



## Response to Intervention: Lindamood-Bell's Process-based Educational Model

The overwhelming number of students identified as learning disabled due to reading difficulty has led to a reexamination of the referral process. The perception of the historical referral process is that students were required to reach a point of failure prior to receiving specialized instruction. Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the lack of integration of general and special education instructional practices, the lack of adequate research-based instruction, and objective accountability measures. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 allowed for an alternative method, the Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes has been partnering with school districts since 1991 to implement a model of instruction and professional development that includes components that fulfill and exceed standards of the RtI framework. This paper outlines these components and specifies the best practices that have evolved from ongoing research and monitoring conducted with the partnering entities. Segments include:

- Understanding the Challenges
- Process-based Education
- Three Tiers of instruction
- Using Assessment to Make Decisions
- Extensive Professional Development
- Successful Partnerships—Results of the Implementation

Together the components serve as a blueprint for replicating the success that schools and districts across the country have enjoyed.

## Understanding the Challenges

Approximately half of the six million children receiving special education services are identified as having a specific learning disability.<sup>1</sup> This includes students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, aphasia, and other diagnoses. That almost three million students are experiencing reading failure indicates the instructional process has failed.

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allowed for an alternative process to the IQ-performance discrepancy method of referral for special services. Response to Intervention (RtI) is a collection of instructional practices that emphasizes effectively teaching all students, early intervention, a multi-tiered model of instruction delivery, and the use of data to make instructional decisions for students.

Lindamood-Bell's school partnerships have been successfully implementing components that include and exceed the precepts of Response to Intervention. This systematic approach includes:

- Use of scientifically based programs that address reading, spelling, comprehension, and mathematics. The programs are applicable to all tiers of instruction, in the general classroom and for remediation.
- Use of assessment to drive instruction. Lindamood-Bell has a clear, concise, and proven process of interpreting how progress monitoring, authentic assessment and state achievement tests relate and can be used to increase the abilities of each child.
- Extensive professional development for all individuals involved in the partnership. The continuing mentoring develops a community of individuals that can provide solutions to the challenges of instruction.
- Use of technology to facilitate progress. In this era of accountability, data management can be overwhelming. Partner districts have access to Lindamood-Bell® proprietary technical support that makes test scoring, scheduling, attendance, reporting, and decision-making more effective and efficient.

Implementation of these components has helped partnering districts encourage staff buy-in and develop the knowledge-and-skills base for professional educators that allows for immediate student results. The approach is applicable for both elementary and secondary sites.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Learning Disabilities. *IDEA Parent Guide*. April, 2006.

## Process-based Education

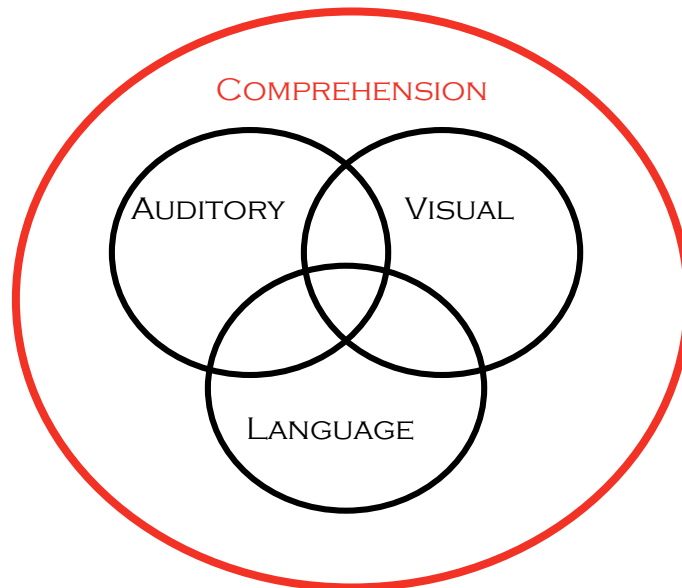
Lindamood-Bell’s overall philosophy of language processing instruction is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, provide appropriate, proven instruction, create the appropriate instructional environment, and monitor and adjust the process whenever necessary.

The Lindamood-Bell® programs develop cognitive processes that result in better reading, comprehension, and mathematics. The model below illustrates the integration of the underlying domains involved in language processing and it is used to examine each individual’s needs.

*Auditory Processing*—necessary for phonemic awareness, phonics, and word attack skills. The Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing® and Seeing Stars® programs develop and remediate this function.

*Visual or Orthographic Processing*—the function requires adequate *symbol imagery* or the ability to visualize letters and numbers. Proficiency in spelling, fluency, phonics, phonological processing, math computation, and word recognition is a result of adequate symbol imagery. The Seeing Stars® and On Cloud Nine® programs develop and remediate this function.

*Language Processing*—Contextual reading and vocabulary are skills residing in this domain. *Concept imagery*, the ability to visualize ideas at a higher order level, underlies the function. The Visualizing and Verbalizing® program develops concept imagery.



