Least Restrictive Environment: Really?

Presentation to the California Association of School Psychologists 2006 Annual Meeting

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Outline
- Determining instructional range
- Instructional range (reading) within general education classrooms
- Return of LD students to general education classrooms (Reintegration)
- Current analysis
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion

Instructional Range
- Will be important in response to intervention models
- Need for purposes of comparison
- Need for purposes of determining least restrictive environment
- For determining reasonable growth
- Measures
  - National normed
  - Mastery measurement
  - General outcome measures

Determining Instructional Range in Classroom
- Nationally normed, standardized tests
  - Could be used to express range in terms of
    - National percentiles
  - In CA, level of proficiency on basic standards
  - Are broad estimates that are difficult to relate to actual instructional setting
  - Provide a one time picture
  - Not feasible for frequent use in progress monitoring
  - Without data on growth cannot know if child needs further support

Mastery Measurement
- Mastery of a series of short term objectives
- First grade reading
  - Phonics
    - Sound-letter correspondence
    - cvc patterns
    - cvce patterns
  - Sight Vocabulary
  - Comprehension
    - Identification of who/what/when/where
    - Identification of main idea
    - Sequence of events
  - Fluency

Problems in Use of Mastery Measurement
- Requires development of series of assessments aligned with instruction being provided
- Measurement shifts with each new subskill
- Measurement is associated with a particular curriculum
- Lack of reliability and validity
- Does not measure maintenance or generalization
- Scale of objective measured changes.
- Cannot track growth or patterns
CBM Avoids These Issues

- Unit of measurement is consistent
- Have been proven valid and reliable
- Not tied to particular instructional sequence
- Automatically assesses retention and generalization

Using CBM in Classrooms

- Use to:
  - Describe competencies
  - Measure growth
  - Compare to peers
- Has psychometric and face validity
- Use in progress monitoring is tied to positive student outcomes when teachers respond to data

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Instructional Range in Reading

- Classrooms have a wide range of reading skills
- It has been suggested that range can be equivalent to:
  - Three years above grade level
  - Three years below grade level

Winter Norms CWPM (Edformation, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>10th percentile</th>
<th>90th percentile</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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Instructional Range

- Rodden-Nord and Shinn (1991)
  - Looked at percent of students performing below median of lower grades
  - As grade level increases overlap among grades increases
    - 36% of 6th graders performed below 5th grade median
    - 19% scored below 25th percentile
    - 25% scored below 4th grade median
    - 20% scored below the 3rd grade median
    - 2% scored below the 2nd grade median
Instructional Range

- Rodden-Nord and Shinn (1991)
- Third grade passage
- Classrooms have wide range of reading levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>CWPM</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>45-304</td>
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<td>6</td>
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Least Restrictive Environment

Section 612 (5) (A)
GENERAL.—To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily

Regular Education Initiative

- Push to provide services to students in the regular education classroom
- Led to more special education involvement in general education
- Collaboration
- Impetus for full inclusion
- Less effect on children with mild disabilities

Response to Intervention Model

- Response of all students to curriculum a requirement for RtI
- Comparison of at risk students to progress of other students
- Problem solving model requires information about expectations of environment

Reintegration of Students With LD

- Different from full inclusion
- Estimates range from 2% to 6% of students with mild disabilities returning to regular ed classroom
Question: Can Student Be Educated Satisfactorily In Regular Classroom?

- Within instructional range of classroom?
- Able to benefit from classroom approaches?

Satisfactory Achievement

- Generally related to nationally normed tests or to standards
- CBM allows use of local norms to identify instructional range of classroom
- Minimum skill level where student would benefit from instruction (Shinn & Hadenbank, 1993)

Barriers to Return to Regular Ed Classroom

- Special education teachers are skeptical of students’ potential for success
- Regular education teachers are skeptical of students’ potential for success
- Unreal expectations for these students
- Parent concerns about losing protections
- Data can counter teacher and parent concerns
- Students’ lack of classroom required learning skills

Using CBM to Foster Reintegration

- Psychometric properties of CBM
- Ease of administration
- Communication potential
- Direct comparison to peers
- Defining satisfactory achievement
- Can be used to monitor progress in both regular and special education

Approaches to Reintegration

- Transenvironmental Programming and CBM
  - Mathes, Fuchs, Roberts & Fuchs (TP Focuses on environmental skills and issues critical for success)
  - CBM adds academic focus

- Responsible Reintegration (Powell-Smith & Hadebank Stewart, 1998)
  - "Case by case basis using systematic, data-based, decision making strategies" p. 236
  - Based on concept of satisfactory achievement
    - CBM operationalizes
    - Ecological approach
      - Behaviors
      - Learning environment
  - Applicable to RtI approaches
Six Steps in RReACS (Powell-Smith and Habedank Stewart, 1996)

- Identification of potential reentry candidates
- CBM data collection on candidate and comparison group
- Reintegration decision making by team
- Planning and consultation for successful reintegration
- Actual reintegration
- Evaluating the effects of reintegration

Factors That Contribute to Successful Reintegration

- Fuchs, Fuchs, Fernstrom (1992)
  - Teacher attitude
  - Student’s preparedness for change to regular ed classroom
  - Transfer of skills
- Powell-Smith and Habedank Stewart (1996)
  - Positive attitudes of teachers and parents
  - Planning and consultation
  - Understanding of what works for the student

Success of Reintegration

- Examples of successful reintegration
  - Powell-Smith & Habendank Stewart (1998)
  - Fuchs, Fuchs & Fernstrom (1992)
- Case by case approach
- Monitoring student progress in regular classroom

Percent of Students Receiving Specific Services: CA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full special ed</td>
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<td>Speech therapy</td>
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<td>W. Special ed consult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other special ed</td>
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Time Spent Outside Regular Education: CA

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<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
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Figure 4: Percent of Students Receiving Specific Services, 2002-03

Figure 5: Percentage of Time Students Spent Outside the Regular Classroom, 2000-03
Possible Pressures to Increase Time Outside Regular Classroom

- Need to meet accountability targets
- Focus on students who are mildly disabled for remediation
- Increased pressures on teachers
- Lack of training for general education teachers

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District and Participants

- 1.1% American Indian
- 1% Asian
- .4% Pacific Islander
- 16% Hispanic
- 2% African American
- 74% White

District CBM: CWPM

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Grade 2 District

Grade 3 District
Laura Ann

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<td>Winter 5</td>
<td>Special Ed</td>
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Mikey

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Conclusions

- Considerable overlap among the three groups: regular education, title 1 and special education
- Distribution of all groups approaches similar shape as grade level increases
- Lack of clear criteria for return to regular education when admitted to special education
Questions
- Might these students still meet criteria as LD?
- Why are other lower achieving students not in special education (discrepancy issue?)
- Will RTI approach change these figures?
- What is relationship between local norms and national norms for fluency data?
  - What do you use?

RTI and Reintegration
- Emphasis on progress monitoring may increase awareness of instructional variability in classroom
- Effects on Reintegration will depend on use of RTI in decision making

Comments
- If higher achieving students exit what happens to the gap between regular education and special education over time?
  - What does this do to studies on special education efficacy?

References

References