

## RTI for Gifted Students

October 19, 2010 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

### *About this Talk*

Join **Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D.**, of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, during our next RTI Talk as she answers your questions about using RTI as a means to ensure gifted and talented students have opportunities to make continual growth. Dr. Coleman will also offer tips based on lessons she has learned about meeting the needs of gifted students within an RTI framework.

### *Transcript*



**Tim**

What should gifted students be doing during the scheduled intervention block?



**Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Two main strategies can be used to allow students to continue learning when they have mastered the expected curriculum. These strategies are content acceleration and content enrichment. Acceleration adjusts the pace of learning ? allowing students to move ahead in the curriculum as they demonstrate mastery. The benefits of acceleration include that the curriculum is available and students can self-pace, with support, as they move forward. For a student who is advanced in math, and who loves math, acceleration might be an ideal learning goal during intervention block. For other students, however, content enrichment may be more appropriate.

During the scheduled intervention block, a focus on content enrichment might include allowing students to pursue an independent or small group project of their choice. This can be facilitated through a learning contract and work can be assessed using rubrics. Alternatively, enrichment might focus on extending a content area that is currently under study. For example, if students are learning about Ancient Egypt they may take a virtual field trip to the British Museum ( [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)) to visit the Egyptian-Greek exhibit and compare and contrast these cultures. A great resource for planning enrichment activities that align with the content and the student's interest is [renzullilearning.com](http://renzullilearning.com). The main thing to remember is that the ?intervention? for a child who has mastered the general curriculum should include additional learning opportunities that both challenge the learner and address high interest learning topics.



**Ronni Levine**

Are there screening tools available to identify gifted math students at the K-2 level?



**Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Most math assessments for young children are curriculum-based and should be tied to the

**A** curriculum being used. These curriculum-based measures will allow the teacher to see what has been mastered and where the gaps are that need to be taught. For young children who are very advanced in math off-grade-level curriculum can be used to identify the level of mastery.

Standardized achievement tests can be useful to establish learning levels and to identify strengths, however diagnostic information on specific skills will still be needed to plan appropriate curriculum. The Hoagies? Gifted Education Site has a full list of assessments with a description of each.

Math acceleration is an option for young learners who are both interested and advanced in math. If this option is selected, then a long term plan (3-5 years) needs to be in place so the child's learning can be continued as they advance through the grades.

**Q** **Terri Montgomery**

Currently we are using the RTI process with our struggling students as well as our gifted students. With struggling students we move them in and out of tiers based upon their progress. The problem we are having is that when gifted students are not showing progress and we move them out of a special service and only provide differentiation within the classroom, their parents have an issue. Isn't the idea of RTI the flexibility of moving students from one tier to another based on their progress and need? How do we explain this to the parents?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Wow - great and complex question! The answer is yes, no, maybe! Let me try to explain. Yes, the benefit of supports and services within RTI is that they are flexible and based on needs so we work to match student needs with the appropriate level of intervention.

With a student who has high potential, a gifted student, the difficulty comes in trying to understand why they are not making progress. If they should be able to successfully complete the work and yet they are not doing so, then we need to figure out what is behind the "underachievement" that we are seeing. First we should determine if the pattern is chronic (long term and in several areas) or just acute (short term in a limited area and one subject or task). Talking with the student is a good way to begin to understand what is going on.

Sometimes gifted students chose not to show progress because they feel like the "extra" work is not something they want to do. If this is the case, developing learning contracts with the student focused on work that takes the students interests in to account may be helpful.

Because underachievement can become a way of life it is pretty important that we catch it early and work to help the child avoid falling into these patterns. So, if we feel that the child is choosing an underachieving pattern, we might decide to try and keep the challenge level high and offer support for this. A great book to help sort these questions out is "Up from Underachievement" by Diane Heacox (Free Spirit Publishing).

**A** Gifted learners are rarely "globally gifted" however, and so the answer is also that sometimes services will need to change based on needs. From a parent's perspective (and sometimes from the child's), this can seem like we are "de-gifted" the child. We are not used to services being matched to needs with flexibility and it has always been "in" or "out" and so this is a new process. The most important thing is that you have the "data" that shows what the student needs and that you are matching this with an appropriate service.

