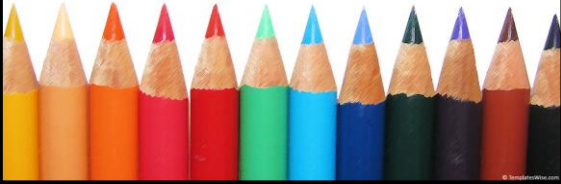# HOT TOPICS FOR GEORGIA SLPS

RTI

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Co-Facilitators:
Maggie Kjer & Kathryn Dix

Session Goals

- **Learn and problem solve issues for implementing RTI in GA for the speech-language program**
- **Identify what works for GA SLPs for RTI**
- **Add intervention RTI strategies to your toolbox**

What's Hot ?

At the Best Practices for School-Based Speech-Language Pathologists Conference in Atlanta (2011) approximately 800 SLPs responded to a survey asking for the most important topics that they needed for their practice.

1. RTI
2. Autism
3. Language and Literacy

Brief Overview RTI Movement

- Response to Intervention is a multi-tiered approach to providing services and interventions to struggling learners at increasing levels of intensity.

- RTI is the practice of ensuring there are systems in place in general education to help every student meet grade-level expectations in academics and behavior.

RTI – Big Ideas

- ❑ Came from research involving interventions provided to students before referral to special education
- ❑ Relates to concerns regarding placement in special education:
  - -growth of the LD population
  - -effective instruction
  - -disproportionality
- ❑ Many states had previously passed laws requiring a "pre-referral process" - called SST Process in Georgia
- ❑ Early intervention for prevention

RTI – What is it?

- ❑ Simply put, RTI is based upon research indicating that many students respond to high quality instruction/ intervention and therefore may not need special education or other services.
- ❑ Providing interventions before deciding that a student has a disability

RTI – What is it?

❑ **General Education Initiative**

❑ **High-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs**

❑ **Using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions**

❑ **Looking at closing the achievement gap or student performance coming within range of grade level**

❑ **To determine eligibility for special education, the current school year's Response to Intervention data based documentation is required prior to a referral to special education**

Then….   And Now…..

❑ **Hands off pre-referral process for SLPs**

❑ **Many inappropriate referrals**

❑ **Too often, referrals come to speech first, even when there is evidence of another disability**

❑ **Often an ineffective problem solving process**

❑ **SLPs will have a role in supporting the process**

❑ **More interventions and information up front – before referral**

❑ **More comprehensive information and interventions**
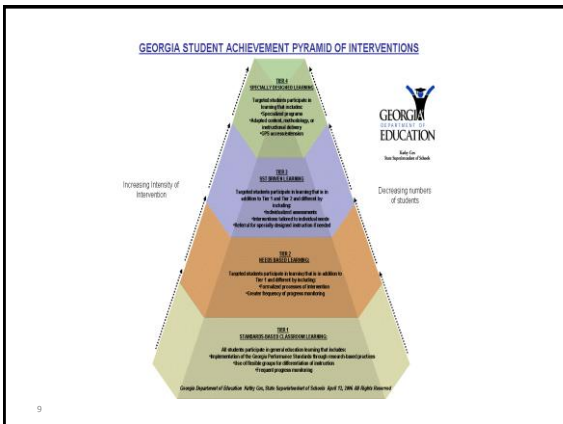
❑ **Greater emphasis on problem solving process**

GEORGIA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS

SLP's Role

SLPs have unique knowledge, skills and strategies for:

- Language and literacy
- Connection between spoken and written language
- Pragmatic knowledge / social communication skills
- Oral expression for articulation, voice & fluency
- Assessment and intervention

SLPs can help classroom teachers to:

- Adapt academic language
- Emphasize key information
- Provide concrete examples for abstract concepts
  to help struggling students
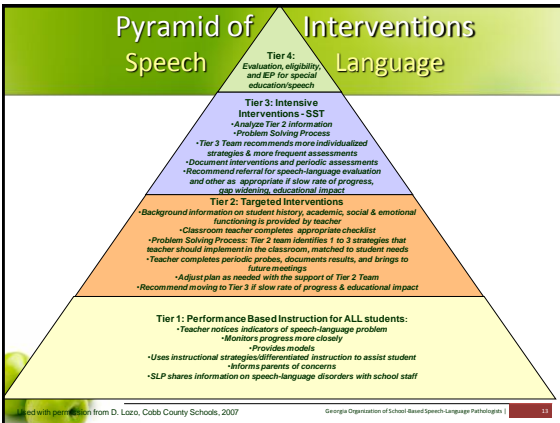
Judy Montgomery, Best Practices 2007

