

The Teacher as Intervention First- Responder: How to Find & Fix Academic Skill Deficits

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RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools

The Teacher as Intervention First Responder: How to Find & Fix Academic Skill Deficits

Jim Wright, Presenter ♦ 13 September 2014 ♦ University of the Incarnate Word

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Workshop materials available at: <http://www.interventionntral.org/uiw>

Access PPTs and other materials from this workshop at:

<http://www.interventioncentral.org/uiw>






“The quality of a school as a learning community can be measured by how effectively it addresses the needs of struggling students.”

--Wright (2005)

Source: Wright, J. (2005, Summer). Five interventions that work. *NAESP Leadership Compass*, 2(4) pp.1,6.

'First Responder' Toolkit



-  **Instruction.** What elements make up high-quality core instruction?
-  **Intervention.** Where can one find research-based academic intervention ideas?
-  **Data.** What are some practical methods of classroom data collection?
-  **Problem-Solving Process.** What forms & meeting process can help to create strong classroom intervention plans?
-  **Resources.** Where can teachers find online resources to support classroom interventions?

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

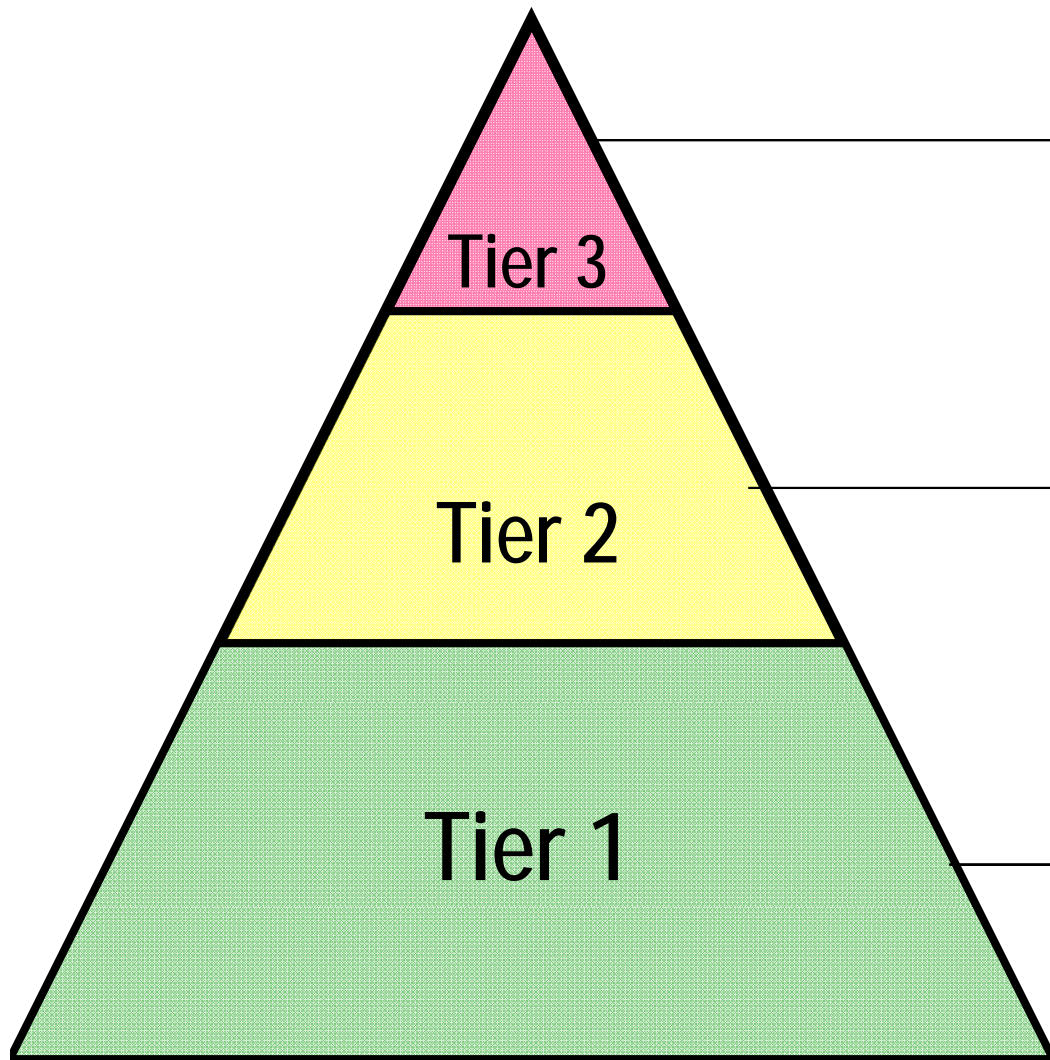
Only when the student shows through well-documented interventions that he or she has 'failed to respond to intervention' does RTI begin to investigate the possibility that the student may have a learning disability or other special education condition.