Communicating with parents should begin early with explanations of how RTI works and that it means that we can better meet student needs because it is more dynamic and targeted. Share the criteria and process that are being used to determine what the students needs are and to match these with appropriate services. Be very explicit with what the differentiation is and how it is addressing the needs. Then make sure that the differentiation is in fact taking place. Also assure parents that when their child needs more intense service, these will be provided. A major shift with RTI is that there is less emphasis on the "label" and more on the provision of appropriate service. If we are indeed basing our decision on data, then parents should eventually welcome the fact that we know what their child needs and we are addressing these needs with appropriate services.

**Q** *Kim Nyfenger*

What are some of your ideas about how, during an RTI grade level block, to address students in grade one who have meet all reading benchmarks for the time being.

**A** *Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman*

Your question is right on target. When a child has met all the expected benchmarks and has demonstrated mastery of the expected materials, it is essential that we find appropriate learning activities for him or her. Here are some ideas for a young and precocious reader:

Allow him or her to select appropriate books at their independent reading level to read. Keeping a reading log may be useful and can be expanded to include a reader's journal reflecting on the book being read. The reader's journal (may be electronic) can include questions like:

- Who is your favorite character in the book and why do you like this character so much? (Draw a picture of this character.)
- What is the most interesting thing that happens in this book? Do you think that the characters handle this situation well? What would you do in the same situation?
- Draw pictures showing the sequence of the events in the story.
- Would you recommend this book to friend? Why or Why not?

If there is more than one student who has meet benchmarks, then you could form a small group for discussions using similar questions.

Often finding appropriate books for young precocious readers is a challenge as books on their

**A** reading level may contain material that deals with more advanced topics that are not age appropriate. Because of this dilemma, teachers often seek out "how to" books and non-fiction materials. These also may connect with the child's interest and so the content is both relevant and interesting.

For children who are advanced readers, long-term solutions might include forming a seminar group using a program like "Junior Great Books."

Ideas for differentiating reading for young children can also be found at:

[http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training\\_resources/readingdifferentiation.asp](http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/readingdifferentiation.asp)

[http://www.appomattox.k12.va.us/acps/attachments/6\\_6\\_12\\_dan\\_mulligan\\_handout.pdf](http://www.appomattox.k12.va.us/acps/attachments/6_6_12_dan_mulligan_handout.pdf)

**Q** *Jane Beaman*

I'm not sure I understand the concept of RTI for the gifted. Do you remediate or enrich potential in underserved populations or is it for all gifted students?

**A** *Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman*

Hi Jane, the basic concept of RTI for students who are gifted is the same as for other students: to plan appropriate instruction, based on data that show the learners' needs. The needs for many students who are gifted will often include additional enrichment and challenge in their area(s) strength. Depending on the intensity of these needs, services are either provided in Tiers 2 or 3 (or whichever number of tiers is being used). As the intensity of the needs increase, the intensity of the services also increases.

So, in this way the data-driven decision making to match students with appropriate services is the same. You also hit on another aspect of RTI that holds specific promise for students with outstanding potential, that is our ability to nurture potential in students prior to formal identification. Your insight here is right on target. Through universal screening and the creation of nurturing learning environments in Tier 1, with high-end differentiation and expectations, we are able to support the development of potential in all students. As students show emerging needs for additional enhancements, we can provide appropriately scaffolded activities through Tier 2 support.

In this way we can both nurture potential and can build a body-of-evidence showing the students' successes as they engage in challenging work. This body-of-evidence can be used to support the nomination process and formal identification when appropriate. As you note, the early nurturing of potential prior to formal identification is likely to be of particular benefit for culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and twice exceptional youngsters who are currently underrepresented within gifted education.

**A** So, the bottom line is, RTI approaches can and should work with all students. The article "RtI Models for Gifted Students," by Rollins, Mursky, Shah-Coltrane, and Johnsen, in the special issue (*Gifted Child Today*, Summer 2009; V12-3) focuses on this and shows the U-STARS~ PLUS model for nurturing, recognizing, and responding to high potential in young learners. And, the article "RtI for Nurturing Giftedness: Implications for RtI School-Based Team," by Hughes and Rollins, also addresses this.

**Q** **Dee Opatz**  
How could we implement RTI to create a smooth transition from a pull-out model to a levels-of-service model?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**  
Hi Dee, the transition from a pull-out model to a tiered approach to supports and services hinges on a carefully planned and a clearly articulated set of expectations for each level of services.

The questions to ask about Tier 1 include:

- What will be done in Tier 1 (Universal) to recognize and nurture potential?
- What kinds of differentiation can we expect to address high end learning needs?
- What universal screening for high potential will be in place?
- How will teachers be supported in their role of nurturing, recognizing and responding to potential?