Pyramid of Interventions
Speech   Language

Tier 4:
Evaluation, eligibility, and IEP for special education/speech

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions - SST
·*Analyze Tier 2 information*
·*Problem Solving Process*
·*Tier 3 Team recommends more individualized strategies & more frequent assessments*
·*Document interventions and periodic assessments*
·*Recommend referral for speech-language evaluation and other as appropriate if slow rate of progress, gap widening, educational impact*

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions
·*Background information on student history, academic, social & emotional functioning is provided by teacher*
·*Classroom teacher completes appropriate checklist*
·*Problem Solving Process: Tier 2 team identifies 1 to 3 strategies that teacher should implement in the classroom, matched to student needs*
·*Teacher completes periodic probes, documents results, and brings to future meetings*
·*Adjust plan as needed with the support of Tier 2 Team*
·*Recommend moving to Tier 3 if slow rate of progress & educational impact*

Tier 1: Performance Based Instruction for ALL students:
·*Teacher notices indicators of speech-language problem*
·*Monitors progress more closely*
·*Provides models*
·*Uses instructional strategies/differentiated instruction to assist student*
·*Informs parents of concerns*
·*SLP shares information on speech-language disorders with school staff*

Used with permission from D. Lozo, Cobb County Schools, 2007   Georgia Organization of School-Based Speech-Language Pathologists   13

RTI Issues – Georgia SLPs respond to a survey!

- **An online survey was sent out to all GO SSLP members in January**
- **SLPs were encouraged to share the link with other SLPs in their district (non-members)**
- **239 SLPs completed the survey**
- **59.1% members, 40.9% non-members**
- **55 school districts were represented**
- **81% of respondents work in an elementary setting**

RTI Issues:
Caseload to Workload

35% of SLPs indicated concerns with the addition of RTI to their workload
- **RTI caseload not considered in caseload size**
- **Additional paperwork, data collection**
- **Additional meetings, communication**
- **IEP caseloads are already high**
- **Time consuming**
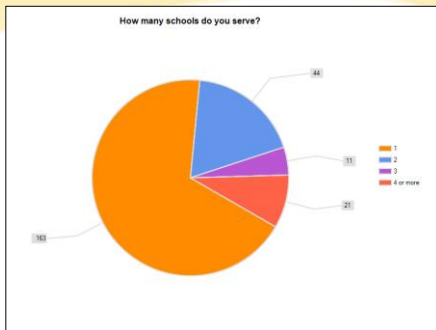- **Adding RTI students to therapy groups**

Number of Schools

How many schools do you serve?

Concerned with Funding

Are you concerned with the lack of funding for the RTI process for students that SLPs serve?
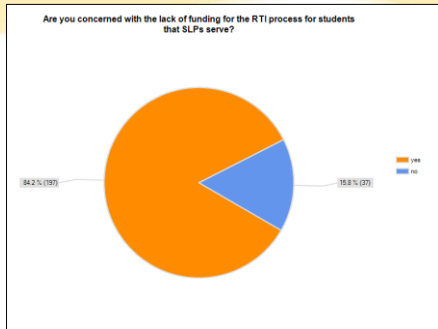
How many RTI students do you serve?
(including Tier 2 and Tier 3)

1-5 Students	6-10 students	11-20 students	Over 20 students	No involvement in RTI
76	74	36	15	30
33%	32%	16%	6%	13%

*No involvement includes preschool and MS and HS

How much time in your work week?

How much time does participation in the RTI process take out of your work week (include time used in consulting teachers)?
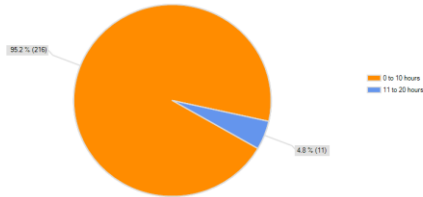
How are students served?

