RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools

RTI: Resources for Educators

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Response to Intervention

RTI: An Overview for Educators

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School Instructional Time: The Irreplaceable Resource

"In the average school system, there are 330 minutes in the instructional day, 1,650 minutes in the instructional week, and 56,700 minutes in the instructional year. Except in unusual circumstances, these are the only minutes we have to provide effective services for students. The number of years we have to apply these minutes is fixed. Therefore, each minute counts and schools cannot afford to support inefficient models of service delivery." p. 177

Source: Batsche, G. M., Castillo, J. M., Dixon, D. N., & Forde, S. (2008). Best practices in problem analysis. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), Best practices in school psychology V (pp. 177-193).

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RTI Assumption: Struggling Students Are 'Typical' Until Proven Otherwise…

RTI logic assumes that:

- A student who begins to struggle in general education is *typical*, and that
- It is general education's responsibility to find the instructional strategies that will unlock the student's learning potential

Only when the student shows through well-documented interventions that he or she has 'failed to respond to intervention' does RTI begin to investigate the possibility that the student may have a learning disability or other special education condition.

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Five Core Components of RTI Service Delivery

1. Student services are arranged in a multi-tier model
2. Data are collected to assess student baseline levels and to make decisions about student progress
3. Interventions are 'evidence-based'
4. The 'procedural integrity' of interventions is measured
5. RTI is implemented and developed at the school- and district-level to be scalable and sustainable over time

Source: Glover, T. A., & DiPerna, J. C. (2007). Service delivery for response to intervention: Core components and directions for future research. *School Psychology Review, 36*, 526-540.

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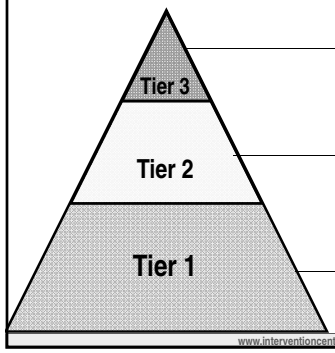
RTI 'Pyramid of Interventions'



Tier 3: Intensive interventions. Students who are 'non-responders' to Tiers I & II may be eligible for special education services, intensive interventions.

Tier 2 Individualized interventions. Subset öf students receive interventions targeting specific needs.

Tier 1: Universal interventions. Available to all students in a classroom or school. Can consist of whole-group or individual strategies or supports.

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Tier 1 Core Instruction

Tier I core instruction:

- Is universal—available to all students.
- Can be delivered within classrooms or throughout the school.
- Is an ongoing process of developing strong classroom instructional practices to reach the largest number of struggling learners.

All children have access to Tier 1 instruction/interventions. Teachers have the capability to use those strategies without requiring outside assistance.

Tier 1 instruction encompasses:

- The school's core curriculum.
- Al published or teacher-made materials used to deliver that curriculum.
- Teacher use of 'whole-group' teaching & management strategies.

Tier I instruction addresses this question: *Are strong classroom instructional strategies sufficient to help the student to achieve academic success?*

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Tier I (Classroom) Intervention

Tier 1 intervention:

- Targets 'red flag' students who are not successful with core instruction alone.
- Uses 'evidence-based' strategies to address student academic or behavioral concerns.
- Must be feasible to implement given the resources available in the classroom.

Tier I intervention addresses the question: *Does the student make adequate progress when the instructor uses specific academic or behavioral strategies matched to the presenting concern?*

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Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet

Teacher/Team: _____ Date: _____ Student: _____

Student Problem Definition #1: _____

Student Problem Definition #2: _____

[Optional] Person(s) assisting with intervention planning process: _____

Interventions: Essential Elements (Witt et al., 2004)
- Clear problem-definition(s)
- Baseline data
- Goal for improvement
- Progress-monitoring plan

Intervention Description	Intervention Delivery	Check-Up Date	Assessment Data
Describe each intervention that you plan to use to address the student's concern(s).	List key details about delivery of the intervention, such as: (1) where & when the intervention will be used; (2) the adult-to-student ratio; (3) how frequently the intervention will take place; (4) the length of time each session of the intervention will last.	Select a date when the data will be reviewed to evaluate the intervention.	Note what classroom data will be used to establish baseline , set a goal for improvement, and track the student's progress during this intervention.
			Type(s) of Data to Be Used: / Baseline / Goal by Check-Up
			Type(s) of Data to Be Used: / Baseline / Goal by Check-Up
			Type(s) of Data to Be Used: / Baseline / Goal by Check-Up

Witt, J. C., VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Gilbertson, D. (2004). Troubleshooting behavioral interventions: A systematic process for finding and eliminating problems. *School Psychology Review, 33*, 363-383.

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The Key RTI Role of Classroom Teachers as Tier 1 'Interventionists': 6 Steps

1. The teacher defines the student academic or behavioral problem clearly.
2. The teacher decides on the best explanation for why the problem is occurring.
3. The teacher selects 'evidence-based' interventions.
4. The teacher documents the student's Tier 1 intervention plan.
5. The teacher monitors the student's response (progress) to the intervention plan.
6. The teacher knows what the next steps are when a student fails to make adequate progress with Tier 1 interventions alone.

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Complementary RTI Models: Standard Treatment & Problem-Solving Protocols

"The two most commonly used RTI approaches are (1) *standard treatment* and (2) *problem-solving protocol.* While these two approaches to RTI are sometimes described as being very different from each other, they actually have several common elements, and both fit within a problem-solving framework. In practice, many schools and districts combine or blend aspects of the two approaches to fit their needs."

Source: Duffy, H. (August 2007). *Meeting the needs of significantly struggling learners in high school.* Washington, DC: National High School Center. Retrieved from http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/ p. 5

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RTI Interventions: Standard-Treatment vs. Problem-Solving

There are two different vehicles that schools can use to deliver RTI interventions:

Standard-Protocol (Standalone Intervention). Programs based on scientifically valid instructional practices ('standard protocol') are created to address frequent student referral concerns. These services are provided outside of the classroom. A middle school, for example, may set up a structured math-tutoring program staffed by adult volunteer tutors to provide assistance to students with limited math skills. Students referred for a Tier II math intervention would be placed in this tutoring program. An advantage of the standard-protocol approach is that it is efficient and consistent: large numbers of students can be put into these group interventions to receive a highly standardized intervention. However, standard group intervention protocols often cannot be individualized easily to accommodate a specific student's unique needs.

Problem-solving (Classroom-Based Intervention). Individualized research-based interventions match the profile of a particular student's strengths and limitations. The classroom teacher often has a large role in carrying out these interventions. A plus of the problem-solving approach is that the intervention can be customized to the student's needs. However, developing intervention plans for individual students can be time-consuming.

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Tier 2: Supplemental (Standard-Protocol Model) Interventions

Tier 2 interventions are typically delivered in small-group format. About 15% of students in the typical school will require Tier 2/supplemental intervention support.

Group size for Tier 2 interventions is limited to 4-6 students.

Students placed in Tier 2 interventions should have a shared profile of intervention need.

The reading progress of students in Tier 2 interventions are monitored at least 1-2 times per month.

Source: Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. A. (2008). *Implementing response-to-intervention in elementary and secondary schools.* Routledge: New York.

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Tier 2: Supplemental Interventions

- Decision Point: Building-wide academic screenings
- Collaboration Opportunity: After each building-wide academic screening, 'data teams' meet (teachers at a grade level; building principal; reading teacher, etc.) At the meeting, the group considers how the assessment data should shape/inform core instruction. Additionally, the data team sets a cutpoint to determine which students should be recruited for Tier 2 group interventions. NOTE: Team may continue to meet every 5 weeks to consider student progress in Tier 2; move students into and out of groups.
- Documentation: Tier 2 instructor completes a Tier 2 Group Assignment Sheet listing students and their corresponding interventions. Progress-monitoring occurs 1-2 times per month.
- Decision Rules [Example]: Student is returned to Tier 1 support if they perform above the 25th percentile in the next school-wide screening. Student is referred to Tier 3 (RTI Team) if they fail to make expected progress despite two Tier 2 (group-based) interventions.

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Tier 2 RTI Group Assignment Sheet

Group Intervention: _____

_____

Teacher: _____

Group Meeting Time: _____ to _____ Frequency:_____ Days Per Week

Student	Classroom	Student Baseline Performance	Student Goal	Student Start Date	Student End Date
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		
		_____	_____		

Data Team Date: _____ Members: _____

_____

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Scheduling Elementary Tier 2 Interventions

Option 3: ***'Floating RTI':Gradewide Shared Schedule***. Each grade has a scheduled RTI time across classrooms. No two grades share the same RTI time. Advantages are that outside providers can move from grade to grade providing push-in or pull-out services and that students can be grouped by need across different teachers within the grade.

Anyplace Elementary School: RTI Daily Schedule

Grade K	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*9:00-9:30*
Grade 1	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*9:45-10:15*
Grade 2	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*10:30-11:00*
Grade 3	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*12:30-1:00*
Grade 4	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*1:15-1:45*
Grade 5	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	*2:00-2:30*

Source: Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. A. (2008). Implementing response-to-intervention in elementary and secondary schools: Procedures to assure scientific-based practices. New York: Routledge.

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Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Interventions (Problem-Solving Model)

Tier 3 interventions are the most intensive offered in a school setting. About 5 % of a general-education student population may qualify for Tier 3 supports. Typically, the RTI Problem-Solving Team meets to develop intervention plans for Tier 3 students.

Students qualify for Tier 3 interventions because:

- they are found to have a large skill gap when compared to their class or grade peers; and/or
- They did not respond to interventions provided previously at Tiers 1 & 2.

Tier 3 interventions are provided daily for sessions of 30 minutes. The student-teacher ratio is flexible but should allow the student to receive intensive, individualized instruction. The academic or behavioral progress of students in Tier 3 interventions is monitored at least weekly.

Source: Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. A. (2008). *Implementing response-to-intervention in elementary and secondary schools.* Routledge: New York.

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Tier 3: RTI Team

- Decision Point: RTI Problem-Solving Team
- Collaboration Opportunity: Weekly RTI Problem-Solving Team meetings are scheduled to handle referrals of students that failed to respond to interventions from Tiers 1 & 2.
- Documentation: Teacher referral form; RTI Team minutes form; progress-monitoring data collected at least weekly.
- Decision Rules [Example]: If student has failed to respond adequately to 3 intervention trials of 6-8 weeks (from Tiers 2 and 3), the student may be referred to Special Education.

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RTI & Intervention: Key Concepts

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Essential Elements of Any Academic or Behavioral Intervention ('Treatment') Strategy:

- ***Method of delivery*** *('Who or what delivers the treatment?') Examples include teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, volunteers, computers.*
- ***Treatment component*** *('What makes the intervention effective?')*
  Examples include activation of prior knowledge to help the student to make meaningful connections between 'known' and new material; guide practice (e.g., Paired Reading) to increase reading fluency; periodic review of material to aid student retention.

