

Response-To-Intervention Leadership Grant Summary of Student Professional Development Activities

Students who are supported by this four year U.S. Department of Education Leadership grant will take specialized coursework, engage in supervised field experiences, do research, and develop their leadership skills to impact schools through research and organizational change in Response-To-Intervention (RTI). What follows is a brief outline of the training opportunities students will receive through participation in the grant.

Specialization coursework. A series of graduated, didactic and experiential seminars will be offered to train students in RTI. Each seminar will involve specific knowledge related to the implementation of RTI procedures, the evaluation of RTI effectiveness, and RTI research. Training will span competencies within the discipline of school psychology to interdisciplinary competencies, including organizational behavior management and systems level consultation, as well as research methods and statistics that are appropriate to the types of research questions raised by an educational decision making models like RTI. Additional courses will be taken by students to supplement the current curriculum. These courses are listed below.

Additional Coursework Supporting the Specialization in RTI

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Title (Credit Hours)</u>
EDPS 987D	RTI Topics Seminar (1)
EDPS 987F	Seminar in Program Evaluation (1)
MGT 960	Organizational Behavior (3)
EDPS 971	Structural Equation Modeling (3)

Students will take the *RTI Topics Seminar* in their first year in the program to learn about RTI. Students will learn about research on RTI, as well as various operational models that have been developed for RTI, and observe and assist with the implementation of Lincoln Public Schools' (LPS) RTI model. At this level, students can learn how to conduct child assessments and assist with activities like the development of district norms, child progress monitoring, and monitoring of interventions as a part of this seminar. To train students to evaluate district level innovations, the specialization also will provide a one-hour credit summer seminar in the area of *program evaluation*. Students will learn skills in measurement, design, and analysis tools for evaluating outcomes to increase their capacity to consult effectively with school districts on the evaluation of broad scale educational reforms and initiatives.

A course on *Organizational Behavior Management* will be taken so that students can learn principles of organizational behavior and tactics and strategies for promoting systems-level change. This course will precede students' externship experience so that they will be able to consult more effectively with the LPS RTI innovation team as a part of their externship experience.

RTI will soon be applied across school districts across the country. Researchers will need to be knowledgeable about methods for modeling growth of student learning using databases of large bodies of students over time to understand the causal variables that affect (positively or negatively) students' growth trajectory. *Structural equation modeling* analyses allow researchers to "map out" potential causal relationships between measured variables in systems like schools in which a host of variables interact in complex ways. Taken after other required statistics courses, this course will prove very helpful to students

in rounding out and establishing proficiency with relevant methodologies that will advance their research careers.

Supervised field experiences to support skill development. School-based activities that are critical to the ongoing maintenance and development of the LPS RTI pilot program include child-based assessments (including interviews, observations, direct assessments of skills), consultation with multidisciplinary teams, monitoring of interventions, development of district norms on curriculum-based measures, collating the data-base for program evaluation, and reporting results. School psychology trainees will be directly involved in these activities while they are supported on the grant. Initially, students will conduct academic assessments, classroom observations, and teacher interviews; collect and analyze individual child data; develop academic interventions; and consult with teachers to implement programs under the supervision of the PIs and certified school psychologists. As students progress in their skills, they will acquire greater responsibility and will begin supervising newer students.

Research experience to support skill development. Students in the RTI specialization will take a Doctoral Research Seminar with a focus on developing expertise in RTI research and research methods. During the Doctoral Research Seminar, students will be involved in a Journal Club which will continue to update their knowledge of RTI by reviewing and discussing current journal publications related to RTI. Additionally, students will receive hands-on research training by designing research projects, implementing research plans, and analyzing project data. Students will work under the supervision of PIs as they carry out research projects in the Lincoln schools on individual RTI cases and on projects evaluating the RTI process. Students will present data from the Doctoral Research Seminar projects at local, regional, and national conferences and develop dissertation studies as an outgrowth of their research in this area.

Activities to promote leadership development. As students progress through the specialization program, they will be expected to assume leadership roles in the program and in the community by becoming involved in grant writing, dissertation development, publishing, and systems-level consultation. Specifically, students will be instructed in grant writing, with a requirement to prepare a grant proposal consistent with the guidelines for the OSERS Student Initiated Research projects. Students will be required to submit and present research results at professional conferences, and develop and submit journal articles. Also, students will present local, regional, and national workshops with the PIs on topics directly related to RTI.

An important component in the development of their RTI skills will be the externship experience. During their fourth year, doctoral students in the UNL school psychology program take on an externship assignment that involves 3 to 10 hours a week in service delivery. Placements are flexible and are tailored to the students' interests. Students working on this project will serve as consultants to LPS in the implementation and evaluation of the RTI pilot. They will be able to provide organizational consultation to the district in expanding the project and making it a more integrated part of the system. Students will also be able to consult with other school districts that are interested in starting pilot projects in RTI.

Students interested in this funded training opportunity for school psychology students should contact either Dr. Edward Daly (edaly2@unl.edu) or Dr. Merilee McCurdy (mmccurdy@unlnotes.unl.edu).