Essential Elements of RTI (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007)

1. A "continuum of evidence-based services available to all students" that range from universal to highly individualized & intensive
2. "Decision points to determine if students are performing significantly below the level of their peers in academic and social behavior domains"
3. "Ongoing monitoring of student progress"
4. "Employment of more intensive or different interventions when students do not improve in response" to lesser interventions
5. "Evaluation for special education services if students do not respond to intervention instruction"

Source: Fairbanks, S., Sugai, G., Guardino, S., & Lathrop, M. (2007). Response to intervention: Examining classroom behavior support in second grade. Exceptional Children, 73, p. 289.

RTI 'Pyramid of Interventions'

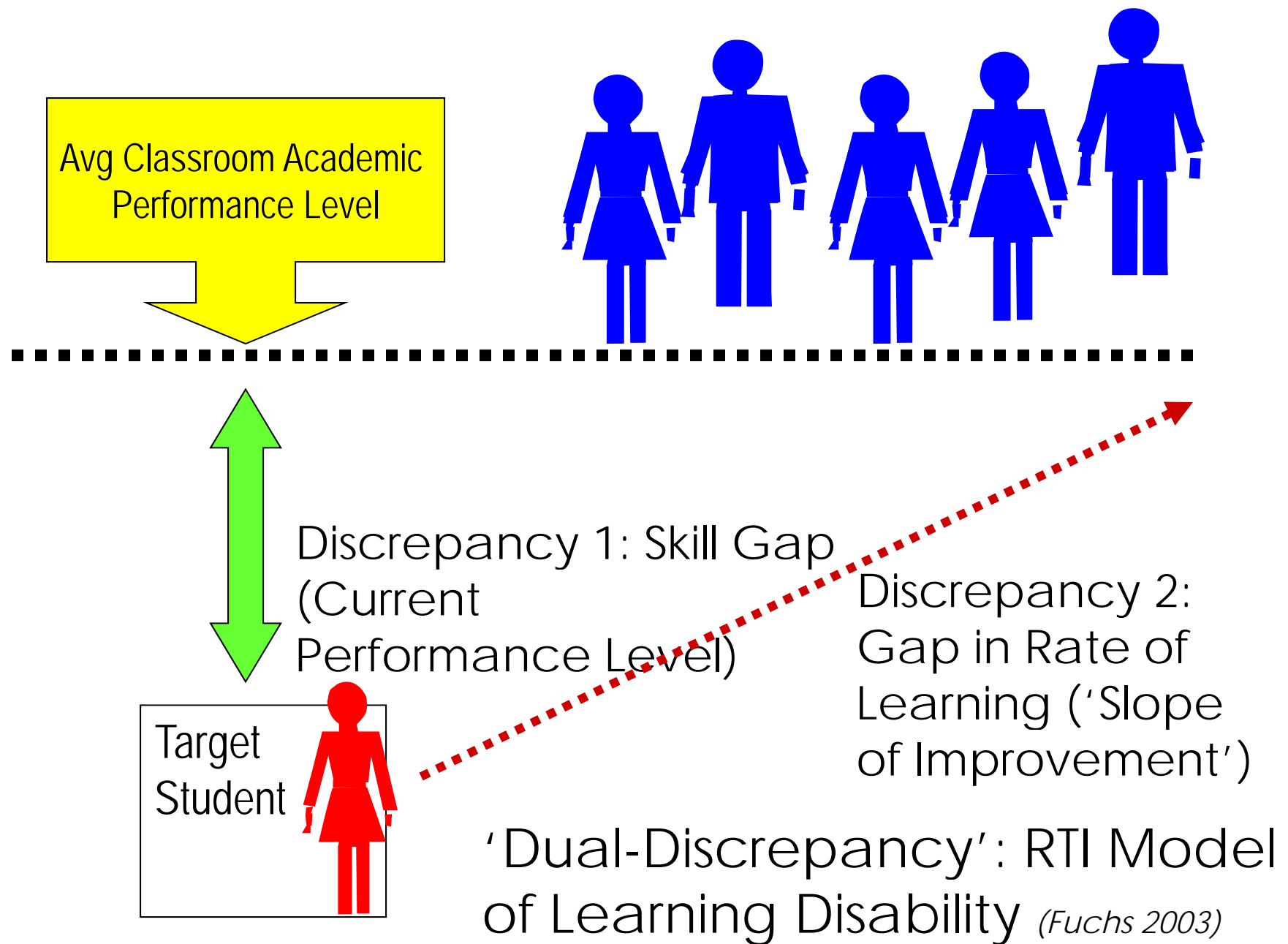


Tier 3: Intensive interventions. Students who are 'non-responders' to Tiers 1 & 2 are referred to the RTI Team for more intensive interventions.