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Core Instruction*, Interventions*, Accommodations & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

- **Core Instruction.** Those instructional strategies that are used routinely with all students in a general-education setting are considered 'core instruction'. High-quality instruction is essential and forms the foundation of RTI academic support. NOTE: While it is important to verify that good core instructional practices are in place for a struggling student, those routine practices do not 'count' as individual student interventions.

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Core Instruction, ***Interventions***, Accommodations & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

- **Intervention.** An academic intervention is a strategy used to teach a new skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage a child to apply an existing skill to new situations or settings. An intervention can be thought of as "a set of actions that, when taken, have demonstrated ability to change a fixed educational trajectory" (Methe & Riley-Tillman, 2008; p. 37).

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Core Instruction, Interventions, **Accommodations** & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

- **Accommodation.** An accommodation is intended to help the student to fully access and participate in the general-education curriculum without changing the instructional content and without reducing the student's rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). An accommodation is intended to remove barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their typical peers.
  - Accommodation example 1: Students are allowed to supplement silent reading of a novel by listening to the book on tape.
  - Accommodation example 2: For unmotivated students, the instructor breaks larger assignments into smaller 'chunks' and providing students with performance feedback and praise for each completed 'chunk' of assigned work (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).

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Core Instruction, Interventions, Accommodations & **Modifications**: Sorting Them Out

- **Modification.** A modification changes the expectations of what a student is expected to know or do—typically by lowering the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated.

  Examples of modifications:
  - Giving a student five math computation problems for practice instead of the 20 problems assigned to the rest of the class
  - Letting the student consult course notes during a test when peers are not permitted to do so
  - Allowing a student to select a much easier book for a book report than would be allowed to his or her classmates.

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Methods of Classroom Data Collection

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Interventions: Potential 'Fatal Flaws'

Any intervention must include 4 essential elements. The absence of any one of the elements would be considered a 'fatal flaw' (Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004) that blocks the school from drawing meaningful conclusions from the student's response to the intervention:

1. *Clearly defined problem.* The student's target concern is stated in specific, observable, measureable terms. This 'problem identification statement' is the most important step of the problem-solving model (Bergan, 1995), as a clearly defined problem allows the teacher or RTI Team to select a well-matched intervention to address it.
2. *Baseline data.* The teacher or RTI Team measures the student's academic skills in the target concern (e.g., reading fluency, math computation) prior to beginning the intervention. Baseline data becomes the point of comparison throughout the intervention to help the school to determine whether that intervention is effective.
3. *Performance goal.* The teacher or RTI Team sets a specific, data-based goal for student improvement during the intervention and a checkpoint date by which the goal should be attained.
4. *Progress-monitoring plan.* The teacher or RTI Team collects student data regularly to determine whether the student is on-track to reach the performance goal.

Source: Witt, J. C., VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Gilbertson, D. (2004). Troubleshooting behavioral interventions. A systematic process for finding and eliminating problems. *School Psychology Review, 33*, 363-383.

Existing Records

- Description: The teacher uses information already being collected in the classroom that is relevant to the identified student problem.
- Examples of existing records that can be used to track student problems include:
  - Grades
  - Absences and incidents of tardiness
  - Homework turned in

Global Skills Checklists

- Description: The teacher selects a global skill.

  The teacher then breaks that global skill down into specific, observable 'subskills'. Each subskill can be verified as 'done' or 'not done'.

Skills Checklists: Example

- The teacher selects the global skill 'organizational skills'.
- That global skill is defined as having the following components, each of which can be observed:
  - ❑arriving to class on time;
  - ❑bringing work materials to class;
  - ❑following teacher directions in a timely manner;
  - ❑knowing how to request teacher assistance when needed;
  - ❑having an uncluttered desk with only essential work materials.

Behavioral Frequency Count

- Description: The teacher observes a student behavior and keeps a cumulative tally of the number of times that the behavior is observed during a given period.
- Behaviors that are best measured using frequency counts have clearly observable beginning and end points—and are of relatively short duration. Examples include:
  - Student call-outs.
  - Requests for teacher help during independent seatwork.
  - Raising one's hand to make a contribution to large-group discussion.

Behavioral Frequency Count: How to Record

Teachers can collect data on the frequency of student behaviors in several ways:

- Keeping a mental tally of the frequency of target behaviors occurring during a class period.
- Recording behaviors on paper (e.g., simple tally marks) as they occur.
- Using a golf counter, stitch counter, or other mechanical counter device to keep an accurate tally of behaviors.

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Behavioral Frequency Count: How to Compute

- If student behaviors are being tallied during a class period, frequency-count data can be reported as 'X number of behaviors per class period'.
- If frequency-count data is collected in different spans of time on different days, however, schools can use the following method to standardize frequency count data :
  - Record the total number of behaviors observed.
  - Record the number of minutes in the observation period.
  - Divide the total number of behaviors observed by total minutes in the observation period.

    Example: 5 callouts observed during a 10 minute period = 0.5 callouts per minute.

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Behavior Log

- Description: The teacher makes a log entry each time that a behavior is observed. An advantage of behavior logs is that they can provide information about the context within which a behavior occurs.(Disciplinary office referrals are a specialized example of a behavior log.)
- Behavior logs are useful for tracking 'low-incidence' problem behaviors.

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Behavior Log: Sample Form

Student Name: _____ Observer: _____

Time: ___:___ a.m./p.m. Date: ___/___/___ Location: _____

Brief narrative of incident (including persons involved, scheduled activity, triggering event(s), outcome(s)):

_____

_____

_____

How long did this incident last? _____ mins

How severe was the behavior in the incident? 1 Not Severe 2 Somewhat Severe 3 Very Severe

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Rating Scales

- Description: A scale is developed that a rater can use to complete a global rating of a behavior. Often the rating scale is completed at the conclusion of a fixed observation period (e.g., after each class period).
- Daily / Direct Behavior Report Cards are one example of rating scales.

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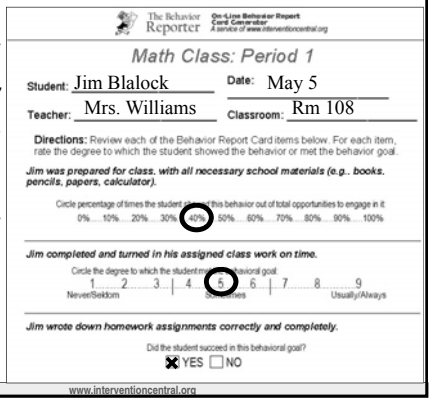
Daily Behavior Report Card: Daily Version


The Behavior Reporter — On-Line Behavior Report Card Generator (A service of www.interventioncentral.org)

Math Class: Period 1

Student: Jim Blalock Date: May 5

Teacher: Mrs. Williams Classroom: Rm 108

Directions: Review each of the Behavior Report Card items below. For each item, rate the degree to which the student showed the behavior or met the behavior goal.

Jim was prepared for class. with all necessary school materials (e.g., books. pencils, papers, calculator).

Circle percentage of times the student [illegible] this behavior out of total opportunities to engage in it:
0%...10%...20%...30%...40%...50%...60%...70%...80%...90%...100%

Jim completed and turned in his assigned class work on time.

Circle the degree to which the student met the behavioral goal:
1 Never/Seldom ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 Sometimes ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 Usually/Always

Jim wrote down homework assignments correctly and completely.

Did the student succeed in this behavioral goal?
✖ YES ☐ NO

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Student Work Samples

- Description: Work samples are collected for information about the student's basic academic skills, mastery of course content, etc.
- Recommendation: When collecting work samples:
  - Record the date that the sample was collected
  - If the work sample was produced in class, note the amount of time needed to complete the sample (students can calculate and record this information).
  - If possible, collect 1-2 work samples from typical students as well to provide a standard of peer comparison.

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Work Performance Logs

- Description: Information about student academic performance is collected to provide insight into growth in student skills or use of skills in appropriate situations.

  Example: A teacher implementing a vocabulary-building intervention keeps a cumulative log noting date and vocabulary words mastered.
- Example: A student keeps a journal with dated entries logging books read or the amount of 'seat time' that she spends on math homework.

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Timed Tasks (e.g., Curriculum-Based Measurement)

- Description: The teacher administers structured, timed tasks to assess student accuracy and fluency.
- Example: The student completes a 2-minute CBM single-skill math computation probe.
- Example: The student completes a 3-minute CBM writing probe that is scored for total words written.

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Combining Classroom Monitoring Methods

- Often, methods of classroom data collection and progress-monitoring can be combined to track a single student problem.
- Example: A teacher can use a rubric (checklist) to rate the quality of student work samples.
- Example: A teacher may keep a running tally (behavioral frequency count) of student callouts. At the same time, the student may be self-monitoring his rate of callouts on a Daily Behavior Report Card (rating scale).

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Activity: Classroom Methods of Data Collection

In your teams:

- Review the potential sources of classroom data that can be used to monitor Tier 1 interventions.
- What questions do you have about any of these data sources?
- How can your school make full use of these data sources to ensure that every Tier 1 intervention is monitored?

Classroom Data Sources:

- Existing records
- Skills checklist
- Rating scales
- Behavioral frequency count
- Behavioral log
- Student work samples
- Work performance logs
- Timed tasks (e.g., CBM)

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Interventionist, Consultant, Data Analyst: Shared Job Descriptions Under RTI

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Shared Roles: Interventionist

The **interventionist** is a teacher or other educator who is directly responsible for implementing an intervention for an individual student or small group. The role requires clear definition ôt the student problem(s), selection of evidence-based intervention strategies or programs, use of data to determine if the intervention is effective, and measurement of how the intervention is carried out to ensure that it is implemented with integrity.

Interventionist: Key 'Look-Fors'

1. Defines the student academic or behavioral concern in clear, specific, measurable terms.
2. Selects interventions that are 'evidence-based' (i.e., intervention practices or programs that have been demonstrated to be effective in one or more high-quality studies in reputable peer reviewed journals).
3. Selects interventions that logically match the presenting student problem(s) (e.g., choosing a fluency-building intervention such as Paired Reading for a student who has acquired basic reading skills but has delayed reading fluency).

Interventionist: Key 'Look-Fors'

4. Delivers the intervention with a high level of integrity (e.g., ensuring that the intervention is implemented with the appropriate frequency, session length, steps of the intervention, student-teacher group size, etc.).
5. Ensures that any accommodations included as part of a general-education student's RTI intervention plan (e.g., preferential seating, breaking a longer assignment into smaller chunks) do not substantially lower the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated and are not likely to reduce the student's rate of learning.
6. Knows which elements of the intervention are 'critical' (must be implemented precisely as designed) and those that are 'negotiable' (the interventionist has some degree of flexibility in how those elements are implemented).

