

MTSS Toolkit: A Practical Guide

## Developing Effective MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 Reading Interventions: Guidelines for Schools

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## Critical MTSS Elements: A Checklist

The elements below are important components of the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) model. Review each element and discuss how to implement it in your school or district:

Tier 1 Interventions: Evidence-Based & Implemented With Integrity			
Tier 1: Classroom Interventions. The classroom teacher is the 'first responder' for students with academic delays.			
Classroom effort	s to instruct and individually support the student should be documented.		
Adequately	MTSS Element	If this element is incomplete,	
Documented?		missing, or undocumented	
□ YES	Tier 1: High-Quality Core Instruction. The student receives high-	Inadequate or incorrectly	
□ NO	quality core instruction in the area of academic concern. 'High quality'	focused core instruction may	
	is defined as at least 80% of students in the classroom or grade level	be an explanation for the	
	performing at or above gradewide academic screening benchmarks	student's academic delays.	
	through classroom instructional support alone (Christ, 2008).		
🗖 YES	Tier 1: Classroom Intervention. The classroom teacher gives	An absence of individualized	
□ NO	additional individualized academic support to the student beyond that	classroom support or a poorly	
	provided in core instruction.	focused classroom intervention	
	<ul> <li>The teacher documents those strategies on a Tier 1</li> </ul>	plan may contribute to the	
	intervention plan.	student's academic delays.	
	<ul> <li>Intervention ideas contained in the plan meet the district's</li> </ul>		
	criteria as 'evidence-based'.		
	<ul> <li>Student academic baseline and goals are calculated, and</li> </ul>		
	progress-monitoring data are collected to measure the		
	impact of the plan.		
	The classroom intervention is attempted for a period		
	sufficiently long (e.g. 4-8 instructional weeks) to fully		
	assess its effectiveness.		
□ YES	<b>Tier 1: Intervention Integrity.</b> Data are collected to verify that the	Without intervention-integrity	
	intervention is carried out with integrity (Gansle & Noell, 2007; Roach	data, it is impossible to discern	
	& Elliott, 2008). Relevant intervention-integrity data include	whether academic	
	information about:	underperformance is due to the	
	Erequency and length of intervention sessions	student's 'non-response' to	
	<ul> <li>Datings by the interventionist or an independent observer.</li> </ul>	intervention or due to an	
	about whether all steps of the intervention are being	intervention that was poorly or	
	conducted correctly	inconsistently carried out	
□ YES □ NO	<ul> <li>The classroom intervention is attempted for a period sufficiently long (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks) to fully assess its effectiveness.</li> <li>Tier 1: Intervention Integrity. Data are collected to verify that the intervention is carried out with integrity (Gansle &amp; Noell, 2007; Roach &amp; Elliott, 2008). Relevant intervention-integrity data include information about:         <ul> <li>Frequency and length of intervention sessions.</li> <li>Ratings by the interventionist or an independent observer about whether all steps of the intervention are being conducted correctly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Without intervention-integrity data, it is impossible to discern whether academic underperformance is due to the student's 'non-response' to intervention or due to an intervention that was poorly or inconsistently carried out.	

Tier 1: Decision Point: Teacher Consultation/Team Meeting			
Decision Points: At Tier 1, the school has set up procedures for teachers and other staff to discuss students who need			
schedule follow-	up meetings on the student(s).	rogress-monitoring plans, and to	
Adequately	MTSS Element	If this element is incomplete,	
Documented?		missing, or undocumented	
□ YES	Tier 1: Classroom Teacher Problem-Solving Meetings. The	If the school does not provide	
D NO	school has set up a forum for teachers to discuss students who need	teachers with guidance and	
	Tier 1 (classroom) interventions and to schedule follow-up meetings	support in creating Tier 1	
	to evaluate progress. That forum takes one of two forms:	intervention plans, it cannot	
	• Consultant. The school compiles a list of consultants in the	answer whether each teacher is	
	school who can meet with individual teachers or grade-level	consistently following	
	teams to discuss specific students and to help the teacher	recommended practices in	
	to create and to document an intervention plan.	developing those plans.	
	• Grade-Level Team. The school trains grade-level teams to		
	conduct problem-solving meetings. Teachers are expected		

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to bring students to regularly scheduled team meetings to	
discuss them and to create and document an intervention	
plan.	

