



RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools

RTI Lab: Effective Academic Interventions for Struggling Students

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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.

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of each intervention session. • Frequency of sessions (e.g., daily, 3 times per week) • Duration of intervention period (e.g., 6 instructional weeks) 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conditions.</i> Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed. • <i>Problem Description.</i> Describe the actual observable academic behavior in which the student is engaged. Include rate, accuracy, or other quantitative information of student performance. • <i>Typical or Expected Level of Performance.</i> 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, 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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	



	<p>academic interventions according to the four stages of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acquisition</i>. 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. • <i>Fluency</i>. 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. • <i>Generalization</i>. 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. • <i>Adaptation</i>. 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. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>'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).</p>	

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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Feedback. The student receives prompt performance feedback about the work completed (Burns, VanDerHeyden & Boice, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher Responsibility. The teacher understands his or her responsibility to implement the academic intervention(s) with integrity.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher Acceptability. The teacher states that he or she finds the academic intervention feasible and acceptable for the identified student problem.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Training. If the teacher requires training to carry out the intervention, that training has been arranged.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intervention Documentation. The teacher understands and can manage all documentation required for this intervention (e.g., maintaining a log of intervention sessions, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	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).	

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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		

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		

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 3 rd grade reading series book...	...John reads 56 words per minutes...	... compared to DIBELS mid-year 3 rd -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 3 rd 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	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Skill Deficit.</i> The student has not yet acquired the skill.	Provide direct, explicit instruction to acquire the skill. Reinforce the student for effort and accuracy.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fluency Deficit.</i> 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.


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<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Generalization Deficit.</i> 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Motivation (Performance) Deficit.</i> 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.).
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Escape or Avoidance.</i> 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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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.

<input type="checkbox"/> 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.

<input type="checkbox"/> 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.

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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

Name: _____ Date: _____

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.	



'Defensive Behavior Management': Advance Planning, Connecting With the Student, and Defusing Crisis Situations

Description: 'Defensive behavior management' (Fields, 2004) is a teacher-friendly six-step approach to avert student-teacher power struggles that emphasizes providing proactive instructional support to the student, elimination of behavioral triggers in the classroom setting, relationship-building, strategic application of defusing techniques when needed, and use of a 'reconnection' conference after behavioral incidents to promote student reflection and positive behavior change.

Purpose: When students show non-compliant, defiant, and disruptive behaviors in the classroom, the situation can quickly spin out of control. In attempting to maintain authority, the teacher may instead fall into a power struggle with the student, often culminating in the student being removed from the classroom. The numerous negative consequences of chronic student misbehavior include classwide lost instructional time, the acting-out student's frequent exclusion from instruction, and significant teacher stress (Fields, 2004). Defensive management can prevent these negative outcomes.

Materials: No specialized materials are needed.

Preparation: Preparation steps are included in the intervention itself (see below).

Intervention Steps: Defensive behavior management is implemented through these steps:

1. **Understanding the Problem and Using Proactive Strategies to Prevent It.** The teacher collects information--through direct observation and perhaps other means--about specific instances of student problem behavior and the instructional components and other factors surrounding them. The teacher analyzes this information to discover specific 'trigger' events that seem to set off the problem behavior(s). Examples of potential triggers include lack of skills; failure to understand directions; fatigue because of work volume; reluctance to demonstrate limited academic skills in the presence of peers or adults; etc.).

As the teacher identifies elements in the classroom environment that appear to trigger student non-compliance or defiance, the instructor adjusts instruction to provide appropriate student support to prevent behavioral episodes (e.g., providing the student with additional instruction in a skill; repeating directions and writing them on the board; 'chunking' larger work assignments into smaller segments; restructuring academic tasks to reduce the likelihood of student embarrassment in front of peers).

2. **Promoting Positive Teacher-Student Interactions.** Early in each class session, the teacher makes a point to engage in at least one positive verbal interaction with the student. Throughout the class period, the teacher continues to interact in positive ways with the student (e.g., brief conversation, smile, thumbs up, praise comment after a student remark in large-group discussion, etc.). In each interaction, the teacher adopts a genuinely accepting, polite, respectful tone.
3. **Scanning for Warning Indicators.** During the class session, the teacher monitors the target student's behavior for any behavioral indicators suggesting that the student is becoming frustrated or angry. Examples of behaviors that precede non-compliance or open defiance may include stopping work; muttering or complaining; becoming



argumentative; interrupting others; leaving his or her seat; throwing objects, etc.).

