

Designing, implementing, and evaluating the Response to Intervention framework in literacy



Emina McLean
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What is it?

Response to Intervention is “a practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying [student] response data to important educational decisions” (NASDE, 2006, p.3).

- The primary goal is improved outcomes for all students.
- The secondary goal is to provide data to identify learning difficulties in a timely manner.
- It is a research-based **instructional framework** that replaced the IQ-performance or cognitive discrepancy model.
- It (RtI) has now been replaced with the term Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- “Progressively intense instruction” (Hughes & Dexter, 2011, p.4)

The three tiers

1. Core instruction
2. Universal screening
3. Progress monitoring
4. Differentiation

Tier 1

70-90% of students

1. Supplemental instruction
2. Small group
3. More frequent progress monitoring (3-5 weeks)

Tier 2

10-25% of students

1. Intensive intervention
2. Individualised program
3. More frequent progress monitoring (1-2 weeks)

Tier 3

2-10% of students

The three tiers

Tier 1: whole class best-practice instruction (primary prevention/proactive)

High quality curriculum and evidence-informed instructional methods for all students

Differentiation of support not task

The overwhelming majority should succeed (high expectations)

Intensity is increased by:

Tier 2: small group additional instruction (secondary prevention)

3-5 students per group (homogenous)

3 x 30 minute sessions per week (20-40 mins 3-5 x per week)

Increased dose of Tier 1 instruction*

Time limited (10-20 weeks)

1. Using more teacher-led systematic and explicit instruction
2. Conducting it more frequently
3. Adding to its duration
4. Creating smaller, more homogenous groups
5. Relying on educators with greater expertise

Tier 3: specialist support (tertiary prevention)

1-3 students per group

Increased frequency (45-60 minutes daily)

Highly individualised/targeted

Extended duration

Why use it?

Students will struggle for many reasons (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage, language difficulties, social/emotional/behaviour difficulties, inadequate instruction).

It is the best framework to use if you want to be a school that:

- is research-informed
- identifies struggling students early (no waiting to fail)
- develops high quality assessment, instruction, and intervention practices school-wide
- develops data literacy in all staff
- is data driven

What's the evidence?

- Good evidence to support the use of universal screening
- Good evidence to support the use of progress monitoring
- Good evidence to support the use of explicit and systematic instruction in reading and writing
- Good evidence to support the use of evidence-informed core curricula/programs
- BUT good evidence for individual components of RtI does not mean consistently strong evidence for the model itself or model scalability in schools/across schools
- Issues arise due to inadequate professional learning, administrative support, coordination, meeting and planning time, staffing, and staff buy-in, to name a few
- RtI studies to date demonstrate achievement or performance improvement
- Studies have tended to focus on early reading and maths skills but that's changing (?)
- OVERALL there is emerging evidence for a range of RtI models
- MORE research is needed on how to be most effective in developing and sustaining RtI in schools

The three key areas to get right

- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Instruction

Select and administer assessments

Select screening tasks that:

- will yield meaningful data
- reflect the knowledge/skills that you are going to be teaching
- are tied to expectations for learning
- are technically adequate (valid and reliable measures)

Ensure:

- teachers are trained to administer correctly and consistently
- you provide scripted instructions
- observation/coaching occurs during initial administration/scoring
- you cross check a % of assessments for scoring reliability