Tier 2/3 Interventions: Evidence-Based & Implemented With Integrity			
<i>Tiers 2 &amp; 3: Supplemental Interventions.</i> Interventions at Tiers 2 & 3 supplement core instruction and specifically target the			
student's acader	NIC deficits.	If this element is incomplete	
Adequatery	MISS Element	n this element is incomplete,	
□ YES □ NO	<ul> <li>Tier 2/3 Interventions: Minimum Number &amp; Length. The student's cumulative MTSS information indicates that an adequate effort in the general-education setting has been made to provide supplemental interventions at Tiers 2 &amp; 3. The term 'sufficient effort' includes the expectation that within the student's general education setting:</li> <li>A minimum number of separate Tier 2/3 intervention trials (e.g., three) are attempted.</li> <li>Each intervention trial lasts a minimum period of time (e.g., 6-8 instructional weeks).</li> </ul>	A foundation assumption of MTSS is that a general- education student with academic difficulties is typical and simply needs targeted instructional support to be successful. Therefore, strong evidence (i.e., several documented, 'good-faith' intervention attempts) is needed before the school can move beyond the assumption that the student is typical to consider whether there are possible 'within-child' factors such as a learning disability that best explain the student's	
☐ YES ☐ NO	<ul> <li>Tier 2/3 Interventions: Essential Elements. Each Tier 2/3 intervention plan shows evidence that:</li> <li>Instructional programs or practices used in the intervention meet the district's criteria of 'evidence-based.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>If the intervention is group-based, all students enrolled in the Tier 2/3 intervention group have a shared intervention need that could reasonably be addressed through the group instruction provided.</li> <li>The student-teacher ratio in the group-based intervention provides adequate student support. NOTE: For Tier 2, group sizes should be capped at 7 students. Tier 3 interventions may be delivered in smaller groups (e.g., 3 students or fewer) or individually.</li> <li>The intervention provides contact time adequate to the student academic deficit. NOTE: Tier 2 interventions should take place a minimum of 3-5 times per week in sessions of 30 minutes or more; Tier 3 interventions should take place daily in sessions of 30 minutes or more (Burns &amp; Gibbons, 2008).</li> </ul>	academic difficulties. Supplemental intervention programs are compromised if they are not based on research, are too large, or include students with very discrepant intervention needs. Schools cannot have confidence in the impact of such potentially compromised supplemental intervention programs.	
□ YES □ NO	Tier 2/3 Interventions: Intervention Integrity. Data are collected to verify that the intervention is carried out with integrity (Gansle & Noell, 2007; Roach & Elliott, 2008). Relevant intervention-integrity	Without intervention-integrity data, it is impossible to discern whether academic	

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data include information about:

- Frequency and length of intervention sessions.
- Ratings by the interventionist or an independent observer about whether all steps of the intervention are being conducted correctly.

underperformance is due to the student's 'non-response' to intervention or due to an intervention that was poorly or inconsistently carried out.

