



Differentiated Instruction: Tiers Without Tears

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Response to Intervention (RTI) Defined:

- “RTI involves regularly assessing proficiency in a skill, determining which students are behind, providing help in small groups for those below benchmark, assessing regularly to monitor progress, and intensifying instruction for students whose progress is insufficient”—Susan Hall, *Create Your Implementation Blueprint*, RTI Action Network.
- 8 core principles of RTI, (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, NASDSE), *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation*, 2006:
 1. We can effectively teach all children.
 2. Intervene early.
 3. Use a multi-tier model of service delivery.
 4. Use a problem-solving model to make decisions within a multi-tier model.
 5. Use scientific, research-based validated intervention/instruction to the extent available.
 6. Monitor student progress to inform instruction.
 7. Use data to make decisions. A data-based decision regarding student response to intervention is central to RTI practices.
 8. Use assessment for 3 different purposes (screening, diagnosis, and progress monitoring).
- Relationship of RTI to special education:
 - IDEA 2004 permits the use of RTI, but doesn't require it.
 - States cannot require districts to use IQ test to identify students as LD.
 - States are encouraged to use RTI as a component of LD identification.
 - High degree of implementation by the states:
 - Spring/Summer 2007 survey of 44 states (*National Implementation of RTI: Research Summary*, Hoover, et al., on NASDSE website):
 - More than one-third of states report that they plan to use RTI, in part, as a replacement or supplement to the LD discrepancy model
 - 90% of states report that statewide training efforts are underway

What is the 3-Tier Reading Model?

- Publication from the University of Texas, UTCRLA
- There are 3 Tiers of instruction available for students, as needed
 - Tier I is core instruction;
 - Tiers II and III, in addition to core for below-benchmark students, and increase in intensity as student's data reflects lack of progress
 - In most states, special education is “Tier IV”—qualification process is different.

Website Resource on RTI:

- RTI Action Network: www.RTInetwork.org

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What level of Success is Possible? (example from a district in Florida)

- 8 Reading First schools in district of 38 elementary schools
- Implemented multi-tiered model of reading intervention K–2, districtwide, starting in 2004
- Improvement over the last 4 years, districtwide, in *DIBELS*[®] scores (18,000 K–3 students)

4-Year Change	% Students at Benchmark	% Students at Intensive
Grade 1	84% to 94%	4% to 1%
Grade 2	74% to 88%	8% to 4%
Grade 3	46% to 75%	26% to 9%

Implement RTI in Phases:

- 3 important RTI structures:
 - 2 scheduling structures (download samples at www.95percentgroup.com):
 - Revise school master schedule to add 30-minute intervention blocks to all implementation grades—stagger across the day.
 - Publish assessment calendar (3 benchmarks and at least 8 progress-monitoring periods per year).
 - Delivery model and organization of materials:
 - Decide on delivery model (“walk-to-intervention” model across the grade level or in classroom).
- Steps in the process of implementing Tiers II and III
 - Examine whether Tier I Core is enabling 70%–80% of students to reach benchmark; if not, improve the Core while implementing Tiers II and III.
 - Select assessment instruments:
 - Curriculum-based measure (CBM) (e.g., *DIBELS* or *AIMSweb*[®]) as universal screener
 - Diagnostic assessments: phonological awareness, phonics, and comprehension measures of skill mastery
 - Progress monitor with diagnostic assessment and/or with CBM, depending on focus skill of intervention group.
 - Data analysis and grouping techniques:
 - Avoid the “stoplight syndrome” of grouping from CBM instructional recommendation levels.
 - Instructional recommendation levels are a weighted average of several skills—can mask details of strengths and weaknesses.
 - Use analysis techniques to study CBM data to ascertain which skills are deficit—points to which diagnostic screener to give.
 - Examine errors to see patterns (download example of Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) Error Pattern Analysis Worksheet from www.95percentgroup.com).

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- Pinpoint skill deficit areas with diagnostic screener.
- Group by deficit skill area:
 - Place students in intervention groups based on diagnostic screener data.
 - Focus instruction on specific skill gaps, particularly for Tier II (Tier III is broader deficits).
- Provide focused intervention instruction:
 - Explicitly model with “I Do, We Do, You Do.”
 - Sequence instruction based on continuums of skills (PA and phonics).
 - Teach skills in a systematic manner that includes instructional routines.
- Monitor progress and engage in team problem-solving process:
 - Decisions about individual students:
 - Team meets to make decisions about students based on data.
 - Move students up to next skill group as mastery is demonstrated.
 - Graph progress monitoring data points for sufficient progress.
 - When rate of improvement is insufficient, use a team problem-solving approach to decide what to try next.
 - Data walls to track progress of grade levels
 - Intervention logs and tracking folders



Create Your Implementation Blueprint, By Susan L. Hall, Ed.D., 95 Percent Group Inc.

Create Your Implementation Blueprint

By Susan L. Hall, Ed.D., 95 Percent Group, Inc.

The idea of Response to Intervention (RTI) is simple. RTI involves regularly assessing proficiency in a skill, determining which students are behind, providing help in small groups for those students below benchmark, assessing regularly to monitor progress, and intensifying instruction for students whose progress is insufficient. Yet, many schools all across this country are discovering that implementing RTI is far from simple.

Some common pitfalls schools encounter in attempting to implement RTI are highlighted here and are explored in further detail in a brief article focused on these pitfalls:

- Underestimating the magnitude of change
- Taking on too many grade levels, tiers, or buildings in the first year
- Jumping in without a comprehensive implementation plan
- Failing to view the implementation as a systems-wide change
- Lacking a designated intervention block time in the master schedule
- Focusing too many resources on administering and collecting assessment data rather than on helping staff learn to use the data
- Viewing purchased instructional programs as silver bullets rather than aids to help well-trained teachers make informed instructional decisions
- Forming groups based on a limited review of the data
- Overrelying on curriculum-based measurement (CBM) data instead of using the CBM as the initial screener to identify WHO is below benchmark levels, and with informal diagnostic assessments to further pinpoint needs and clarify WHAT to teach
- Confusing awareness training with implementation training
- Using approaches to train teachers that are ineffective given the practices that have to be changed

Implementing RTI requires a broadening in focus. To implement this innovation in a school setting, one has to pay attention not only to research about effective instruction, but also to the change management process. For too long education has underestimated what it will take for the adults in a school setting to change their practices and behaviors. The benefit of RTI is for our students, and success will be measured in how much their achievement scores improve. However, when it comes to implementation planning, the focus has to be on the adults—the teachers who will use the new practices.

Where can we look to understand implementation processes? Fixsen, codirector of the National Implementation Research Network, and his colleagues (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, & Wallace, 2007) recently completed a review of the human services implementation literature, including the literature on education. Although their review was about innovation and implementation in general, rather than being specific to RTI, they did describe implementation as the “missing link” between research and practice. Fixsen and colleagues released two frameworks as a product of their extensive review, and these frameworks also form the basis for the articles in this section on implementing your plan:

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Create Your Implementation Blueprint, By Susan L. Hall, Ed.D., 95 Percent Group Inc.