What delivery models do you use for services to RTI students? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY
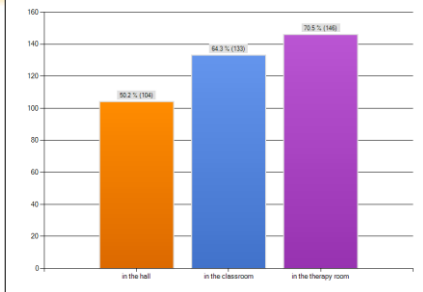
Time to communicate with Teachers and Parents

Do you have enough time for communication with teachers and parents?
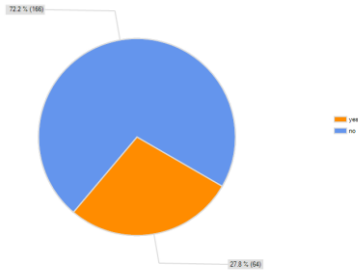
RTI Issues:
SLPs' concerns about RTI Process

38% of SLPs indicated concerns about the RTI process for their school and/or district
- **Lack of consistency**
- **Length of time it takes to go through the process**
- **Teachers are not referring**
- **Teacher accountability**
- **Lack of administrative support**
- **Process is not effective**

How Long in RTI Process?

On average, how long do students (with suspected speech-language disorders) usually stay in the RTI process?
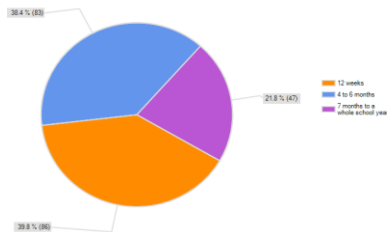
RTI Issues – How long should students stay in the RTI process?

Discuss at your table:
- **How long should students stay in the RTI process?**
- **Do you have suggestions for criteria to consider?**
- **What is the difference in therapy for RTI and IEP students?**

Impact to Students

23% of SLPs indicated that they were concerned about students not receiving the services needed due to the length of time in the process:

- **Effectiveness of interventions**
- **Serving students who don't need speech (developmental problems)**
- **Takes too long for clearly disordered students**
- **Takes time away from IEP caseload**

Additional Concerns with RTI Process

- **Teachers need additional training**
- **Data collection (quality & frequency, teachers not completing)**
- **Lack of resources/materials (more research-based materials, universal speech-language screener)**
- **Interventions for Language**

RTI Issues – Language Intervention Strategies

At your table, share 1 to 2 language strategies that work well.

Be prepared to share out with the class!

RTI Issues – Resources
What commercial programs do SLPs use most often?

- **58% None**
- **35% Yes**
- **7% Not Sure**

- **Artic Lab**
- **Hear Builders**
- **Start In**
- **Earobics**
- **Bridge of Vocabulary**

What is the SLP's Role for Tier 2?

Tier 2 Activities
54% Provide strategies and progress monitoring tools to teachers, assist in choosing interventions
32% Act as a consultant, guide teachers, make recommendations
12% Provide direct services
9% Observe students in the classroom
9% Collect and Review Data
8% Not involved in Tier 2
7% Screen students
6% Attend RTI meetings regularly
2% Demonstrate interventions
1% Coordinate process

Inservice to Teachers: Tier 2

For Tier 2, do you provide in-services for teachers?

- yes
- no

93

125
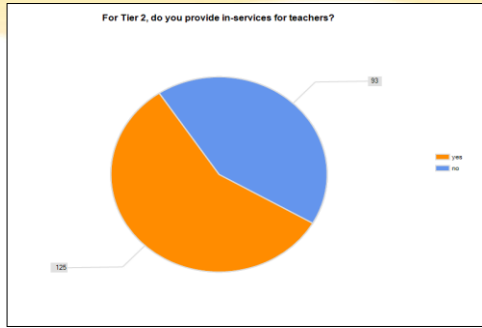
RTI Training for teachers:

Investing in professional development pays in the long run because teachers will be more effective using materials and programs when they have a broader understanding of interventions.

