

Four Words to Live By

People who attend my LIVE seminars often say that one sentence makes all the difference in their understanding of RTI.

The one sentence which I usually say about one hour into the seminar only contains four words. But they do boil RTI down to its very essence.

The four-word sentence that makes all of the difference is this:

"Interventions Always Involve Instruction."

So many times I will go to a school and ask them what they are doing for interventions. I will often get responses such as:

- We put students on a list.
- We get together one a week with a team of adults and discuss students.
- We have a wall where we put data about student.
- We call home to student's parents.
- We have a room where we send students.

None of these are interventions. They all may help students, but interventions TEACH students new skills so they can be successful. Putting kids on a list does not teach them anything. Sitting around a table talking about students does not make them smarter.

Interventions always involve instruction.

Sometimes when I ask about interventions people will respond:

- DIBELS
- AIMSWEB
- CBM
- MAZE

These are not interventions either. They are tests. Testing students more often does not make students smarter. only instruction does this.

Do you want to know if your school is doing real interventions? Look for instruction!

Is there an adult sitting with students teaching them?

Is the student receiving instruction from a computer program?

Is there a student tutoring another student giving them instruction?

These are indications that an intervention is actually taking place.

By the way, the same is true when using RTI for behavior.

If I ask what your behavior interventions are and you list:

- Detentions
- Suspensions
- Candy Rewards
- Other Positive Behavior Rewards

None of these are interventions.

They all might change behaviors, but they do not teach new behaviors and skills.

Detentions and suspensions are punishments. They decrease the frequency of existing behaviors.

Candy and other positive behavior rewards are rewards. They increase the frequency of existing behaviors.

Neither punishment nor rewards teach students new skills and behaviors. The only thing that does that? You guessed it: instruction!

Stick to my simple rule: Interventions always involve instruction.

I welcome your thoughts and questions on this issue!

Thanks!

-Pat Quinn
"The RTI Guy"
www.TotalRTI.com

Ideas Unlimited Seminars, Inc., P.O. Box 272, Slinger, WI 53086, USA