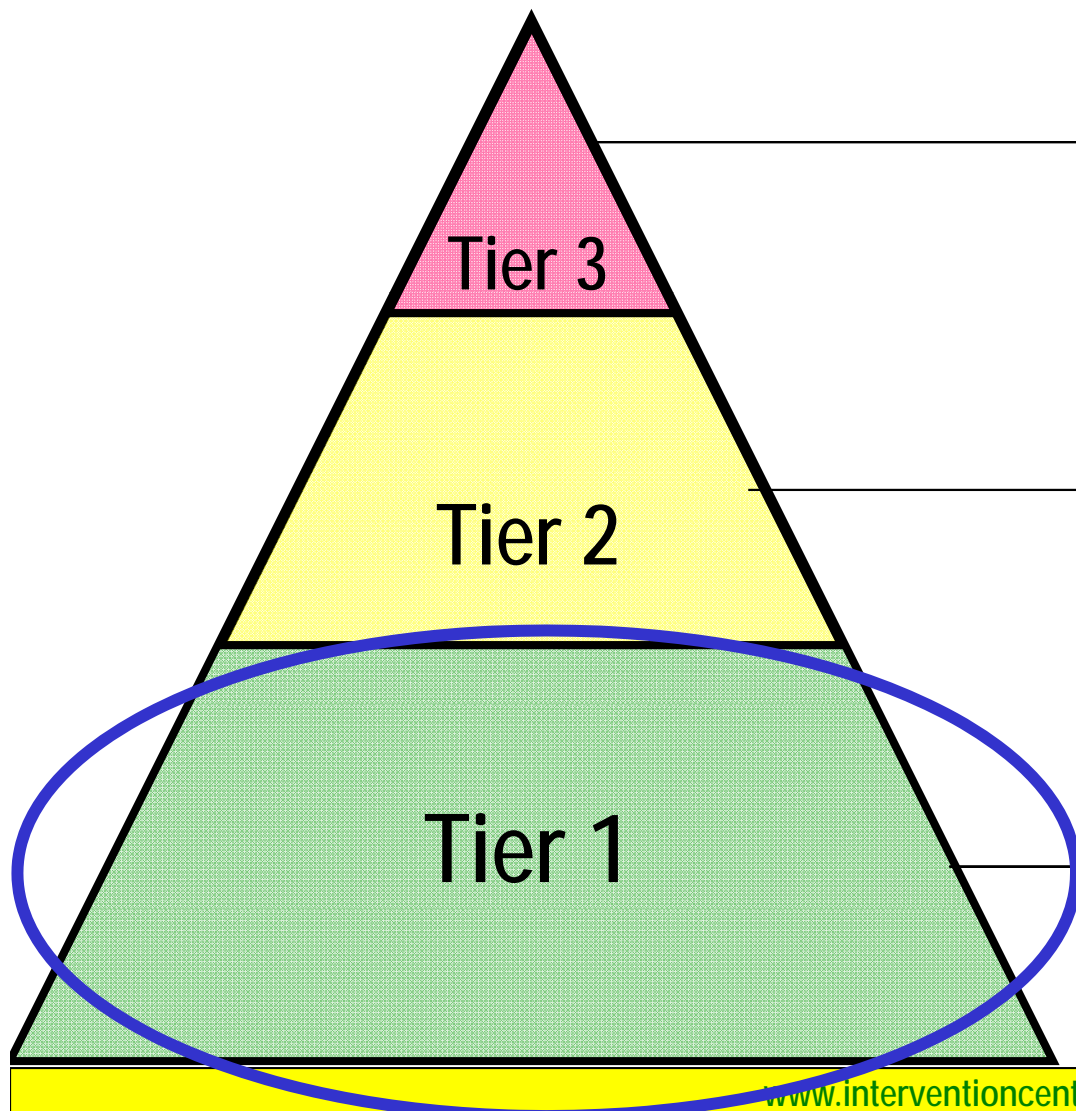
Tier 2 Individualized interventions. Subset of students receive interventions targeting specific needs.

