Is Special Education Special Anymore? : The New Role in Special Education in the ERA of School Reform

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Nothing is certain except death and taxes…and CHANGE!
Democrats
Could the end of collective bargaining between the players' union and NFL owners... mean that these millionaires won't be playing in their taxpayer-subsidized stadiums?

And if there's a lockout... who's to blame?

Teachers!
Oh, crap! Was that TODAY?
In education we have just about reached the end of squeezing good out of an outdated school system.

Fullan, 2013
The only solutions to complex problems are complex answers.

Sharon Vaughn, 2011
The transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one from which a new tradition of normal science can emerge is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications. During the transition period there will be a large but never complete overlap between the problems that can be solved by the old and by the new paradigm. But there will also be a decisive difference in the modes of solution. When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals.

*Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*
Really...what’s so special about special ed?

- What is the purpose of special ed?
- What is the best thing you can say about special education?
- What is most troubling?
- How supportive is general ed for special ed?
- How supportive is special ed for general ed?
- We’ve achieved access, why aren’t outcomes better?
Why are we in the situation we are in?

The separate law has produced a dual system of education.

We have spent too much time on compliance and not enough on teaching and learning.

High stakes accountability has created high stakes anxiety. Students with disabilities are the scapegoats.

Special ed is clinging to a 1980s model in a 21st century world...IQ/Achievement Discrepancy v. RtI

NOW WHAT?
• Begin with the idea that the purpose of the system is student achievement

• Acknowledge that student needs exist on a continuum rather than in typological groupings

• Organize resources to make educational resources available in direct proportion to student need

Tilly, 2004
• Intelligent accountability, focusing on growth, related to common core academic standards and emotional and social wellness standards.
• All services meeting the demands of universal design and sustainable and coherent MTSS.
• Teacher certification based on the diagnostic and prescriptive instructional skills of teachers in core content and behavior areas.
• Flexibility across funding streams in order to improve outcomes for all students.
• ALL students with median growth levels below the 35th percentile will have an individual growth plan.
• Special education is ONLY for students whose disabilities cause very significant adverse effects on achievement and growth.

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RTI: Eligibility Determination

Overview of legal requirements regarding assessment

- Sources of legal requirements
- Federal Statute and Regulations
  Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Protection in Evaluation Procedures (PEP) 1977-1999)
- Protection in Evaluation and Eligibility Determination (PEDE) (1999-
Goal: Eligibility Determination

- Each public agency shall conduct a **full and individual initial evaluation**, in accordance with 34 CFR 300.532 and 34 CFR 300.533, before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability. **This may or may not include additional testing** as determined by the evaluation team members.

- Implications: Judgment, tailored to individual
Goal: Eligibility Determination

- A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parent, and information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities), that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child’s IEP.

- Implications?
What is a Comprehensive Evaluation

- Note Federal Regulation,
  - (g) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. (34 C.F.R. 300.532

- Meaning? Note “if appropriate”
Traditional Assessment Proponents: Core of Comprehensive Evaluation

1. The core procedure of a comprehensive evaluation of LD is an objective, norm-referenced assessment of the presence and severity of any strengths and weaknesses among the cognitive processes related to learning in an academic area.”

2. Deficient—Why? No relationship between these strengths and weaknesses and effective interventions
RTI Comprehensive Evaluation Core

- RTI Core is the analysis of achievement and behavior, using direct measures in natural settings,
  - Precise analysis and measurement of skills levels
  - Precise analysis of alterable conditions
  - Application of powerful instructional design and behavior change methods
  - Assessment of rate of learning, progress monitoring with formative evaluation
  - Decisions based on intervention outcomes
Federal Requirements since 1977

- Multiple domains must be considered
- Screening in multiple domains followed by, if appropriate, ......
  - If potential educationally related deficits are suggested by screening, THEN
  - In depth assessment in the domain
- Principle: If screening suggests adequate functioning, then in depth assessment is wasteful and irrelevant
## Comprehensive Evaluation: After Tier II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>In Depth, If Appropriate</th>
<th>Possible Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Class work, Tch eval., CBM, group tests</td>
<td>Individual tests, diagnostic tests</td>
<td>More intense intervention, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Class work, Tch eval., CBM, group tests</td>
<td>Individual tests, diagnostic tests</td>
<td>More intense intervention, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Behavior</td>
<td>Records, Tch checklist</td>
<td>Observations Parent interview</td>
<td>Possible eligibility for MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Language</td>
<td>Class work, Tch eval., CBM, group tests</td>
<td>Individual tests, diagnostic tests</td>
<td>More intense intervention, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>If depth, if appropriate</td>
<td>Possible Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Nurse, records</td>
<td>Referral MD Eval</td>
<td>Medical condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Nurse, records</td>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Nurse, records</td>
<td>Otological, Audiologist</td>
<td>Hearing Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Records, Tch ratings, ach. tests</td>
<td>Psychologist, Gen’l Intell Functioning (GIF)</td>
<td>Sig subaverage GIF, possible MR, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comprehensive Evaluation: Post Tier II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>In depth, if appropriate</th>
<th>Possible Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Tchr Observations, Sp/L screening</td>
<td>Sp/L eval, tests, obs.</td>
<td>Sp/Lang need, therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Tchr judgment, checklists, nomination</td>
<td>Observation, Interview, Indiv intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>Tchr judgment, checklists, nomination</td>
<td>Observation, Interview, Indiv intervention</td>
<td>More intense intervention, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor</td>
<td>Physical, Tch, PE observations</td>
<td>Medical evaluation</td>
<td>More intense intervention, possible sp ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Egberta Consideration of Eligibility

