The professional judgment and differentiation provided by SLPs throughout the 2016-17 MTSS & Language Pilot have been critical in determining next steps for planning a tiered approach to language intervention. The application of Story Champs was successful in promoting professional and student growth. Educators learned through implementation and students developed skills through participation in this research based Multi-Tiered Language Intervention Curriculum developed by Trina D. Spencer and Douglas B. Peterson. This curriculum targeted story structure and complex language features, which are necessary skills for academic success. It included authentic, engaging, and motivating storytelling activities and games scaffolded across tiers to meet a broad range of students with diverse language needs. Moving ahead SLPs will use this tool within the broad scope of a tiered design to language intervention.

**The Highlights...**

**TIER ONE**

Ann Poyer, D26 SLP
Collaborative Teaching

Ellen Hajek, D25 SLP (left); Rachel Weber, NSSEO SLP (center); Mary Budreau, D57 SLP (right)
Teaching vocabulary in story context and teaching story parts with gestures, pictures, and symbols.

Susan Kelley, D25 SLP
Facilitated and independent peer to peer story retell.

**TIER TWO**

Lindsey Castronovo, D23 SLP
Increased opportunities to respond using manipulatives and games.

Participants not pictured are Laura Strass, D25 SLP and Christy Martinez, D21 SLP
On May 25th, NSSEO & Member School District OTs and PTs, along with over ten outside district therapists and/or coordinators, were presented with the key components and rationale for a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework. Stacey Weber, NSSEO Instructional Coach, provided examples of using a problem solving model and existing sources of data to guide decision making. Indirect and direct OT-PT services were considered for future planning across the tiers. For example, therapists may develop guiding questions in fine and gross motor areas for educational teams to address during problem solving meetings. In addition, therapists could conduct a brief observation for a snapshot of a student in order to provide strategies for educators to implement. Participants engaged in a small group collaboration activity to brainstorm Tier One target areas, related skills, and possible sources of data. These Tier One areas included: Basic Gross Motor Play, Self-Regulation, Hand Function, Organization, Participation, Environmental Set Up, Self Care, and Sensory. Contributions from OTs & PTs are valuable in identification and resolution of the underlying sensory and motor causes of learning and behavior problems. Our goal is to optimally utilize these resources through a flexible and creative service delivery design.
A Tiered Approach in the Delivery of Assistive Technology Services

The Universal Design for Augmentative & Alternative Communication Pilot has been aligned with a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach. The process was enhanced during the 2016-17 school year by building capacity at a Tier One Level to ensure increased acquisition and use of AAC (iPad w/TouchChat WordPower) for NSSEO students. Forms were developed to support the process and provide guidance to the educational teams. These forms included a problem solving template to guide decision making, a letter of informed consent to increase communication with home/member school districts, an Intervention Plan to collect evidence during a trial period, and an Individual iPad/ AAC Request Form to track acquisition. Educational Teams received training on the purpose and aspects of this new system and Speech-Language Pathologists assumed a leadership role in application of Tier One AAC supports. During the 2016-17 school year approximately 50 individual iPads w/AAC app have been distributed to students across NSSEO Schools/Programs.

The Communication Matrix Virtual Community of Practice Project: A NSSEO Reflection and Preparation for Beyond

The Communication Matrix Community of Practice Grant Project educational teams have analyzed the results of their participation over the past three years given facilitation from Kelly Fonner, AT Specialist. Each component of this project was reviewed with the group to identify strengths and to share ideas for improvement. The components included completion of the four part Moodle Training, administration of the Communication Matrix assessment in the Fall and Spring, contribution from parents, and involvement within the online Community of Practice. The outcomes from the evidence collected showed professional growth in delivering a continuum of communication services for low incidence populations, progress monitoring the communication skills of students with significant complex needs, and expanding the collection of data to enhance instruction specific to ability levels and personal characteristics. Parent participation included completion of a Communication Matrix assessment for their son/daughter and feedback surveys to enhance the experience for future families. Information was provided to improve upon the grant project during year four. NSSEO has contacted Member School Districts and districts outside of the cooperative, on behalf of the Communication Matrix Community of Practice Grant Project, to recruit participants for next year. To date, numerous educational teams have expressed interest across 16 School Districts.

“Understanding what individuals are capable of today is the first step toward helping them reach their potential.”

www.communicationmatrix.org

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Infinitec 2016-2017
Outstanding Student Technology Achievement Awards

Congratulations to Riley Ganka of D211 and NSSEO (left) and Devyn Thompson of D25 (right) on their Infinitec North Technology Achievement Awards! Special thanks to Karie McGinn, D211 SLP and Lauren Wheeler, NSSEO SLP for nominating these amazing students!

Robyn Jung
Assistive Technology Facilitator
Speech/Language Pathologist
Email: njung@nsseo.org

Christi Mecca, M.A., CCC-SLP
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Assistive Technology Team