

Application of Response to Intervention for Gifted and High Ability Learners Developed by the Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) Committee

The approach referred to as problem solving and response to instruction/intervention (PS/RtI) is the practice of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs, using learning rate over time and level of performance to inform instructional decisions. RtI involves the systematic use of assessment data to efficiently allocate resources **to improve learning for all students** including students with disabilities, students identified as gifted, those who qualify under Section 504, and advanced learners.

Evidence-based instruction is an alignment between valid data and instructional decisions. In most cases, data collected on gifted students will require “evidence-based instruction” significantly different from other students in a general education classroom. For some gifted and high achieving students the minimal standards established for all students will require further scrutiny when targets are achieved at the advanced level.

The problem-solving method has been defined as “a process that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to develop and evaluate intervention plans that improve significantly the school performance of the students” (Batsche, 2006). As a process that relates to gifted and high ability students, improving school performance at all levels is reflected in the needs of the individual.

A tiered model of programming has traditionally been a framework within the field of gifted education. Levels of intensity allow for the diversity of individual needs of advanced students. Professional development on differentiation of curriculum, instruction and appropriate assessment is essential for meeting the needs of those students. RtI is a framework that establishes a support system for students, including those with exceptional ability or potential. These students may require special provisions because of their strengths and above grade instructional level or potential. In gifted education, strength-based interventions or programming have long been used to prescribe and shape tiered instruction. An educational plan (EP) for a student who is gifted is intended to address the strengths of the student and the needs beyond the general curriculum and classroom. The EP assists in providing this focus and accountability.

General Considerations

1. Gifted learners are diverse. Problem solving may be complex, especially since the issue(s) might be a combination of academic, affective, social-emotional or behavioral issues, pacing and motivation, or problems such as asynchronous development, perfectionism, sensory-motor integration or ADHD-type behaviors.
2. Problem solving for appropriate curriculum, instruction and assessment for gifted learners is a shared responsibility among staff, students and parents. Reasons for bringing the issues of gifted learners to an RtI problem solving team include, but are not limited to: differentiated instructional strategies that provide for modification of content, process, and/or student products at Tier I; determining Tier II or Tier III content or programming options; problem solving for implementation of evidence-based strategies; recommendations to improve reading or math skills; reducing underachievement factors or perfectionist behaviors; and social-emotional or behavioral issues. Throughout this process, problem solving and decision-making are dynamic and address pace, depth and complexity of evidence-based instruction.
3. When problem solving for appropriate strength-based programming, four (4) components are given attention over time: acceleration, differentiated content, process and product, affective and career guidance and content options matched to strengths.
4. Major decision-making points in a gifted learner’s instructional environment use the problem solving process: define, analyze, implement, and evaluate. Whether a team is discussing accelerated programming options or intervention for at-risk indicators, the concepts and cycle of problem solving should be implemented with fidelity, over time. Parents are integral to the team’s work.

5. The Tier 1 teacher, general education and gifted endorsed, is responsible for providing appropriate curriculum, instruction, assessment and special provisions, as outlined in state guidelines and law through differentiated practices and may utilize the assistance of the problem solving team for decision making and planning.
6. Educators and parents should be familiar with compliant and non-compliant behaviors common in gifted learners. Recognition of these characteristics may drive the problem solving process and implementation of programming options before and after identification.
7. For gifted learners who also struggle in a content area, the problem solving team must consider both strengths and weaknesses when planning interventions, programming strategies and time lines for assessment and progress monitoring. Problem solving for weaknesses of gifted learners is similar to that employed for other students with the same needs, being aware of the rate, depth and complexity of the needs of gifted learners.
8. Gifted learners who are acquiring English will require challenge and rigor in their area of strength at the same time that language skills are being developed.
9. Students who are high achieving require special provisions because of their strengths and above grade instructional level or potential.

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