- A model describing six stages of implementation
- A description of key “implementation drivers”

A brief overview of the six stages of implementation is provided below. The stage names are those of Fixsen and his colleagues; the details about the activities that occur in an implementation of RTI are those of Susan Hall.

1. *Exploration*—a small team does research to learn as much as they can about RTI in determining whether to implement such an approach
2. *Installation*—begins when the decision to implement is made and continues until the first use of the innovation (may include planning, assigning job responsibilities, determining how it will be organized, initial team building)
3. *Initial implementation*—where the “rubber meets the road” as many teachers try to use new practices in their day
4. *Full Implementation*—practices have been installed and most professionals are comfortable, with practices operating smoothly
5. *Innovation*—after implementing the innovation the way it was laid out, this is the time to try to make improvements
6. *Sustainability*—in which the focus is on figuring out how to sustain the innovation over the long term

Although this stage approach may seem linear, Fixsen et al. (2007) are clear that it is actually more recursive. What happens in one stage affects another stage. Fixsen et al. are also clear that implementation is not an overnight process. Fixsen’s suggestion that it may take 3–5 years to fully implement a human services innovation is consistent with my observation that most schools require at least 3 years to implement RTI.

(Note: see attachment titled “Sample RTI Implementation Timetable for Elementary Building”)

Stage 1: Exploration

FROM PRE-CONTEMPLATION TO TEAM FORMATION

Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) refer to Stage 1 as “exploration,” and this stage begins with “pre-contemplation.” Often one staff member learns about Response to Intervention (RTI) at a conference or in discussion with colleagues from another school. This one person could be a classroom teacher, a special education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, or a school psychologist. What happens next is the initiation of the exploration stage, when a school begins gathering information about RTI to decide whether, or in what way, to implement it.

Typically, a district or school begins by assembling a small team to do the early information gathering. Selection of district RTI team members is critical. The team members will most likely become the internal experts in the district, and their support of the initiative will sway others to make a commitment later on in the process. Consequently, staff members should be selected to serve on the RTI team not only because of their interest in the initiative, but also because these are the individuals whose opinions will be valued by their colleagues.



Who might be on a district RTI team?

Let's take the case of a sample district with 19 schools, of which 13 are elementary schools. An RTI team is formed with the following members:

- two elementary principals
- one middle school principal
- the curriculum director at the district office
- the special education district coordinator

After the initial team decides to proceed, representatives from schools and teacher groups (classroom, special education, Title I, etc.) should be added to the district RTI team.

What does the district RTI team do?

Often the RTI team gathers information by attending workshops or conferences, reading and sharing articles and books, and possibly planning a field trip to another school that is further along in the implementation process. They move from information gathering to information dissemination, such as an overview presentation for other administrators so as to bring them into the process and help them develop an initial awareness of RTI. Even if RTI is initially going to focus on the elementary schools, it is common to include the principals or assistant principals from the middle and high schools in administrative overviews from the start.

Some steps for getting ready to disseminate information within the district may include the following:

- Design a PowerPoint presentation or write a document for internal distribution.
- Develop a 1-page tri-fold flyer describing RTI for distribution within the district.
- Develop a chart with a 3–5-year timetable for gradual implementation across reading and math and all the grade levels.

Soon the team begins to move from “pre-contemplation” to “contemplation.” At that time principals often form an RTI team in each school. It's important to form school-based teams relatively early in the exploration stage. Building buy-in is much easier when planning occurs at the building level early enough that it doesn't feel like the schools were left out of the planning process. At this point the district RTI team broadens their efforts to a dual role—they continue to gather information and plan while also beginning to disseminate information to key staff at the district and school levels.

The focus of the dissemination stage at the school level is to begin building awareness among the entire staff in a school. At this early stage the information disseminated is basically an overview, definition, and history of RTI. The focus is on building staff awareness of what RTI is and the benefits for the students at the school. Not a lot of details about what it looks like or specifics about implementation are necessary yet. There are, of course, many options for how to share information. Here are some common approaches:

- Passing out a short article for staff to read
- Passing out a 1-page flyer with a three-tier triangle graphic



- Arranging to take a couple of teacher leaders on a field trip to another school

In addition to information gathering and dissemination, there are several critical activities initiated during the contemplation stage. The two major activities—conducting a self-assessment and determining an assessment plan—are discussed below.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EXPLORATION STAGE

During the exploration stage, the RTI team needs to determine two important aspects of the implementation plan: the timing and pacing of the rollout. When it comes to timing, consider whether this is the right year to take on a new initiative. If a school has unlimited resources to dedicate to the implementation of RTI, it would be easy to argue that this practice is good for students and should be rolled out to all grade levels simultaneously. Since unlimited funding is not a reality, districts and schools will be forced to explore how much they can reasonably take on at once.

After you consider resource availability, a plan can be developed that details the rollout schedule. I recommend that RTI be implemented in phases rather than all at once. From the district's perspective, the phases can be planned in regard to the number of schools, the content areas, and the grade levels. Many districts implement RTI first in reading to be followed by math, and at a limited number of schools in the first year. There are so many aspects to customize to the school context that no two schools or districts use the same approach for implementation. Therefore, I recommend that the district select a cluster of schools to serve as pilots the first year. These sites will enable the district staff to learn about how to successfully implement RTI in the district environment, with the existing student population, culture, instructional materials, and assessment instruments. Selection of the pilot schools should include a couple of the lower performing schools so that success in these buildings will be evidence that if RTI can work there, it will work in other schools. There should be a sufficient number of schools included in the pilot so that all types of schools in the district are represented.

Most districts and schools phase RTI into all grade levels across several years. The focus in the first year often is on kindergarten and first grade, followed by Grades 2 and 3 the second year (or K-2 in the first year). Occasionally Grades K-3 will be launched in the first year, although it is very difficult to implement RTI across the entire elementary building in the first year.

Activity 1: Complete a Self-Assessment

A self-assessment can be done at either the district or school level. Eventually it will be completed at both levels. Obtaining a rubric or outline for a self-assessment is a wise choice. Perhaps the most important reason to complete a self-assessment is to determine the degree of need for RTI in your school. It is much more difficult to implement a change of this magnitude in schools where the data indicate high levels of student performance. Teachers will question why they need to fix something that's not broken. Implementing the numerous and complex processes involved in RTI takes a lot of extra work, especially in the first year of implementation. If the need for the change is not clearly understood and articulated, teachers will question it and may advocate going back to the way they have always done things.