Interventionist: Key 'Look-Fors'

7. Completes required documentation of the intervention (e.g., writing down all necessary details of the intervention plan before implementing, maintaining a contact log to record each intervention session, etc.).
8. Collects baseline data on student performance prior to the intervention, sets a predicted goal for student improvement to be attained by the intervention checkup date, and allots an adequate minimum period for the intervention (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks) to adequately judge its impact.
9. Collects regular progress-monitoring data during the intervention to determine if the student is making adequate progress (Tier 1 monitoring frequency is at discretion of the interventionist; Tier 2 monitoring occurs at least 1-2 times per month; Tier 3 monitoring occurs at least weekly).
10. Applies decision rules at the checkup date to evaluate whether the intervention is successful and to determine the appropriate 'next intervention steps'.

Shared Roles: Consultant

The **consultant** provides support to teachers (or other interventionists), helping them to structure and implement an intervention to maximize its chances for success. The consultant establishes a collegial relationship with teachers, uses a structured problem-solving model to match students to those intervention ideas most likely to be effective, and focuses on student factors that are alterable as the focus of interventions.

Consultant: Key 'Look-Fors'

1. Has knowledge within his or her area(s) of expertise of a range of intervention ideas that are 'evidence-based'.
2. Fosters collegial relationships to promote teachers' willingness to access consultation services. For example, the consultant uses 'safe' language in consultation that avoids the appearance of 'judging' teachers' skills or job performance—concentrating instead on objective data and actual student performance.
3. Focuses during the consultation meeting on those factors that are alterable in a school setting (e.g., instructional materials, instructional strategies, motivating strategies).

Consultant: Key 'Look-Fors'

4. Ensures that a range of possible factors are considered to increase the probability of finding the correct explanation of a student's academic, behavioral, or other problems. A helpful acronym to promote investigation of multiple possible explanations of student problems in schools is ICEL: instruction (factors related to instructional delivery); curriculum (degree of student master of curriculum goals); environment (non-instructional factors in the learning environment such as presence of peers that can help or impede learning); learner (factors residing primarily within the learner—such as high levels of inattention across all classes or a low sense of self-efficacy regarding school-- that can significantly influence learning).

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Consultant: Key 'Look-Fors'

5. Follows a structured problem-solving agenda during consultation meetings. The initial consultation meeting includes (a) problem identification, (b) problem analysis, and(c) development of an intervention plan. The follow-up consultation meeting includes (c) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention plan.
6. Helps teachers to define student academic and behavioral problems in clear, specific, measureable terms.
7. Ensures that interventions developed in consultation meetings are scripted in step-by-step format with sufficient detail to promote teachers' high-quality implementation.

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Consultant: Key 'Look-Fors'

8. Assists teachers in measuring student baseline performance and in computing goals for student progress.
9. Develops a plan with teacher input to measure the integrity with which the intervention is implemented using a mix of direct and indirect means (e.g., sampling of student work products produced during the intervention; teacher self-ratings of intervention integrity; direct observation of intervention implementation). NOTE: The teacher is also strongly encouraged to notify the consultant immediately if any part of the intervention cannot be carried out as designed.
10. Schedules a follow-up meeting with the teacher (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks after the initial consultation meeting) to determine whether the intervention plan is successful and to decide on the next step(s) to be taken.

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Shared Roles: Data Analyst

The **data analyst** makes an effort to help the teacher or school to collect information from a variety of sources to better understand a student problem, creates time-series graphs as visual displays to show student progress, finds the best methods for estimating peer performance and setting goals for rate of student progress, and can apply tools of data analysis to progress-monitoring data to determine if the student has made adequate growth with the intervention.

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Data Analyst: Key 'Look-Fors'

1. Ensures that background information is drawn from varied data sources to more fully understand a presenting student academic or behavioral problem. A helpful acronym to promote collection of multiple kinds of data in schools is RIOT: review of student records; interviews; observations of the student, testing.
2. Can judge when sufficient data have been collected from multiple sources to allow the teacher or school to analyze the student problem ('data saturation' point).
3. Uses time-series (progress-monitoring) graphs to convert student baseline and progress-monitoring numeric data into visual displays of data points that are easy to interpret.

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Data Analyst: Key 'Look-Fors'

4. Selects the most appropriate method to estimate typical or expected peer performance in a particular academic or other targeted skill. The data analyst selects from among these possible options: research norms/performance benchmarks/product norms, schoolwide norms, classroom or small group norms, expert opinion.
5. Calculates predicted rate of student progress during the intervention using the most appropriate method. The data analyst selects from among these possible choices: research growth norms, product growth norms, average rates of student progress calculated from schoolwide screenings repeated several times during the school year, expert opinion.
6. Helps teachers to sift through multiple types of available classroom data and determine the relative value for each in providing clear, objective, 'low-inference' information about the presenting student problem(s).

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Response to Intervention

Data Analyst: Key 'Look-Fors'

7. Assists in developing plans for teachers to measure student progress during interventions—using classroom data that is feasible to collect (e.g., direct observation; student work products; teacher ratings; student self-ratings; grades and other archival information).
8. Observes the general principle that methods of student assessment and progress-monitoring should have technical adequacy (validity and reliability) sufficient for the task. The data analyst understands that interventions at earlier tiers such as Tier 1 with lower stakes can use less-rigorous, classroom-friendly data, while high-stakes interventions at higher tiers such as Tier 3 will require data sources with more rigorous technical adequacy.

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Data Analyst: Key 'Look-Fors'

9. Uses a range of tools to analyze student baseline and progress-monitoring data formatively to determine whether the intervention is successful. Some examples of data-analysis tools are visual analysis of charted data across intervention phases, trend lines, and percentage of non-overlapping data points.
10. Applies standard data-based decision rules adopted by the school or district to determine whether a student is making adequate progress with the existing intervention, requires an intervention change, or should be referred to a higher Tier for additional intervention support.

Tier 1 (Classroom) Interventions: Building Your School's Capacity

Directions: Schools must plan carefully to build their capacity to carry out evidence-based Tier 1 interventions in the classroom. Below is an 8-point checklist that schools can follow to expand their capacity to provide appropriate teacher-led classroom interventions available to all students who might need them.

☐ **Train Teachers to Write Specific, Measureable, Observable 'Problem Identification Statements**.

☐ **Inventory Tier 1 Interventions Already in Use**.

☐ **Create a Standard Menu of Evidence-Based Tier 1 Intervention Ideas for Teachers**.

☐ **Establish Tier 1 Coaching and Support Resources**.

☐ **Provide Classroom (Tier 1) Problem-Solving Support to Teachers.**

☐ **Set Up a System to Locate Additional Evidence-Based Tier 1 Intervention Ideas**.

☐ **Create Formal Guidelines for Teachers to Document Tier 1 Strategies**.

☐ **Develop Decision Rules for Referring Students from Tier 1 to Higher Levels of Intervention**.

☐ **Train Teachers to Write Specific, Measureable, Observable 'Problem Identification Statements'**. Teachers are able to describe common student academic and behavioral problems accurately in specific, observable, measurable terms.

If training in this skill is required, how will teachers receive this training? _____

_____

_____

If training is required, who will provide the training? _____

Tip: Review past student cases referred to your school's RTI Team (Problem-Solving Team). For each case, list the primary reason(s) that the student was referred. Review this cumulative list of referral concerns to determine (a) the kinds of student referral concerns that teachers are most likely to encounter and (b) whether referring teachers are able to articulate clearly and specifically their concerns about students.

☐ **Inventory Tier 1 Interventions Already in Use**. The school surveys teachers' current classroom intervention practices to discover those effective strategies that they are already using. This information can assist the school in understanding the staff's present capacity to deliver classroom interventions, as well as gaps in intervention knowledge and use.

1. Generate a list of 4-6 TOP teacher RTI referral concerns for your school (e.g., 'lack of study/organizational skills', 'limited content-area vocabulary').
2. Create a survey form for teachers that lists each top RTI referral concern and asks that

teachers write down those whole-group or individual student strategies that they routinely use in the classroom to address that concern. Teachers are encouraged to write enough detail so that the strategy is clear to others. (Note: As a sample survey, review the form *Teacher Survey: What Classroom (Tier 1) Instruction/Intervention Strategies Do You Currently Use?* later in this packet.)

3. Review the surveys. Compile a list of the best teacher strategies—organized by referral concern. Include only those classroom intervention ideas that are supported by research.
4. Analyze the results on the classroom intervention survey to determine current teacher intervention practices; variability of intervention use among classrooms, grade levels, teams, or departments; intervention areas in which teachers require additional training, etc.

Tips:

- Your school can identify potential 'intervention coaches' among your staff by reviewing teacher responses to the intervention surveys. Contact those teachers who list innovative and effective intervention ideas and ask whether they might be willing to serve as informal 'intervention coaches', being available to demonstrate those strategies to other teachers and coach those teachers in their use.
- Once your school has created a list of the 'best' classroom intervention ideas organized by referral concern, give a copy of that list to teachers. Point out that staff already routinely provides Tier 1 interventions to students—and that over time the RTI model will simply build on this existing capacity.
- Scan the teacher Tier 1 intervention survey results. Select the strongest entries to add to the schoolwide Tier 1 intervention menu (see next section).

☐ **Create a Standard Menu of Evidence-Based Tier 1 Intervention Ideas for Teachers**. When given a menu of evidence-based classroom interventions, teachers can independently access and use them to address common student academic and behavioral concerns.

1. Generate a list of the academic and behavioral concerns for which your teachers appear most in need of classroom intervention strategies (e.g., 'reading fluency', 'inattention in class'). (Note: To record these areas of student concern, you can use the form *Grade- or Building-Wide Student Academic / Behavioral Concerns for Which Tier 1 Intervention Menus Will Be Developed* that appears later in this packet.)
2. For each common student concern, locate evidence-based intervention ideas from research journals and other print publications, websites, etc.
3. Write each intervention idea in a teacher-friendly format, including sufficient detail for the instructor to implement the strategy in the classroom. Organize all of the collected ideas into a Tier 1 intervention menu. Group each intervention under the appropriate category of teacher concern (e.g., 'reading fluency', 'inattention in class'). Share these intervention menus with teachers.

Tip: The What Works Clearinghouse has an expanding series of 'practice guides' with empirically supported classroom ideas for instruction and behavior management. These guides are one good source for Tier 1 intervention ideas. You can review these practice guides at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/

☐ **Establish Tier 1 Coaching and Support Resources**. Teachers are encouraged to access colleagues as needed who can demonstrate how to use effective Tier 1 interventions—and can

also provide coaching and feedback in those intervention skills.