Decision Point for Tier 2: Data Analysis Team			
Decision Points.	At Tier 2, the school has set up procedures for teachers and other staff to discuss students who need		
intervention, to a	nalyze data about their school performance, to design intervention and progress-monitoring plans, and to		
schedule follow-	nedule follow-up meetings on the student(s).		
Adequately	MISS Element	If this element is incomplete, missing, or undocumented	
	Tior 2: Data Analysis Team The	If the school lacks a functioning Data Analysis Team, there are	
Adequately Documented? PES NO	<ul> <li>MTSS Element</li> <li>Tier 2: Data Analysis Team. The school has established a Data Analysis Team at Tier 2 to evaluate the school-wide screening data collected three times per year and to place students who need Tier 2 interventions. The Data Analysis Team</li> <li>is knowledgeable of all intervention personnel and evidence-based programs available for Tier 2 interventions.</li> <li>knows how to identify students who have failed to meet expected screening benchmarks</li> <li>can use the benchmarks to estimate the risk for academic failure of each student picked up in the screening</li> <li>is able to match identified students to appropriate interventions while providing students with sufficient instructional support.</li> <li>can document the Tier 2 intervention set up for each student</li> <li>NOTE: It is also recommended that the Data Analysis Team meet at least once <i>between</i> each screening period to review the progress of students on Tier 2 intervention, to apply screening benchmarks, and to decide for each student to more intensive Tier 3 intervention, or (if improved) discontinue the Tier 2</li> </ul>	If this element is incomplete, missing, or undocumented If the school lacks a functioning Data Analysis Team, there are likely to be several important questions left unanswered, such as the following: Are screening data being used to bring consistency and objectivity to the selection of students who need Tier 2 intervention? Are the intervention programs at Tier 2 'evidence-based'? Is the progress of students receiving Tier 2 intervention reviewed every 6-8 instructional weeks to ensure that students don't remain in ineffective interventions and don't continue to occupy intervention 'slots' after they have closed the academic gap with peers?	
	to Tier 1 support alone.		

Decision Point for Tier 3: MTSS Problem-Solving Team		
Decision Points: At Tier 3, the school has set up procedures for teachers and other staff to discuss students who need		
intervention, to a	nalyze data about their school performance, to design intervention and p	rogress-monitoring plans, and to
schedule follow-u	up meetings on the student(s).	
Adequately	MTSS Element	If this element is incomplete,
Documented?		missing, or undocumented
□ YES □ NO	<ul> <li>Tier 3: MTSS Problem-Solving Team. The school has established an 'MTSS Problem-Solving Team' to create customized intervention plans for individual students who require Tier 3 (intensive) interventions. The Problem-Solving Team:</li> <li>has created clear guidelines for when to accept a Tier 3 student referral.</li> <li>follows a consistent, structured problem-solving model during its meetings.</li> <li>schedules initial meetings to discuss student concerns and follow-up meetings to review student progress and judge whether the intervention plan is effective.</li> <li>develops written intervention plans with sufficient detail to ensure that the intervention is implemented with fidelity across settings and people.</li> <li>builds an 'intervention bank' of research-based intervention ideas for common student academic and behavioral concerns.</li> </ul>	The MTSS Problem-Solving Team is the 'decision point' in the school that ensures that students with Tier 3 academic or behavioral needs receive interventions that are well- documented, well-implemented, and sufficiently intensive to match the student's serious deficits. Most Special Education Eligibility Teams use Tier 3 Problem-Solving Teams as a quality-control mechanism and gate-keeper that prevents students from being referred for possible special education services until the school has first exhausted all general-
		education service options.

School-Wide Academic Screenings: General Outcome Measures and Skill-Based			
Measures			
Peer Norms: The	e school selects efficient measures with good technical adequacy to be u	ised to screen all students at a	
Adequately	MTSS Element	If this element is incomplete,	
Documented?		missing, or undocumented	
□ YES □ NO	<ul> <li>Selection of Academic Screening Measures. The school has selected appropriate grade-level screening measures for the academic skill area(s) in which the target student struggles (Hosp, Hosp &amp; Howell, 2007). The selected screening measure(s):</li> <li>Have 'technical adequacy' as grade-level screeners—and have been researched and shown to predict future student success in the academic skill(s) targeted.</li> <li>Are general enough to give useful information for at least a full school year of the developing academic skill (e.g., General Outcome Measure or Skill-Based Mastery Measure).</li> <li>Include research norms, proprietary norms developed as part of a reputable commercial assessment product, or benchmarks to guide the school in evaluating the risk level for each student screened.</li> </ul>	Academic screening measures provide a shared standard for assessing student academic risk. If appropriate gradewide academic screening measure(s) are not in place, the school cannot efficiently identify struggling students who need additional intervention support or calculate the relative probability of academic success for each student.	
☐ YES ☐ NO	Local Norms Collected via Gradewide Academic Screenings at Least 3 Times Per Year. All students at each grade level are administered the relevant academic screening measures at least three times per school year. The results are compiled to provide local norms of academic performance.	In the absence of regularly updated local screening norms, the school cannot easily judge whether a particular student's skills are substantially delayed from those of peers in the same	

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educational setting.

