

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker® Online

Buffum, Austin, Mike Mattos and Chris Weber. (2010). *“The Why Behind RTI.” Interventions That Work: Volume 68, pages 10-16. ASCD: October 2010.*
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/The-Why-Behind-RTI.aspx>

Purpose of the Article:

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a three-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. It is built on the premise that when students struggle, it is because we are not teaching them correctly. RtI asks that we turn our attention away from what is ‘wrong’ with a student and toward finding better ways to meet individual learning needs. Compelling evidence demonstrates that this approach identifies students in need of additional instruction and support and then provides it so that they can continue to learn at increasingly higher levels. RtI does not replace special education. Rather, it provides a mechanism for identifying students with needs, defining appropriate supports, and then delivering them within a timely, and data-driven methodology.

Background Information:

- Students who fail in school are at greater risk of poverty, welfare dependency, incarceration, and early death.
- RtI was legally mandated as part of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004.
- The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity (from Tier 1 through Tier 3) to accelerate their rate of learning.
- A three-tiered approach helps instructors provide increasing intensities of instruction, offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs at all three tiers.
- RtI supports and services can and often should be provided by a variety of interdisciplinary personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, speech and language clinicians, and other specialists.

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker® Online

Key Findings:

RTI is a systematic approach for identifying and then supporting students who struggle, either academically, behaviorally, or both. There is no single method for implementing the RTI process. However, it mandates that schools do not wait until students fall far enough behind to qualify for special education. Instead, schools should provide targeted and systematic interventions to *all* students as soon as they demonstrate the need. Hallmarks of the RTI approach generally include high-quality, evidence-based instruction, timely ongoing assessment, differentiated or tiered instruction, and increased parent involvement.

Application of Key Findings to Boardmaker Instructional Solutions:

Boardmaker Instructional Solutions (BIS) are a collection of accessible curricula that support the literacy development of students who read and write at early levels. Boardmaker Instructional Solutions were designed to reflect today's mandate that no student is excluded from receiving evidence-based academic instruction that aligns to standards. These programs leverage the accessibility of Boardmaker Online by providing individual opportunities to customize access to the curriculum, as well as the integration of digital technology in today's learning places and spaces. BIS programs share some additional features. These include formative and summative data collection opportunities, Lesson Plans and Guides, and differentiated supports for writing, which research tells us is the most challenging cognitive-linguistic task our students face. Your sales representative can provide you with an in-depth description of each title.

Tier 1:

- ✓ **Every student has access to rigorous, grade-level curriculum and highly effective teaching.** BIS programs provide a common curricular path. This means all students receive instruction that is rigorous and grade-appropriate. Differentiated supports allow students with idiosyncratic learning needs to participate and fulfill the learning objectives of each activity.

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker Online

- ✓ **Student learning outcomes shift from trying to cover all required standards to a narrower focus on meaningful standards.** BIS provides scripted instructional routines with pre-aligned to specific ELA standards across grade levels.
- ✓ **Not all students learn the same way, and some students require additional time.** BIS are delivered through Boardmaker Online, which allows teachers to identify needs and extend student learning, either using standard templates for content creation in Boardmaker Online, or title-specific templates expressly designed for this purpose.

Tier 2:

- ✓ **Teachers use ongoing formative assessment to identify students in need of additional support, as well as to target each student's specific learning needs.** While the overwhelming emphasis of BIS is on teaching and instruction, both formative and summative assessment opportunities are embedded within the instructional routines of all BIS titles. Written records of writing samples are one key way to provide an assessment. Additionally, many activities compile data appearing in the Student Management Center of Boardmaker Online. This is an easy way to view progress in real-time, and tailor instruction to individual needs.
- ✓ **Most Tier 2 interventions are delivered through small-group instruction using strategies that directly target a skill deficit.** BIS is most frequently deployed in small group settings. Each Unit-at-a-Glance, as well as the lesson plans and guides, clearly state the purpose of each activity or lesson. This provides cognitive clarity which is easily transferred from teachers to students. Within small groups, students benefit from peer scaffolds and develop deeper engagement in authentic learning communities.

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker® Online

- ✓ **Tier 2 Interventions are most effective when they are timely, structured, and mandatory; focused on the *cause* of a student's struggles rather than on a symptom.** A primary reason that most students struggle is a lack of access to the curriculum. BIS is delivered through Boardmaker Online, which is accessible to students with the widest range of needs; from those who use eye-gaze technology, to scanning, to mouse options. Additionally, each student has their own account. Teachers customize individual access methods once and then assignments automatically convert to the correct format. The digital nature of these titles makes for seamless implementation across devices and contexts; including smartboards, personal computing devices, tablets, and various other mobile technologies.

Tier 3:

- ✓ **At Tier 3, students receive intensive interventions in *addition* to core instruction—not in place of it.** BIS provides ELA instruction that is consistently embedded within the context of science and social studies topics. This helps students cultivate the academic vocabulary they need to engage in the school day. It also helps them develop world knowledge, which is the foundation for reading comprehension. BIS provides remedial supports within the context of core instruction. This allows a student with the most significant learning needs to engage with grade level topics in meaningful, integrated ways.
- ✓ **Tier 3 interventions must be individualized, based on a problem-solving approach that targets highly specific individual needs.** BIS share common features (like accessibility and instructional design), yet they target different skills for students at different points in their development. Expedition Education, for example, is expressly designed for students who struggle with comprehension and writing in middle and high school. Reading Avenue targets elementary school students with extremely low literacy and language skills. While all BIS programs support students with the most significant needs, they also recognize that these students are typically those who have fallen significantly below grade level. Each title has a look and feel that is considerate of evolving ages and interests.

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker® Online

- ✓ **Tier 3 interventions must be delivered with the utmost of intensity.** All BIS programs provide Complete Lesson Plans and Quick Lesson Guides that require focused daily implementation. The nature of these daily lesson bundles across weeks, months and years, creates a cycle of repetition with variety, which is how students develop the ability generalize new learning across contexts. The instructional sequences are predictable, which drives achievement. They can quickly learn the purpose and operational requirements of each activity. This allows students to focus less on the ‘how’ of learning and more on the ‘what’ of learning. Finally, independent practice is a critical component to learning. Practice intervals, both alone and with more knowledgeable others, are a regular component of BIS instructional routines.