The questions to ask about Tier 2 include:

- What additional enhancements, enrichments, and challenges can we provide for students who demonstrate a need to go beyond the general curriculum?
- How will we use progress monitoring and other assessment data to make decisions about student learning needs?
- What kinds of collaboration will need to be in place?
- How will we involve parents in the decision making process as we explore possible nomination for formal identification?

The questions to ask about Tier 3 include:

- What support services will be offered for students at the most intensive levels of need?
- Is this going to include learning opportunities provided in a resource pull-out format? If not, what will take the place of this?
- How will decisions be made regarding formal identification?

Clear communication, professional development, and a timeline for the transition will all help to make things go more smoothly. The book [RtI for Gifted Students](#), edited by Mary Ruth Coleman &

**A** Susan Johnsen (due out soon with Prufrock Press) contains a chapter on planning for RtI within gifted education.

**Q** **Carole McAfee**  
What is being done about gifted children with learning disabilities? Are there any RTI models?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**  
Hi Carole, The complex needs of gifted students with disabilities make RTI a natural fit for this population. Within an RTI framework the student's strengths can be identified and challenging learning opportunities can be offered. The areas where the student needs additional support can also be identified and support for academic success can be provided.

When the RTI approach includes support for emotional well-being and positive behavior support these can also be provided as needed. The article, "Response to Intervention and Twice-Exceptional Learners: A Promising Fit," by Pereles, Omdal, and Baldwin, in the special issue *Gifted Child Today*, Summer 2009; V12-3) focuses on this. The Colorado RTI approach is a comprehensive model that has been developed to include twice exceptional students from the beginning. Information on the Colorado RTI approach can be found at the [Colorado Department of Education Web site](#).

In addition, the [CEC position paper on RTI](#) specifically mentions the importance of addressing the needs of twice exceptional learners. All of this, however, does not mean that we are problem free. In order for twice exceptional students to receive the supports and services needed, districts, schools, and educators must have the knowledge, skills, and will to create collaborative responses to address the complex combinations of strengths and areas of need that twice exceptional learners often have.

**Q** **Garland Reed**  
My son is a highly intelligent 10 year-old diagnosed with Aspergers. Can RTI help him to address his reading and math deficits as well as improve him behaviorally. He goes to one of the best schools, but they are not challenging his intelligence.

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**  
Hi Garland, thank you for your question on how RTI can help address the needs of a child with Asperger's syndrome. In some other replies we looked at the ways an RTI approach can address the complex needs of twice exceptional learners, like your son. Here is a bit of additional information specific to students with Asperger's syndrome.

With the tiered framework of RTI and the use of data-driven decision making, teams of educators

**A** and support personnel can target the student's strengths and needs. The collaborative approach of RTI is ideal because students with Asperger's syndrome often need a complex web of support that includes targeted remediation to address skills that have been missed, focused tutorials to help keep up with current academics, challenge and enrichment to address areas of strength and interest, and support for social & emotional adjustment and behavioral needs.

The key to this working, however, is the same as success in any educational endeavor: knowledgeable teachers and support personnel who are given the time, resources, support, and encouragement that they need to work together to address the student's needs!

RTI is not a silver bullet. It is a framework that supports getting it right. What does that mean? It means attending to the strengths and needs of each student and using the information (data) that we have about each student to work collaboratively in planning for optimal learning and growth.

One reference that may help build the knowledge and skills of the teachers is: *Asperger's Syndrome* by Silverman & Weinfeld (Prufrock Press). Please also look at the responses for this session that address students who are twice exceptional.

**Q** **Sally Jones**

If we provide enrichment activities for our advanced students, won't that just increase the achievement gap? Shouldn't we focus our resources on providing remedial instruction to struggling students?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Sally, I think the most important thing we can focus on is ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn and grow. Looking at it from this perspective & this should never become an either/or educational question where we have to pick one group of children over another group. Educational opportunities are not a zero sum game where some students gain and others lose. The heart of RTI is creating synergy through collaboration and team work, pooling expertise, and sharing resources to better meet the needs of all learners.

This is not a Pollyanna approach, it is very pragmatic. When we use the traditional service-delivery model of all or nothing some learners actually get more services than they need, while other who need something but not all actually end up getting nothing. The multi-tiered approach to supports and services allows us to match need with the appropriate level of support and, through this, we may see fewer students receiving the most intense services while more students may receive supports at Tiers 1 and 2. Thus resources are used more wisely to match the needs of learners.