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## 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		
□ Instructional Match. Lesson content is appropriately matched to			
students' abilities (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).			
Content Review at Lesson Start. The lesson opens with a brief review			
of concepts or material that have previously been presented. (Burns,			
VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).			
Preview of Lesson Goal(s). At the start of instruction, the goals of the			
current day's lesson are shared (Rosenshine, 2008).			
Chunking of New Material. The teacher breaks new material into			
small, manageable increments, 'chunks', or steps (Rosenshine, 2008).			

#### 2. Provided 'Scaffolding' Support

2.					
Inst	ructional Element	Notes			
	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).				
	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)				
	(Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008, Rosenshine, 2008).				
	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).				
	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.				
	Collaborative Assignments. Students have frequent opportunities to				
	work collaborativelyin pairs or groups. (Baker, Gersten, & Lee, 2002;				
	Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).				
	Checks for Understanding. The instructor regularly checks for student				
	understanding by posing frequent questions to the group (Rosenshine,				
	2008).				

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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).	
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).	
Brisk Rate of Instruction. The lesson moves at a brisk ratesufficient to hold student attention (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).	
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).	

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

4. Provide Opportunities for Review & Practice			
Inst	ructional Element	Notes	
	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).		
	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).		
	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).		
	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).		





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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	Intervention Element	Notes		
Item?				
	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.			
	<ul> <li>Frequency of sessions (e.g., daily, 3 times per week)</li> </ul>			
	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.

inkely to help—and which should be avoided.				
Critical	Intervention Element	Notes		
Item?				
	<ul> <li>Problem Definition. The student academic problem(s) to be addressed in the intervention are defined in clear, specific, measureable terms (Bergan, 1995; Witt, VanDerHeyden &amp; Gilbertson, 2004). The full problem definition describes:</li> <li><i>Conditions</i>. Describe the environmental conditions or task demands in place when the academic problem is observed.</li> <li><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.</li> <li><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.</li> </ul>			
	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.	
• <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.	
• 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	
 of situations.	
'Can't Do/Won't Do' Cneck. The teacher has determined whether the	
student problem is primarily a skill or knowledge deficit ( can t do ) or	
underperformance ('went de'). If metivation 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, Pannas & Davis, 2005: Witt, VanDerHeyden &	
Gilbertson, 2004).	

Incorporat	ting Effective Instructional Elements			
These effective 'building blocks' of instruction are well-known and well-supported by the research. They should be				
considered with	nen selecting or creating any academic intervention.			
Critical	Intervention Element	Notes		
Item?				
	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					
can do it, and	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).	

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## How To: Create a Written Record of Classroom Interventions

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 Response to Intervention standards.

Teachers need a standard format to use in documenting their classroom intervention plans. The *Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet* that appears later in this article is designed to include all of the essential documentation elements of an effective intervention plan. The form includes space to document:

- *Case information.* In this first section of the form, the teacher notes general information, such as the name of the target student, the adult(s) responsible for carrying out the intervention, the date the intervention plan is being created, the expected start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will be in place. Most importantly, this section includes a description of the student problem; research shows that 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).
- Intervention. The teacher describes the evidence-based intervention(s) that will be used to address the identified student concern(s). As a shortcut, the instructor can simply write the intervention name in this section and attach a more detailed intervention script/description to the intervention plan.
- *Materials.* The teacher lists any materials (e.g., flashcards, wordlists, worksheets) or other resources (e.g., Internet-connected computer) necessary for the intervention.
- *Training.* If adults and/or the target student require any training prior to the intervention, the teacher records those training needs in this section of the form.
- *Progress-Monitoring.* The teacher selects a method to monitor student progress during the intervention. For the method selected, the instructor records what type of data is to be used, collects and enters student baseline (starting-point) information, calculates an intervention outcome goal, and notes how frequently he or she plans to monitor the intervention.