1. Identify personnel in your school (and perhaps district-wide) who can be available to meet with teachers as intervention coaches.
2. Train these personnel to be effective Tier 1 coaches by ensuring that they follow a structured sequence in their coaching: a. meet with the teacher to select one or more ideas from the school's Tier 1 intervention menu, b. show the teacher how to use each selected strategy, c. go into the teacher's class if needed to demonstrate the strategy, d. observe the teacher use the strategy and give performance feedback.
3. Compile a list of people in the school who can serve as intervention coaches. Share that list with teachers. Include information about how teachers can contact coaches and how to schedule coaching sessions.

Tip: Find creative ways to make Tier 1 intervention coaching time-efficient. If your school has grade-level / teaching team / department meetings, for example, consider bringing coaches to those meetings occasionally to show all teachers how to use interventions for shared concerns.

☐**Provide Classroom (Tier 1) Problem-Solving Support to Teachers.** Teachers can reach out to colleagues for additional Tier 1 classroom intervention ideas that they can try before referring a student to higher levels of intervention.

OPTION A: Time is regularly reserved at grade-level / teaching team / department meetings for teachers to bring students up for discussion. The team and teacher generate a list of evidence-based interventions that the teacher can implement.

How frequently will this team meet to discuss students struggling at Tier 1? _____

How will those intervention ideas be documented? _____

_____

OPTION B: The school generates a list of building-level (and perhaps district-level) personnel who can serve as Tier 1 intervention consultants, meeting individually with teachers to brainstorm classroom intervention ideas.

How will this consultant list be developed and shared with teachers? _____

_____

How will those intervention ideas be documented? _____

_____

Who are candidates to serve as Tier 1 consultants? (Use attached *Tier 1 (Classroom) Intervention Consultant List*).

Tips:

- Invite personnel with specialized training (e.g., reading teachers) to attend grade-level / teaching team / department Tier 1 intervention planning meetings when appropriate to generate additional intervention ideas.
- When selecting candidates for a consultant list, prepare a simple anonymous teacher survey.

On that survey, list the most common academic and behavioral concerns that lead to RTI student referrals in your school. Next to each concern, ask teachers to write in the names of building (and perhaps district) personnel whom they would seek out for intervention ideas. Recruit those people for your consultant list whose names appear most frequently on completed teacher surveys.

☐ **Set Up a System to Locate Additional Evidence-Based Tier 1 Intervention Ideas**. As research identifies additional effective classroom strategies, the school is able routinely to learn of those strategies and add them to its Tier 1 intervention menu.

1. Appoint staff members to serve as 'knowledge brokers' who monitor different intervention topic areas (e.g., inattention in class, study skills, reading fluency, etc.).
2. These knowledge brokers read research journals, attend workshops and otherwise stay current on emerging research into school intervention in their topic area(s).
3. Knowledge brokers periodically make recommendations to the school on innovative intervention ideas that should be added to the Tier 1 intervention menu.

Tip: Consider appointing at least two school staff members to serve as knowledge brokers for each intervention topic area. Sharing responsibilities for staying current on intervention research allows knowledge brokers to collaborate and pool their knowledge—thus making the task more manageable.

☐ **Create Formal Guidelines for Teachers to Document Tier 1 Strategies**. Teachers have a single format for documenting their Tier 1 strategies for students who may be referred for higher levels of intervention.

Create one form that all teachers use to document their classroom interventions in a uniform manner. (See attached Tier 1 Intervention Planner form as a sample documentation format.)

Tip: Be sure that teachers use the standard classroom intervention documentation form at the point when they seek out additional Tier 1 intervention ideas from their fellow teachers or school consultants. Intervention documentation is much easier to do at the point that an intervention is first planned than after that intervention has already been implemented.

☐ **Develop Decision Rules for Referring Students from Tier 1 to Higher Levels of Intervention**. Teachers know when they have attempted a sufficient number of classroom strategies for a still-struggling student and should refer the student for more intervention support.

Establish general decision rules to guide teachers in determining whether they have put sufficient effort into classroom interventions before seeking additional intervention support. These rules should include:

- The minimum number of evidence-based classroom interventions that the teacher should implement and document.
- The minimum period of time that classroom interventions should typically be implemented before teachers should consider a higher level of RTI intervention.
- The expected documentation that teachers should complete describing their Tier 1/classroom intervention efforts.

Tip: Include teachers in the development of decision rules for Tier 1 interventions. When presenting those decision rules to school faculty, be sure to emphasize that the decision rules are simply a formal structured version of good instruction and behavior management.

Tier 1 (Classroom) Intervention Consultant List	
Consultant	Area(s) of Expertise

Grade- or Building-Wide Student Academic / Behavioral Concerns for Which Tier 1 Intervention Menus Will Be Developed School: _____	
Academic Concerns	Behavioral Concerns

Teacher Survey: What Classroom (Tier 1) Instruction/Intervention Strategies Do You Currently Use?

Name: _____ Da te: _____

Directions. For the academic or behavioral concern below, write down those whole-group or individual student strategies that you routinely use in the classroom to address that concern. Please write enough detail so that your strategy is clear to those reviewing this survey.

If we share any of your intervention ideas with staff, may we cite you as the source? __Y __N

Academic or Behavioral Concern: _____

	Teacher Strategy
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Documenting Tier 1 (Classroom) Interventions: A Sample Form

When general-education students begin to struggle with academic or behavioral issues, the classroom teacher will typically select and implement one or more evidence-based intervention strategies to assist those students. But a strong intervention plan needs more than just well-chosen interventions. It also requires 4 additional components (Witt, VanDerHeyden, & Gilbertson, 2004): (1) student concerns should be clearly and specifically defined; (2) one or more methods of formative assessment should be used to track the effectiveness of the intervention; (3) baseline student data should be collected prior to the intervention; and (4) a goal for student improvement should be calculated before the start of the intervention to judge whether that intervention is ultimately successful. If a single one of these essential 4 components is missing, the intervention is to be judged as fatally flawed (Witt, VanDerHeyden, & Gilbertson, 2004) and as not meeting minimum RTI standards.

Teachers need a standard format to use in documenting their 'Tier 1' (classroom) intervention plans. The attached form, *Tier 1/Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet*, is designed to include all of the essential RTI elements of an effective intervention plan. The form includes space to document:

- *Definition of up to two student academic or behavioral problems*. The most significant step in selecting an effective classroom intervention is to correctly identify the target student concern(s) in clear, specific, measureable terms (Bergan, 1995). The teacher selects no more than two student concerns to address on the intervention plan.
- *Intervention description.* The teacher describes the evidence-based intervention(s) that will be used to address the identified student concern(s).
- *Intervention delivery.* The teacher writes down details necessary for implementing the intervention in the classroom (e.g., where and when the intervention will be used; the adult-to-student ratio; how frequently the intervention will take place; the length of time each session of the intervention will last; materials needed for the intervention, etc.
- *Checkup date.* The teacher notes the date at which the intervention will be reviewed to determine whether it has been sufficiently effective. NOTE: For academic interventions, it is advisable to allow at least **4** instructional weeks before deciding whether the intervention has been effective.
- *Assessment data.* For each intervention, the teacher selects the type(s) of classroom data that will be collected formatively throughout the intervention period to judge its effectiveness. For each data source, in turn, the teacher collects baseline data on student performance—and calculates an outcome goal that the student is expected to attain if the intervention is successful. (During the period in which the intervention is in effect, the teacher collects ongoing data to judge student performance and attaches that data to the classroom intervention documentation form.)

While a Tier 1/classroom intervention documentation form is a helpful planning tool, schools should remember that teachers will need other resources and types of assistance as well to be successful in selecting and using Tier 1 interventions. For example, teachers should have access to an 'intervention menu' that contains evidence-based strategies to address the most common academic and behavioral concerns and should be able to get coaching support as they learn how to implement new classroom intervention ideas. A future blog entry will review necessary Tier 1 teacher supports in greater detail.

References

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Tier 1/Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet

Teacher/Team: _____ Date: _____ Student: _____

Student Problem Definition #1: _____

Student Problem Definition #2: _____

[Optional] Person(s) assisting with intervention planning process: _____

Interventions: Essential Elements (Witt et al., 2004)

- Clear problem-definition(s)
- Baseline data
- Goal for improvement
- Progress-monitoring plan

Intervention Description	**Intervention Delivery**	**Check-Up Date**	**Assessment Data**
Describe each intervention that you plan to use to address the student's concern(s).	List key details about delivery of the intervention, such as:; (1) where & when the intervention will be used; (2) the adult-to-student ratio; (3) how frequently the intervention will take place; (4) the length of time each session of the intervention will last;.	Select a date when the data will be reviewed to evaluate the intervention.	Note what classroom data will be used to establish baseline, set a goal for improvement, and track the student's progress during this intervention.
			Type(s) of Data to Be Used: Baseline | Goal by Check-Up
			Type(s) of Data to Be Used: Baseline | Goal by Check-Up
		.	Type(s) of Data to Be Used: Baseline | Goal by Check-Up

Witt, J. C., VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Gilbertson, D. (2004). Troubleshooting behavioral interventions. A systematic process for finding and eliminating problems. *School Psychology Review, 33*, 363-383.

Defining Academic Problems: Do It Right and Interventions Are More Likely to Be Effective

Students who struggle with academic deficits do not do so in isolation. Their difficulties are played out in the larger context of the school environment and curriculum—and represent a 'mismatch' between the characteristics of the student and the instructional demands of the classroom (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). . It may surprise educators to learn that the problem-identification step is the most critical for matching the student to an effective intervention (Bergan, 1995). Problem identification statements should be defined in clear and specific terms sufficient to pass 'the stranger test' (Howell, Hosp, & Kurns, 2008). That is, the student problem can be judged as adequately defined if a person with no background knowledge of the case and equipped only with a copy of the problem-identification statement can observe the student in the academic setting and know with confidence when the problem behavior is displayed and when it is not.

Here are recommendations for increasing teacher capacity to frame student skills in relation to curriculum requirements, describe student academic problems in specific terms, and place student academic deficits in the context of task demands and peer expectations.

1. **Be knowledgeable of the school academic curriculum and key student academic skills that are taught.** The teacher should have a good survey-level knowledge of the key academic skills outlined in the school's curriculum—for the grade level of their classroom as well as earlier grade levels. If the curriculum alone is not adequate for describing a student's academic deficit, the instructor can make use of research-based definitions or complete a task analysis to further define the academic problem area. Here are guidelines for consulting curriculum and research-based definitions and for conducting a task analysis for more global skills:

   - *Curriculum*. The teacher can review the school's curriculum and related documents (e.g., score-and-sequence charts; curriculum maps) to select specific academic skill or performance goals. Of course, if the student is performing well below grade-level, the teacher should be prepared to go 'off-level' by reviewing curriculum goals from earlier grades. First, determine the approximate grade or level in the curriculum that matches the student's skills. Then, review the curriculum at that alternate grade level to find appropriate descriptions of the student's relevant academic deficit.