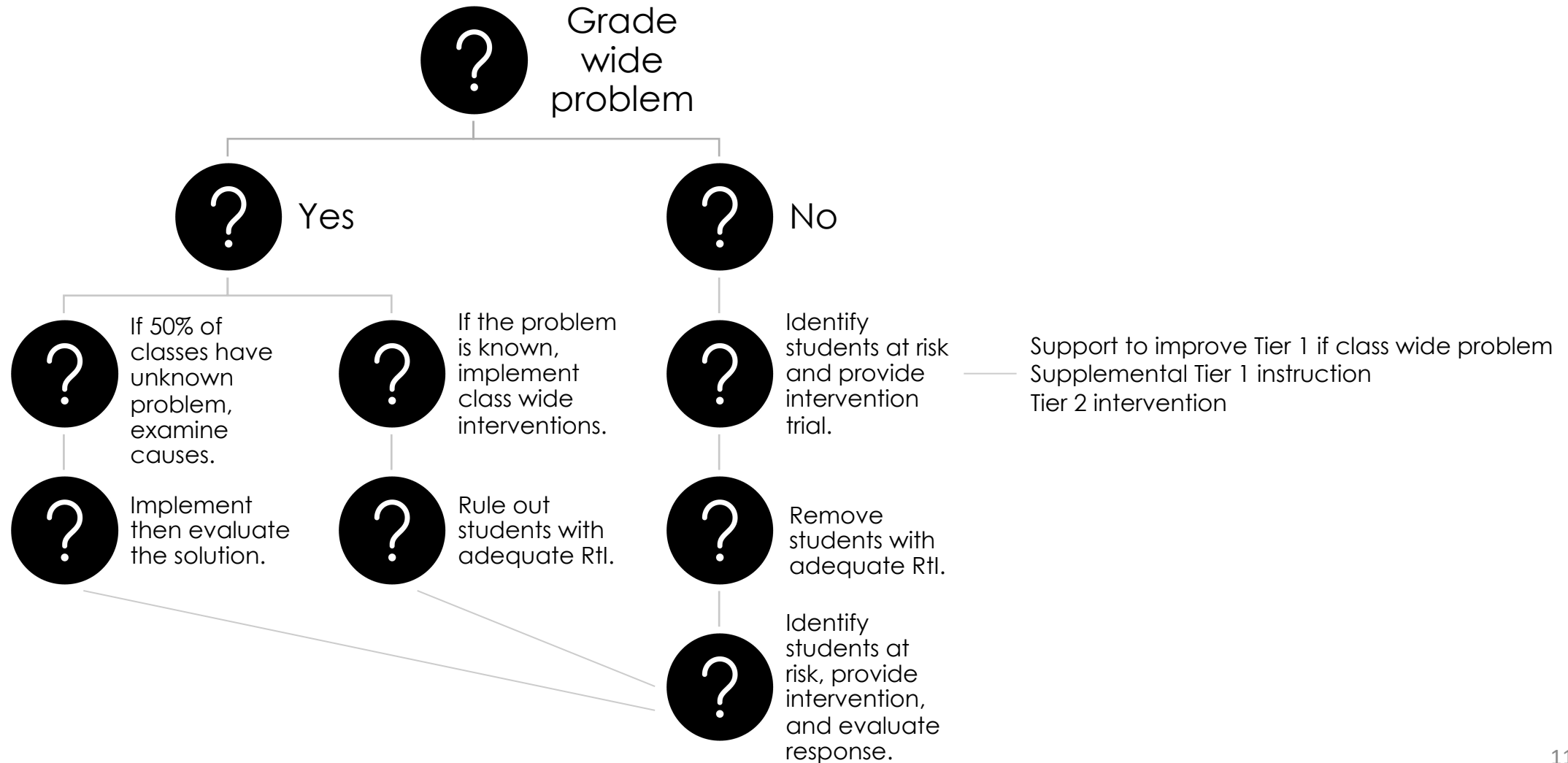
Our school: Assessment

- Benchmarking (DIBELS 3 x per year)
- Universal screening in Year 1 (Phonics Check)
- Additional progress monitoring for students who struggle (every 2-3 weeks for students receiving intensive support and every 3-5 weeks for students receiving strategic support in Tier 1/2)
- In the early years we prioritise the fundamentals of language and reading
- We continue to monitor reading skills throughout primary school
- Formative assessment including frequent Checking For Understanding (CFU)
- Review
- Professional learning on administration, interpretation, and goal setting

Our school: Assessment

DIBELS	CUBED	MOTiF and CoST	CJ & writing moderation	PAT Reading	Phonics Screening Check	PAT Grammar & Punctuation
Letter naming fluency	Listening comprehension	DiST-s	Writing to dictation	Comprehension		
Word reading fluency	Story retell	DiST-n	Writing to prompts			
Nonword reading fluency	Story grammar	DiST-i				
Phoneme segmentation fluency	Vocabulary	Phonology				
Oral reading fluency	Coordinating and subordinating conjunctions	Orthography				
Comprehension		Morphology				
F-6; 3x	F-2; 3x	F-2; 1x 3-6; 1x	F-6; 2x	1-6; 1x	1; 1x	3-6; 1x