A completed example of the *Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet* that includes a math computation intervention can be found later in this article.

While a simple 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 classroom 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.

#### References

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## **Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet**

This worksheet is designed to help teachers to quickly create classroom plans for academic and behavioral interventions.

Case Information					
What to Write: Record the important case information, including student, person delivering the intervention, date of plan, start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will run.					
				Date Intervention	
Student:		Interventionist(s):		Plan Was Written:	
		· ·			
Date		Date Intervention		Total Number of	
Intervention		is to End:		Intervention	
is to Start:				Weeks:	
Description of the Student Problem:					

#### Intervention

What to Write: Write a brief description of the intervention(s) to be used with this student. TIP: If you have a script for this intervention, you can just write its name here and attach the script to this sheet.

Training
What to Write: Note what trainingif anyis needed to prepare adult(s) and/or the student to carry out the intervention.

Progress-Monitoring			
What to Write: Select a method to mor is to be used, enter student baseline (st you plan to monitor the intervention. Tip	itor student progress on this intervention. arting-point) information, calculate an inter b: Several ideas for classroom data collection.	For th venti on ap	ne method selected, record what type of data on outcome goal, and note how frequently opear on the right side of this table.
Type of Data Used to Monitor:			Ideas for Intervention Progress-Monitoring
		•	Existing data: grades, homework logs, etc.
Baseline	Outcome Goal	•	Cumulative mastery log
		•	Rubric
		•	Curriculum-based measurement
		•	Behavior report card
How often will data be collected? (e.g.,	daily, every other day, weekly):	•	Behavior checklist

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## Classroom Intervention Planning Sheet

Case Information					
What to Write: Record the important case information, including student, person delivering the intervention, date of plan, start and end dates for the intervention plan, and the total number of instructional weeks that the intervention will run.					
Student:       Patricia M.       Interventionist(s):       Mrs. Cardamone, Social       Date Intervention         Studies       Studies       Studies       Plan Was Written:       4 Feb 2013					4 Feb 2013
Date Intervention is to Start:	11 Feb 2013	Date Intervention is to End:	8 March 2013	Total Number of Intervention Weeks:	4
Description of the Student Problem: Student has difficulty summarizing and retaining key information from social studies course readings.					

#### Intervention

What to Write: Write a brief description of the intervention(s) to be used with this student. TIP: If you have a script for this intervention, you can just write its name here and attach the script to this sheet.

Text Lookback (see attached script)

Question Generation (see attached script)

Materials	Training
What to Write: Jot down materials (e.g., flashcards) or resources (e.g., Internet-connected computer) needed to carry out this intervention.	What to Write: Note what trainingif anyis needed to prepare adult(s) and/or the student to carry out the intervention.
Index cards for question generation	Meet with Patricia before starting intervention to train to use both intervention strategies. NOTE: Use past course readings to demonstrate reading comprehension strategies.

Progress-Monitoring						
What to Write: Select a method to monitor student progress on this intervention. For the method selected, record what type of data is to be used, enter student baseline (starting-point) information, calculate an intervention outcome goal, and note how frequently you plan to monitor the intervention. Tip: Several ideas for classroom data collection appear on the right side of this table.						
Type of Data Used to Monitor: 1. Student self-assessment of reading comprehension using 4-pt rating scale: 0=Did not understand rdng; 4=Fully understood rdng 2. Quiz grades		<ul> <li>Ideas for Intervention Progress-Monitoring</li> <li>Existing data: grades, homework logs, etc.</li> <li>Cumulative mastery log</li> <li>Rubric</li> <li>Curriculum-based measurement</li> </ul>				
<i>3 student self-ratings: 1.6 average</i> <i>3 quiz grades: 65 average</i> How often will data be collected? (e <i>Self-Assessment: after each assign</i>	student self-ratings: 3.5 average quiz grades: 75 average .g., daily, every other day, weekly): ed reading; quiz grades: weekly	<ul><li>Behavior report card</li><li>Behavior checklist</li></ul>				

# Intervention Integrity: Methods to Track the Quality with Which MTSS Interventions Are Carried Out

As schools implement academic and behavioral interventions, they strive to implement those interventions with consistency and quality in classrooms that are fluid and fast-evolving instructional environments. On the one hand, teachers must be prepared to improvise moment by moment to meet classroom needs that suddenly arise: for example, reordering their lesson plans on the fly to maintain student engagement, spending unanticipated extra time answering student questions, or responding to sudden behavior problems. On the other hand, it is a basic expectation that specific MTSSI interventions will be carefully planned and carried out as designed.