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

Response to Intervention



RTI 'Pyramid of Interventions'



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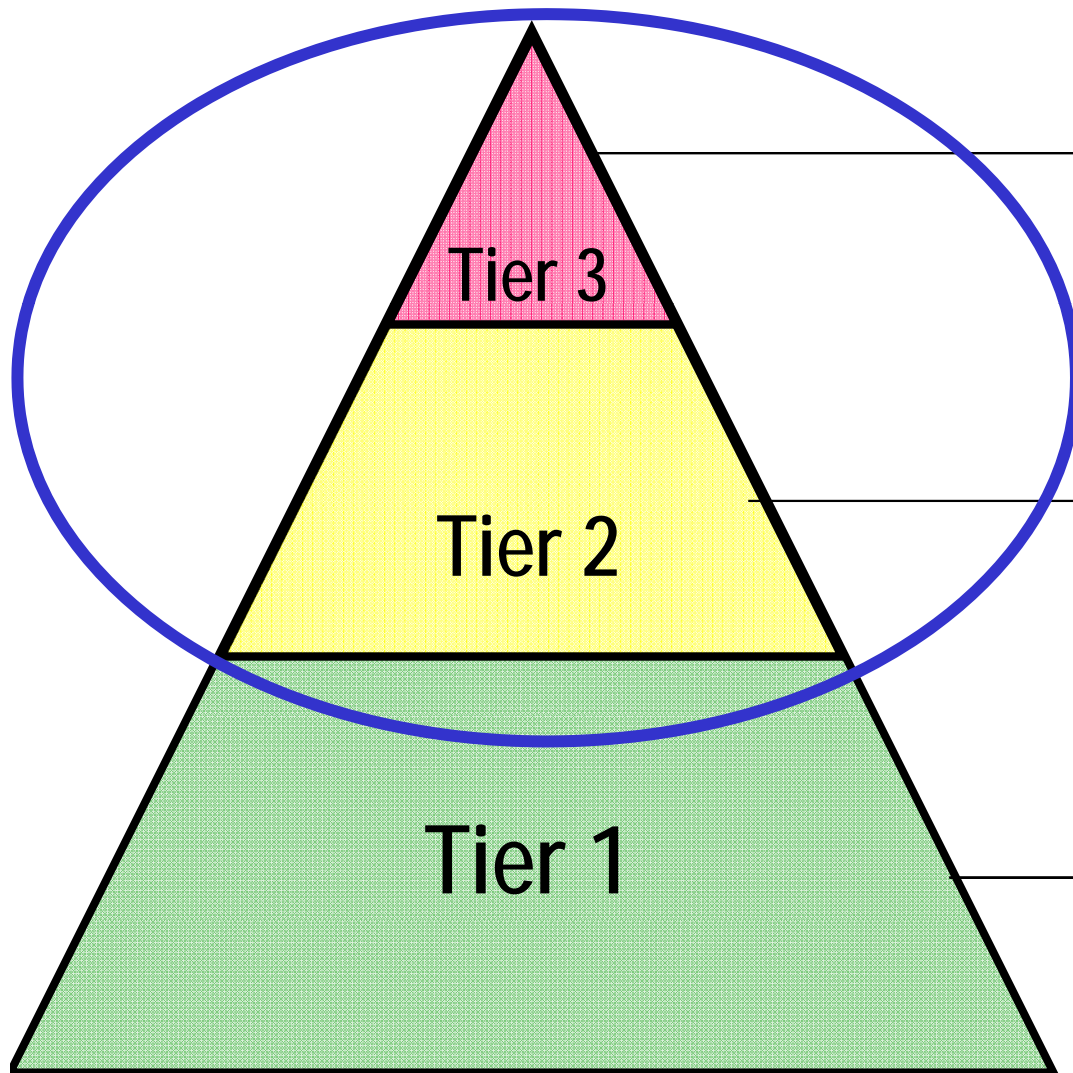
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Tier 1: Universal interventions. Available to all students in a classroom or school. Can consist of whole-group or individual strategies or supports.

Tier 1: Teacher Consultation/Team

- At Tier 1, problem-solving occurs when the teacher meets briefly with a team (e.g., grade-level team, instructional team, department) or a consultant.
- The teacher defines the student problem(s), selects intervention(s), decides how to monitor the intervention, and documents the intervention plan—with the guidance of the team or consultant
- The teacher meets again with team or consultant several weeks later to check on the status of the intervention.
- The classroom teacher is the person primarily responsible for the integrity of the Tier 1 intervention plan.
- The numbers of students requiring Tier 1 interventions depends on district decision-rules defining classroom 'at-risk' status.