A needs analysis allows the leadership team to articulate the motivation for implementing RTI. In schools where students' scores are low and have been stagnant or declining for a while, making a case for this innovation is not difficult. Where scores are generally higher, one important step is to analyze the subgroups of students and, once the data are disaggregated, determine if there are groups that are lower performing. If that is the case, then the motivation for RTI can be clearly stated. It is far better to know why the school is implementing RTI from the beginning than not to have answers when teachers confront the administration with these questions. It can't be just a good thing to do overall; it has to be the right thing to do for specific students in your school. Even if the district or state is requiring schools to implement RTI, it is still best to articulate why students in your school will benefit from this. One thing you'll need for this step is baseline data, preferably from the screener that you'll be using in the future.

Activity 2: Evaluate Organizational Priorities

For RTI implementation to be successful, it must be a high priority within the school or district. RTI is no small undertaking and it cannot be added on top of multiple other time-consuming initiatives. Launching RTI under these circumstances usually leads to a great deal of frustration.

Before launching an implementation, it's useful to look at how this initiative fits, or conflicts, with all other district initiatives. Consider the curriculum adoption years. For example, if the school is adopting a new reading curriculum next year, you may want to use next year as the planning year for RTI, a year in which the focus will simply be to build awareness. Teachers are likely to be overloaded if they are asked to learn to teach a new curriculum the same year RTI is launched. It is even difficult to have enough inservice days to provide sufficient training in the new basal in addition to the new practices for assessment and data analysis for RTI.

Some initiatives require the attention of the same staff, while other initiatives are compatible with RTI. For example, RTI in K–1 reading can be combined well with a new school focus on professional learning communities (PLCs). RTI in early reading can become the content for the PLC process, and the dialogue during collaboration time in PLC study groups can focus on learning about data analysis and small group intervention for below-benchmark students.

Another view of priorities is to examine how RTI fits with the personal passions and goals of important leaders in the organization. What are the superintendent's passions? How does RTI fit within his or her goals for the district? Sometimes it's a matter of showing the link between the superintendent's goal to improve reading or math achievement and how RTI can become a process that is aligned with and useful in reaching that goal. It may be necessary to wait a year to "clear the deck" and finish other initiatives before launching an RTI initiative.

Activity 3: Assess Readiness to Implement

The RTI team needs to explore the school's or district's readiness to implement RTI. It's helpful to anticipate the degree of culture change represented by RTI. Although it's impossible to always fully predict readiness, the team can contemplate the degree of staff acceptance or resistance they expect to see. Some buildings have predictable politics and a pattern where particular teachers have repeatedly blocked change initiatives in the past. Sometimes teachers have a history of bringing issues to the union's attention whenever a new initiative appears to require teachers to work more hours.



Assessing the background knowledge of staff is another important factor. Schools that have received Reading First funds have useful background knowledge because they have participated in extensive professional development about reading instruction, assessment, and tiers of instruction to meet the needs of below-benchmark students. On the other hand, schools that deliver nearly all instruction in a whole-class format will need preparatory professional development. Classroom management techniques for how to keep the rest of the students fully engaged in independent work stations are needed so that the teacher can focus on instructing an intervention group.

The RTI team often determines that a school is not ready to implement RTI in a particular year and may experience a “false start” if launched. Selecting schools as the pilot sites for the first year can be tricky and critical. The district will need to move forward in at least a few buildings to gain experience in how to implement RTI; it is wise not to wait for state guidelines to be fully articulated. Begin in a limited way and learn along with the state department of education.

Activity 4: Develop an Assessment Plan

One critical activity the RTI team must complete during the exploration stage is to evaluate the assessment instruments that the school already uses. What type of data is provided by each of the current assessments? Do these assessments provide outcome, screener, progress-monitoring, or diagnostic data?

If the district or school doesn't have an assessment instrument for universal screening, the team will need to select one. Most districts start RTI with reading, or reading combined with behavior. One of the reasons reading is selected over math is that curriculum-based measurements (CBMs) are more readily available. Most likely, the district will select a CBM such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or AimsWeb for universal screening, which is the assessment given to all students typically three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) to identify the students not at benchmark in important early skills. Other assessments will also be needed, including informal diagnostic measures used to pinpoint more precisely deficit skill areas flagged by the universal screener as students' weaknesses. Although research about diagnostic assessments may begin during the exploration stage, selection of these screeners can wait until the baseline data have been collected and the installation stage is launched.

One of the main reasons that districts select a universal screener during the exploration stage is to begin collecting baseline data. Many times the district or school will train a small team to administer the screener during the exploration stage and train all the teachers later. Analysis of baseline data is critical for articulating which student populations are not well served by the current instructional approach. Determining the schools' overall scores and identifying underperforming subpopulations of students is critical in order that a principal be able to articulate in a school-specific and personalized way why RTI is needed.

Over the past several years, I've had the opportunity to work closely with dozens of principals as they implement RTI. While researching for my latest book, *Implementing Response to Intervention: A Principal's Guide*, I interviewed principals about how they had implemented RTI. I discovered that in the schools where the implementation went smoothly and student results were evident within the first 2 years, the principals each had a way of articulating their motivation to change former practices. These



principals talked about why practices needed to be different. Their comments were noticeably passionate, specific, and related to their school's student population. They didn't say that they were jumping on board because the district or state was going to require it. In their interviews their voices changed as they made comments like "there is no way 29% of our students should be in special education" or "we are not going to be the lowest school in the district in reading any more." The RTI team can use baseline screener data to talk about where students are now, and to explain why—in order to raise the achievement level—some things will have to be done differently in the future.

In addition to articulating a motivation for change, the team will begin exploring what needs to be in place to effect this change. They will begin to discuss a professional development (PD) plan, the details of which will be fleshed out much more during the installation stage. The PD plan can unfold gradually; the only things to do right away are a) determine how much awareness building is immediately necessary and b) launch the training for the assessment teams that will administer the baseline universal screener. In later stages, plans can be developed to train teachers to work with small groups, data analysis techniques for identifying student skill deficits, procedures for placing below-benchmark students in intervention groups, and techniques for planning and delivering differentiated instruction to the groups.

One decision that the RTI team may make during the exploration stage is to consider whether to hire a consultant to help. A consultant needs to have two things: expertise about RTI and expertise in how to successfully implement RTI at the school or district level. If you decide to hire a consultant, you will want one who has experience in helping a team develop a phased approach to rollout, who can provide professional development at all levels, and who has expertise in data analysis, grouping decisions, and teaching teachers to use available materials to teach differentiated instruction.

The exploration stage ends when a decision is reached to implement RTI. Although the boundaries between one stage and another are fuzzy, in general once the district or school decides to proceed, it enters the installation stage.

Stage 2: Installation

The installation stage starts when the decision is made to implement a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) approach, and it ends when the innovation process is first used. This stage is often referred to as the "start-up stage." Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) suggested that this stage may take between 2 and 6 months.