So how can a school ensure that interventions are implemented with consistency even in the midst of busy and rapidly shifting instructional settings? The answer is for the school to find efficient ways to track 'intervention integrity'. After all, if the school lacks basic information about whether an intervention was done right, it cannot have confidence in the outcome of that intervention. And uncertainty about the quality with which the intervention was conducted will prevent the school from distinguishing truly 'non-responding' students from cases in which the intervention did not work simply because it was done incorrectly or inconsistently.

There are three general sources of data that can provide 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 structured observation of the intervention as it is being carried out. Each of these approaches has potential strengths and drawbacks.

Work products and records generated during the intervention. Often student work samples and other records generated naturally as part of the intervention can be collected to give some indication of intervention integrity (Gansle & Noell, 2007). If student work samples are generated during an intervention, for example, the teacher can collect these work samples and write onto them the date, start time, and end time of the intervention session. Additionally, the teacher can keep a simple intervention contact log to document basic information for each intervention session, including the names of students attending the session (if a group intervention); date; and start time and end time of the intervention session.

An advantage of using work products and other records generated as a natural part of the intervention is that they are easy to collect. However, such work products and records typically yield only limited information on intervention integrity such as whether interventions occurred with the expected frequency or whether each intervention session met for the appropriate length of time. (The Intervention Contact Log is an example of a documentation tool that would track frequency, length of session, and group size for group interventions— although the form can also be adapted as well for individual students.)

Teacher self-reports and self-ratings. As another source of data, the teacher or other educators responsible for the intervention can periodically complete formal or informal self-ratings to provide information about whether the intervention is being carried out with integrity. Teacher self-ratings can be done a variety of ways. For example, the instructor may be asked at the end of each intervention session to 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 (e.g., weekly) be emailed an intervention integrity self-rating to complete.

One advantage of teacher self-ratings is that they are easy to complete, a definite advantage in classrooms

where time is a very limited resources. A second advantage of self-ratings, as with any form of self-monitoring of behaviors is that they may prompt teachers to higher levels of intervention compliance (e.g., Kazdin, 1989). A limitation of teacher self-reports and self-ratings, though, is that they tend to be biased in a positive direction (Gansle & Noell, 2007), possibly resulting in an overly optimistic estimate of intervention integrity. (The attached *Intervention Contact Log* includes a teacher self-rating component to be completed after each intervention session.)

Direct observation of the intervention steps. The most direct way to measure the integrity of any intervention is through observation. First, the intervention is divided into a series of discrete steps to create an observation checklist. An observer would then visit 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. For example, a teacher conducts a 5-step reading fluency intervention with a student. The observer notes that 4 of the 5 steps were done correctly and that one was omitted. The observer divides the number of correctly completed steps (4) by the total number of possible steps (5) to get a quotient of .80. The observer then multiples the quotient by 100 (.80 X 100), resulting in an intervention integrity figure of 80 percent.

The advantage of directly observing the steps of an intervention is that it gives objective, first-hand information about the degree to which that intervention was carried out with integrity. However, this approach does have several drawbacks. The first possible hurdle is one of trust: Teachers and other intervention staff may believe that the observer who documents the quality of interventions will use the information to evaluate global job performance rather than simply to give feedback about the quality of a single intervention (Wright, 2007).

