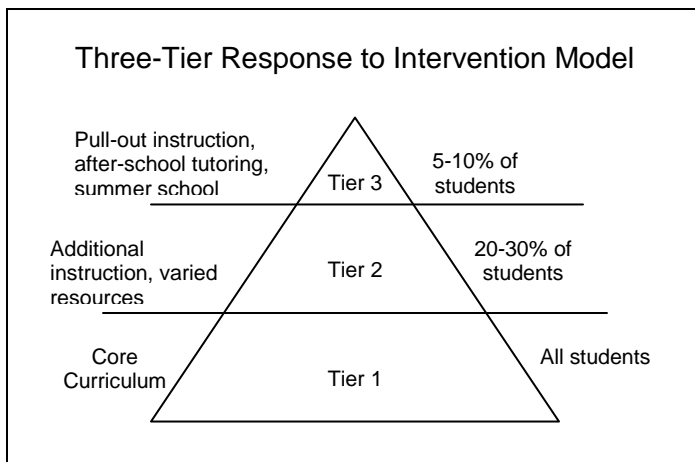


Instruction Matched to the Learner

The University of Texas Elementary School implements two powerful approaches to assure academic achievement: Response to Intervention (RTI) and Social /Emotional Learning (SEL). As an instructional method, Response to Intervention uses varied strategies and strategic intervention in regular classroom settings in an effort to ensure academic success for individual students. RTI dictates that students are continually assessed for achievement of learning goals and that they receive a level of intervention that is appropriate to their needs.



Interventions are prescribed according to a three-tier system where students are provided additional assistance and extended time according to the level of difficulty they are experiencing. All students receive core curriculum and instruction in the regular classroom, referred to as Tier 1. Tier 2 students receive extended instruction time and varied materials inside or outside the classroom. Students who do not respond to Tier 2 interventions after a prescribed amount of documented time are classified in Tier 3 and are given the most intensive intervention, including pull-out sessions, after-school tutoring, and summer school. Continual assessment and response to intervention determines the tier students fall into at any given time. Documented methods of assessment and interventions are also used by the school psychologist to determine a

possible learning disability. The combination of this strategy and SEL has yielded impressive results: for the past three years, 100 percent of third-graders have passed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading. In 2008, 97 percent of our fourth-graders and 100 percent of our fifth-graders passed the reading TAKS.

Dr. Sharon Vaughn, researcher at the University of Texas at Austin College of Education and Director of the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, developed the three-tier model for use in reading instruction. UT Elementary had such success with implementation of this Response to Intervention Model of instruction in reading that we have adapted the approach to other curriculum areas. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, UT Elementary developed a three-tier framework for math instruction in the school. School administrators worked with the math teachers and Dr. Diane Bryant, a senior faculty member in UT's Department of Special Education, to develop math resources and instructional strategies to be used for intervention in Tier 2 and Tier 3. Prior to the math intervention implementation, the passing rate for the third grade math TAKS was 76 percent. In 2008, the rate of students passing the math TAKS was an almost-perfect 95 percent for third grade, 97 percent for fourth grade, and 100 percent for fifth grade.



UT Elementary's physical education instructor and wellness interventionist is developing the use of RTI in physical education in order to help combat childhood obesity, including the basic Tier 1 curriculum of physical education and nutrition. The wellness interventionist works more intensively with students in Tiers 2 and 3 and their families to focus on leading healthy lifestyles. The school psychologist is developing a three-tier RTI model for mental health, based on Tier 1 being the Social and Emotional Learning curriculum implemented in every classroom. Tier 2 involves teacher consultation and pull-out group counseling, and Tier 3 includes therapy and a behavior intervention plan. Over the 2008-09 academic year, with the support of the KDK-Harman Foundation, UT Elementary will develop a curriculum that connects RTI to science instruction as well. The curriculum will then be disseminated throughout the state with in partnership with the UT College of Education's Texas Regional Collaboratives.

UT Elementary is the Model for Best Practices

UT Elementary continues to use the research developed at the university, and in coordination with UT faculty, adapting the three-tier model to fit additional topics that are fundamentals in elementary education. Several of these subjects will be covered in the best practices manual that UT Elementary teachers are producing in coordination with UT faculty, with the generous support of the RGK-Foundation. This best practices manual will be used to train future urban teachers from the UT Austin College of Education for years to come.