- **Levels Difference**: Large performance differences compared to peers and benchmark expectations in relevant domains of behavior

- **Rate Difference**: Large differences in rate of learning compared to peers and trajectories toward benchmark standards when provided with high quality interventions implemented over a significant period

- Documented Adverse Impact on Education

- Documented Need for Special Education

- Exit Criteria

- Exclusion Factors: Rule out MR etc.
RTI based SLD Identification
First part: Necessary conditions, MTSS, UDL, state approved standards
Family School Partnership throughout

1. Failure to meet age-or grade-level State standards in one of eight areas when provided appropriate instruction:
   • Oral expression
   • Listening comprehension
   • Written expression
   • Basic reading skill
   • Reading fluency skills
   • Reading comprehension
   • Mathematics calculation
   • Mathematics problem solving

2. RTI: Lack of progress in response to scientifically based instruction and intervention
   OR
   Pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development

3. Lack of progress not primarily the result of:
   • Vision, hearing, or motor problems
   • Intellectual disability
   • Emotional disturbance
   • Cultural factors
   • Economic or environmental disadvantage
   • Limited English proficiency

4. For all students: Demonstrate that under achievement is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math.
   • Data demonstrating appropriate instruction
   • Repeated assessments of student progress during instruction

Documentation and Observation
Specific Learning Disability

Adapted from Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden & Shapiro, 2013, p.16
Consequences Of RTI-based SLD Identification

- Connects identification and treatment
- Self-correcting methodology-improve results
- Promotes implementation of evidence-based assessment and interventions across systems
- Finds same kids
- Establishes foundations for effective sp ed interventions
- Uses universal screening---can be problematic
- Requires effective interventions with good fidelity
- Requires changes in schools and school psychology roles
What is your reality?

Generic Models

- A FEW need intensive instruction
- SOME need more support
- NEARLY ALL work in core curriculum

Another Reality

- Most will benefit from intensive instruction
- Some need more support
- A few learn easily

A FEW
SOME
NEARLY ALL
Most will benefit from
Intensive Instruction
Some need more support
A few learn easily

What is your reality?
The Best Tattoo Remover!
MINDSET

Think All, Some, Few for all components
How can we maximize this momentum?

- Work in the context of CCSS and MTSS
- Focus on evidence based practice
- Demand fidelity of implementation
- Gain expertise in:
  - Problem solving
  - Diagnostic, explicit instruction
  - PBIS
  - Reading and math interventions
The term “evidence based” means those practices, instruction, interventions that have independent validation that they will produce gains in student outcomes when used with fidelity.

- 800 Meta Analysis of 50,000 research articles
- 150,000 effect sizes
- 240 million students
- 100+ Meta Analyses added for 2012 edition
### Top 15 Influences on Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Most Influence</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-reported grades/Student expectations</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Piagetian programs</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Response to Intervention</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher credibility</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Providing formative evaluation</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Micro-teaching</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Classroom discussion</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Comprehensive interventions for learning disabled students</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teacher clarity</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Reciprocal teaching</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teacher-student relationships</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spaced vs. mass practice</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Meta-cognitive strategies</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Acceleration</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hattie, 2012
## Bottom 15 Influences on Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Least Influence</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Teacher subject matter knowledge</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Changing school calendars/timetables</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Out-of-school curricular experiences</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Perceptual-motor programs</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Whole language</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Ethnic diversity of students</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>College halls of residence</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Multi-grade/multi-age classes</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Student control over learning</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Open vs. traditional</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Summer vacation</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Welfare policies</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
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  - Reading and math interventions
Duration of intervention is a meaningless indicator of intervention strength in the absence of integrity data.

Amanda VanDerHeyden, 2010
Experts need checklists—literally—written guides that walk them through the key steps in any complex procedure. Gawande thinks that the modern world requires us to revisit what we mean by expertise: that experts need help, and that progress depends on experts having the humility to concede that they need help.

*Malcolm Gladwell in The Checklist Manifesto*
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Can’t do or Won’t do?

Functional assessment will help in determining whether the student:

CAN’T do it…or

WON’T do it
Problem Solving

- A process that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to develop and evaluate intervention plans that improve significantly the school performance of students

Batsche, 2006
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## 16 Elements

1. Focus instruction on critical content.
2. Sequence skills logically.
3. Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units.
4. Design organized and focused lessons.
5. Begin with a clear statement of the lesson’s goals and your expectations.
6. Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction.
7. Provide step-by-step demonstrations
8. Use clear and concise language.
9. Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples.
10. Provide guided and supported practice.
12. Monitor student performance closely
13. Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback.
14. Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace.
15. Help students organize knowledge.
16. Provide distributed and cumulative practice.

Explicit Instruction
Archer & Hughes, 2011
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SWPBS is about....

Integrating Academic & Behavior Initiatives

Increasing reactive management

Improving classroom & school climate

Improving supports for students w/EBD

Maximizing academic engagement & achievement

"School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Reaching All Students"
by George Sugai (Center for Behavioral Education and Research- University of Connecticut)
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Characteristics of CO Special Ed Re-Invented
June 2012

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- ALL students with median growth levels below the 35th percentile will have an individual growth plan.
- Special education is ONLY for students whose disabilities cause very significant adverse effects on achievement and growth.
What Is “Special” About Special Education?
Specially Designed Instruction for Students With Disabilities Within a Multi-tiered System of Supports

In Collaboration with
What is Massachusetts’ definition of Special Ed Re-invented?
You’ve got to learn to take care of people smaller and sweeter than you are.

Miss Bathsheba in Beasts of the Southern Wild
What so special about special ed?

You are!