RTI 'Pyramid of Interventions'



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

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Tier 2/3 Interventions: Quality Indicators

Each Tier 2/3 intervention plan shows evidence that:

- Instructional programs or practices are 'evidence-based.
- The intervention has been selected because it logically addressed the area(s) of academic deficit for the target student (e.g., an intervention to address reading fluency was chosen for a student whose primary deficit was in reading fluency).
- All students enrolled in the Tier 2/3 intervention group have the same shared intervention need.
- The student-teacher ratio in the group provides adequate student support: Tier 2 up to 7 students; Tier 3 up to 3 students.
- The intervention provides contact time adequate to the student academic deficit. Tier 2 interventions occur a minimum of 3-5 times per week in sessions of 30 mins or more; Tier 3 interventions occur daily in sessions of 30 mins or more (Burns & Gibbons, 2008).

Response to Intervention

Scheduling Elementary Tier 2/3 Interventions

'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.



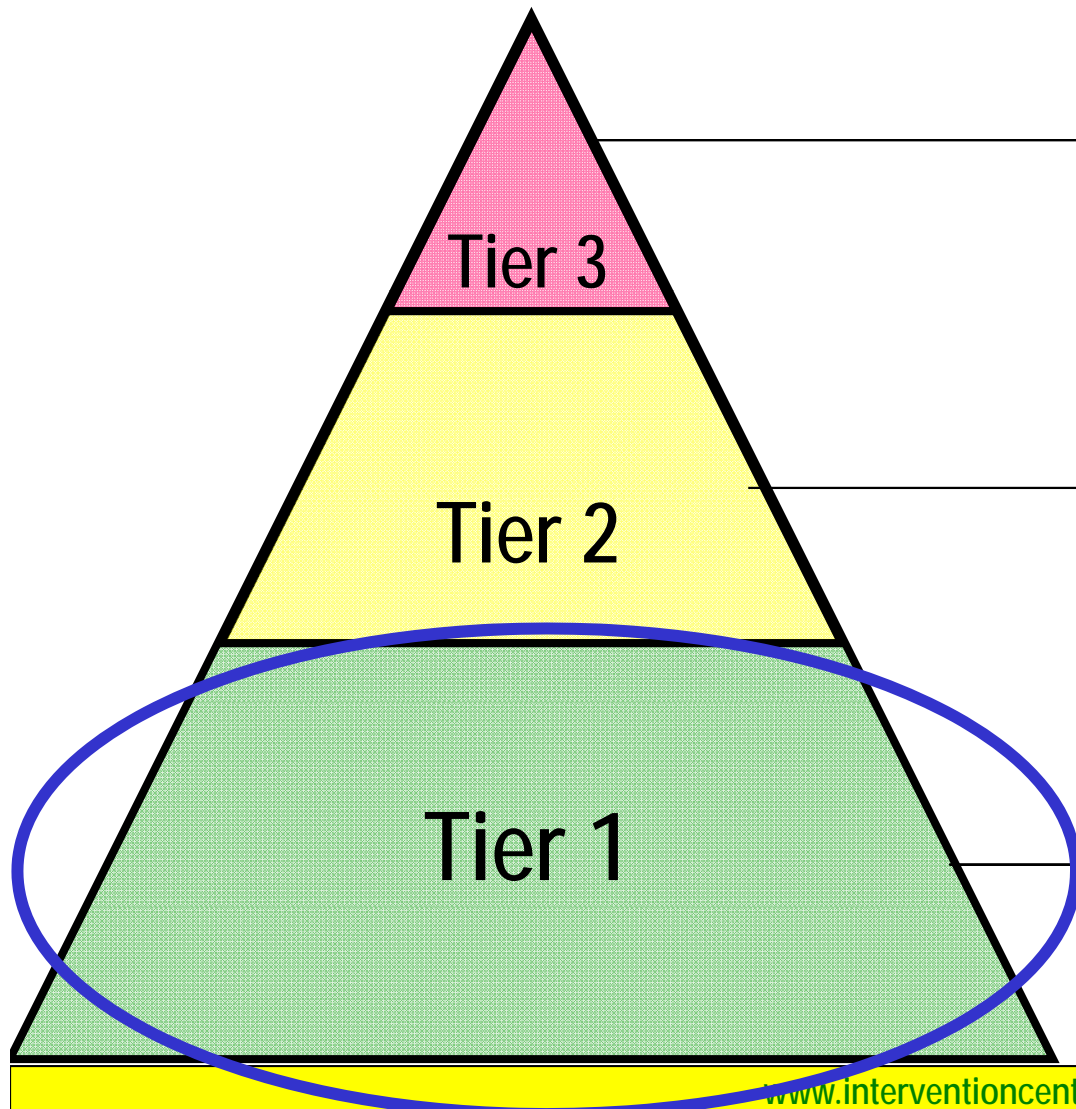
RTI: Core Instruction. At the Tier 1 (classroom) level, what elements make up high-quality core instruction?
pp. 2-4

