2010

Toward True Integration of Response to Intervention Systems in Academic and Behavior Support: Part Three: Tier 3 Support

Kent McIntosh
University of Oregon

Hank Bohanon
Loyola University Chicago, hbohano@luc.edu

Steve Goodman
MiBlisi

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education: Faculty Publications and Other Works by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Toward True Integration of Academic and Behavior Response to Intervention Systems
Part Three: Tier 3 Support
BY KENT McINTOSH, HANK BOHANON, & STEVE GOODMAN

Implementing RTI

n articles one and two in this series, we described strategies for integrating aca-
demic and behavior response to intervention (RTI) systems at Tiers 1 and 2 (McIn-
tosh, Goodman, & Bohanon, 2010; McIntosh, Bohanon, & Goodman, 2010). This article will illustrate how integrated academic and behavior RTI systems can work at Tier 3. When students are not successful with academic or behavior support at Tiers 1 and 2, more resources need to be dedicated to support them. These resources include the time required in increasing support and the technical skills required for inter-
tervening and monitoring progress. Because ameliorating intensive student challenges requires school personnel with the most highly specialized skill sets, school and district resources can easily be wasted without a systems approach to providing academic and behavior support. In these situations, it can be hindered by too little attention to assessment. One of the clear benefits of an RTI approach is the differentiation and individualization of support that occurs at Tier 3. At times, the school team may need to invite additional members (e.g., family members, mental health experts, community agency representatives) to create student-specific wrap-around teams (Eber et al., 2009), but the integrated support team can still coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of support. The characteristic distinction between Tiers 2 and 3 is the intensification and individualization of support that occurs at Tier 3. This difference can be seen most clearly in the processes of assessment and intervention.

Assessment. Though Tier 2 assessment may focus on efficiency of assessment to conserve resources for intervention (Vaughn & Fletcher, 2010), Tier 3 support can be hindered by too little attention to assessment. One of the clear benefits of an RTI system is the rich amount of data collected before Tier 3 support begins. Integrated support teams can review previously collected Tier 2 monitoring data and identify what additional information is needed to plan effective support.

It is useful to assess functioning in three domains: academic performance, behavior needs, and quality of life. Though it may seem unnecessary to assess needs in each domain if the presenting problem is in one area only, there is a strong likelihood that intensive problems in one area will lead to problems in the others (McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Bo-
land, & Good, 2006; Reinke, Herman, Petros, & Ialongo, 2008). In these situations, it can be helpful to identify whether academic deficits evoke problem behavior to escape tasks or attention-maintained problem behavior is disrupting academic instruction, as each circumstance has different implications for intervention. Moreover, students with challenges in academics or behavior are at risk for diminished quality of life because behavior challenges restrict access to positive social outcomes, and academic challenges intervention creates barriers, especially when problems spill over into other areas when the level of student need intensifies. Students at Tier 3 require intensive instruction, and integrated support may help provide students with more opportunities for practice and success across both domains. Consequently, integrating these systems can make support both more comprehensive and more streamlined.

INTEGRATING TIER 3 SUPPORT

When progress monitoring data show an inadequate response to the efficient support provided in Tier 2, more intensive and individualized support is indicated. However, the same teaming and decision-making structures used in Tier 2 still apply at Tier 3 (McIntosh, Bohanon, & Goodman, 2010). Because teaming at Tier 3 involves the same activities of screening, assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring, it makes more sense to rely on the same integrated support teams for both tiers than create specific Tier 3 teams. At times, the school team may need to invite additional members (e.g., family members, mental health experts, community agency representatives) to create student-specific wrap-around teams (Eber et al., 2009), but the integrated support team can still coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of support. Different domains of life can then further degrade both academic and behavior performance. The functional behavior assessment–behavior support planning (FBA–BSP) process is a helpful framework for organizing integrated Tier 3 assessment and intervention. Though it may be more commonly associated with behavior support for students with significant needs (O’Neill et al., 1997), Tier 3 academic and integrated interventions can also be derived from this logic of comprehensive skill-based and environmental support (Witt, Daly, & Noell, 2000). Moreover, there is ample evidence of its effectiveness in general education settings (McIntosh, Brown, & Borgmeier, 2008). Through the FBA–BSP process, teams identify a hypothesis statement, including (a) a clear definition of the behavior of concern, (b) the immediate antecedents, (c) the setting events, and (d) the maintaining consequences. Quality of life assessment, in the areas of emo-
tional, environmental, and social well-being (Poston et al., 2003) can then be used to identify potential alternative behaviors and long term objectives. Additional Tier 3 assessment can involve diagnostic assessment, including brief experimental analy-
sis (Daly, Andersen, Gortmaker, & Turner, 2006) and can’t do/won’t do assessment (VanDerHeyden & Witt, 2008).