According to Fixsen and colleagues (2007), the installation stage has too often been ignored in human services. This comment is consistent with my observation that schools so often spend almost no time planning how they will accomplish a new practice—they just launch into it and hope to figure it out along the way. Although a healthy amount of action rather than analysis paralysis is a good thing, it's as if schools sometimes fail to see what type of planning is possible.



CONSENSUS BUILDING

Consensus building is a critical part of implementation that is frequently overlooked. Don't skip it. Getting buy-in is a process that can be planned—it doesn't just happen. It starts with a discussion among the RTI team about who needs to be on board for success. There are key opinion leaders in every school and district. These key opinion leaders typically buy into something more fully if they are involved from the start. Sometimes it's wise to identify key influencers who may be negative and place them on a carefully selected committee to try to bring them around from the beginning. Other times it's better to figure out who is the best person to convince the naysayers and plan for that person to address the naysayers' questions and concerns in private meetings rather than at committee meetings.

What processes will help staff embrace the initiative? There are certain decisions that are district based and others that are building based. For example, typically the district determines that RTI will be implemented and they select common assessment instruments. It isn't effective to have schools selecting different curriculum-based measurements (CBMs), because building data must be rolled up to the district level to measure the progress of the RTI initiative. Yet, RTI happens at the school building level, and many of the critical decisions about how to implement it are left to the school. For example, the district requires that the assessments be given, but the schools decide whether they will use an assessment team or classroom teachers to administer the screener. The district requires each building to provide 30 minutes of intervention to all students receiving Tier 2 services, but the building typically determines when intervention groups will occur and who will teach the groups. I recommend that decisions about how are made by grade-level teams to the extent possible to allow teachers to have maximum input into what they want to do. Commitment will be stronger if they design the delivery approach.

TEAM BUILDING

Because of the wide variety of staff involved in RTI, team building is a critical ingredient for successful implementation. There are two dimensions of team building to consider. First, there is the necessity to facilitate collaboration among many different staff members who provide reading instruction to students who are struggling. This can include classroom teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, speech-language pathologists, English as a second language (ESL) teachers, and so on. The second dimension of team building is among teachers within a grade-level.

Collaboration between general and special education is critical for the successful implementation of RTI. But it's more than just general and special education—it is also critical that Title I, ESL, and Reading Resource teachers all actively participate in this process. Every staff member who deals with a struggling reader needs to participate in decisions about which instruction the student will receive, whether it's working, and what else to try if the student's rate of progress is insufficient. RTI provides a golden opportunity to align staff who traditionally have worked with limited collaboration.

Consideration of special education placement should be a seamless process between general and special education. Documentation of the extra help provided while the student is in general education is critical in determining if it's time to refer a student for child study. Collaboration up-front between general and special education staff is crucial for designing data collection procedures that will serve all purposes. In most states, data about the types and amount of intervention provided to a



student will be considered when a child study team determines whether to test a student for a possible specific learning disability. Important data to consider include the following:

	Data	Source
Amount of Intervention		
	Number of rounds at each tier	Intervention log
	Total minutes of intervention instruction	Intervention log
Type of Intervention	Curriculum – materials – programs	Intervention log
	Focus skill of instruction	Intervention log
Intensity	Size of intervention group	Intervention log
	Number of minutes of intervention provided daily	Intervention log
Response to Intervention	Table of progress-monitoring data	Intervention log
	Documentation of insufficient rate of progress	Graph showing progress-monitoring points below aim line or goal line
	Target student improved less than others in group	Graph showing progress of all students in group of target student

As evident from the table above, much of the data can be captured in an intervention log. It is difficult, or impossible, to recreate the history of interventions after the fact. At the outset it's impossible to know which students will make insufficient progress. Data must be collected throughout the process on all students so that it will be available for the few students who show an insufficient rate of improvement and are referred for further study.

One positive outcome of RTI is that often the collaboration within a grade-level team improves as a result of the dialogue that transpired in implementing these new practices. This is especially the case when they use the “walk-to-intervention” model to group across the grade level, whereby students might receive intervention instruction from a teacher other than his or her homeroom teacher. Another impetus for improved grade-level collaboration is when the focus of team meetings is on how teachers are grouping their students, what instructional strategies or materials have led to successes with students, or how teachers seek input and advice from their colleagues about individual students who are not improving. It's significant when teachers refer to students as “our kids” instead of “my kids.”



RESOURCE INVENTORY

During the installation stage, schools often take time for a self-assessment focused on analyzing the achievement scores of the students served by the school and on how to articulate a motivation for implementation of RTI. In this stage, RTI teams inventory what the school already has in place, as well as what resources will be needed for the implementation. Some common topics to explore include the following:

- Staffing—who will provide the intervention instruction?
- Assessment tools—do we need to purchase or license any?
- Curriculum inventory—what do we have, and what will we need?
- Administrative leadership—what steps do the leaders need to take to support this initiative?
- Teacher training—what kind of support, coaching, or professional development (PD) will be needed?
- Teacher background knowledge—what exists and what will we need to provide?
- Budget/funding—how much may be needed, and what are the potential funding sources?

ACTIVITIES DURING THE INSTALLATION STAGE

Activity 1: Determine Service Delivery Model and Scheduling

One of the first in a set of decisions involved in planning an RTI implementation involves how to organize what may be called the “service delivery model.” This term is used to encompass decisions about who, where, and when, meaning who will teach the groups, where they will be taught, and when will intervention groups occur? These decisions need to be made before considering the staffing and training needs, which are covered in Activity 2. Discussion about how to organize a delivery model for Tiers 2 and 3 is sometimes a missing part of training about RTI. Many teachers report that often what regional offices of education offer is PD to disseminate information about what RTI is, but those sessions sometimes don’t include practical tips on how to get started. Too often the content remains at the overview level and misses getting down to the nitty-gritty details that have to be addressed to start the installation. As noted by Fixsen and colleagues (2007), “Thus, diffusion and dissemination play an important role in starting the implementation process but should not be confused with implementation itself” (p. 5).

Who Teaches Intervention Groups? Selecting who delivers the intervention instruction depends on the school’s staffing. There are several typical options. Administrators need to determine which staff can assist classroom teachers. Are there curriculum specialists who dedicate their day to working with small groups of students who are struggling with reading or math? In most schools that have Title I funding, the teachers and aides align their groups with the intervention groups.

When there are no instructional aides, Title I teachers, or curriculum specialists to help, then the classroom teacher teaches the intervention groups. When there is additional support staff to help, sometimes all groups are taught by interventionists (reading or math specialists). Many times a combination of support personnel and classroom teachers teach the intervention groups.



Where Do Intervention Groups Meet? There are many location options for intervention instruction. Some schools have multiple groups in the classroom, while in other schools an interventionist may pull her group from the classroom and take them to a quieter room. There is no research that says that one is more effective than another. Many times it depends on the school's layout. If there is a room where an intervention group can meet, it may be much quieter and the separate space will allow the intervention teacher to have all of his or her materials organized for easy access. If the reading specialist's room is too far from the classroom, then the advantages of quiet and materials accessibility may be offset by the loss of time in walking students to another location.