RTI: Tier 1 Core Instruction

Focus of Inquiry: Because it benefits all students and is the most efficient way to improve academic skills, core instruction is the most important element of RTI.



RTI 'Pyramid of Interventions'



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RTI Plan: Tier 1 Core Instruction

Tier 1: High-Quality Core Instruction. The student receives high-quality core instruction in the area of academic concern. 'High quality' is defined as at least 80% of students in the classroom or grade level performing at or above grade-wide academic screening benchmarks through classroom instructional support alone (Christ, 2008).

How To: Implement Strong Core Instruction

How To: Implement Strong Core Instruction

When teachers must present challenging academic material to struggling learners, they can make that material more accessible and promote faster learning by building assistance directly into instruction. Researchers use several terms to refer to this increased level of student instructional support: explicit instruction, direct instruction, supported instruction (Rosenshine, 2008).

The checklist below summarizes the essential elements of a supported-instruction approach. When preparing lesson plans, instructors can use this resource as a 'pre-flight' checklist to make sure that their lessons reach the widest range of diverse learners.

1. Increase Access to Instruction	
Instructional Element	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Match. Lesson content is appropriately matched to students' abilities (Bums, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Content Review at Lesson Start. The lesson opens with a brief review of concepts or material that have previously been presented. (Bums, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Preview of Lesson Goal(s). At the start of instruction, the goals of the current day's lesson are shared (Rosenshine, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chunking of New Material. The teacher breaks new material into small, manageable increments, 'chunks', or steps (Rosenshine, 2008).	

2. Provided 'Scaffolding' Support	
Instructional Element	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed Explanations & Instructions. throughout the lesson, the teacher provides adequate explanations and detailed instructions for all concepts and materials being taught (Bums, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Think-Alouds/Talk-Alouds. When presenting cognitive strategies that cannot be observed directly, the teacher describes those strategies for students. Verbal explanations include 'talk-alouds' (e.g., the teacher describes and explains each step of a cognitive strategy) and 'think-alouds' (e.g., the teacher applies a cognitive strategy to a particular problem or task and verbalizes the steps in applying the strategy) (Bums, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Models. The teacher makes exemplars of academic work (e.g., essays, completed math word problems) available to students for use as models (Rosenshine, 2008).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Active Engagement. The teacher ensures that the lesson engages the student in 'active accurate responding' (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005) often enough to capture student attention and to optimize learning.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Assignments. Students have frequent opportunities to work collaboratively—in pairs or groups. (Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Checks for Understanding. The instructor regularly checks for student understanding by posing frequent questions to the group (Rosenshine, 2008).	

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Increase Access to Instruction

1. **Instructional Match.** Lesson content is appropriately matched to students' abilities (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).
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How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Increase Access to Instruction

3. **Preview of Lesson Goal(s).** At the start of instruction, the goals of the current day's lesson are shared (Rosenshine, 2008).
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How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide 'Scaffolding' Support

1. **Detailed Explanations & Instructions.** Throughout the lesson, the teacher provides adequate explanations and detailed instructions for all concepts and materials being taught (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).
2. **Talk-Alouds/Think-Alouds.** Verbal explanations are given to explain cognitive strategies: 'talk-alouds' (e.g., the teacher describes and explains each step of a cognitive strategy) and 'think-alouds' (e.g., the teacher applies a cognitive strategy to a particular problem or task and verbalizes the steps in applying the strategy) (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide 'Scaffolding' Support

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How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide 'Scaffolding' Support

5. **Collaborative Assignments.** Students have frequent opportunities to work collaboratively--in pairs or groups. (Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).
6. **Checks for Understanding.** The instructor regularly checks for student understanding by posing frequent questions to the group (Rosenshine, 2008).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide 'Scaffolding' Support

