and interventions that meet student needs and ensures effectiveness of instruction and interventions through progress monitoring.
- Lincoln Parish School Board has implemented **Response to Intervention (RTI)** through such programs as DIBELS, Reading A to Z, IB4E, and other enrichment/intervention programs.

Before responding to the survey, please mark the box next to the appropriate description of your job position:

- ☐ General education classroom teacher
  - ☐ Special education teacher
- 

1) In your professional opinion, how effective is Response to Intervention (RTI) in increasing student achievement?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

2) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 1?

---

---

---

3) Please read the following statements addressing common aspects of RTI, and then use the five-point scale on the right of each item to indicate the extent to which it is evident in your school and/or classroom instruction.

<u>Aspect of RTI</u>	<u>Extent of Implementation</u>
a) I collaborate on a regular basis with special education teachers and other general education teachers on RTI strategies.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
b) I have ample opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
c) I incorporate <u>all components</u> of the mandated RTI programs into my classroom instruction.	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>
d) I am incorporating RTI strategies into my classroom with <u>rigor</u> and <u>fidelity</u> .	5 ----- 4 ----- 3 ----- 2 ----- 1 Always or Almost always <span style="float: right;">Never or Hardly Ever</span>

4) Regarding your answers to parts a and b, what factors or circumstances influence your opinions concerning the value of collaborating with other teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Regarding your answers to parts a and b, in what ways do you collaborate with teachers in regard to implementation of RTI? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) Regarding your answers to parts c and d, what factors influence the depth or level of implementation that you use to incorporate RTI into your instruction? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) To what extent do you feel prepared to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions?

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

8) Regarding your answer to Question # 7, what training have you received to prepare to make recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

9) In your professional opinion, how effective is teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

10) Regarding your answer to Question # 9, how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

11) Which of the following statements best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) into your classroom instruction?

- ☐ "I would like to spend **much more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **a little more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I spend the **appropriate amount** of instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **a little less** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like to spend **much less** instructional time on RTI strategies."

12) Regarding question # 11, what factors or circumstances influence your opinion concerning the amount of instructional time required by RTI methods? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

13) In your professional opinion, how valid is Response to Intervention (RTI) in determining which students need special education services?

- ☐ Very valid
- ☐ Somewhat valid
- ☐ Neither valid nor invalid
- ☐ Somewhat invalid
- ☐ Very invalid

14) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 13?

---

---

15) What Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies are currently being used in your school?

(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ DIBELS
- ☐ Reading A to Z
- ☐ IB4E or similar enrichment/intervention program
- ☐ Other (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!*

## **Appendix I**

### **Letter to Elementary Administrators**



\_\_\_\_\_, 2012

Dear Elementary Administrators,

As part of my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana Tech University, I am conducting research into the implementation of Response to Intervention in the seven elementary schools in [REDACTED] Parish. All principals, assistant principals, and/or coordinating teachers in [REDACTED] Parish's seven elementary schools are invited to complete this survey regarding their opinions and perceptions of several aspects of RTI implementation. I have received permission from the [REDACTED] Parish School Board to conduct my research in these schools.

Please be aware that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure your anonymity. By completing and submitting the survey, you are indicating that you understand the purpose and methods of the study. Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary, and your participation or refusal will not affect your relationship with Louisiana Tech University in any way. You may withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions without penalty. Your responses will be kept confidential and the results of the study will be freely available to you upon request. Your decision to participate is greatly appreciated.

Please complete the attached survey, place it in the accompanying envelope, and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. I will pick up the surveys from your school on that date. Thank you for taking time to assist me in my research endeavors. I truly appreciate your help!

Sincerely,

Sheila S. Nugent  
sheilasnugent@aol.com

## **Appendix J**

### **Survey for Elementary Administrators**

**Survey of Administrators' Opinions Regarding Response to Intervention**

This survey is designed to determine administrators' opinions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in their schools.