Evaluate screening data



Identify patterns in the data

If class-wide learning problems are detected, then the grade level team should examine grade wide data to determine whether a grade wide problem is apparent. **If the screening tasks were appropriate and administered correctly**, we then need to ask:

1. Is a research-based core curriculum in place?
2. Is that curriculum being followed with sufficient instructional time and/or with effective techniques?
3. Is there a scope and sequence detailing when skills will be targeted/mastered across each year? Is it being followed?
4. Have students mastered the prerequisite skills?
5. Is the instructional environment one in which students are actively engaged, non-instructional time is kept to a minimum, and most students are responding accurately? Are students receiving corrective feedback?
6. Is the gradewide problem isolated to one grade level or is it pervasive?
7. Are there shared features between classes with class wide learning problems? (e.g., veteran or graduate teachers; only lower or higher grades with gradewide problems)

Identify patterns in the data

If class wide learning problems are detected, that are localised to a particular class, and **if the screening tasks were appropriate and administered correctly**, we then need to ask:

1. Is the teacher adhering to the curriculum?
2. Is the teacher adhering to the scope and sequence?
3. Is the teacher allowing sufficient instructional minutes?
4. Did students in this class master the pre-requisite skills?
5. Are there common features among low performing students in this class?
6. Is the instructional environment one in which students are actively engaged, non-instructional time is kept to a minimum, and most students are responding accurately? If students make mistakes, do they receive immediate corrective feedback?

Plan core solutions

- Core solutions depend on the answers to grade wide and class wide questions on the previous two slides
- Class wide and grade wide problems suggest more frequent monitoring is required
- The problem drives the solution (e.g. if students are collectively struggling to segment phonemes, the solution is to increase instruction/feedback in that area, but if the problem is the teacher not adhering to the curriculum, that requires an entirely different approach)

Common solutions:

- Develop a research-informed core curriculum
- Develop detailed scope and sequences
- Develop highly effective teaching techniques/practices in all staff
- Invest in high quality professional learning in target areas
- Ongoing, targeted implementation support/coaching cycles

Plan supplemental solutions

After establishing and delivering evidence based, core instruction:

- Identify students below benchmark
- Group students by area of need
- Plan and provide intervention at Tier 1 and 2
- Embed regular progress monitoring (every 2-5 weeks in Tiers 1 and 2; every 1-2 weeks in Tier 3)
- Review intervention if students do not make progress on four consecutive progress monitoring measures

Nb: Class wide interventions should be a supplement to core instruction.

Evidence informed curriculum and instruction

“Evidence-based Tier 1 instruction effectively eliminates inappropriate instruction as a reason for inadequate progress.”
(Hughes & Dexter, 2011, p.5)

Checklist:

- Are all components of effective reading instruction present and prominent?
- Are all components of effective writing instruction present and prominent?
- Are all components of effective instruction generally present and prominent (e.g., explicit and systematic)?
- Is the curriculum aligned/coordinated/cumulative/mapped/sequential?

Three important features of any effective core literacy program are 1) based on/informed by research, 2) explicit instructional strategies, and 3) consistent organisational and instructional routines (Hughes & Dexter, 2011).

Our school: Core curriculum

- Word-level reading and spelling: Sounds~Write (F-2) and Spelling Mastery (3-6) for 25-30 minutes daily
- Reading fluency: 10-15 minutes of daily practice
- Handwriting: 10-15 minutes of explicit instruction daily
- English, History, Geography, and Science knowledge/text units: explicit reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing instruction are embedded (5 hour of English; 5 hours History/Geography/Science per week)*
- Grammar and punctuation instruction are embedded in writing instruction which follows The Writing Revolution scope and sequence/pacing guides
- Detailed reading and writing scope and sequences which make it clear what students should develop mastery in each term/semester/year.

Our school: Core instruction

- Explicit Direct Instruction model
- Consistent slide decks and slide structure to support instruction
- Weekly professional learning (whole staff)
- Formal training in programs (e.g., Sounds~Write, The Writing Revolution)

Evaluation

- Review benchmark data (3 times per year)
- Review progress monitoring data (every 2-5 weeks)
- Leadership meetings at the end of each term to evaluate data, determine progress, and move students in and out of intervention (Tier 2 interventions are 10 weeks)
- Formal observation and instructional coaching program (Tier 1 and 2)
- Learning Walks twice per term (Tier 1)

Problem solving v. standard protocol

Problem solving	Standard protocol
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem solving = collective brainstorming as a team• The team makes instructional decisions based on individual student needs• Students who struggle are provided a variety of interventions based on need/performance data• Interventions are tailored to individual or specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standard = consistent/the same for all students• Protocol = preselected delivery/format/program• The interventionist/leader makes instructional decisions that follow the <i>standard protocol</i>• A single consistent intervention is used (pre-selected, evidence-informed)• A variety of staff can deliver the intervention, if well trained and supported.