Stepping back a bit and thinking about the achievement gap more broadly, we can see that there are two approaches to closing this gap. One is focusing on remediation, however the second

**A** approach focuses on the nurturing of potential through creating expectations for excellence that permeate Tier 1 with extended opportunities for enrichment for all children who need them at Tier 2. With the focus on excellence, the rising tide will help all students reach their potential. This is the goal of education.

**Q** **Angie Young**

Which research-based screeners and diagnostic tools have been used by schools who are successfully meeting the curriculum (mainly math and reading) needs of gifted and advanced students through the RtI process?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Angie, great question! The schools that are implementing RtI and successfully addressing the needs of student who are gifted or advanced that I am most familiar with are in Colorado. While I am not comfortable naming individual schools in this forum, you may want to visit the Colorado Department of Education website and request specific information on the grade levels and programs that interest you.

I do not know what specific screeners these schools are using but do know that there is an emphasis on curriculum-based measures to document strengths and needs as well as to document progress. Please note that in two questions within this discussion I have shared thoughts on reading and math, including websites that address screening tools and strategies for responding to students strengths. Here are a few additional websites that may be useful as you think about how to recognize the needs of advanced students in reading and math:

- [AIMSweb](#)
- [Alpine Achievement](#)
- [Florida Center for Reading Research](#)
- [National Center on RTI, Screening Tools Chart](#)

Within these websites you can locate resources that will address your specific needs. The main thing is to make sure that the screener is directly related to the curriculum that you are using and that it has a high enough ceiling to allow advance learners to show what they know. This means that you may need to use off-grade-level screeners to both identify the students? learning level and to monitor their progress!

**Q** **Anna O'Connell**

What types of interventions are appropriate for gifted students suspected of having non-reading LD's? (e.g. NVD, dysgraphia / dyspraxia)



**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Anna, Several questions within this session have addressed the challenges of working to meet the needs of twice exceptional learners. Please look at these to see if they contain any helpful information in addition to this reply! For student whose learning disabilities impact non-verbal areas and/or whose challenges are with fine/gross motor tasks (dysgraphia and dyspraxia), we need to focus on supports that mitigate the difficulties and allow the child to continue to learn and express themselves.

One concrete strategy is to use assistive technology to support the expression of ideas. Assistive technology includes tape recorders to allow student to speak their thoughts and capture them, as well as computers. The computer is the easiest way to help children with difficulties writing capture their ideas and express their thoughts in a way that they can edit and organize their written productions. Learning to manage a keyboard can be challenging but it is well worth the effort as it allows the child to produce work that matches their thinking levels.

There are several software programs available to support writing, but one that I like is called Inspiration - it helps student with the pre-writing organization so that they can see how to build an effective paper.

Two states have done an exceptional job developing resources on supporting student who are twice exceptional: [Colorado](#) and [Idaho](#). If you go to their sites and do a search for "Twice Exceptional" you will find several resources that are excellent! In addition the book *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties*, by Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, & Shevitz, is a useful reference. And the Council for Exceptional Children's journal, *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Volume 38 No. 1/September October 2005 focused on students who are twice-exceptional (I served as guest editor for this issue). While this is an older issue it is packed with valuable and practical teaching ideas! You should be able to purchase and online copy through the [CEC website](#).

**Q** **Cheri Sullivan**

How does a team support gifted children with RTI when most of the staff are supporting the children not at grade level? Do you have examples of how this has been attempted in schools that may not have gifted education teachers?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Cheri, your question on supporting student who are gifted within an RTI approach where the focus is primarily on students who need additional support to reach grade level is a good one ? especially within a school where there is not a gifted education specialist.

The first step in this process is recognizing that students who are above grade level, or advanced in their academics, also need support to thrive in school. Indeed, all students deserve to attend a school where their learning needs are met and this is the goal of RTI. If this premise is accepted,

**A** then the next step is to seek out ways to build the knowledge and skills of teachers to address the range of needs that their students have. This includes learning about differentiated instruction within Tier 1 and creating additional opportunities for enhancements and enrichments within Tier 2.