     For example, a teacher noted that her second-grade student had limited phonemic awareness: the student was not able accurately to deconstruct a spoken word into its component sound-units, or phonemes. In her school's curriculum, children were expected to attain proficiency in phonemic awareness by the close of grade 1. The teacher went 'off level' to review the grade 1 curriculum and found a specific description of phonemic awareness that she could use as a starting point in defining the student's skill deficit.

   - *Research-Based Skill Definitions.* Even when a school's curriculum identifies key skills, schools may find it useful to corroborate or elaborate those skill definitions by reviewing alternative definitions published in research journals or other trusted sources.

     For example, an algebra teacher had a student with delays in solving quadratic equations. The

instructor found that the school's math curriculum did not provide a detailed description of the various skills required to successfully complete quadratic equations. So the teacher reviewed the report issued by the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (Fennell et al., 2008) The teacher discovered in that document a detailed description of the component skills for solving quadratic equations, including "factors and factoring of quadratic polynomials with integer coefficients" , "completing the square in quadratic expressions" and "quadratic formula and factoring of general quadratic polynomials". By combining the skill definitions from the school curriculum with the more detailed descriptions taken from the research-based document, the teacher was better able to pinpoint the student's area of academic deficit in specific terms.

- *Task Analysis.* Students sometimes possess deficits in more global 'academic enabling' skills that are not specifically outlined in the curriculum but are nonetheless essential for academic success. In such cases, teachers can complete an analysis of the relevant skill by breaking that more global skill down into a checklist of constituent subskills. This process is known as 'discrete categorization' (Kazdin, 1989) or task analysis. An instructor can use the resulting checklist to verify that the student can or cannot perform each of the subskills that make up the global 'academic enabling' skill.

  For example, teachers at a middle school noted that many of their students seemed to have poor 'organization' skills when completing in-class assignments. Yet none of the teachers initially agreed on just how to define the term 'organization'. So those instructors worked together to complete a task analysis and determined that--in their classrooms--the essential subskills of 'student organization' included (a) arriving to class on time; (b) bringing work materials to class; (c) following teacher directions in a timely manner; (d) knowing how to request teacher assistance when needed; and (e) having an uncluttered desk with only essential work materials. The teachers found this task analysis to be useful, as it allowed them to agree on the essential ingredients of 'good organization' and also yielded a useful checklist to verify that students possessed every one of the important subskills that make up the larger skill.

2. **Describe the academic problem in specific, skill-based terms** (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). Write a clear, brief description of the academic skill or performance deficit that focuses on a specific skill or performance area. Here are sample problem-identification statements:

   - John's reads aloud from grade-appropriate text much more slowly than his classmates.
   - Ann lacks proficiency with multiplication math problems (double-digit times double-digit with no regrouping).
   - Tye does not turn in homework assignments.
   - Angela produces limited text on in-class writing assignments.

3. **Develop a fuller description of the academic problem to provide a meaningful instructional context.** When the teacher has described the student's academic problem, the next step is to expand the problem definition to put it into a meaningful context. This expanded definition includes information about the conditions under which the academic problem is observed and typical or expected level of performance.

- *Conditions*. Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed.
- *Problem Description*. Describe the actual observable academic behavior in which the student is engaged. Include rate, accuracy, or other quantitative information of student performance.
- *Typical or Expected Level of Performance*. Provide a typical or expected performance criterion for this skill or behavior. Typical or expected academic performance can be calculated using a variety of sources,

Academic Problems: Sample Definitions		
Environmental Conditions or Task Demands	**Problem Description**	**Typical or Expected Level of Performance**
When given a passage from the 3rd grade reading series book…	…John reads 56 words per minutes…	… compared to DIBELS mid-year 3rd-grade benchmark norms of 78 words per minute.
On a math computation worksheet (double-digit times double-digit with no regrouping)…	…Ann computes 45 digits per minute…	…while peers in her 3rd grade compute an average of 67 correct digits.
During social studies large-group instruction…	…Franklin attends to instruction an average of 45% of the time…	… while peers in the same room attend to instruction an average of 85% of the time.
For science homework…	… Tye turns in assignments an average of 50% of the time…	… while the classroom median rate of homework turned in is 90%.
On weekly 30-minute in-class writing assignments…	… Angela produces compositions that average 145 words…	…while a sampling of peer compositions shows that the typical student writes an average of 254 words.

4. **Develop a hypothesis statement to explain the academic skill or performance problem.** The hypothesis states the assumed reason(s) or cause(s) for the student's academic problems. Once it has been developed, the hypothesis statement acts as a compass needle, pointing toward interventions that most logically address the student academic problems.

Academic Problems: Possible Hypotheses & Recommendations	
Hypothesis	Recommendation
□ *Skill Deficit.* The student has not yet acquired the skill.	Provide direct, explicit instruction to acquire the skill. Reinforce the student for effort and accuracy.
□ *Fluency Deficit.* The student has acquired the basic skill but is not yet proficient.	Provide opportunities for the student to practice the skill and give timely performance feedback. Reinforce the student for fluency as well as accuracy.

☐ *Generalization Deficit.* The student possesses the basic skill but fails to use it across appropriate situations or settings.	Train the student to identify the relevant characteristics of situations or settings when the skill should be used. Provide incentives for the student to use the skill in the appropriate settings.
☐ *Motivation (Performance) Deficit.* The student is capable of performing the skill and can identify when use of the skill is appropriate—but nonetheless fails to use the skill.	Use various strategies to engage the student in the skill (e.g., select high-interest learning activities; offer incentives to the student for successful use of the skill, etc.).
☐ *Escape or Avoidance.* The student behavior is intended to allow them to stop an academic activity (escape) or to prevent them from participating in the activity (avoidance).	Check for appropriate instructional match to ensure that the student experiences sufficient success in the activity. Use motivation strategies (see above) to promote student interest and engagement. Offer the student opportunities for choice in the academic activity.

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Defining and Illuminating Problem Student Behaviors: 5 Quick Steps

Teachers can select effective interventions for student behavior problems only if they first clearly define the problem behavior(s) and the reason(s) that a behavior is occurring. By following the five steps below, the teacher is more likely to describe a student's problem behavior(s) with clarity and to identify effective interventions to address them.

1. **Define the problem behavior in clear, observable, measurable terms** (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). Write a clear description of the problem behavior. Avoid vague problem identification statements such as "The student is disruptive."

   A good method to judge whether the problem has been adequately defined is to apply the "stranger test": Can a stranger read the problem definition statement, then observe the student, and be able to judge reliably when the behavior occurs and when it does not? A useful self-prompt to come up with a more detailed description of the problem is to ask, "What does <problem behavior> look like in the classroom?"

   A well-written problem definition should include three parts:
   - Conditions. The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur
   - Problem Description. A specific description of the problem behavior
   - Contextual information. Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior that provide a context for estimating the degree to which the behavior presents a problem in the setting(s) in which it occurs.

Sample Problem Behavior Definitions		
Conditions. The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur	**Problem Description. A specific description of the problem behavior**	**Contextual Information. Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior**
During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks,…	…John talks with peers about non-instructional topics…	…an average of three times.
In school settings such as the playground or gymnasium, when unsupervised by adults,…	…Angela is reported by peers to use physically threatening language…	…at least once per week.
When given a verbal teacher request…	…Jay fails to comply with that request within 3 minutes…	… an average of 50% of the time.

2. **Develop examples and non-examples of the problem behavior** (Upah, 2008). Writing both examples and non-examples of the problem behavior helps to resolve uncertainty about when the student's conduct should be classified as a problem behavior. Examples should include the most frequent or typical instances of the student problem behavior. Non-examples should include any

behaviors that are acceptable conduct but might possibly be confused with the problem behavior.

Examples and Non-Examples of Problem Behavior		
Problem Behavior	**Examples**	**Non-Examples**
During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics	• John chats with another student that he encounters at the pencil sharpener. • John whispers to a neighboring student about a comic book in his desk.	• At the direction of the teacher, John pairs up with another student to complete an assignment.. • John verbally interacts with students in an appropriate manner while handing out work materials as requested by the teacher.
When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request within 3 minutes.	• Jay does not comply when directed by the teacher to open his math book and begin work. • Jay is verbally defiant and uncooperative when requested by an adult to stop running in the hall.	• Jay does not comply with a teacher request because he does not hear that request. • Jay asks the teacher to explain directions that he does not understand.

3. **Write a behavior hypothesis statement** (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). The next step in problem-solving is to develop a hypothesis about why the student is engaging in an undesirable behavior or not engaging in a desired behavior. Teachers can gain information to develop a hypothesis through direct observation, student interview, review of student work products, and other sources. The behavior hypothesis statement is important because (a) it can be tested, and (b) it provides guidance on the type(s) of interventions that might benefit the student.

Behavior Hypothesis Statements		
Problem Behavior	<Because>	**Hypothesis**
During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics…	…because…	…he is avoiding academic work.
When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request…	…because…	…he is reinforced by the negative adult attention that results from his noncompliance.

4. **Select a replacement behavior** (Batsche et al., 2008). Behavioral interventions should be focused on increasing student skills and capacities, not simply on suppressing problem behaviors. By selecting a positive behavioral goal that is an appropriate replacement for the student's original problem behavior, the teacher reframes the student concern in a manner that allows for more effective intervention planning.

Selection of Replacement Behavior	
Problem Behavior	**Replacement Behavior**

During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John talks with peers about non-instructional topics.	During 20-minute independent seatwork literacy tasks, John is engaged in active accurate academic responding.
When given a verbal teacher request, Jay fails to comply with that request.	When given a verbal teacher request, Jay carries out the request without argument or complaint within 3 minutes.

5. **Write a prediction statement** (Batsche et al., 2008; Upah, 2008). The prediction statement proposes a strategy (intervention) that is predicted to improve the problem behavior. The importance of the prediction statement is that it spells out specifically the expected outcome if the strategy is successful. The formula for writing a prediction statement is to state that *if* the proposed strategy ('Specific Action') is adopted, then the *rate* of problem behavior is expected to *decrease* or *increase* in the desired direction.

Prediction Statement		
Specific Action	Problem Behavior	**Rate of Behavior**
If prior to independent seatwork, John meets with a tutor to review key vocabulary terms and rehearse the assigned reading,..	…the amount of time that John spends talking with peers about non-instructional topics during independent work…	…will decrease.
If adults avoid engaging Jay in long exchanges when he fails to comply with their requests and instead impose appropriate pre-selected consequences…	…the frequency of Jay's timely compliance with adult requests…	…will increase.

References

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Finding the Right Behavioral Intervention: Five Steps to Defining Student Problem Behaviors

Teachers can select effective interventions for student behavior problems only if they first clearly define the problem behavior(s) and the reason(s) that a behavior is occurring.

The process of defining student problem behaviors goes more smoothly if the teacher has first collected relevant information about the student's problem behavior (e.g., examples of seatwork, anecdotal notes of student behavior, frequency counts of behavior, student interview, etc.).

By following the five steps below, the teacher is more likely to describe a student's problem behavior(s) with clarity and to identify effective interventions to address them.

1. Define the problem behavior in clear, observable, measurable terms.

Sample Problem Behavior Definitions		
Conditions. The condition(s) under which the problem is likely to occur	*Problem Description. A specific description of the problem behavior*	*Contextual Information. Information about the frequency, intensity, duration, or other dimension(s) of the behavior*

2. Develop examples and non-examples of the problem behavior.

Examples and Non-Examples of Problem Behavior	
Examples Non-Examples	

3. Write a behavior hypothesis statement.

Behavior Hypothesis Statements		
Problem Behavior	<Because>	Hypothesis
	…because…	

4. Select a replacement behavior.

Selection of Replacement Behavior
Replacement Behavior

5. Create a prediction statement.

Prediction Statement		
Specific Action	Problem Behavior	Rate of Behavior

Interventions & Related Concepts: Definitions

Core Instruction. Those instructional strategies that are used routinely with all students in a general-education setting are considered 'core instruction'. High-quality instruction is essential and forms the foundation of RTI academic support. NOTE: While it is important to verify that good core instructional practices are in place for a struggling student, those routine practices do not 'count' as individual student interventions.

Intervention. An academic *intervention* is a strategy used to teach a new skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage a child to apply an existing skill to new situations or settings. An intervention can be thought of as "a set of actions that, when taken, have demonstrated ability to change a fixed educational trajectory" (Methe & Riley-Tillman, 2008; p. 37).

Accommodation. An accommodation is intended to help the student to fully access and participate in the general-education curriculum without changing the instructional content and without reducing the student's rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005). An accommodation is intended to remove barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their typical peers. An accommodation for students who are slow readers, for example, may include having them supplement their silent reading of a novel by listening to the book on tape. An accommodation for unmotivated students may include breaking larger assignments into smaller 'chunks' and providing students with performance feedback and praise for each completed 'chunk' of assigned work (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).

Modification. A modification changes the expectations of what a student is expected to know or do—typically by lowering the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated. Examples of modifications are giving a student five math computation problems for practice instead of the 20 problems assigned to the rest of the class, letting the student consult course notes during a test when peers are not permitted to do so, and allowing a student to select a much easier book for a book report than would be allowed to his or her classmates.

Instructional modifications are essential elements on the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans of many students with special needs. Modifications are generally not included on a general-education student's RTI intervention plan, because the working assumption is that the student can be successful in the curriculum with appropriate interventions and accommodations alone.

References

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Academic Interventions 'Critical Components' Checklist

This checklist summarizes the essential components of academic interventions. When preparing a student's Tier 1, 2, or 3 academic intervention plan, use this document as a 'pre-flight checklist' to ensure that the academic intervention is of high quality, is sufficiently strong to address the identified student problem, is fully understood and supported by the teacher, and can be implemented with integrity. NOTE: While the checklist refers to the 'teacher' as the interventionist, it can also be used as a guide to ensure the quality of interventions implemented by non-instructional personnel, adult volunteers, parents, and peer (student) tutors.

Directions: When creating an academic intervention plan, review that plan by comparing it to each of the items below.

- If a particular intervention element is missing or needs to be reviewed, check the 'Critical Item?' column for that element.
- Write any important notes or questions in the 'Notes' column.

Allocating Sufficient Contact Time & Assuring Appropriate Student-Teacher Ratio

The cumulative time set aside for an intervention and the amount of direct teacher contact are two factors that help to determine that intervention's 'strength' (Yeaton & Sechrest, 1981).

Critical Item?	Intervention Element	Notes
☐	**Time Allocated.** The time set aside for the intervention is appropriate for the type and level of student problem (Burns & Gibbons, 2008; Kratochwill, Clements & Kalymon, 2007). When evaluating whether the amount of time allocated is adequate, consider: • Length of each intervention session. • Frequency of sessions (e.g.., daily, 3 times per week) • Duration of intervention period (e.g., 6 instructional weeks)	
☐	**Student-Teacher Ratio.** The student receives sufficient contact from the teacher or other person delivering the intervention to make that intervention effective. NOTE: Generally, supplemental intervention groups should be limited to 6-7 students (Burns & Gibbons, 2008).	

Matching the Intervention to the Student Problem

Academic interventions are not selected at random. First, the student academic problem(s) is defined clearly and in detail. Then, the likely explanations for the academic problem(s) are identified to understand which intervention(s) are likely to help—and which should be avoided.

Critical Item?	Intervention Element	Notes
☐	**Problem Definition.** The student academic problem(s) to be addressed in the intervention are defined in clear, specific, measureable terms (Bergan, 1995; Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004). The full problem definition describes: • *Conditions.* Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed. • *Problem Description.* Describe the actual observable academic behavior in which the student is engaged. Include rate, accuracy, or other quantitative information of student performance. • *Typical or Expected Level of Performance.* Provide a typical or expected performance criterion for this skill or behavior. Typical or expected academic performance can be calculated using a variety of sources,	
☐	**Appropriate Target.** Selected intervention(s) are appropriate for the identified student problem(s) (Burns, VanDerHeyden & Boice, 2008). TIP: Use the Instructional Hierarchy (Haring et al., 1978) to select	

	academic interventions according to the four stages of learning: • *Acquisition*. The student has begun to learn how to complete the target skill correctly but is not yet accurate in the skill. Interventions should improve accuracy. • *Fluency*. The student is able to complete the target skill accurately but works slowly. Interventions should increase the student's speed of responding (fluency) as well as to maintain accuracy. • *Generalization*. The student may have acquired the target skill but does not typically use it in the full range of appropriate situations or settings. Or the student may confuse the target skill with 'similar' skills. Interventions should get the student to use the skill in the widest possible range of settings and situations, or to accurately discriminate between the target skill and 'similar' skills. • *Adaptation*. The student is not yet able to modify or adapt an existing skill to fit novel task-demands or situations. Interventions should help the student to identify key concepts or elements from previously learned skills that can be adapted to the new demands or situations.	
☐	**'Can't Do/Won't Do' Check.** The teacher has determined whether the student problem is primarily a skill or knowledge deficit ('can't do') or whether student motivation plays a main or supporting role in academic underperformance ('wont do'). If motivation appears to be a significant factor contributing to the problem, the intervention plan includes strategies to engage the student (e.g., high interest learning activities; rewards/incentives; increased student choice in academic assignments, etc.) (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005; Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004).	

Incorporating Effective Instructional Elements

These effective 'building blocks' of instruction are well-known and well-supported by the research. They should be considered when selecting or creating any academic intervention.

Critical Item?	Intervention Element	Notes
☐	**Explicit Instruction.** Student skills have been broken down "into manageable and deliberately sequenced steps" and the teacher provided" overt strategies for students to learn and practice new skills" (Burns, VanDerHeyden & Boice, 2008, p.1153).	
☐	**Appropriate Level of Challenge.** The student experienced sufficient success in the academic task(s) to shape learning in the desired direction as well as to maintain student motivation (Burns, VanDerHeyden & Boice, 2008).	
☐	**Active Engagement.** The intervention ensures that the student is engaged in 'active accurate responding' (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).at a rate frequent enough to capture student attention and to optimize effective learning.	
☐	**Performance Feedback.** The student receives prompt performance feedback about the work completed (Burns, VanDerHeyden & Boice, 2008).	
☐	**Maintenance of Academic Standards.** If the intervention includes any accommodations to better support the struggling learner (e.g., preferential seating, breaking a longer assignment into smaller chunks), those accommodations do not substantially lower the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated and are not likely to reduce the student's rate of learning (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).	

Verifying Teacher Understanding & Providing Teacher Support		
The teacher is an active agent in the intervention, with primary responsibility for putting it into practice in a busy classroom. It is important, then, that the teacher fully understands how to do the intervention, believes that he or she can do it, and knows whom to seek out if there are problems with the intervention.		
Critical Item?	Intervention Element	Notes
☐	**Teacher Responsibility.** The teacher understands his or her responsibility to implement the academic intervention(s) with integrity.	
☐	**Teacher Acceptability.** The teacher states that he or she finds the academic intervention feasible and acceptable for the identified student problem.	
☐	**Step-by-Step Intervention Script.** The essential steps of the intervention are written as an 'intervention script'--a series of clearly described steps—to ensure teacher understanding and make implementation easier (Hawkins, Morrison, Musti-Rao & Hawkins, 2008).	
☐	**Intervention Training.** If the teacher requires training to carry out the intervention, that training has been arranged.	
☐	**Intervention Elements: Negotiable vs. Non-Negotiable.** The teacher knows all of the steps of the intervention. Additionally, the teacher knows which of the intervention steps are 'non-negotiable' (they must be completed exactly as designed) and which are 'negotiable' (the teacher has some latitude in how to carry out those steps) (Hawkins, Morrison, Musti-Rao & Hawkins, 2008).	
☐	**Assistance With the Intervention.** If the intervention cannot be implemented as designed for any reason (e.g., student absence, lack of materials, etc.), the teacher knows how to get assistance quickly to either fix the problem(s) to the current intervention or to change the intervention.	

Documenting the Intervention & Collecting Data		
Interventions only have meaning if they are done within a larger data-based context. For example, interventions that lack baseline data, goal(s) for improvement, and a progress-monitoring plan are 'fatally flawed' (Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004).		
Critical Item?	Intervention Element	Notes
☐	**Intervention Documentation.** The teacher understands and can manage all documentation required for this intervention (e.g., maintaining a log of intervention sessions, etc.).	
☐	**Checkup Date.** Before the intervention begins, a future checkup date is selected to review the intervention to determine if it is successful. Time elapsing between the start of the intervention and the checkup date should be short enough to allow a timely review of the intervention but long enough to give the school sufficient time to judge with confidence whether the intervention worked.	
☐	**Baseline.** Before the intervention begins, the teacher has collected information about the student's baseline level of performance in the identified area(s) of academic concern (Witt, VanDerHeyden &	

	Gilbertson, 2004).	
☐	**Goal.** Before the intervention begins, the teacher has set a specific goal for predicted student improvement to use as a minimum standard for success (Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004). The goal is the expected student outcome by the checkup date if the intervention is successful.	
☐	**Progress-Monitoring.** During the intervention, the teacher collects progress-monitoring data of sufficient quality and at a sufficient frequency to determine at the checkup date whether that intervention is successful (Witt, VanDerHeyden & Gilbertson, 2004).	

References

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Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. A. (2008). Implementing response-to-intervention in elementary and secondary schools. Routledge: New York.