Please note:

- Lincoln Parish School Board has defined **Response to Intervention (RTI)** as the practice of providing systematic, research-based instruction and interventions that meet student needs and ensures effectiveness of instruction and interventions through progress monitoring.
- Lincoln Parish School Board has implemented **Response to Intervention (RTI)** through such programs as DIBELS, Reading A to Z, IB4E, and other enrichment/intervention programs.

Before responding to the questions, please mark the box next to the appropriate description of your job position:

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal or Coordinating Teacher

---

1) Which of the following statements best describes your professional opinion regarding the amount of time required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) into classroom instruction?

- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **much more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **a little more** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "Teachers spend the **appropriate amount** of instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **a little less** instructional time on RTI strategies."
- ☐ "I would like for teachers to spend **much less** instructional time on RTI strategies."

**2) Regarding question # 1, what factors or circumstances influence your opinion concerning the amount of time required to implement RTI strategies?**

---

---

---

**3) In your professional opinion, how valid is Response to Intervention (RTI) in determining which students need special education services?**

- ☐ Very valid
- ☐ Somewhat valid
- ☐ Neither valid nor invalid
- ☐ Somewhat invalid
- ☐ Very invalid

**4) What evidence or indicators do you have to support your answer to Question # 3?**

---

---

**5) In your professional opinion, how prepared are teachers to make referrals for special education services based upon the students' responses to RTI interventions?**

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

**6) Regarding your answer to Question # 5, what training have teachers received concerning recommendations for special education services based upon students' responses to RTI interventions?**

---

---

---

**7) In your professional opinion, how effective is teacher collaboration in implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies?**

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Somewhat ineffective
- ☐ Very ineffective

8) Regarding your answer to Question # 7, how often and under what circumstances do regular education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to plan and implement RTI strategies? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9) What Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies are currently being used in your school? (Please check all that apply.)

- ☐ DIBELS
  - ☐ Reading A to Z
  - ☐ IB4E or similar enrichment/intervention program
  - ☐ Other (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!*

## **Appendix K**

### **Outline of Survey Questions and Methods of Analysis**

**Outline of Survey Questions and Methods of Analysis**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Item on Teacher Survey</b>	<b>Item on Administrator Survey</b>	<b>Groups to be Compared</b>	<b>Method of Analyzing Data</b>
Question # 1 (Effectiveness of RTI)	Question # 1	N/A	General and special education teachers	Mann-Whitney U test
Question # 1 (Effectiveness of RTI)	Question # 2	N/A	General and special education teachers	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 2 (Depth of RTI implementation)	Question # 3c	N/A	General and special education teachers	Mann-Whitney U test
Question # 2 (Depth of RTI implementation)	Question # 3d	N/A	General and special education teachers	Mann-Whitney U test
Question # 2 (Depth of RTI implementation)	Question # 6	N/A	General and special education teachers	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 3 (Amount of time)	Question # 11	Question # 1	General and special education teachers and administrators	Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks
Question # 3 (Amount of time)	Question # 12	Question # 2	General and special education teachers and administrators	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 4 (Validity as screening tool)	Question # 7	Question # 5	General and special education teachers and administrators	Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks

Question # 4 (Validity as screening tool)	Question # 8	Question # 6	General and special education teachers and administrators	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 4 (Validity as screening tool)	Question # 13	Question # 3	General and special education teachers and administrators	Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks
Question # 4 (Validity as screening tool)	Question # 14	Question # 4	General and special education teachers and administrators	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 3a	N/A	General and special education teachers	Mann-Whitney U test
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 3b	N/A	General and special education teachers	Mann-Whitney U test
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 4	N/A	General and special education teachers	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 5	N/A	General and special education teachers	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 9	Question # 7	General and special education teachers and administrators	Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance of Ranks
Question # 5 (Value of teacher collaboration)	Question # 10	Question # 8	General and special education teachers and administrators	Qualitative means; analysis of similarities and differences



## **Appendix L**

Letter to Superintendent of “Woodland Parish School District”

██████████, LA ██████████  
October 18, 2011

Superintendent ██████████  
██████████ Parish School Board  
██████████ LA ██████████