- 7. Group Responding.** The teacher ensures full class participation and boosts levels of student attention by having all students respond in various ways (e.g., choral responding, response cards, white boards) to instructor questions (Rosenshine, 2008).
- 8. High Rate of Student Success.** The teacher verifies that students are experiencing at least 80% success in the lesson content to shape their learning in the desired direction and to maintain student motivation and engagement (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide 'Scaffolding' Support

9. **Brisk Rate of Instruction.** The lesson moves at a brisk rate--sufficient to hold student attention (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).
10. **Fix-Up Strategies.** Students are taught fix-up strategies (Rosenshine, 2008) for use during independent work (e.g., for defining unknown words in reading assignments, for solving challenging math word problems).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Give Timely Performance Feedback

1. **Regular Feedback.** The teacher provides timely and regular performance feedback and corrections throughout the lesson as needed to guide student learning (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice).
2. **Step-by-Step Checklists.** For multi-step cognitive strategies, the teacher creates checklists for students to use to self-monitor performance (Rosenshine, 2008).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide Opportunities for Review & Practice

1. **Spacing of Practice Throughout Lesson.** The lesson includes practice activities spaced throughout the lesson. (e.g., through teacher demonstration; then group practice with teacher supervision and feedback; then independent, individual student practice) (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide Opportunities for Review & Practice

- 2. Guided Practice.** When teaching challenging material, the teacher provides immediate corrective feedback to each student response. When the instructor anticipates the possibility of an incorrect response, that teacher forestalls student error through use of cues, prompts, or hints. The teacher also tracks student responding and ensures sufficient success during supervised lessons before having students practice the new skills or knowledge independently (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).

How To Implement Strong Core Instruction

Provide Opportunities for Review & Practice

- 3. Support for Independent Practice.** The teacher ensures that students have adequate support (e.g., clear and explicit instructions; teacher monitoring) to be successful during independent seatwork practice activities (Rosenshine, 2008).
- 4. Distributed Practice.** The teacher reviews previously taught content one or more times over a period of several weeks or months (Pashler et al., 2007; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1995).

Activity: Core Instruction Fidelity Checks

- Lembke et al (2012) recommend that schools periodically use teacher self-, collegial, or administrative checks to ensure that strong explicit core instruction is occurring in classes.
- Discuss how your school could use a 'core instruction' checklist like the one just reviewed to ensure strong Tier 1 (core) instruction across all classrooms.



Source: Lembke, E. S., Hampton, D., & Beyers, S. J. (2012). Response to intervention in mathematics: Critical elements. *Psychology in the Schools*, 49(3), 257-272.



Defining Intervention-Related Terms. What are the definitions for different types of student instruction and support ?

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & 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 classroom academic support. NOTE: While it is important to verify that a struggling student receives good core instructional practices, those routine practices do not 'count' as individual student interventions.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & 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).

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional
Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

Intervention: Example

- *Question Generation*. The student is taught to locate or generate main idea sentences for each paragraph in a passage and record those 'gist' sentences on index cards for later review.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

Instructional Adjustment/Accommodation. An *instructional adjustment* (also known as 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 instructional adjustment removes barriers to learning while still expecting that students will master the same instructional content as their typical peers.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

Instructional Adjustment/Accommodation: Example.

- *Chunking.* The teacher breaks a larger assignment into smaller 'chunks' and provides a student with performance feedback and praise for each completed 'chunk' of assigned work (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005).
- *Choice in Mode of Task Completion.* The teacher allows the student two or more choices for completing a given academic task. For example, a student may be given the option to use a computer keyboard to write an essay instead of writing it by hand -- or to respond orally to math-facts on flashcards rather than recording answers on a math worksheet (Kern & Clemens, 2007).

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & 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.

Modifications are generally **not** included on a general-education student's classroom intervention plan—because lowering academic expectations is likely to result in these students falling further behind rather than closing the performance gap.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

Modification: Examples.

- *Reduced Amount of Work on a Fluency-Building Assignment.* A student is given 5 math computation problems for practice on a **math-computation fluency task** instead of the 20 problems assigned to the rest of the class.
- *Open-Book Test for One.* Allowing a single student to consult course notes during a test when peers are not permitted to do so.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out

Teacher Task: Steering Clear of Classroom Modifications.

The teacher is the ultimate judge about whether a particular classroom support is an instructional adjustment or a modification. That judgment is a 2-part process:

1. The teacher first identifies the non-negotiable '**target skills**' in the academic task that are non-negotiable (that is, skills that cannot be changed without compromising the task) (Tindal & Fuchs, 1999).
2. The teacher then has the latitude to alter any of the remaining 'negotiable' elements of the learning task.