Burns, M. K., VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Boice, C. H. (2008). Best practices in intensive academic interventions. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp.1151-1162). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Haring, N.G., Lovitt, T.C., Eaton, M.D., & Hansen, C.L. (1978). *The fourth R: Research in the classroom*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.

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Intervention Script Builder for: Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher/Team: _____ Intervention Start Date: _____/___/____

Description of the Target Academic or Behavior Concern: _____

_____

Intervention Check	**Intervention Preparation Steps:** Describe any preparation (creation or purchase of materials, staff training, etc.) required for this intervention.	**Negotiable?** (Hawkins et al., 2008)
This step took place Y__ N__	1. _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	2. _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	3. _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step

Intervention Check	**Intervention Steps:** Describe the steps of the intervention. Include enough detail so that the procedures are clear to all who must implement them.	**Negotiable?** (Hawkins et al., 2008)
This step took place Y__ N__	1. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	2. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	3. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	4. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	5. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step
This step took place Y__ N__	6. _____ _____	❑ Negotiable Step ❑ Non-Negotiable Step

Research Citation(s) / References: List the published source(s) that make this a 'scientifically based' intervention.

_____

_____

Intervention Quality Check: How will data be collected to verify that this intervention is put into practice as it was designed? (Select at least one option.)

- ❑ Classroom Observation: Number of observations planned? _____

  Person responsible for observations?: _____

- ❑ Teacher Intervention Rating Log: How frequently will the teacher rate intervention follow-through?

  Daily___ Weekly ___

- ❑ Teacher Verbal Report: Who will check in with the teacher for a verbal report of how the

  intervention is progressing? _____

  Approximately when during the intervention period will this verbal 'check in' occur? _____

- ❑ Rating Intervention Follow-Through: Select either the classroom teacher/team or an outside observer to rate the quality of the intervention and check the appropriate set of directions below.

  ___*Teacher Directions*: Make copies of this intervention script. Once per week, review the steps in the intervention script and note (Y/N) whether each step was *typically* followed. Then write any additional notes about the intervention in the blank below

  ___ *Independent Observer Directions*: Make copies of this intervention script. At several points during the intervention, make an appointment to observe the intervention in action. While observing the intervention, go through the steps in the intervention script and note (Y/N) whether each step was typically followed. Then write any additional notes about the intervention in the space below

  Intervention Observation Notes: _____

  _____

  _____

Reference
Hawkins, R. O., Morrison, J. Q., Musti-Rao, S., & Hawkins, J. A. (2008). Treatment integrity for academic interventions in real- world settings. *School Psychology Forum, 2*(3), 1-15.

Intervention Contact Log

Staff Member(s) Implementing Intervention: ______________________________

Classroom/Location: ______________ Intervention Description: ______________________

____

Students in Group: (Note: Supplemental intervention groups generally should be capped at 6-7 students.)

1. ______________ 7. ______________ 4. ______________

2. ______________ 8. ______________ 5. ______________

3. ______________ 9. ______________ 6. ______________

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Date: ________ Time Start: ___ : ____ AM/PM Time End: ___ : ____ AM/PM Students Attending: ______________

To what degree were you able to carry out the intervention as designed? Comments: ______________

1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9
Not at all | Somewhat | Fully

Selecting Methods to Track Intervention Integrity for _____

Schools can use three general sources of data to obtain direct or indirect information about intervention integrity: (1) work products and records generated during the intervention, (2) teacher self-reports and self-ratings, and (3) direct classroom observation of the intervention as it is being carried out. Use this form to select an efficient combination of methods to measure the overall integrity with which an intervention is being implemented.

Work products and records generated during the intervention. Student work samples and other records such as intervention contact logs generated naturally as part of the intervention can be collected to give some indication of intervention integrity (Gansle & Noell, 2007). What work products or other intervention records can be collected to help to track the integrity of the intervention?

Type of Work Product/ Other Intervention Documentation	Person(s) Responsible	Frequency of Data Collection

Teacher self-reports and self-ratings. The teacher or other educators responsible for the intervention can periodically complete formal or informal self-ratings to provide information whether the intervention is being carried out with integrity (Gansle & Noell, 2007).. Teacher self-ratings can be done a variety of ways. At the end of each intervention session, for example, the instructor may complete a brief rating scale (e.g., 0 = intervention did not occur; 4 = intervention was carried out completely and correctly). Or the teacher may periodically be emailed a short, open-ended intervention integrity questionnaire. What method(s) of teacher self-reports/self-ratings will be used to track the integrity of this intervention?

Type of Teacher Self-Report or Self-Rating	Person(s) Responsible	Frequency of Data Collection

Direct observation of the intervention steps. The intervention is divided into a series of discrete steps to create an observation checklist. An observer then visits the classroom with checklist in hand to watch the intervention being implemented and to note whether each step of the intervention is completed correctly (Roach & Elliott, 2008). The direct observation of intervention integrity yields a single figure: 'percentage of intervention steps correctly completed'. To compute this figure, the observer (1) adds up the number of intervention steps correctly carried out during the observation, (2) divides that sum by the total number of steps in the intervention, and (3) multiplies the quotient by 100 to calculate the percentage of steps in the intervention that were done in an acceptable manner.

Who will be responsible for creating an intervention-integrity checklist containing the essential steps of the intervention?	Who will use the intervention-integrity checklist to conduct observations of the intervention?	How often or on what dates will classroom observations of the intervention be conducted?

Gansle, K. A., & Noell, G. H. (2007). The fundamental role of intervention implementation in assessing response to intervention. In S. R. Jimerson, M. K. Burns, & A. M. VanDerHeyden (Eds.), *Response to intervention: The science and practice of assessment and intervention* (pp. 244-251). New York: Springer Publishing.

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Interventionist, Consultant, Data Analyst: Descriptions of Shared RTI Roles

Most schools must rely on the capacity of their existing staff as they implement Response to Intervention. Certainly, each group of educators in a school system— teachers, support staff, administrators, paraprofessionals –possess unique abilities that enrich the RTI initiative. However, RTI also requires that staff move away from compartmentalized job descriptions to begin to adopt a shared set of more general RTI skills.

Educators holding a variety of positions should be prepared to serve as needed as RTI interventionists, consultants, and data analysts. Below are specific 'look-fors' that define each of the roles. School leaders may find this listing of skills useful as they plan RTI professional development for staff and clarify RTI job performance expectations.

Interventionist

The **interventionist** is a teacher or other educator who is directly responsible for implementing an intervention for an individual student or small group. The role requires clear definition of the student problem(s), selection of evidence-based intervention strategies or programs, use of data to determine if the intervention is effective, and measurement of how the intervention is carried out to ensure that it is implemented with integrity.

Interventionist 'Look Fors': The interventionist…	*Present?*	*NOTES*
1. Defines the student academic or behavioral concern in clear, specific, measurable terms.	__Y __N	
2. Selects interventions that are 'evidence-based' (i.e., intervention practices or programs that have been demonstrated to be effective in one or more high-quality studies in reputable peer reviewed journals).	__Y __N	
3. Selects interventions that logically match the presenting student problem(s) (e.g., distinguishing between acquisition, fluency, and generalization problems and selecting appropriate interventions for each).	__Y __N	
4. Delivers the intervention with a high level of integrity (i.e., ensuring that the intervention is implemented with the appropriate frequency, session length, steps of the intervention, student-teacher group size, etc.).	__Y __N	
5. Ensures that any accommodations included as part of a general-education student's RTI intervention plan (e.g., preferential seating, breaking a longer assignment into smaller chunks) do not substantially lower the academic standards against which the student is to be evaluated and are not likely to reduce	__Y __N	

the student's rate of learning.		
6. Knows which elements of the intervention are 'critical' (must be implemented precisely as designed) and those that are 'negotiable' (the interventionist has some degree of flexibility in how those elements are implemented).	__Y __N	
7. Completes required documentation of the intervention (e.g., writing down all necessary details of the intervention plan before implementing, maintaining a contact log to record each intervention session, etc.).	__Y __N	
8. Collects baseline data on student performance prior to the intervention, sets a predicted goal for student improvement to be attained by the intervention checkup date, and allots an adequate minimum period for the intervention (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks) to adequately judge its impact.	__Y __N	
9. Collects regular progress-monitoring data during the intervention to determine if the student is making adequate progress (Tier 1 monitoring frequency is at discretion of the interventionist; Tier 2 monitoring occurs at least 1-2 times per month; Tier 3 monitoring occurs at least weekly).	__Y __N	
10. Applies decision rules at the checkup date to evaluate whether the intervention is successful and to determine the appropriate 'next intervention steps'.	__Y __N	

Consultant

The **consultant** provides support to teachers (or other interventionists), helping them to structure and implement an intervention to maximize its chances for success. The consultant establishes a collegial relationship with teachers, uses a structured problem-solving model to match students to those intervention ideas most likely to be effective, and focuses on student factors that are alterable as the focus of interventions.

Consultant 'Look Fors': The consultant…	*Present?*	*NOTES*
1. Has knowledge within his or her area(s) of expertise of a range of intervention ideas that are 'evidence-based'.	__Y __N	
2. Fosters collegial relationships to promote teachers' willingness to access consultation services. For example, the consultant uses 'safe' language in consultation that avoids the appearance of 'judging' teachers' skills or job performance—concentrating instead on objective data and actual student performance.	__Y __N	
3. Focuses during the consultation meeting on those	__Y __N	

factors that are alterable in a school setting (e.g., instructional materials, instructional strategies, motivating strategies).		
4. Ensures that a range of possible factors are considered to increase the probability of finding the correct explanation of a student's academic, behavioral, or other problems. A helpful acronym to promote investigation of multiple possible explanations of student problems in schools is ICEL: **i**nstruction (factors related to instructional delivery); **c**urriculum (degree of student master of curriculum goals); **e**nvironment (non-instructional factors in the learning environment such as presence of peers that can help or impede learning); **l**earner (factors residing primarily within the learner—such as high levels of inattention across all classes or a low sense of self-efficacy regarding a specific subject-- that can significantly influence learning).		
5. Follows a structured problem-solving process during consultation meetings. The initial consultation meeting includes these steps: (a) problem identification, (b) problem analysis, and(c) development of an intervention plan. The follow-up consultation meeting includes (d) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention plan.	__Y __N	
6. Helps teachers to define student academic and behavioral problems in clear, specific, measureable terms.	__Y __N	
7. Ensures that interventions developed in consultation meetings are scripted in step-by-step format with sufficient detail to promote teachers' high-quality implementation.	__Y __N	
8. Assists teachers in measuring student baseline performance and in computing goals for student progress.	__Y __N	
9. Develops a plan with teacher input to measure the integrity with which the intervention is implemented using a mix of direct and indirect means (e.g., sampling of student work products produced during the intervention; teacher self-ratings of intervention integrity; direct observation of intervention implementation). NOTE: The teacher is also strongly encouraged to notify the consultant immediately if any part of the intervention cannot be carried out as designed.	__Y __N	

10. Schedules a follow-up meeting with the teacher (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks after the initial consultation meeting) to determine whether the intervention plan is successful and to decide on the next step(s) to be taken.	__Y __N	

Data Analyst

The **data analyst** assists the teacher or school to collect information from a variety of sources to better understand a student problem, creates time-series graphs as visual displays to show student progress, finds the best methods for estimating peer performance and setting goals for rate of student progress, and can apply methods of data analysis to progress-monitoring data to determine if the student has made adequate growth with the intervention.