A second drawback of direct observations tied to an intervention checklist is that this assessment approach typically assigns equal weight to all intervention steps—when in actual fact some steps may be relatively unimportant while others may be critical to the success of the intervention (Gansle & Noell, 2007). Schools can construct interventions more precisely at the design stage to improve the ability of intervention-integrity checklists to distinguish the relative importance of various intervention elements. When first developing a step-by-step intervention script, schools should review the research base to determine which of the steps comprising a particular intervention are essential and which could be considered optional or open to interpretation by the interventionist. The teacher would then clearly understand which intervention steps are 'negotiable' or 'non-negotiable' (Hawkins, Morrison, Musti-Rao, & Hawkins, 2008). Of course, the intervention integrity checklist would also distinguish between the critical and non-critical intervention elements. (The *attached Intervention Script Builder* is a form that guides schools to break an intervention down into its constituent steps and to identify specific steps as 'negotiable' or 'non-negotiable'. The form also has an 'Intervention Check' column that an independent observer can use to observe an intervention and verify that each step is correctly carried out.)

As schools develop procedures to measure the quality with which interventions are implemented, the majority will probably come to rely on an efficient mix of different data sources to verify intervention integrity-- including products generated during interventions, teacher self-ratings, and direct observations. (Schools can use the attached form

*Selecting Methods to Track Intervention Integrity* to brainstorm various ways to collect intervention integrity data on a particular student.)

Let's consider an intervention integrity example: The integrity of a small-group time-drill math computation intervention (Rhymer et al., 2002) could be measured concurrently in several ways. The teacher might maintain an intervention contact log (*record generated during the intervention*) that documents group size as well as the frequency and length of intervention sessions. As a part of each contact log entry, the teacher may be asked to rate the degree to which she was able to implement the intervention that day (*teacher self-rating*). The teacher could also collect examples of student worksheets (*work products*): saving at least one computation-drill worksheet per student from each intervention session and recording on each worksheet the date, start time, and end time for the computation time drill. These work products would supply at least indirect evidence that the intervention was being administered according to research recommendations (Rhymer et al., 2002) for math time drills. And finally, an observer might drop into the class at least once per week (*direct observation*) to observe the math time drill intervention using a step-by-step integrity checklist customized for that intervention. Collectively, these various direct and indirect measures would assure the school that the intervention plan is being implemented with sufficient integrity to inspire confidence in the outcome.

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### Intervention Script Builder

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	<b>Intervention Steps:</b> Describe the steps of the intervention. Include enough detail so that the procedures are clear to all who must implement them.	Neg et a	<b>gotiable?</b> (Hawkins I., 2008)	
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	
This step took place Y N	7		Negotiable Step Non-Negotiable Step	
This step took place Y N	8		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?

Intervention Checklist: Select either the classroom teacher/team or an outside observer to use the completed Intervention Script Builder as a checklist to rate the quality of the intervention. Check the appropriate set of directions below:

<u>\_\_\_\_\_</u>*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.)						
A	D	G				
В	E	Н				
C	F	l				
AM	AM					
Date: Time Start: :	Time End:: Students Absent _					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed? Comments:					
1 2 3 4 5 6 Not at all Somewhat	7 8 9 Fully					
AM Date: Time Start: :	Time End:: AM Time End:: Students Absent:					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed?					
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9					
Not at all Somewhat	Fully AM					
Date: Time Start::	Time End:: Students Absent:					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed? Comments:					
1 2 3 4 5 6 Not at all Somewhat	789 Fully					
AM	AM Timo End:					
	Students Absent:					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed? Comments:					
Not at all Somewhat	7 8 9 Fully					
AM Date: Time Start: :	Time End:: AM Students Absent:					
To what dogree were you able to carry out the	o intorvontion as dosignod?					
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9					
Not at all Somewhat	Fully AM					
Date: Time Start: :	Time End:: Students Absent:					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed? Comments:					
1 2 3 4 5 6 Not at all Somewhat	789 Fully					
AM Date: Time Start	AM Time End					
To what degree were you able to carry out the	e intervention as designed? Comments:					
Not at all Somewhat Fully		22				

## Selecting Methods to Track Intervention Integrity

Student Name: \_\_\_\_

Date:

**Directions:** 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 interventionintegrity checklist containing the essential steps of the intervention? Who will use the interventionintegrity 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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