

# **RTI is Necessary but not Sufficient for LD Diagnosis**

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## **My position**

- RTI provides valuable information as *part* of an evaluation for learning disabilities
- A failure to respond to interventions is not, by itself, diagnostic of a learning disability.
- Cognitive and neuropsychological processing is critical to identifying LD.
- School psychologists can and should evaluate processing.

## RTI as Prereferral Process

- Prereferral interventions, with good progress monitoring, are essential to serving children.
- Interventions may help a large number of children (e.g., Torgeson, early reading, 94-96%).
- Tracking response to intervention provides good information about what works and what doesn't.
- Avoids “waiting to fail.”

## Problems with RTI

- Established interventions for many referral problems do not exist.
- Agreement on goal setting (what is failure to respond?) can be problematic.
- Many children are referred for multiple areas of difficulty.
- Failure to respond may be due to many reasons other than disability.

## Processing and LD

- Literature in cognition, cognitive assessment, neuropsychology, and learning disabilities links cognitive processing with achievement and LD.
- Regular education curricula tend to focus on a few areas of processing (e.g., phonemic awareness) to the exclusion of many others.
- Once there has been failure to respond, process assessment can be used to develop interventions.

## Processing and Achievement

	Reading	Written Expression	Basic Math	Math Reasoning	Oral Expression	Listening Comp.
<b>Achievement</b>	Basic Reading	Comprehension				
<b>Important</b>	Ga Phonemic	Ga Phonemic				
<b>CHC Factors</b>	Awareness	Awareness				
	Gsm Auditory Working Memory		Gsm Memory Span, Auditory Working Memory	Gsm Memory Span, Auditory Working Memory		
	Gr Rapid Automatic Naming	Gr Rapid Automatic Naming	Gr			
	Gr Associative Memory	Gr Associative Memory				
	Gs Processing					
	Gs Processing Speed	Speed	Gs Processing Speed	Gs Processing Speed	Gs Processing Speed	
	Gc Crystallized Ability	Gc Crystallized Ability	Gc Crystallized Ability	Gc Crystallized Ability	Gc Crystallized Ability	
	-Vocabulary	-Vocabulary	-Vocabulary			
	-Language Development	-Language Development	-Language Development			
	-General Knowledge	-General Knowledge	-General Knowledge			
<b>Additional Neuropsych factors</b>	Gf Fluid Reasoning	Gf Fluid Reasoning	Gf Fluid Reasoning	Gf Fluid Reasoning		
	Attention, Executive Functions		Gq Math Knowledge			
	Left Hemisphere Convergent Crystallized Processing					
	Right Hemisphere Discordant Novel Processing					Gq Math Reasoning (higher math)
	Motor and sensory-motor integration					
	Memory					

## School Psychologists and Processing Assessment

- Many tests of processing are instruments that SPs already use or are easily learned.
- Processing assessment will still go on; will we be the ones to do it?
- Eliminating cognitive assessment in the schools differentially impacts poor students; well-off parents will still obtain comprehensive assessments.