Data Analyst 'Look Fors': The data analyst…	*Present?*	*NOTES*
1. Ensures that background information is drawn from varied data sources to more fully understand a presenting student academic or behavioral problem. A helpful acronym to promote collection of multiple kinds of data in schools is RIOT: **r**eview of student records; **i**nterviews; **o**bservations of the student, **t**esting.	__Y __N	
2. Can judge when sufficient data have been collected from multiple sources to allow the teacher or school to analyze the student problem ('data saturation' point).	__Y __N	
3. Uses time-series (progress-monitoring) graphs to convert baseline and progress-monitoring numeric data for a single student into visual displays of data points that are easy to interpret.	__Y __N	
4. Selects the most appropriate method to estimate typical or expected *peer performance* in a particular academic or other targeted skill. The data analyst selects from among these possible options: research norms/performance benchmarks/product norms, schoolwide norms, classroom or small group norms, expert opinion.		
5. Calculates predicted rate of student progress during the intervention using the most appropriate method. The data analyst selects from among these possible choices: research growth norms, product growth norms, average rates of student progress calculated from schoolwide screenings repeated several times during the school year, expert opinion.	__Y __N	
6. Helps teachers to sift through multiple types of available classroom data and determine the relative value for each in providing clear, objective, 'low-	__Y __N	

inference' information about the presenting student problem(s).		
7. Assists in developing plans for teachers to measure student progress during interventions—using classroom data that is feasible to collect (e.g., direct observation; student work products; teacher ratings; student self-ratings; grades and other archival information).	__Y __N	
8. Observes the general principle that methods of student assessment and progress-monitoring should have technical adequacy (validity and reliability) sufficient for the task. The data analyst understands that interventions at earlier tiers such as Tier 1 with lower stakes can use less-rigorous, classroom-friendly data, while high-stakes interventions at higher tiers such as Tier 3 will require data sources with more rigorous technical adequacy.	__Y __N	
9. Uses a range of methods to analyze student baseline and progress-monitoring data formatively to determine whether the intervention is successful. Some examples of data-analysis tools are visual analysis of charted data across intervention phases, trend lines, and percentage of non-overlapping data points.	__Y __N	
10. Applies standard data-based decision rules adopted by the school or district to determine whether a student is making adequate progress with the existing intervention, requires an intervention change, or should be referred to a higher Tier for additional intervention support.	__Y __N	

Frequently Asked Questions About…RTI Problem-Solving Teams

Students at any grade level can sometimes experience significant problems that threaten to derail their progress and even lead to their eventual dropping out of school. Students in crisis are not an anomaly: It is estimated that—in a typical school--perhaps as many as 5% of individuals in a general school population may require intensive RTI intervention supports each year (Christ, 2008). A school's RTI Problem-Solving Team (or 'RTI Team') is the vehicle for assembling customized intervention plans for those students who display the most intensive and serious problems.

The RTI Team is composed of a multidisciplinary group of educators and follows a research-validated structured approach known as the 'problem-solving model' (Bergan, 1995) to understand and analyze student challenges. Distilled to its essence, the problem-solving model requires that a consultant (in this case, the entire RTI Team) and referring teacher(s) work together to (1) identify the student problem in specific, measureable, observable terms; (2) analyze the student problem to uncover underlying functions or reasons to explain why the problem is occurring; (3) implement an evidence-based intervention plan whose elements are logically selected to assist the student; and (4) evaluate the plan on an ongoing basis to determine if it does in fact help the student to reach academic or behavioral goals.

Below are answers to 10 questions frequently asked about RTI Problem-Solving Teams.

1. **How often should the RTI Team meet?** It is recommended that the RTI Team reserve a standing block of time each week for student problem-solving meetings. Many schools set aside 2-3 hours per week, although the amount of time scheduled for meetings will depend on the number of students typically referred in a week to the RTI Team.

2. **Who should serve on the RTI Team?** RTI Teams can be flexible in their membership but should be multidisciplinary (e.g., school counselor, special or general education teachers, etc.). RTI Teams should make a special effort to recruit teachers to increase the team's credibility with classroom personnel. One useful idea is for teams to enlist a larger number of teachers and support staff and to rotate the members who sit on the team each week. By rotating its members, the RTI Team can reduce the weekly commitment required of any single member and thus increase the willingness of teachers and support staff to serve on the team.

3. **How much RTI Team time should be set aside for a student RTI case?** An initial student RTI case should typically not exceed 30 minutes. Follow-up RTI Team meetings often do not exceed 20 minutes. Streamlined, efficient RTI Team meetings are possible provided that the teams have done their necessary advance work to prepare for the actual meetings (e.g., communicating with the classroom teacher(s) to clarify referral concerns; ensuring that important data on the student is collected and brought to the RTI Team meeting).

4. **What is a reasonable number of student RTI cases that can be handled by an RTI Team in a school year?** Experience suggests that a single RTI Team can efficiently manage between 25 and 40 Tier 3 cases in the course of a typical school year. There are several

factors that influence the actual numbers of students referred to the team, including the overall success of core instruction in the school and expectations for what Tier 1 (classroom) interventions should be done prior to an RTI Team referral.

Schools can estimate the number of students likely to be referred to the team in one of two ways. First, the school can simply look at past rates of referral to the RTI Team in its own building. For example, if 29 students were referred to the RTI Team in a grade 7-8 middle school in the previous year, it is likely that a similar number of students will be referred in the present school year. Second, the school can look at RTI research, which suggests that as much as 5 percent of a building's student population may require a Tier 3 (RTI Team) intervention plan in a given school year. In a grade 7-8 middle school with 1000 students, for example, this prevalence rate of Tier 3 cases predicts that as many as 50 students may be referred to the RTI Team across the academic year—indicating that the school should consider fielding at least two separate RTI Teams (e.g., one at each grade level) to manage the referral load.

5. **When should the RTI Team decide to accept student referrals from classroom teachers?** One important source of referrals to the RTI Team is the general-education teacher. A basic expectation of RTI is that classroom/content-area teachers will serve as RTI 'first responders' who can proactively identify students with emerging academic or behavioral concerns, provide reasonable individualized (Tier 1) intervention support, and document those classroom intervention efforts. The RTI Team should develop guidelines for classroom teachers about when a struggling student who has not responded to Tier 1 instruction/interventions should be considered for referral to the RTI Team. Such guidelines would include a standard form that teachers would use to document their Tier 1 intervention efforts, as well as a minimum timespan that Tier 1 interventions would first be tried (e.g., 4 to 6 instructional weeks) before an RTI Team referral is considered. RTI Teams should also ensure that teachers receive the support necessary to implement Tier 1 interventions, including having access to a range of evidence-based intervention ideas, as well as coaches and consultants on staff that can help teachers to select appropriate interventions and use them correctly.

6. **Should an administrator sit on the RTI Team?** A school can run an effective RTI Team with or without administrators serving on the team. Advantages of the administrator serving on the RTI Team are both that the team has the high-profile backing and support of building leadership and that the team can get quick clarification at meetings about whether they can access any school intervention resources that are controlled by administration. A possible disadvantage of the administrator sitting on the RTI Team is that the leader's presence at meetings might reduce the comfort level of referring teachers and make them reluctant in the presence of their supervisor to speak candidly about their inability to address the needs of a struggling student. Even if an administrator does not sit on the team, the RTI Team should keep building leadership regularly updated on upcoming and current RTI cases and be able to

count on administrators to enforce teacher expectations for compliance with the building's RTI guidelines.

7. **Once an intervention plan has been designed by the RTI Team, how long should that intervention last before the team meets again to evaluate its effectiveness?** An intervention plan should be in place long enough to judge with confidence whether that plan is working. It is recommended that RTI Teams set a reasonable default length of time that intervention plans will be in effect (e.g., 6 to 8 instructional weeks). However, teams should also have the latitude to set longer or shorter intervention timespans based on the facts of the specific student case. For example, a high school may allow 6 instructional weeks to pass before holding a follow-up RTI Team meeting on a student whose intervention targets content-area vocabulary but may schedule a follow-up meeting in only 3 weeks for a student whose intervention addresses disruptive classroom behaviors.

8. **How many intervention plans should the RTI Team implement before deciding that a student has failed to adequately respond to general-education interventions?** Each school district must develop its own decision rules for judging when a series of general-education intervention plans have failed to work and for deciding that a student is not responding adequately to intervention. The foundation assumption of RTI is that students in general education who begin to experience academic or behavioral problems are typical learners and that it is the school's responsibility to find strategies will allow those students to experience success. A district's RTI decision rules for a referral to special education should require evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that a student is not responding to general-education interventions. For many districts, these decision rules require that a minimum of 3 separate intervention plans be attempted—with each intervention plan being tried for at least 6 to 8 instructional weeks—before the school can adequately judge whether a given student has or has not responded to intervention.

9. **How can the RTI Team find the resources necessary to implement intensive student intervention plans?** It is a reality that most schools will need to rechannel existing resources to support RTI. The RTI Team should inventory all resources in the building or district that can be used to support student interventions and assessment. Resources to be canvassed include any staff whose schedule permits them to assist with student interventions or assessment (e.g., reading teacher, school psychologist, paraprofessionals); staff with specialized expertise in such areas as reading instruction or behavior management who can serve as consultants or intervention coaches; commercial materials for academic instruction or intervention; commercial professional development materials for academic or behavioral intervention or assessment, etc. RTI Teams should consult this inventory of intervention and assessment resources at problem-solving meetings when putting together plans for student intervention and assessment.

10. **How can the RTI Team convey the message to faculty and parents that it is not simply a preliminary step to a special education referral?** As schools make the transition to the RTI model, teachers and parents may at first be reluctant to embrace the focus of RTI on supporting struggling students in the general-education setting. The most effective means for the RTI Team to convince teachers and parents that it is not a conduit for special education referrals is by creating strong and useful intervention plans that are effective in general education classrooms. Schools may also consider requiring that any student who is referred for a special education evaluation based on a parent request is simultaneously referred to the building's RTI Team. This 'fast track' RTI Team referral process for any parent-initiated referrals to special education reinforces the message that information about students' response to intervention in the general-education setting is critical in determining their possible special education status.

References

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