Core Instruction, Interventions, Instructional Adjustments & Modifications: Sorting Them Out
Teacher Task: Steering Clear of Classroom Modifications: Example.

A social-studies teacher plans to assign a course reading to her students.

1. *Non-negotiable target skills.* The assigned reading has 4 key terms and their definitions that students must learn.
2. *Negotiable elements.* The level of reading difficulty of the assigned passage is negotiable, as the assignment is intended to convey information, not serve as a reading test.

Therefore the teacher is able to make available to students an easier passage that contains the same terms and definitions as the original reading.

AccommodationFinder

<http://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/accommodationfinder>

This application allows the user to browse a set of 60+ classroom accommodations to put together a unique plan for a struggling learner.

AccommodationFinder



Create customized accommodation plans to support ambitious learning

If you have any suggestions or comments about this tool, please mail me.

Save

Start New Checklist

AccommodationFinder

AccommodationFinder is a free database of accommodation ideas to help students to attain the Common Core Standards while holding those students to the same learning expectations as peers. Accommodations are grouped under six categories: *Communication, Environment, Instruction, Motivation, Self-Management, and Task*. Teachers can browse the 60+ strategies in this collection to create a custom checklist with ideas suitable for a specific class, small group, or individual student. Each teacher-made accommodations checklist can be saved to a free account for later retrieval--and can also be downloaded or emailed in text or PDF format.

Select Checklist: Communication

Selected Checklist

CUE IMPORTANT INFORMATION. Identify those concepts, ideas, or other academic content likely to be evaluated on upcoming tests and quizzes. During lecture or class discussion, teacher comment can draw attention to important content, while on handouts, asterisks or other visual highlighting techniques can be used to emphasize content likely to appear as test items.

EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE IN REQUESTS. When delivering a request, directive, or command to a student, state the request using positive phrasing (e.g., "I will be over to help you on the assignment just as soon as you return to your seat") rather than negative phrasing (e.g., "I can't help you with your assignment until you return to your seat."). When a request has a positive 'spin', that teacher is less likely to trigger a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance.

FOCUS ATTENTION VIA SILENT CUES. Meet with the student and agree on one or more silent teacher cues to redirect or focus the student

Items on this list are not editable.

Communication

This category included accommodations to support better communication with and from the student.

Your Checklist

New Item

Format Checklist as

- Checkboxes
- Bulleted List
- Numbered List
- No Formatting

A Sampling of Accommodation Ideas

Accommodations: Sampling

- The following is a sampling of accommodations that could be used to support general-education students in the area of 'instruction', taken from the free Accommodations Finder application on Intervention Central (www.interventioncentral.org).
- A link to this resource also appears on the conference web page.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations

- **ARRANGE CLASSROOM SEATING.** Arrange classroom seating to elicit the desired student behavior: (1) to promote higher rates of student engagement and on-task behavior, arrange seats in traditional rows facing the instructor; (2) to promote discussion and student questions, arrange seats in a semi-circle.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations

- **CREATE LOW-DISTRACTION WORK AREAS.** For students who are off-task during independent seatwork, set up a study carrel in the corner of the room or other low-distraction work area. The teacher can then either direct the distractible student to use that area whenever independent seatwork is assigned or can permit the student to choose when to use the area.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations

- **DIRECTIONS: ASSIGN A BUDDY.** Assign a study buddy who is willing and able to repeat and explain directions to the student.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations

- **PROVIDE CLASSROOM STORAGE SPACE.** Provide the student with a section of shelf or container in the classroom to store work materials required for class.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations

- **DEVELOP A STUDENT SELF-CHECK ERROR CHECKLIST.**
Meet with the student and generate a short list of the most common errors that the student habitually makes on course assignments (e.g., 'In writing assignments, some words are illegible', 'Not all words at sentence beginning are capitalized'.) Format that list as a customized error-correction checklist. Instruct the student to review completed assignments using the error-correction checklist before turning in the work.

Instructional Adjustments/Accommodations: Instruction

- USE 'VISUAL BLOCKERS'. Encourage the student to reduce distractions on assignments by using a blank sheet of paper or similar aid to cover sections of the page that the student is not currently working on.

RTI & the Classroom: Definitions of Intervention Terms

In your 'elbow groups', discuss the difference between 'instructional adjustment (accommodation)' and 'modification' (handout: p. 13).

Discuss whether – in your school – general-education students may be receiving modified core instruction. If YES, brainstorm ideas to provide appropriate support to students *without* modifying instruction.

