

Book Study

Prepared by the
Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) Project

Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice

R. Brown-Chidsey and M.W. Steege
(Guilford Press, 2005)

Book Description:

Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice provides guidance with the why's and how to's of RtI.

Target Audience:

This book is a great introduction to a Response to Intervention (or MTSS) model. This is a good read for building or district leadership teams as they build a picture of what the "triangle" represents.

Core Team Note: Throughout this book, you will see the term Response to Intervention or RtI. Since the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 the term Response-to-Intervention (RtI) has become a buzz word within education. RtI is built upon a broad research base resulting in multiple models with the common features of (1) multiple tiers of intervention service delivery, (2) problem solving method and (3) data collection/assessment to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2006).

It is not uncommon to hear the term RtI and Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) used interchangeably. However, in many instances the meaning applied to RtI does not align with the principles and practices of a MTSS. The principles and practices of a MTSS are based upon what research has shown to be effective in **both** creating successful and sustainable **system change** as well as what is necessary in providing **the most effective instruction to all students**. The MTSS framework is designed to address the academic and behavioral needs of every student, regardless of whether the students are struggling or have advanced learning needs.

In laymen's terms, RtI is what happens in the triangle at the center of the MTSS trademark. MTSS is the triangle PLUS everything else that builds and supports the system. That being said, there are enough "crossing over" points to make a book study based on an RtI model a worthwhile pursuit. For our purposes, we will be using the term MTSS in the questions to give the book a broader perspective.

Chapter 1: What is *Response to Intervention (RTI)*?

Helpful Hints

It might be beneficial for the first day of the book study to actually read chapter one during the time allotted and discuss MTSS and what the participants currently know about it. It may also be beneficial to frame the discussion around the following question:

Based on what you read, what is one thing that would look different than what is standard practice in your school?

Discussion Questions

1. How do we currently support our teachers when we have students who are struggling behaviorally or academically?
2. What response structures do we currently have in place?
3. How does our current problem solving process address the needs of students?
4. Is it similar to what was described in this chapter?
5. Would our current local policies support the “big ideas” presented? If not, what would need to be done to align them?
6. The chapter noted that teachers may not be adequately trained to analyze student performance data. What do we think about our teachers’ current skills in this area?
7. How do we currently respond when students are not meeting expectations?
8. How do we professionally advocate for ourselves when we need assistance with a student or groups of students (academically or behaviorally)?

Chapter 2: NCLB, IDEIA, and RTI: Linkages across National Education Policies

Helpful Hints

Discussion questions for this chapter could address how the district, building, and individuals are implementing the above education policies.

Discussion Questions

1. What evidence based practices are we currently using?
2. How do our local policies align with the national education policies?
3. How do we evaluate our current programs and any new programs to determine if they are evidenced-based practices?
4. How do we support the teachers in finding evidence based instructional practices?
5. How do we communicate the success or failure of programs to teachers?
6. How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our instruction?
7. How do we know if what we are doing is evidence-based?
8. Does our service delivery model align with the current research on best practices for children with disabilities?

Chapter 3: RTI Instead of Discrepancy Models

Helpful Hint

This chapter will be very important for school psychologists so be prepared to have extensive discussion if psychologists are in the group.

Another consideration is that this chapter recommends additional testing after the team determines that an initial evaluation needs to be made. There are other models that do not require additional testing be completed if the data collected through the RTI process is sufficient and an eligibility decision can be made. Additionally, KSDE does not require that additional testing be completed.

Discussion Questions

1. How do our current practices differ from what was described?
2. What do we have in place that is in alignment with what was described and what would we need to improve upon?
3. Is our core or Tier 1 curriculum based on scientifically validated instruction?
4. The group should spend some time discussing the idea of prevention versus waiting to fail.
5. How do we support the teachers in utilizing scientifically validated practices?
6. What is our standard in which to evaluate instructional practices?
7. Does our professional development support scientifically validated practices?
8. How do we communicate our beliefs about instruction and learning to the faculty?
9. How do we ensure the faculty doesn't view MTSS as one more "hoop" to jump through?
10. How do we evaluate our own practices to ensure we are utilizing scientifically based research?
11. When considering a new methodology or program, how do we know if it is scientifically validated? Does it matter? If our data indicate the students are performing up to expectations, do we need to change?
12. How could the MTSS model improve what we are already doing to identify children with disabilities?
13. What is the role of published standardized tests?
14. What do they contribute to determining instructional needs?