*Comprehension*—both oral and written language comprehension are necessary for proficiency in reading and understanding and applying math concepts. Concept imagery underlies this domain and is developed or remediated by Visualizing and Verbalizing®.

## Three Tiers of Instruction

At the heart of the Response to Intervention model is the concept of a leveled approach to instruction that is appropriate for each student's need. Lindamood-Bell's process-based model provides the specifics of differentiated instruction at each tier.

### Tier I

The first tier of instruction is in the general classroom. Many state educational agencies have an approved list of core curricula from which local agencies must choose. While these curricula provide exposure to literature and reading practice, the assumption is that students possess underlying foundational skills. Lindamood-Bell's programs augment the core curriculum by helping students acquire these necessary skills that lead to improved reading, math and comprehension skills.

#### *Tier I Instruction*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Daily Instruction</b>
Kindergarten- 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Decoding (Seeing Stars <sup>®</sup> and/or LiPS <sup>®</sup> )	30 minutes
	Comprehension (V/V <sup>®</sup> )	30 minutes
	Math (OCN <sup>™</sup> )	15-20 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	Comprehension (V/V <sup>®</sup> )	20-30 minutes: Development and Application to Content Standards
6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	Comprehension (V/V <sup>®</sup> )	Application to Content Standards

The RtI general guidelines suggest that this minimum amount of instruction will result in effective instruction for 80% of the overall student population. Lindamood-Bell's model provides for flexibility in the instructional time.

Along with providing a solid instructional foundation, Tier I is also where the first opportunity to actively screen and monitor the language processing skills of each student. If the progress monitoring indicates that the percentage of students still at-risk for reading or math failure is at or greater than 18-20%, instruction should be increased to 30 minutes daily. Failure to progress adequately on monitoring tools should refer a student to Tier II assessment.

## Tiers II and III

These levels of instruction are designed for students not adequately responding to the first tier of instruction. While the tiers have some similar elements, the application differs distinctly.

Students referred to the second tier are administered a battery of assessments to determine which specific course of instruction is necessary. Daily instruction is provided to small groups of students that are grouped according to like need. The instruction is provided according to deficit type—either decoding, comprehension, mathematics, or a combination.

The instruction is closely monitored by a qualified consultant to ensure the pacing of the tasks, the complexity of the material, and the overall fidelity of instruction is maintained at appropriate levels.

Students referred to Tier III receive increased intensity and individual instruction. At this level, assessment via the district’s special education procedures and development of the IEP team may be necessary.

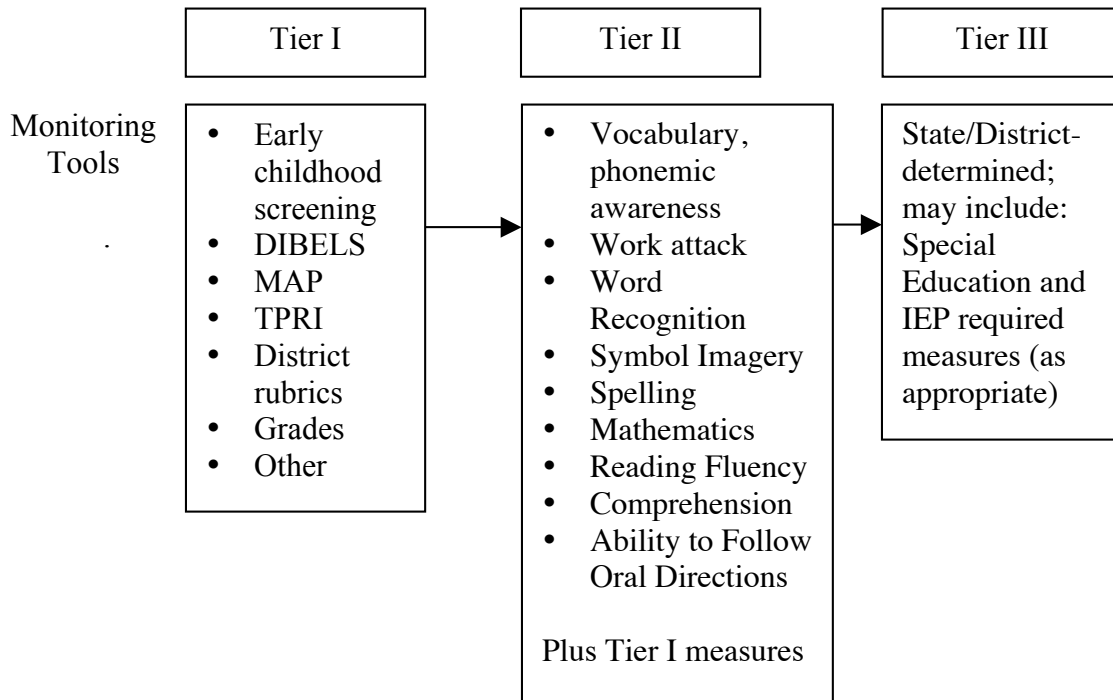
	<i><b>Tier II</b></i>	<i><b>Tier III</b></i>
Assessment	Full Lindamood-Bell® battery	Full Lindamood-Bell® battery, Special Education battery (if appropriate)
Daily Instruction	45-60 minutes	90-120 Minutes
Duration	80-100 hours per deficit type	Individually determined by progress
Group Size	3-5	1
Instructor	Qualified specialist with direct Lindamood-Bell® support	Lindamood-Bell® Certified Consultant or candidate