4. **Exercising Emotional Restraint.** Whenever the student begins to display problematic behaviors, the teacher makes an active effort to remain calm. To actively monitor his or her emotional state, the teacher tracks physiological cues such as increased muscle tension and heart rate, as well as fear, annoyance, anger, or other negative emotions. The teacher also adopts calming or relaxation strategies that work for him or her in the face of provocative student behavior--such as taking a deep breath or counting to 10 before responding.
5. **Using Defusing Tactics.** If the student begins to escalate to non-compliant, defiant, or confrontational behavior (e.g., arguing, threatening, other intentional verbal interruptions), the teacher draws from a range of possible deescalating strategies to defuse the situation. Such strategies can include private conversation with the student while maintaining a calm voice, open-ended questions, paraphrasing the student's concerns, acknowledging the student's emotions, etc.
6. **Reconnecting with the Student.** Soon after any in-class incident of student non-compliance, defiance, or confrontation, the teacher makes a point to meet with the student individually to discuss the behavioral incident, identify the triggers in the classroom environment that may have led to the problem, and brainstorm with the student to create a written plan to prevent the reoccurrence of such an incident. Throughout this conference, the teacher maintains a supportive, positive, polite, and respectful tone.

Adjusting/Troubleshooting: Here are recommendations for using defensive management as an intervention strategy and addressing issues that might arise:

Consider adopting defensive behavior management across classrooms. Particularly in middle and high schools, students who are chronically non-compliant or defiant often display those maladaptive behaviors across instructional settings. If all teachers who work with a challenging student use the defensive management approach, there is a greater likelihood that the student will find classrooms more predictable and supportive—and that teachers will experience greater success with that student.

Do not use defensive management to respond to physically aggressive behaviors or other serious safety concerns. While the defensive-management process can work quite effectively to prevent or minimize verbal outbursts and non-compliance, the teacher should not attempt on his or her own to manage serious physical aggression using this classroom-based approach. Instead, teachers should respond to any episodes of student physical aggression by immediately notifying building administration.

Reference

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Reading Comprehension 'Fix-Up' Skills: A Toolkit

Good readers continuously monitor their understanding of informational text. When necessary, they also take steps to improve their understanding of text through use of reading comprehension 'fix-up' skills. Presented here are a series of fix-up skill strategies that can help struggling students to better understand difficult reading assignments.

- ❑ [Core Instruction] **Providing Main Idea Practice through 'Partner Retell'** (Carnine & Carnine, 2004). Students in a group or class are assigned a text selection to read silently. Students are then paired off, with one student assigned the role of 'reteller' and the other appointed as 'listener'. The reteller recounts the main idea to the listener, who can comment or ask questions. The teacher then states the main idea to the class. Next, the reteller locates two key details from the reading that support the main idea and shares these with the listener. At the end of the activity, the teacher does a spot check by randomly calling on one or more students in the listener role and asking them to recap what information was shared by the reteller.
- ❑ [Accommodation] **Developing a Bank of Multiple Passages to Present Challenging Concepts** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Kamil et al., 2008; Texas Reading Initiative, 2002). The teacher notes which course concepts, cognitive strategies, or other information will likely present the greatest challenge to students. For these 'challenge' topics, the teacher selects alternative readings that present the same general information and review the same key vocabulary as the course text but that are more accessible to struggling readers (e.g., with selections written at an easier reading level or that use graphics to visually illustrate concepts). These alternative selections are organized into a bank. Students are encouraged to engage in wide reading by choosing selections from the bank as a means to better understand difficult material.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Promoting Understanding & Building Endurance through Reading-Reflection Pauses** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010). The student decides on a reading interval (e.g., every four sentences; every 3 minutes; at the end of each paragraph). At the end of each interval, the student pauses briefly to recall the main points of the reading. If the student has questions or is uncertain about the content, the student rereads part or all of the section just read. This strategy is useful both for students who need to monitor their understanding as well as those who benefit from brief breaks when engaging in intensive reading as a means to build up endurance as attentive readers.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Identifying or Constructing Main Idea Sentences** (Davey & McBride, 1986; Rosenshine, Meister & Chapman, 1996). For each paragraph in an assigned reading, the student either (a) highlights the main idea sentence or (b) highlights key details and uses them to write a 'gist' sentence. The student then writes the main idea of that paragraph on an index card. On the other side of the card, the student writes a question whose answer is that paragraph's main idea sentence. This stack of 'main idea' cards becomes a useful tool to review assigned readings.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Restructuring Paragraphs with Main Idea First to Strengthen 'Rereads'** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010). The student highlights or creates a main idea sentence for each paragraph in the assigned reading. When rereading each paragraph of the selection, the student (1) reads the main idea sentence or student-generated 'gist' sentence first (irrespective of where that sentence actually falls in the paragraph); (2) reads the remainder of the paragraph, and (3) reflects on how the main idea relates to the paragraph content.



- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Summarizing Readings** (Boardman et al., 2008). The student is taught to summarize readings into main ideas and essential details—stripped of superfluous content. The act of summarizing longer readings can promote understanding and retention of content while the summarized text itself can be a useful study tool.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Linking Pronouns to Referents** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010). Some readers lose the connection between pronouns and the nouns that they refer to (known as 'referents')—especially when reading challenging text. The student is encouraged to circle pronouns in the reading, to explicitly identify each pronoun's referent, and (optionally) to write next to the pronoun the name of its referent. For example, the student may add the referent to a pronoun in this sentence from a biology text: *"The Cambrian Period is the first geological age that has large numbers of multi-celled organisms associated with it"* Cambrian Period.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Apply Vocabulary 'Fix-Up' Skills for Unknown Words** (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999). When confronting an unknown word in a reading selection, the student applies the following vocabulary 'fix-up' skills:
 1. Read the sentence again.
 2. Read the sentences before and after the problem sentence for clues to the word's meaning.
 3. See if there are prefixes or suffixes in the word that can give clues to meaning.
 4. Break the word up by syllables and look for 'smaller words' within.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Compiling a Vocabulary Journal from Course Readings** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010). The student highlights new or unfamiliar vocabulary from course readings. The student writes each term into a vocabulary journal, using a standard 'sentence-stem' format: e.g., "*Mitosis* means..." or "A *chloroplast* is...". If the student is unable to generate a definition for a vocabulary term based on the course reading, he or she writes the term into the vocabulary journal without definition and then applies other strategies to define the term: e.g., look up the term in a dictionary; use Google to locate two examples of the term being used correctly in context; ask the instructor, etc.).
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Encouraging Student Use of Text Enhancements** (Hedin & Conderman, 2010). Text enhancements can be used to tag important vocabulary terms, key ideas, or other reading content. If working with photocopied material, the student can use a highlighter to note key ideas or vocabulary. Another enhancement strategy is the 'lasso and rope' technique—using a pen or pencil to circle a vocabulary term and then drawing a line that connects that term to its underlined definition. If working from a textbook, the student can cut sticky notes into strips. These strips can be inserted in the book as pointers to text of interest. They can also be used as temporary labels—e.g., for writing a vocabulary term and its definition.
- ❑ [Student Strategy] **Reading Actively Through Text Annotation** (Harris, 1990; Sarkisian et al., 2003). Students are likely to increase their retention of information when they interact actively with their reading by jotting comments in the margin of the text. Using photocopies, the student is taught to engage in an ongoing 'conversation' with the writer by recording a running series of brief comments in the margins of the text. The student may write annotations to record opinions about points raised by the writer, questions triggered by the reading, or unknown vocabulary words.



Engaging the Reluctant Teacher: Seven Reasons Why Instructors May Resist Implementing Classroom (Tier 1) RTI Interventions

Directions: Read through each of the possible reasons listed below for why a teacher may be 'reluctant' to use classroom RTI interventions and select the top 3 reasons that MOST apply to your school. Number those selected items in descending order of importance. For each of the explanations that you select, generate ideas to overcome teacher reluctance.

	1. Lack of Skills. Teachers lack the skills necessary to successfully implement academic or behavioral interventions in their content-area classrooms (Fisher, 2007; Kamil et al., 2008).
	2. Not My Job. Teachers define their job as providing content-area instruction. They do not believe that providing classwide or individual academic and behavioral interventions falls within their job description (Kamil et al., 2008).
	3. No Time. Teachers do not believe that they have sufficient time available in classroom instruction to implement academic or behavioral interventions (Kamil et al., 2008; Walker, 2004).
	4. No Payoff. Teachers lack confidence that there will be an adequate instructional pay-off if they put classwide or individual academic or behavioral interventions into place in their content-area classroom (Kamil et al., 2008).
	5. Loss of Classroom Control. Teachers worry that if they depart from their standard instructional practices to adopt new classwide or individual academic or behavior intervention strategies, they may lose behavioral control of the classroom (Kamil et al., 2008).
	6. Not Deserving. Teachers are unwilling to invest the required effort to provide academic or behavioral interventions for unmotivated students (Walker, 2004) because they would rather put that time into providing additional attention to well-behaved, motivated students who are 'more deserving'.
	7. The Magic of Special Education. Content-area teachers regard special education services as 'magic' (Martens, 1993). According to this view, interventions provided to struggling students in the general-education classroom alone will be inadequate, and only special education services have the power to truly benefit those students.
Other:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Brainstorm Ideas to Overcome Teacher 'Reluctance'...

Concern 1

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Concern 2

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Concern 3

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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