When Do Intervention Groups Meet? The "who" and the "where" are easier to determine because they are a function of the school's staffing and facilities. Typically, the hardest decision of the three (who, where, and when) is to determine when to provide intervention instruction. Teachers already feel that their day is completely scheduled and there is no time to squeeze in one additional thing. Solving the scheduling issue is critical if teachers are to dedicate time to teaching intervention groups. Should the intervention block be taught as one activity during the content area block time? The "gold standard" recommended by experts is that Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention should occur outside of the core content block. The reason for this recommendation is that students who are behind in an area need more time in instruction, not the same amount of time. Additionally intervention typically focuses on only a few skill areas and, therefore, pulling a student for intervention during the regular instruction in that content area means he or she will miss out on other important components. For example, if a student's reading intervention happens during the 90-minute reading block, he or she may be pulled out during vocabulary and comprehension instruction for intervention in decoding. This gap in instruction may contribute to the student losing ground overall even if he or she is making progress in the skill area targeted by the intervention.

Many schools add 30–45 minute intervention blocks to the daily master schedule. Each grade level has a designated time for intervention groups that is outside their core content instruction, PE, lunch, music or other "specials." It is recommended that intervention be scheduled at different times for each grade level. For example, kindergarten intervention might be from 9:00 to 9:30, 3rd grade from 9:40 to 10:10, 1st grade from 10:30 to 11:00, and 2nd grade from 11:10 to 11:40. Staggering the times of the grade-level blocks enables support staff to be available to assist each grade level during intervention. Usually, Title I and reading specialists go into all the classrooms to work with one intervention group while the classroom teacher takes another intervention group during the same time slot.

Based on observation of hundreds of schools attempting to implement RTI, schools that add an implementation block to their master schedule make earlier progress in their implementation than those that don't. There may be a host of reasons for this. When the principal or administrative team adds intervention to the master schedule, there is a level of commitment and a statement of the importance of this instructional time. It also enables the sharing of students between teachers. What is on the schedule is more likely to get done rather than leaving it to each teacher to decide how to fit intervention time into her own daily schedule.

Activity 2: Creating an RTI Implementation Plan

As part of the team's plan, a number of other decisions will need to be made.



- *Staffing*

Sometimes there is funding to hire new staff to assist with RTI. This could include either an RTI coordinator or intervention teachers to teach the small groups. If staff is added, a number of activities will occur, including writing job descriptions, recruiting and interviewing applicants, and hiring and training new staff. Most schools don't add any staff when they launch RTI but they may redeploy existing staff and restructure responsibilities slightly. For example, it may be helpful to free up one afternoon per week for a reading specialist to serve as a part-time RTI coordinator.

- *Assessment Planning and Training*

The RTI team will need to plan the assessment functions, which includes administering assessments, collecting and analyzing data, and determining how to interpret data to place below-benchmark students in small groups. Who will do these functions? The most available person is not necessarily the best choice—instructional aides might be able to give the assessments but will not always be able to bring other teachers around to understanding what the data say about their students' skill deficits.

Stage 3: Initial Implementation

Teachers and other staff must learn to do things differently, both individually and also in collaboration with other staff members. This stage is called "initial" to recognize that when teachers first start using these new practices, they may not be completely proficient in their new roles. It is not uncommon for this initial implementation to extend for an entire academic year. Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) indicated that this stage typically takes between 9 and 24 months.

Some common issues that emerge as teachers learn new practices include the following:

- Making mistakes in administering screener assessments
- Interpreting a scoring rule incorrectly, thereby overstating or understating the student's score
- Confusion about how to analyze error patterns in the data to inform instructional decisions
- Difficulty in keeping the other students working independently in literacy work stations to free up attention to focus on one intervention group
- Disappointment that the students in an intervention group are not tightly enough grouped to enable focused instruction on a skill deficit
- Frustration in finding time to plan properly for intervention groups in addition to planning for the core instruction
- Confusion about the difference between teaching a small focused skill group and a guided reading group

Change can be very difficult for many people and the implementation may not go completely smoothly during the initial implementation stage. When providing consulting services for a district, we meet with principals during the installation stage to plan, and then we meet with them typically three times during the early implementation stage. We warn principals that when launching implementation



at the beginning of the school year, don't be surprised if there are difficult times during the fall. The initial excitement has worn off and now the work begins.

It seems that October is the month when teachers feel a great deal of stress about the extra work load involved in organizing and planning for their intervention groups. Data collection is time consuming as well. At this point about 8 weeks into the implementation, there is a great deal of uncertainty. Sometimes teachers feel confusion about how to do this or uncertainty about whether they know how to analyze data and provide quality intervention instruction. It is imperative that the school address these concerns through coaching and follow-up rather than allow the negative energy to fester.

In the middle of the year, one of two things will likely happen. There will either be enthusiasm because the student data is showing progress, or else there may be teachers demonstrating "push-back" because they feel that this new way may not be as effective as their old way. If the grade-level team is grouping across classrooms, sometimes teachers express discomfort in having their students with another teacher for 30 minutes of day (it's the "I can do it better myself" syndrome). Teachers will look at the midyear data and question whether it's showing improvement in students. If the data don't show immediate student improvement, they will raise concerns with the principal about the extra work. We have actually had teachers go to the union with a complaint. This is where the principal will need to be firm and stay the course while at the same time addressing the teacher's concerns with support and coaching. If you are working with an educational consultant, this is an area where they can guide and sustain the school through this challenging part of the change process.

Implementations can fail at this stage for several reasons. First, if the requirements were poorly understood at the outset there may be dissonance. If everyone expected an easy, fast process, then there will be dismay. If it was not clear at the outset that this will be a 3–5-year process and that there will be bumps along the way, it is easy to feel discouraged at this point. It is during the initial implementation stage that it becomes clear that Response to Intervention (RTI) is a huge change in business as usual. The benefits are worth it, but it is not without pain.

Schools that didn't understand the importance of adding intervention blocks to the master schedule are now feeling the difficulty of trying to squeeze intervention into the day. If the professional development plan didn't provide adequate coaching, collaboration time, and data analysis and planning time, the teachers are not going to feel supported. This is the time when principals may cave under this pressure from teachers. The principal has to believe that it's the right thing for kids and that data-differentiated instruction just cannot lead to lower results. The principal has to believe that RTI will be better than what we were doing before.

Stage 4: Full Implementation

Full implementation is reached when at least 50% of the teachers are performing their new functions acceptably (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace 2007). It generally takes the first academic year for teachers to learn how to administer the assessments, interpret the data, place students in groups, and begin to learn how to provide targeted and effective intervention instruction. Learning to interpret the assessment data and form tight groups takes the first couple of months, and then learning to plan and deliver effective intervention instruction generally takes even longer.