Several of the other responses in this session address what these might look like for advanced learners. You mention that there is currently no gifted education specialist in your school. This often means that the district views the school as a "high-needs" school and does not feel that many children would qualify for gifted education services (thus no teacher allocation is warranted). If this is the case, then this is a problematic view as it perpetuates the myth that some groups of children are not likely to be "gifted". Often the children who attend these schools are culturally and linguistically diverse and economically disadvantaged and so they are now placed in a double jeopardy situation: they face challenges at home and in their neighborhoods and their schools are set up to address deficits rather than supporting strengths.

One model that has been developed to support strengths of and nurture potential in young students is U-STARS~PLUS (Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students ~ Promoting Learning in Underrepresented Students). This approach takes an "at potential" view of learners and helps K-3 teachers recognize the indicators of potential in children who have often been viewed as "at-risk." Creating high-end learning environments in the general classroom (Tier 1) is a key to the U-STARS~PLUS approach and there are five differentiation strategies used to help teachers do this.

These five differentiation strategies are as follows:

1. Curriculum Compacting (pre-assessment of learners to see what they know)
2. The use of Tiered Assignments that address: Mastery, Enrichment, and Challenge
3. Tiered Learning Centers that allow children to further explore skills and concepts
4. Independent and Small group learning contracts that allow students to follow area of interest
5. Questioning for Higher Level thinking to stretch the minds of each child.

More information on this approach to supporting and nurturing potential in children can be found through the [Council for Exceptional Children's Web site](#), or by [contacting me](#). This is one approach to strengthening Tier 1 in schools where there is limited access to a gifted education specialist.

**Q** **Debra Levy**

Can an RTI process be initiated to assist with identification of giftedness in a student with learning differences who has reading and attentional barriers to testing? How is RTI helpful in the identification process?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Debra, RTI was, as you likely know, first proposed as a way to help us better identify students who continue to need additional support in spite of having appropriate instructional opportunities

**A** to learn. That is where the response to intervention/instruction words came from and for a time the focus was on the child's inability to respond with success in learning.

This has changed with our understanding of RTI as a multi-tiered framework and now the focus is on using data to make appropriate decisions about supporting optimal learning for all students. Having said that, the way that children with learning disabilities are identified is changing and this can have an impact on our ability to recognize the gifts of children who are also facing learning challenges.

The primary issue is the need for measures of potential as well as performance. This means that in a comprehensive assessment of a child that we feel may be twice exceptional, an IQ measure will be a critical piece of the puzzle. Selecting the appropriate one means understanding which measure is most likely to capture the child's strengths. For a child with reading and language challenges, an assessment that somewhat mitigates the language load is most appropriate. This would be a test like the UNIT (Universal Non-Verbal Intelligence Test) or another non-verbal test.

It is also essential that we use the Body-of-Evidence approach to building a portfolio showing the students strengths through their performance and accomplishments (that sometimes occur outside of school). Other replies in this session offer more information on this approach to identification. The bottom line is that children with complex sets of strengths and needs require a comprehensive evaluation that includes multiple types, sources, and time periods to create the most accurate and complete understanding of their educational needs.

**Q** **Ladona Gorham**

Do many school systems use a "diamond" shaped RTI model with 3 tiers of instruction for gifted students?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Ladona, some schools and districts have used a diamond shape to try and show that RTI for students who are advanced is the mirror image of RTI for students who need additional support to reach grade level. My feeling is that this is confusing and somehow separates the needs of gifted learners from the needs of all learners.

The beauty of RTI is that is truly is for "Every Ed" because it hinges on using data to learn what the child needs to thrive in school and then on working collaboratively to address these needs. So, in my opinion we should use the same icon to represent how we address the increasing intensity of academic and behavioral needs for all learners.

**Q** **Veronica Galvan**

**Q** What "pearls of wisdom" would you share with novice teachers regarding gifted and talented students who are English Language Learners?

**A** **Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman**

Hi Veronica, what a great question! With the changing demographics in many of our schools, we have more and more children for whom English is not their first language and many of these children may be gifted. For children who are learning English, it is essential that we provide a language-rich platform to build the academic vocabulary needed, while simultaneously offering learning opportunities that involve hands-on activities.

By combining vocabulary building activities with hands-on learning (i.e. math manipulative, hands-on science activities, art activities that show the storyline and demonstrate comprehension, etc.) we allow students to continue learning as they strengthen their language development.

Collaboration with the ELL teacher and others who know the child to help us recognize their strengths is also important. The things that we can look for should go beyond the child's language and should include their strengths in reasoning, problem-solving, leadership, creativity, and their social perceptiveness. Often these areas can be seen if the teachers use systematic observations and document what they are seeing.