Susan Hall (2008)

RTI Training for teachers:

- **Team meetings (grade or content area)**
- **Brown Bag Lunch with SLP(s)**
- **Newsletter**
- **Posting information on school/staff website**
- **At your table, share other ideas that have worked!**

Number of Minutes Per Week that Students Receive Services from the SLP at Tier 2
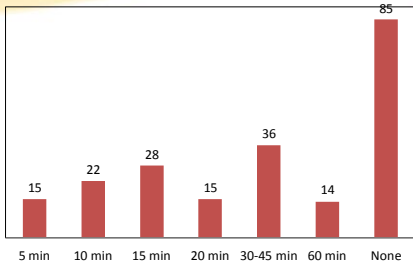
5 min	10 min	15 min	20 min	30-45 min	60 min	None
15	22	28	15	36	14	85

Number of Minutes Per Week that Students Receive Services from the SLP at Tier 3

5 min	10 min	15-20 min	30 min	45 min	60 min	None
2	23	52	85	12	29	30
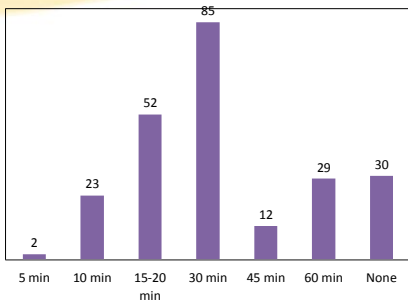
Compare the Tiers:
What conclusions can we draw about SLP services?
What should the SLP's role be at Tier 2?

Tier 2

5 min	10 min	15 min	20 min	30-45 min	60 min	None
15	22	28	15	36	14	85

Tier 3

5 min	10 min	15-20 min	30 min	45 min	60 min	None
2	23	52	85	12	29	30
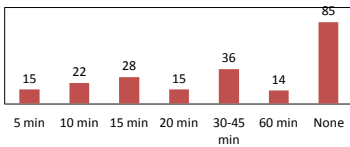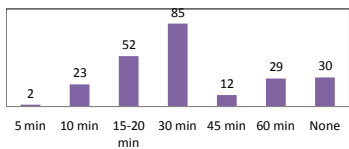
How do we consider developmental milestones for articulation?

SOUND DEVELOPMENT AGES

Research indicates that sounds develop over a range of ages. The ages on this sound chart allow students time to develop correct sound production within developmental norms.

3 4 5 6 7 8

In addition to developmental norms, other considerations for eligibility for speech therapy include:
- Intelligibility
- Stimulability - ability to make sound(s) with model
- Error patterns (i.e., leaves off final sounds)
- Oral motor skills
- Impact on social and academic skills
- Other disabilities that may relate to speech problem
- Structure of oral mechanism
- Emerging production (indicators that student is developing correct production of the sound)

Caseload to Workload

Perhaps the most significant challenge for the SLP involved in RTI activities is incorporating general education roles and responsibilities into an already full caseload.

Rudebusch & Wiechmann (2011)

Caseload to Workload

A workload approach takes into account the total work activities provided on behalf of or to students
- Considerations of educationally relevant practices (curriculum-based therapy, knowledge of the standards, supporting student achievement)
- A continuum of service delivery models for both IEP students and RTI students
- Flexible scheduling –
  -Allows time for RTI activities in an already full schedule
  -helps maximize use of time to meet the needs of each student
  -includes possible changes in the frequency of service and a combination of service delivery models
  -also important for monitoring and adjusting service delivery to meet the changing needs of the student for both IEP and RTI services
- Data-driven decisions
- Avocacy and leadership roles – communication with school & district leadership regarding data on caseload/workload, impact on student learning

Delivery Models for Students with IEPs

RTI: What works?

Discuss at your table and be ready to share:

1. What works for the RTI Process?

2. What works for streamlining caseload to workload issues?

3. What works for data collection/progress monitoring?

Problem Solving

Develop an Action Plan:
What can I do to improve my
caseload/workload situation?
(i.e., streamline Tier 2, work with other SLPs to improve the list of interventions & progress monitoring tools, use more flexible scheduling strategies, etc.)

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