A checklist of processes that are observable when the school is in the full implementation stage is provided. Schools can use this checklist of characteristics to evaluate whether they are in the full implementation stage, and identify any areas requiring more attention. (see checklist at end of this document).

ACTIVITIES DURING THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Activity 1: Teachers Receive Ongoing Professional Development and Coaching

The focus of professional development during full implementation shifts from teachers learning data analysis techniques to coaching teachers in how to deliver the most effective intervention instruction possible. There is a sequence to the new processes that teachers must learn. Administering assessments comes first and is followed by interpreting the data. Then, once the data analysis techniques are mastered, it's possible to place students in groups by targeted skill area. Only after groups are well constructed is it possible to look at the quality of instruction; it's difficult to focus on the characteristics of high quality intervention instruction when students in a group have diverse needs such that the skills one student needs to develop are not at all what another student needs.

Why does it take teachers so long to reach proficiency in Response-to-Intervention (RTI) practices? Teachers are often not accustomed to teaching small groups and may find this transition very difficult. But it's more complicated than merely learning classroom management techniques to keep the other students well occupied at independent work stations while the teacher works with three to five students at a table. Intervention instruction is explicit and systematic, and it is likely quite different from the type of instruction the teacher has a great deal of experience in providing. Students in intervention groups receive immediate corrective feedback, so the teacher has to observe each student and differentiate the reteaching to meet each student's needs. The intensity and individualization of intervention instruction is not something very many teachers know how to do before they see it modeled. Professional development is critical because this instruction is different from whole-class instruction.

At the earlier stages of implementation some of the professional development can be structured in a workshop format. For example, workshops are effective for providing an overview of what RTI is, as well as the historical and research underpinnings supporting its use. Also workshops are effective for learning to administer new assessments and how to interpret the data reports. However, when it comes to learning new instructional strategies, modeling and coaching are more effective than a workshop format. Many of the topics effectively covered in a workshop setting are appropriate during the exploration, installation, and initial implementation stages. By the time the school reaches the full implementation stage, the most effective format of professional development is grade-level team meetings and individual coaching and modeling.

Activity 2: Develop a Problem-Solving Process

Although the school may initiate problem-solving processes in an earlier stage, this process is most needed during full implementation. The problem-solving meetings are relevant after intervention instruction has been provided for a reasonable time period and enough progress-monitoring data have been collected to merit discussing whether the rate of improvement is insufficient. This often means



that the student has participated in a couple of 10-week rounds of intervention, with at least one round where the instruction was intensified, commonly referred to as Tier 3.

Once the school begins regularly discussing students in a problem-solving approach, it is common to increase the frequency of progress-monitoring assessment during this stage. This occurs at this point because the data are now actively used in decision making and teachers see that it is easier to draw conclusions about a student's rate of progress with more data points.

When a problem-solving process is used, a team of staff members meets to discuss the rate of progress of an individual student. The problem-solving process may have some characteristics of a child study team meeting in some schools, depending on how that process is done. It's important to outline a process in general education that is linked to the referral process; these processes should be cohesive and connected, not two different processes. That way the information collected before referral is used for the referral decision. This is at the heart of RTI.

Activity 3: Develop a Tier 3 Instruction Layer

When schools first implement RTI, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the difference between Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. Does more time in an intervention group automatically mean the instruction is Tier 3? What does it mean to "intensify" instruction? Does the instruction need to include a more systematic program or instructional approach? How is the instruction provided in Tier 3 different from that in Tier 2, but also different from what a student will receive if qualified for special education services? All these questions, and many more, need to be answered.

Many schools spend their first year just getting a solid Tier 2 system in place. Only after the data show that their Tier 2 instruction is effective for nearly all students will the staff begin to question what Tier 3 is. The transition happens naturally once teachers can identify the outliers—students not progressing as much as peers. I observed this natural evolution toward Tier 3 while participating in a 5th grade team meeting at a middle school in New York with many students reading below grade-level. The team met monthly to move students from one skill group to another. Before the meeting, each teacher gave the students in his or her current group a progress-monitoring assessment using an informal phonics screener or an oral reading fluency probe (this school used the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), depending on the group's focus. The names of the skill groups were written across a whiteboard and each teacher posted sticky notes to place students in the appropriate skill group for the next month. In December, the third month the team had met, there was a cluster of five students who had hovered in the bottom skill group since September. All other students were moving up the skills continuum. The team decided to place those five students in a group with a teacher who had prior training in delivering explicit, systematic, multisensory instruction so that she could keep that group together for several months and increase the intervention time. Before Tier 2 was up and running, it would have been difficult for this team to know what Tier 3 should be and which students should be placed in this increasingly intensive tier.

Stage 5: Innovation

There is no "RTI in a Box." Instead, it will have to be customized to fit the context of each individual school. For example, whether it is better for an interventionist to "push-in" to a classroom or



for teachers to group across an entire grade level depends upon staffing, level of teacher cooperation, and even facility layout. There is no single right way to organize the delivery model for intervention groups. Yet, it is important to implement with practices that have been proven to be effective in schools similar to yours. Only after fully understanding what you are trying to do and successfully getting results with the proven process should you then make changes. As Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) said, “learn the intervention, learn how to do it with fidelity, do it long enough to learn the nuances of its applications, and then work on how to improve the intervention itself” (p. 7). Success and student results during the first full year of implementation are crucial to getting complete staff buy-in, so it’s better not to allow teachers to create their own way until after they have implemented the district’s selected approach first.

During the innovation stage, schools typically make improvements to their assessment calendar, data analysis practices, grouping practices, timing of intervention in the master schedule, and model for the delivery of the groups. During this stage, RTI may be added to upper grade levels or to the rest of the schools now that the process and practices are fully understood and working well at the lower grade levels or pilot buildings.

Stage 6: Sustainability

Sustainability is critical and should be the goal during each earlier stage. The manner in which RTI is implemented in earlier stages will determine the level of sustainability. To a great extent, securing teacher buy-in is critical to the long-term sustainability of this innovation. That’s why it is critical to provide teachers with professional development and coaching that leads to support and commitment, not just compliance. Teachers need time to fully understand the why and the how, and to have the opportunity to learn data analysis, grouping, and instructional techniques.

Some people search for the silver bullet of intervention programs that will produce results, as if the program teaches rather than the teacher. In RTI, perhaps even more than with a core program, the data-informed decision making is critical to success. The data analysis processes must be taught to the classroom teachers so that they can experience why focused groups enable targeted instruction; teachers need to experience that the success in the student’s progress monitoring scores resulted from decisions they participated in and practices they implemented. If someone else administers all the assessments and places students in groups and just hands over a list of students and a program to teach, the success cannot be experienced in the same way. In RTI there is an integral connection between making instructional decisions for a student and the assessment data that led to those choices. Teachers must be taught to understand and use the data.