Dear Mr. ██████████,

As you may know, I am enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Louisiana Tech University. To fulfill the requirements of the program, I must conduct an educational study and write a dissertation concerning this study. I have selected the topic of educators' perceptions of the implementation and effectiveness of Response to Intervention measures. I would like to ask your permission to contact the principals of the seven elementary schools in ██████████ Parish and gain their approval to submit surveys to their general education English Language Arts teachers and special education teachers. I would also like to ask the principals, assistant principals, and/or coordinating teachers about their opinions and perceptions of the implementation of RTI in their schools. I assure you that all participants and schools will be anonymous and that there will be no public disclosure of the identification of these schools and participants. I would be more than happy to share the information that I gain from the study with you and with the principals in the district.

I can be contacted at the address listed above or at ██████████. I can also be reached via email at sheilasnugent@aol.com. I eagerly await your response, and I thank you so much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Sheila Stepp Nugent

## **Appendix M**

Email from Superintendent of "Woodland Parish School District"

**Subject:** Permission Request -- Survey for doctoral dissertation

**Date:** 10/21/2011 3:50:42 P.M. Central Daylight Time

**From:** [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]

**To:** [sheilasnugent@aol.com](mailto:sheilasnugent@aol.com)

*Sent from the Internet (Details)*

Ms. Nugent,

I have received your letter requesting permission to contact the principals of our seven public elementary schools in [REDACTED] in an effort to secure their approval to survey the ELA and special education teachers in their respective schools. Also, you express a desire to survey the principals and their administrative staff regarding their opinions and perceptions of the implementation of RTI in their schools. Consider your request approved.

I do understand from your letter that all participants and schools will remain anonymous, and that there will be no public disclosure of the identification of these schools and participants. This is as it should be.

Since your study deals with perceptions of educators relative to the implementation and effectiveness of RTI measures, I would appreciate you sharing the findings with me. Hopefully through your research you will find that our educators widely utilize and value RTI in helping children to be successful.

Good luck in your efforts!

[REDACTED]

## **Appendix N**

Approval from Human Use Committee



LOUISIANA TECH  
UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

TO: Ms. Sheila Nugent and Dr. Lawrence Leonard  
FROM: Barbara Talbot, University Research  
SUBJECT: HUMAN USE COMMITTEE REVIEW  
DATE: February 1, 2012

In order to facilitate your project, an EXPEDITED REVIEW has been done for your proposed study entitled:

**"Educators' Perceptions of the Implementation and Effectiveness of  
Response to Intervention Measures"**

HUC 929

The proposed study's revised procedures were found to provide reasonable and adequate safeguards against possible risks involving human subjects. The information to be collected may be personal in nature or implication. Therefore, diligent care needs to be taken to protect the privacy of the participants and to assure that the data are kept confidential. Informed consent is a critical part of the research process. The subjects must be informed that their participation is voluntary. It is important that consent materials be presented in a language understandable to every participant. If you have participants in your study whose first language is not English, be sure that informed consent materials are adequately explained or translated. Since your reviewed project appears to do no damage to the participants, the Human Use Committee grants approval of the involvement of human subjects as outlined.

Projects should be renewed annually. *This approval was finalized on February 1, 2012 and this project will need to receive a continuation review by the IRB if the project, including data analysts, continues beyond February 1, 2013.* Any discrepancies in procedure or changes that have been made including approved changes should be noted in the review application. Projects involving NIH funds require annual education training to be documented. For more information regarding this, contact the Office of University Research.

You are requested to maintain written records of your procedures, data collected, and subjects involved. These records will need to be available upon request during the conduct of the study and retained by the university for three years after the conclusion of the study. If changes occur in recruiting of subjects, informed consent process or in your research protocol, or if unanticipated problems should arise it is the Researchers responsibility to notify the Office of Research or IRB in writing. The project should be discontinued until modifications can be reviewed and approved.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Mary Livingston at 257-4315.

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

P.O. BOX 3092 • RUSTON, LA 71272 • TELEPHONE (318) 257-5075 • FAX (318) 257-5079  
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY