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Watch Where You Step...



Teacher's Workshop[®]

"Information for everyday teaching..."



RTI Models: One Size Does Not Fit All!!

By Karen Kemp

While attending a literacy conference this summer, I had the pleasure of hearing Chris Tovani, author of Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? and I Read It, But I Don't Get It! The three-day presentation focused on how to engage secondary students in the reading process across content areas. One of the ideas Chris shared was the use of "companion pieces" (i.e. pictures, excerpts from other books, political cartoons, music etc..) as a motivation tool. She explained that an effective companion piece relates to the unit topic, generates interest, and provides a springboard for thought provoking discussion. As Chris showed the group various companion pieces she was using in her classroom, I thought, "Wow, this is good stuff!" I was anxious to use Chris's technique. Without a classroom of my own, I immediately started thinking about staff development and how I could incorporate companion pieces into the presentation of topics such as RTI, Curriculum Based Measurement and Effective Instruction.

I settled on RTI as my first workshop choice for using a companion piece. Sharing my district's success with RTI and the steps taken to implement our model is one of my favorite presentations; however, every time I talked about the aspects of the RTI model used in my district, I struggled with the best way to convey two very important facts. One, that our district model cannot be replicated and two, all possibilities for implementation of an RTI model need to be considered so district stakeholders do not perceive it as a fail-proof replacement model of whatever is currently in place. While racking my brain about these issues, I began to think about the book I was reading, Orbiting The Giant Hairball, by Gordon MacKenzie, is a quirky read about one man's tenure at Hallmark working in the creative division. One chapter of the book provides insight into MacKenzie's thought process related to organizational models. It happened to have the book with me when Chris gave the group an assignment to find a companion piece for a content area. I went back through the chapters and found what I needed; the springboard for my discussion on, models, structures, unexplained acceptance, flexibility, reality was in Chapter 18, The Pyramid and the Plum Tree. I was thrilled, I'd found my "companion piece" for discussing the concept of one size does not fit all when it comes to RTI.

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Who You Ask Is Everything!

The graduate with a Science degree asks, "Why does it work?"

The graduate with an Engineering degree asks, "How does it work?"

The graduate with an Accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?"

The graduate with a Liberal Arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

The Job Interview...

"I see you were last employed by a psychiatrist," said the employer to the applicant. "Well," she replied, "I just couldn't win. If I was late, I was hostile. If I was early, I had an anxiety disorder. If I was on time, I was compulsive."

Mind Teaser...

What falls but does not break, and what breaks but does not fall?

(answer at bottom of last page)

Thrifty Tip Of The Month...

Here's a great way to buy quality paint for your home at pennies on the dollar.

Many paint stores have a supply of paint that is either not exactly the color the customer really wanted, or the customer who ordered the color never came back to pick it up.

These paints are called "mistints," and you can buy them for only a few dollars per gallon. There is nothing wrong with the paint; it's just that the company cannot sell it as regular stock because it was a special mix. It's a win-win situation for the store and for you!

Life Lessons...

- ♦ The most valuable function performed by the federal government is entertainment.
- ♦ A person who is nice to you, but rude to a waiter, is not a nice person.
- ♦ No matter what happens, someone will find a way to take it way too seriously.
- ♦ The main accomplishment of almost all organized protests is to annoy people who are not in them.
- ♦ There is a fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

I have obtained permission to use the excerpt on pages 163 & 164 of the book for classroom activities but not yet for reprint in other articles. So, in order to provide you with a sense of the content in Chapter 18, I am, at the risk of violating copyright, inserting a sentence from the excerpt. As you read, think about your school/district and the beliefs held by staff regarding the implementation of an RTI model.

"... they (models) can also, if used without mindfulness, become addicting anesthetics to the pain of an inscrutable universe and further insulate us from full reality, which is the realm of infinite possibilities" (MacKenzie, 1998).

I've been using this excerpt "Why Models?" at the beginning of every workshop to engage participants and provoke honest dialogue about models... RTI, PBIS, CST/IST, discrepancy, pyramids etc.. The results have created rich discussions about what a school is currently using as a model and how that is different or similar to what they are expecting from a "new model" called Response to Intervention. As a new school year unfolds, I challenge you as an active staff member to engage in a conversation about the models in your building and then ask yourselves this question, "Does our model limit us or allow us to see the infinite possibilities of full reality?" For sanity's sake, I hope it is the latter.

Mackenzie, Gordon (1998). *Orbiting the giant hairball: A corporate fool's guide to surviving with grace*. Penguin Putnam Inc. New York: NY.

Educational Leader:

Ms. Toody Byrd

Ms. Toody Byrd has been there and done that. Her career includes the jobs of teacher, counselor, author, and speaker. She has spent her career helping people meet the challenges of education, even "in times like these." A wonderful communicator, she moves across the educational spectrum reaching students, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and the whole community with humor and home-grown Texas wisdom.

In recognition of Toody's unique contribution to education and community life in the state of Texas, Toody was declared a State Treasure by the 71st Legislature of the state of Texas.

Ms. Byrd's genuine love for people (especially young people) coupled with her educational experiences (which range from being a teacher of all subjects in seventh and eighth grades in a three-teacher country school to serving as director of guidance and student services in a large suburban school district) has made her a sought-after speaker in more than thirty five states. Toody is a joy that you won't want your teachers to miss.

For information on having Toody come to your school call us at 800-991-1114.

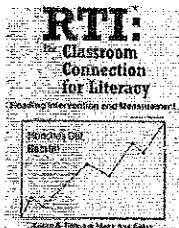
Wacky Bumper Stickers...

Here is a series of strange, but true bumper stickers seen around the country...

- ♦ CAUTION! I Drive Like You Do!
- ♦ I'm Back By Popular Demand
- ♦ They're Not Hot Flashes, They're POWER SURGES!
- ♦ The Big Bang Theory: God Spoke and BANG It Happened
- ♦ I Still Miss My Ex-Husband, But My Aim Is Improving
- ♦ I Almost Had A Psychic Girlfriend, But She Left Me Before We Met
- ♦ I Drive Way Too Fast To Worry About Cholesterol
- ♦ Hang-Up And Drive!
- ♦ Pardon My Driving, I'm Reloading
- ♦ Despite The Cost Of Living, Have You Noticed How It Remains So Popular?

Did You Know...

- ♦ Hershey's kisses are called that because the machine that makes them looks like it's kissing the conveyor belt.
- ♦ The longest recorded flight of a chicken is thirteen seconds.
- ♦ An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- ♦ "I am" is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.
- ♦ A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.



This book by Karen Kemp, published by National Professional Resources, takes RTI to the next level and explores the successful implementation of RTI concepts to reading education. Kemp takes the five precepts of literacy development and applies them to a practical RTI plan that not only successfully addresses individual students' needs but provides guidance to teachers in how to address the special needs of students while keeping the whole classroom engaged and excited about reading. Karen's newest book *RTI: The Classroom Connection for Math Literacy* will be out in a few weeks.

RTI, Discipline Tactics, and Behavior Problems

With the increased emphasis on Response to Intervention (RTI), many educators are now discussing RTI procedures for students with behavior problems. Of course many models for positive behavioral supports have involved multi-tiered interventions for students with behavioral problems for the last decade. Still, the emphasis on RTI has now focused this discussion, and a large number of states are implementing RTI, not only in the reading/literacy area, but also in the behavioral area. This is understandable, given our current disciplinary options; here is what we now know about discipline tactics to date.

First many currently used disciplinary procedures seem to have only limited effectiveness. For example, both in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension procedures do remove an offending student from the general education class, and principals are seemingly convinced of the efficacy of these widely used practices. However, the available evidence has shown that neither of these procedures reduces recurring disciplinary problems for most students over the long term (Blankenship & Bender, 2007). Also, there is considerable evidence that these procedures are implemented more frequently for minority students, raising some questions on overall fairness.

Next, spanking is only rarely used today, since it is not allowed in most states. According to the Cable News Network (CNN Morning Show; August 19, 2008), only 21 states still allow spanking in any form, but even within those states, many districts don't allow the practice. Further, 35% of all spankings are administered to African-Americans, a group that makes up only 17% of the school population. Again, this raises questions, and another disciplinary approach is clearly needed.

In view of this data, RTI seems to offer a meaningful disciplinary option (Bender & Shores, 2007). As educators are now exploring RTI procedures in terms of a multi-tier series of increasingly intensive interventions, this same multi-tier concept can be—many would suggest should be—applied to students with behavior problems. In fact, many states built their positive behavior supports model on a multi-tier series of disciplinary interventions a number of years ago.

In this model, tier 1 would involve general education interventions that are class wide (e.g. token economies) along with some individual progress monitoring of specific targeted behaviors for specific students. Tier 2 would involve increased progress monitoring, coupled with interventions targeted at a particular student or small group of students with similar overt behavior problems. Performance monitoring data from these two tiers (typically in the form of charted behavioral data on an X / Y axis chart) could then be considered in any future decisions about a student's behavior, as well as in future placement decisions and/or manifestation determinations.

While current definitions of conduct disorders, emotional disturbance or emotional/behavioral disorders (terms vary from state to state) do not generally focus on RTI procedures, data generated by such procedures can certainly be considered in placement decisions. Indeed, among the proponents of RTI, no one would be surprised if definitions for conduct disorders and/or

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Answer To Mind Teaser...

Night and Day.

Quote of the Month...

“The only service a friend can really render is to keep up your courage by holding up to you a mirror in which you can see a noble image of yourself.”

-George Bernard Shaw

emotional/behavioral disabilities are modified in the near future to reflect more emphasis on RTI. Educators should check their state department of education website to see if RTI procedures are currently recommended for students with behavioral problems in their state. Suffice it to say at this point, that this seems to be a coming trend.

Blankenship, T. & Bender, W. N. (2007). Widely used disciplinary options for aggressive kids: Are the current approaches effective? *The Journal of the American Academy on Special Educational Professionals*, (Winter Issue, 2007; URL: Assep.org). Pp. 1 – 38.

Bender, W. N., & Shores, S. (2007). *Response to Intervention: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

For a copy of our first newsletter, please call or email .

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