Many times schools are in a hurry to implement RTI. Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) said the following with regard to the benefit of hiring an outside expert to advise during the process: “Early decisions about how to access external expertise to assure a quick and successful start-up, and how to make use of that external expertise to build local capacity, will impact sustainability over the long term” (p. 7). Educational consultants can indeed help with the implementation process; however, careful selection of a consultant is encouraged. Ask about the depth of the consultant’s experience in helping schools implement RTI. Ask for referrals and talk with staff or administrators at other schools the consultant has assisted. While a consultant can help the district or school implement RTI more



quickly and the consultant's advice may improve the probability of sustainability, schools can be just as successful without a consultant if they have a dedicated RTI team that researches extensively and is given the time to lead this innovation.

Implementation Drivers

Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, and Wallace (2007) suggested that accomplishing the change in teacher behavior and the culture of the schools that is needed will depend on there being in place a number of core implementation components. Fixsen and colleagues referred to these core components as *implementation drivers*, each of which is described below. Rather than being independent forces at work, these drivers influence one another. When one is strong it can compensate for another component that is weak.

STAFF SELECTION

Selecting staff who are most qualified to implement intervention instruction can help ensure success. Sometimes a school hires an educator into a new role of Response-to-Intervention (RTI) coordinator or instructional coach. Some of the characteristics for success in this new role include depth of knowledge about the content or curriculum area (reading or math) as well as interpersonal skills typical of a successful peer coach. Other than a coach or coordinator, schools almost always depend on current staff to provide intervention instruction rather than hire new staff to deliver the instruction.

PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE TRAINING

Because most of the teachers delivering intervention are existing staff, determining preservice training is critical in planning the amount and type of inservice training required for success. RTI is a new term with recent supporting research; the tiered model for instructional layers and the protocol or problem-solving approaches are also new enough that most teachers will not have had these terms in their undergraduate or master's programs. Although the notion of data-differentiated instruction is not new, the depth of the data analysis procedures for pinpointing students' skill deficits is beyond what most teachers report they were exposed to in their teacher training. Sometimes the newest teachers catch on more quickly and the more experienced teachers struggle more. Within a year of launching RTI the professional development is best differentiated because teachers will be at different points.

COACHING AND CONSULTATION

The value of coaching in supporting the improvement of teachers' skills is widely understood. The Reading First grant requires each funded school to have a full-time reading coach whose job is to provide professional development through observing, modeling, and coaching colleagues. Many schools also have math curriculum specialists. Coaching is essential for arriving at a change in the teacher's use of data and the delivery of instruction. Fixsen and colleagues (2007) acknowledged the importance of coaching in the following quote: "Most skills needed by effective practitioners can be introduced in training but must be practiced and mastered on the job with the help of a coach" (p. 8).

STAFF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The degree that classroom teachers are supervised by principals varies greatly from one school to another. I have observed principals that walk through each and every classroom daily and are true instructional leaders, and I have observed principals that only are in classrooms during prescheduled



supervisory observations. One of the most beneficial types of professional development to assist principals in being an effective observer is to walk between rooms with a highly knowledgeable expert who critiques the instruction and trains the principal in what intervention should look like. In addition to observations and walk-throughs, principals need to use student data as part of staff objectives and goals. A principal in a Kansas school asks the teachers to write a goal at the beginning of the year for what percentage of their students will be at benchmark by the end of the year. Each teacher sends a journal entry weekly via e-mail to the principal to discuss their progress in helping their students reach that goal.

DECISION SUPPORT DATA SYSTEMS

Another implementation driver is periodic appraisals of the overall effectiveness of the RTI implementation. In the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills data management system, a report can be printed that shows an administrator the effectiveness of each of the three tiers of reading instruction. Effectiveness of the core tier is measured by what percentage of benchmark students remained at benchmark with the Tier 1 instruction. The effectiveness of Tier 3 is what percentage of students in intensive moved up one or two levels. The effectiveness of Tier 2 is measured by determining what percentage of students moved up, down, or stayed the same. Administrators also need to examine how well each grade level, each classroom, and each student is doing.

FACILITATIVE ADMINISTRATION

There are key policies that affect RTI implementation. For example, two principles of RTI are that there will be universal screening of all students three times per year, and that all below-benchmark students are entitled to small-group intervention. Procedures that facilitate the implementation include the following:

- When to study data
- Data meetings
- Assessment calendar with specified frequency of progress monitoring
- Grouping
- Checkpoints at which to review the progress of individual students

Having policies and procedures for each of these areas will help a school implement RTI.

SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

When a school launches an RTI approach, the implementation will be more successful if an administrative decision is made to determine the curriculum of Tiers 1, 2, and 3. It is also helpful to show teachers how instruction connects with grade-level equivalents and curriculum maps of their core programs. Articulating the connections between the curriculum in the 90-minute content block with the intervention curriculum is a help for teachers.

REFERENCE

Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blasé, K., & Wallace, F. (2007, Winter/Spring). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. *The APSAC Advisor*, 4–10.



Checklist of Observable Processes During RTI Full Implementation Stage By Susan L. Hall, Ed.D., 95 Percent Group Inc.		
Assessment		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal Screening	Benchmark screening is completed three times per year.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Informal Diagnostic Screeners	The school has assembled a tool kit of several informal diagnostic screeners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Informal Diagnostic Screeners	Informal diagnostic screeners are used to inventory which skills the student has mastered, and pinpoint which skills are deficit.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Progress Monitoring	Progress monitoring is completed on all intervention students at least every 3 weeks with either the universal screener or an informal diagnostic screener.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Progress Monitoring	Teachers graph the progress-monitoring data to see each student's rate of improvement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Management & Reporting	The staff of the school has routines for how and when to collect data.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Management & Reporting	Entering data into a data management system is done systematically and completely within a few days of the close of the assessment window.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Management & Reporting	Each teacher reviews reports from the system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Management & Reporting	The principal, reading coach, and/or RTI coordinator review updated data reports at least monthly.
Data Analysis		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Techniques	Teachers have moved beyond the "stoplight phenomenon" of looking only at the instructional recommendation levels of benchmark, strategic, and intensive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Techniques	Teachers analyze probe error patterns to identify whether the student has an accuracy issue, a fluency issue, or both.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Techniques	Teachers use insights from error pattern analysis (or miscue analysis) to determine group placement for below-benchmark students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Techniques	Informal diagnostic screener data are analyzed, along with data from the universal screener.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Procedures	Data are analyzed after each progress-monitoring cycle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis	RTI coordinator or instructional coach meets with teachers regularly to



Create Your Implementation Blueprint, By Susan L. Hall, Ed.D., 95 Percent Group Inc.