One tool that has been developed to specifically help teacher observe student's strengths is the TOPS (Teacher's Observations of Potential in Students). This is an observation tool that helps K-3 teachers recognize indications of potential in their students. Using the TOPS, teachers observe student strengths in nine domains (learns easily, shows advanced reasoning, displays curiosity and creativity, has strong interests, shows advanced reasoning and problem solving, displays spatial abilities, show motivation, shows social perceptiveness, and displays leadership). Through systematically observing for student's strengths we can document these and plan for meeting their needs.

The TOPS is part of the U-STARS~PLUS program to nurture, recognize, and respond to young children's potential and it is specifically designed to help us meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and twice exceptional learners who are often underrepresented in programs for gifted learners. Several other questions addressed in this session discuss aspect of U-STARS~PLUS and more information about this approach can be found at the [CEC Web site](#).

**Q** **Cecilia Absher**

I have a few related questions - Are you aware of whether many schools are in fact using RTI as an approach to help high-achieving children reach their potential? How does it differ from using a differentiated instruction approach? Would a system need to be in place K-12 to be effective and would tracking (grouping children according to ability) be a necessary component? Thanks!

**A** *Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman*

Hi Cecilia, thank you for this comprehensive set of questions. Some of the other responses for this session will address parts of your questions as well. More and more schools are starting to incorporate addressing the needs of high-achieving learners within their RTI models and this is having a two-fold impact. First, it is ensuring that we think about the strengths of all learners and second, that we intentionally plan for the needs of students who are advanced. The focus on strengths for all learners keeps us from sliding into a deficit approach and when we incorporate high-end learning strategies into our programs, we strengthen these as well.

Differentiated instruction is part of a strength-based approach to Tier 1, providing enriched and challenging learning opportunities for all students. However, a comprehensive RTI approach for gifted learners will also need strong Tier 2 and 3 supports and services.

Tier 2 support may include enrichment and accelerated learning opportunities based on students' strengths and interests (ideas for these have been shared in other responses within this session). Tier 3 supports are more intensive and individualized to address student's specific strengths.

Within the additional resources section below there is a PowerPoint that shares some models within gifted education that are compatible with RTI. These include the Triad Enrichment Model (Joe Renzulli), the Autonomous Learner Model (George Betts), the William and Mary Curriculums (Joyce Van Tassel-Baska), and the U-STAR~PLUS model (Mary Ruth Coleman). These are approaches to gifted education that fit within the RTI framework.

Tracking, or the fixed stratification of children into learning levels based on limited data (placing children in fixed learning groups based on a single reading score), is the opposite of RTI. The benefit of RTI is that it is a dynamic approach to assessment and instruction. The use of data to monitor student progress and plan appropriate instruction should ensure that the groups formed are fluid and dynamic and are based on the students needs.

[Please also read through the responses on tracking and tiered approaches provide to other questions.]

**Q** *Jose Sanchez*

How can we establish appropriate growth targets for students identified as gifted?

**A** *Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman*

Hi Jose, establishing growth targets for student in their area(s) of strength is challenging because we want to make sure that we set our aim high enough and this may include off grade level trajectories. One way to think about this is to find the learning level and use progress monitoring check-points to assess the slope and speed of learning and plot the target from there.

- A** In other words, if the student is mastering material twice as fast as other learners, we would set the target to reflect this rate of learning across the given time. We can adjust these if the rate of learning slows down as the material becomes more complicated.

That concludes our RTI Talk for today. Thanks to everyone for the thoughtful questions and thanks to our expert, Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman, for her time today.

**Please also take a few moments at the completion of this event to give us your feedback by taking our [survey](#)!**

**Related Reading from RTINetwork.org:**

- [Why Adopt an RTI Model?](#) by David P. Prasse, Ph.D.
- [Tiered Instruction and Intervention in a Response-to-Intervention Model](#) by Edward S. Shapiro, Ph.D.
- [Voices from the Field: La Junta Middle School](#) by Paul A. Jebe

**Additional Resources:**

- *Gifted Child Today*, [Special Issue on Response to Intervention](#). Volume 32, Issue 3 Publication Date: Summer 2009
- ["RTI and Students Who are Gifted" PPT Presentation](#)
- [Rti for Gifted Students: A CEC-TAG Educational Resource](#)