15. Does our current method of identification and assessment yield results that improve instruction?
16. What support would we need to change?
17. Do we have enough knowledge about the core curriculum and instruction to be confident that research validated practices are being utilized?
18. How do we ask the above in a sensitive and collaborative manner and how do we support the core? What is our responsibility with implementing the core?

Chapter 4: Core Principles of RtI

Helpful Hints

It might be helpful to begin with a discussion of the current interventions being used in the schools and areas that might be lacking or need more choices to fit student needs.

Discussion Questions

1. How do we insure we are being responsible in making sure interventions are evidence-based? – Think district level, building level, classroom level?
2. What role does each of the above professionals have in ensuring proper utilization of evidence-based practices?
3. How should treatment integrity be handled, as this could create uncomfortable situations for faculty?
4. From what sources do I draw upon when creating interventions for students (experience, research, colleague, student data, what's available, etc.)?
5. How do I feel about someone else evaluating the treatment integrity of an intervention I have created and/or am implementing?
6. How does the current service delivery model of psychological services align with the standards presented?
7. What needs to change?
8. Whose role should it be to evaluate treatment integrity?
9. Do we have a sufficient pool of evidence-based interventions to draw from and implement with integrity?

Chapters 5 & 6: Single-Subject Experimental Design & Single-Subject Research and RTI**Discussion Questions**

1. How do our practices in our current problem-solving process align with what is being recommended?
2. How are we going to do this? How does following a practitioner-researcher model enhance instruction and improve results for children?
3. What professional development would be needed to function as recommended in these chapters?
4. As school psychologists, what would we need to do to support teachers in implementing single-subject experiments?
5. Discuss the key features of effective instruction. Where does homework fit into this?

Chapter 7: Using RTI Procedures of Assessment of Academic Difficulties

Helpful Hints

If there are school psychologists in the book study group, be prepared to engage in detailed and intense discussion, as this could be a significant paradigm shift from their current belief system and practices. Keeping an open mind will be critical.

Discussion Questions

1. How do our current practices in selection of materials and screening assessments align with what is described in the chapter?
2. Are we implementing the core curriculum with consistency? How do we know?
3. We are already doing a lot of testing...how would the MTSS practices enhance/improve what we're already doing?
4. What would be an effective way to do all of this monitoring (including doing the testing and analyzing the results)?
5. How could special education support personnel assist in this process?
6. What role do and should administrators have in the procedures described?

Chapter 8: Using RTI Procedures with Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Helpful Hints

When discussing this chapter, have the participants think about all types of diversity, not just racial differences.

Discussion Questions

1. What examples of diversity do we have in our district?
2. How has the community changed over the years? What changes could we predict for the future?
3. How does the community perceive the school?
4. Best practices recommend that schools should view parents as partners and should include them in some degree at all levels of instruction and intervention. How could this be done?

Chapter 9: Using RTI Procedures as a Part of Special Education Eligibility Decision-Making & Chapter 10: RTI Reports

Helpful Hints

It may also be helpful to do Chapter 3 in conjunction with these chapters rather than at the beginning.

Discussion Questions

1. How do our current procedures to determine special education eligibility align with what is being proposed?
2. Do we have the skills necessary to conduct evaluations in the manner being recommended?
3. How do our state regulations and procedures align with what is proposed?
4. How do our district or cooperative procedures align with what is proposed?
5. Get an evaluation report from the way that eligibility is currently done and compare with what is presented? Which yields better instructional recommendations?

Chapter 11: Training Educators to Use RTI Methods

Helpful Hints

Although this chapter may appear to be most appropriate for administrators or those individuals responsible for staff development, don't assume that teachers or other faculty would not contribute helpful information for planning. It is a best practice for educators to be able to contribute to creating their own staff development programs and gives ownership.

Discussion Questions

1. After reading the book, what training do you think would be necessary to implement MTSS? This could be addressed in a brainstorm fashion where all concerns are recorded and neither evaluated nor prioritized until later.
2. MTSS calls for a paradigm shift which represents a change from looking at problems and disability as a problem within the student to viewing a problem as a discrepancy from what is expecting to what is occurring. With this shift, teaching procedures will be evaluated and examined as to how they may be contributing to the concern, which may cause some teacher to feel vulnerable. How do we avoid this or develop a mindset that will enable teachers and other educators to be open to this way of thinking?

Chapter 12: Frequently Asked Questions...and Our Best Responses: Some Conclusions about RTI

Discussion Questions

1. This chapter could be done with Chapter 11 or as a wrap up session to address any unanswered questions.