	Procedures	discuss data.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Procedures	Data are discussed at grade-level team meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Analysis Procedures	Principal regularly reviews data with teachers.
Grouping		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grouping Procedures	Teachers place students in skill groups to address deficits as evident from the informal diagnostic measures, or from error pattern analysis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grouping Procedures	Teachers no longer group by “strategic groups” or “intensive groups.”
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grouping Procedures	Each skill group has a focused instructional goal, and materials are identified to address the specific skill needs.
Intervention Instruction		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Intervention instruction is a high priority and groups meet daily for 30 minutes (except beginning-of-the-year kindergarten, where they may meet for 15 minutes).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Appropriate materials or programs are selected that will support teacher in providing targeted instruction to match the group’s instructional focus.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Instruction is explicit and systematic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Effective modeling is evident during each group’s lesson with an “I do, we do, you do” cycle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Teachers provide immediate corrective feedback whenever a student makes a mistake.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Instruction	Teachers keep notes about each student in an intervention log.
Problem Solving		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem-Solving Processes	School has a process for discussing the progress of each below-benchmark student.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem-Solving Processes	Discussion includes analysis of the data for individual students, and which students are making an insufficient rate of progress (progress-monitoring points are below their aim line).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem-Solving Processes	Problem-solving group makes changes to intensify instruction for the below-aim line students.



Sample Job Description for RTI Coach or Coordinator

Table 2.2 Job Responsibilities of RTI Coach or Coordinator

Important prerequisite skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly understands reading development and effective instructional practices to teach reading to struggling readers• Collaborates well with teachers• Enjoys working with data
Responsibilities of RTI coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administration of assessments<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Oversees the assessment calendar○ Orders assessment materials○ Organizes storage system for student scoring booklets○ Manages the assessment team (if there is one)○ Organizes schedule for rotating substitutes during assessment periods○ Trains teachers in how to administer assessments○ Provides review sessions on critical administration rules and procedures before each benchmark period• Data collection and reporting<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Coordinates collection of data from assessment teams and classroom teachers○ Distributes reports to teachers○ Coordinates distribution of data to special education, Title I, speech-language pathology, and English as a second language leaders on students they serve○ Prepares data notebook for principal and updates it frequently• Coordination of RTI processes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Attends grade-level team meetings to coordinate RTI processes across grade levels○ Serves as liaison between the principal and teachers on the RTI initiative
Additional responsibilities of RTI coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data analysis<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Meets with teachers individually or in grade-level teams to help interpret data○ Instructs teachers in data analysis procedures, including item analysis on student probes for error patterns○ Helps teachers place students in intervention groups and define focus of instruction for each group• Planning intervention instruction for each group<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assists teachers in preparing materials and strategies for each group• Instructional coach<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Models effective intervention group instruction for teachers○ Observes teachers instructing intervention groups and provides feedback and coaching



RTI Implementation Timetable – Example for an Elementary Building

	Year 1		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 & Beyond
	Exploration	Installation	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation	Innovation	Sustainability
Assessment						
Select Assessments	Select screener	Select diagnostic assessments				
Assessment Calendar	Create Initial Assessment Calendar	Add progress monitoring	Increase frequency of progress monitoring	Improve calendar	Sustain assessment practices	
Benchmark Screening	Complete Baseline Screening	Benchmark 3 X/year	Benchmark 3 X/year	Benchmark 3 X/year	Benchmark 3 X/year	
Progress Monitoring		Assess below - benchmark students periodically	Assess below - benchmark students periodically	Assess below - benchmark students periodically	Assess below - benchmark students periodically	
Data Analysis						
Learn Data Analysis & Grouping Techniques	Begin training literacy team, reading coaches, & reading specialists	Train classroom teachers	Train new teachers	Train new teachers	Train new teachers	
Coaching	Team receives coaching	Classroom teachers receive coaching	New teachers receive coaching	New teachers receive coaching	New teachers receive coaching	
Application	Coaches assign groups	Teachers begin grouping	Teachers continue grouping	Improve grouping practices	Sustain practices to group below-benchmark students	
Service Delivery & Scheduling						
Schedule	Initial discussion	Add intervention block to master schedule	Revise blocks	Improve schedule	Maintain intervention blocks in schedule	
Delivery Model	Initial discussion	Determine model & establish it	Revise model	Improve model	Maintain model	
Tiers	Analyze effectiveness of Tier 1	Gr. K&1 – add Tier 2	Gr. K&1 – add Tier 3 Gr. 2&3 – add Tier 2	Gr. K&1- Improve tiers Gr. 2&3 – add Tier 3 Gr. 4&5 – add Tier 2	Gr. K&1 – Sustain tiers Gr. 2&3 – Sustain tiers Gr. 4&5 – add Tier 3	

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Sample School Master Schedule

TIME	KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE	SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE	COACH			
8:00	Core Reading Block	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Prep			
8:05		Core Reading Block	Core Reading Block	Core Reading Block	Observe Core Reading Block			
8:10								
8:15								
8:20								
8:25								
8:30								
8:35	In Class Intervention	Core Reading Block	Core Reading Block	Core Reading Block	Observe Core Reading Block			
8:40								
8:45								
8:50								
8:55								
9:00								
9:05	Core Reading Block	Spelling	In Class Intervention	Recess	Prep			
9:10								
9:15								
9:20								
9:25								
9:30								
9:35	Recess	Recess	Recess	Block 1	Prep			
9:40								
9:45								
9:50								
9:55								
10:00								
10:05	Instructional Time	Math	Planning Time / Specials	1 Math	2 Science & Social Science - Benchmark & Intervention Groups	First Grade Intervention		
10:10								
10:15								
10:20								
10:25								
10:30								
10:35				Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Block 2	Third Grade / Second Grade Intervention
10:40								
10:45								
10:50								
10:55								
11:00								
11:05	Lunch	Lunch	Science / SS / Pull Out Intervention	1 Science & Social Science - Benchmark & Intervention Groups	2 Math	Lunch		
11:10								
11:15								
11:20								
11:25								
11:30								
11:35	Instructional Time	Planning Time / Specials	Language Arts / Spelling	In Class Intervention	Kindergarten Intervention			
11:40								
11:45								
11:50								
11:55								
12:00								
12:05	Pull Out Intervention	Language Arts	Language Arts / Spelling	In Class Intervention	Kindergarten Intervention			
12:10								
12:15								
12:20								
12:25								
12:30								
12:35	Instructional Time	Recess	Recess	Recess	Prep			
12:40								
12:45								
12:50								
12:55								
1:00								
1:05	Recess	Science / SS / Pull Out Intervention	Math	Planning Time / Specials	First Grade Intervention			
1:10								
1:15								
1:20								
1:25								
1:30								
1:35	Instructional Time	Language Arts	Math	Planning Time / Specials	Third Grade Intervention			
1:40								
1:45								
1:50								
1:55								
2:00								
2:05	Instructional Time	Language Arts	Math	Planning Time / Specials	Third Grade Intervention			
2:10								
2:15								
2:20								
2:25								
2:30								
2:35								
2:40								
2:45								
2:50								
2:55								