## Using Assessment to Make Decisions

One of the hallmarks of Lindamood-Bell’s RtI model is the use of quantifiable data to make both policy and individual instruction decisions. Language processing and mathematics proficiency is a complex mix of skills that are affected by individual differences. The goal of process-based education is to understand these differences and develop or remediate the deficits in order to create a balance that will lead to competency. Response to Intervention includes several opportunities for gathering and interpreting these data.

Most districts are currently administering Tier I screening and progress monitoring tools such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Texas Primary Reading Index, and Measures of Academic Progress. Typically, these measures are administered periodically throughout the course of the year. Data indicate that Lindamood-Bell® instruction has a positive effect on student performance on DIBELS, the most widely used measure. Individual results may indicate need for student placement in Tier II instruction at the first administration.

Preparing appropriate instruction for students referred to Tier II requires a more thorough understanding of their language processing skills. Lindamood-Bell® partners use a battery of nationally normed, standardized measures taken from a variety of published assessments. School site instructional teams determine student movement between tiers.



## Extensive Professional Development

An instructional implementation will only be successful if the invested partners are aware of the necessity of change and are prepared to implement an extensive professional development approach. Leadership that actively guides instruction and commitment to the fidelity of implementation are also contingencies necessary for reaching desired goals. Developing advanced knowledge and skills for licensed educators is a complex task.

Lindamood-Bell provides extensive on-going professional development for each of its RtI partnerships through the following avenues:

- Pre-service presentations are conducted to provide exposure to the theoretical and research base of the Response to Intervention model.
- Workshops are provided in the Seeing Stars<sup>®</sup>, Visualizing and Verbalizing<sup>®</sup>, Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing<sup>®</sup>, and On Cloud Nine<sup>®</sup> Math programs.
- Successful delivery of the programs requires instructors not only with intact language processing skills but experience in adapting the tasks to the response of the classroom, small group, or individual. Lindamood-Bell has developed a consultant certification program that will develop the diagnostic, instructional, and managerial skills of its graduates. This program is completed on-site with oversight by Lindamood-Bell<sup>®</sup> staff for a minimum of one year. Lindamood-Bell<sup>®</sup> certified individuals are prepared to work with peers, maintain quality instruction, and sustain the success of the project.
- Assessment training in administration, interpretation and application is delivered on-site for teachers in all Tiers.
- Professional Learning Communities are established to monitor student progress and referral.
- Leadership symposia are conducted to help school and district administrators lead, monitor and adjust the course of the implementation during its course. The depth of the leaders' commitment is directly correlated to the project's success.
- Parent and community involvement is an important part of meeting the learning needs of an area's students. Lindamood-Bell provides workshops and presentations that help family and community members be involved at several levels of the process.
- School board workshops are held where information on project progress will allow for effective policy decisions to be made that are appropriate for the entire community.

## Successful Partnerships

Lindamood-Bell has been working with schools and districts to systemically implement its programs since 1991. The continuing research has led to refinement of the practices commensurate with RtI, but the core has remained the same. Some project highlights include:

Pueblo (Colorado) students making a 40-point gain on state tests scores, surpassing the state average and maintaining an average higher than all other similar high minority and poverty districts.

In the first three years of the implementation of the model, the Vista (California) school district reports having over 800 teachers receive hundreds of hours of professional development. This has allowed over 3,000 students to receive quality Tier I instruction and hundreds more to receive Tier II or III instruction.

Hernando County (Florida) students have been receiving instruction in several tiers of instruction for seven years. Last year, dozens of classroom teachers implemented decoding and comprehension instruction. In addition, over 100 students received targeted remediation in Tiers II and III.

For several years hundreds of Native American students in Gallup (New Mexico), Dunseith (North Dakota) and Iditarod (Alaska) have received high quality instruction via the use of the Lindamood-Bell® RtI model.

Districts partnering with Lindamood-Bell have benefited by having a consistent plan for professional development that can help institute a learning community focused on the most important outcomes of education—reading, comprehension, and math.

These partnerships have also allowed for a smooth transition from a wait-to-fail approach for struggling students to a Response to Intervention design that actively addresses the learning needs of all students.