Post-primary considerations

- Less evidence
- Universal screening/sound assessment practices are less common
- Less of a focus on identifying problems in secondary
- The focus is now on remediation rather than prevention
- This often means moving students directly into Tier 2 or Tier 3 based on assessment data rather than testing a response to intervention (instruction) first

Our school: Staffing and resources in 2021



- Leadership team (Principal, Assistant Principal, English Leader, Year 1 Leader/Intervention Coordinator)
 - English Leader overseeing assessment, curriculum, instruction, intervention, professional learning, and practice development
 - Teacher employed as interventionist (formal training/PL provided)
 - Final year Master of Speech Pathology students (volunteers)
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- Sounds-Write (word-level reading and spelling)
 - Story Champs (oral language)

Our school: Tier 2 in 2022 plan

Tier 2 interventions:

- Sounds-Write
- Spelling through Morphographs and Spelling Mastery
- Oral reading fluency
- Corrective Reading (Comprehension)*
- Expressive Writing* and The Writing Revolution

Staffing:

- Leadership team (Principal, Assistant Principal, English Leader, Year 1 Leader)
- English Leader overseeing assessment, curriculum, instruction, intervention, professional learning, and practice development
- Education Support staff (trained) – 20 intervention hours per week
- Speech Pathologist (intervention coordinator) – 1-2 days per week

Take-aways

- Getting core instruction right (Tier 1) is the most important work. This can reduce the number of students at risk by up to 25% (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009).
- Develop an evidence informed assessment schedule alongside this work.
- See how students respond to high-quality Tier 1, then identify students for Tier 2 support.
- If too many students continue to struggle in Tier 1, review and refine Tier 1.
- Invest heavily in staff knowledge and practice development through formal training, in-house professional learning, and coaching cycles.
- Develop a culture of practice improvement.
- Develop data literacy and ensure assessment fidelity.
- Develop expert educators/interventionists.

References and resources

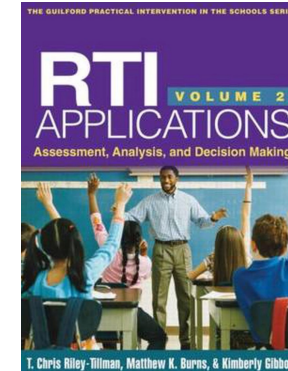
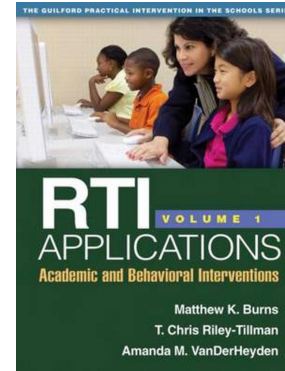
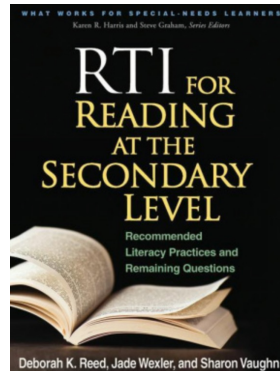
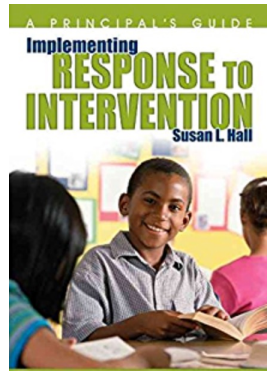
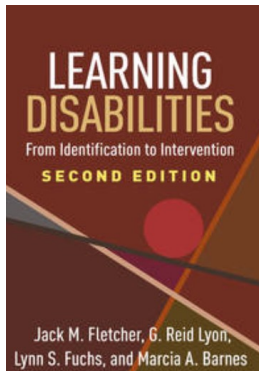
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Stay in touch



@EminaMcLean

www.eminamclean.com