Intervention. Though it may be more efficient to provide separate academic and behavior interventions at Tier 2 (McIntosh, Bohanon, & Goodman, 2010), integrated support is necessary for enhanced outcomes at Tier 3. A key feature of Tier 3 support is the focus on individualized intervention matched to student need. Consideration of both academic and behavior difficulties allows for a more comprehensive individual-
ized intervention. In the FBA–BSP process, the hypothesis statement is used to iden-
tify strategies that will make problems (or academic errors) unlikely, inefficient, and ineffective (Suga, Luis-Palmer, & Hagan, 1998). Specific strategies are generated and selected based on their potential effectiveness and fit with the skills, resources, and values of the implementers and stakeholders (Albin, Lucyshyn, Horner, & Flannery, 1996). Strategies are organized by (a) behavior strategies, (b) antecedent strategies, (c) setting event strategies, and (d) consequence strategies. The result is a comprehensive plan integrating academic, behavioral, and quality of life interventions.

Behavior strategies. Academic and behavior interventions both focus on teach-
ing as the most important intervention in education. Academic interventions involve teaching important skills that are missing or deficient. Behavior interventions also involve missing or deficient skills, though with a focus on teaching missing or under-
used prosocial skills. For remediation of any skill (academic or behavior), interventions must include high quality instruction. High quality instruction (a) focuses on critical, functional skills, (b) uses explicit teaching, (c) is carefully sequenced, (d) emphasizes the use of conspicuous strategies, (e) uses scaffolding to promote student success, (f) utilizes prior knowledge, and (g) provides regular opportunities for practice (Coyle, Kame’enui, & Carnine, 2007).

Intervention strategies may involve a range of instructional methods. When academic skills are the targets for change, it is important to identify the right specific skill to target. The instructional hierarchy (acquisition, fluency, generalization, and adaptation; Haring, Lovitt, Eaton, & Hansen, 1978), in combination with validated models of academic development, can inform the identification of target skills. For ex-
ample, low accuracy indicates the need to focus on acquisition, with performance feed-

Figure 1: Hypothesis statement and integrated support plan for Keenan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT</th>
<th>SUPPORT PLAN STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting Event</strong></td>
<td><strong>Setting Event Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences of academic failure earlier in the school day (e.g., failing a quiz)</td>
<td>Provide high interest reading materials (low rider cars) at his level for pleasure reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves activities with high interest and probability of success (graphic arts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Antecedent Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented with Grade 6 level reading material during independent reading</td>
<td>Provide individualized academic support targeting reading fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td><strong>Behavior Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative self-talk (e.g., “I can’t do this,” “I’m stupid”), leading to work refusal (puts head on desk and doesn’t acknowledge requests)</td>
<td>Teach alternative behaviors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive self-talk (e.g., “I’m getting better with practice”)</td>
<td>Prompt use of alternative behavior when he uses negative self-talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consequence Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapes academic task (independent reading)</td>
<td>Ensure that he completes independent reading (assigned or preferred materials)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
back as a critical component, whereas high accuracy but low rates of responding indicate difficulty in fluency interventions and additional scaffolding in the form of graphic organizers.

The team also identified an alternative behavior to replace work refusal. Keenan was taught that when he felt frustrated, he could request to read pre-taped reading materials and use positive self-talk to counter negative thoughts. Consequence strategies would also be used to neutralize routines before he could use the alternative behavior. When frustrated and would work during independent work time, reading either the assigned work or his preferred materials.

Finally, the team created a plan for monitoring implementation and effectiveness. The team created a detailed intervention plan that included a detailed, daily checklist to ensure that strategies were implemented, and Keenan’s progress was measured through daily behavior report cards and weekly oral reading fluency probes. Measuring both academic and social progress was noted as critical in enhancing Keenan’s success in both areas. To enhance engagement in the support plan and school in general, Keenan was encouraged to lead his IEP meetings, where he would share his data and provide input into the plan.

CONCLUSION

As the case study shows, implementing separate, independent Tier 3 academic and behavioral support systems has clear drawbacks. When the magnitude of academic and behavior problems increase, so do the resources, environmental structures, and data needed to address the problems. As a result, support should be aligned in such a way that each team can identify their responsibilities, keep the other teams informed, and know when to move support up or down the triangle. By integrating both models, it is hoped that the integration of academic and behavior support can operate more efficiently to provide more comprehensive support, and avoid being overwhelmed by multiple initiatives.

References
