RtI: The Forgotten Tier

A Practical Guide for Building a Data-Driven Tier 1 Instructional Process

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At the time of this book's publication, all facts and figures cited are the most current available. Student and teacher names are fictitious.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

RtI: The Forgotten Tier is designed for teachers and administrators grappling with the development and implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention, more commonly referred to as RtI. In our effort to translate the intent of RtI into practice, our observations and experiences with hundreds of educators have led us to focus on Tier 1. Even though what to use, when to use it, and how to access intervention in Tiers 2 and 3 are essential questions in an RtI model, we focus on the Tier 1 classroom as the foundation of a successful RtI implementation. Our purpose is to provide a blueprint for the kind of instructional planning and decision-making that maximizes learning for all students—those who are proficient and advanced, as well as those who require intervention services. Making an investment in effective instruction for Tier 1 classrooms reduces expenditures by minimizing referrals for more intensive and expensive instructional support. A strong Tier 1 is cost effective for everyone—administrators, teachers, and students.

The chapters that follow guide you through a process designed to zero in on critical aspects of Tier 1 instruction—those aspects that when addressed contribute to teacher success and student achievement. Section 1 focuses on several critical instructional variables—what to teach, how to teach, and how to determine what students have learned. Section 2 takes the next step and demonstrates how these variables play out in effective Tier 1 instruction. Using data to guide instructional decisions and assess student progress are at the heart of building a strong foundational program. Section 3 examines decisions that exist beyond the Tier 1 classroom. These decisions pertain to infrastructure, policies, and overarching instructional goals that typically lie within the purview of school or district-wide leadership. This section also summarizes the process, presented as a checklist, designed to help you determine the state of Tier 1 in your classroom, school, or district. We invite you to take a look at the checklist in Chapter 9 as a pre-organizer for where you are in this process. We hope these chapters will foster conversation about the importance and effectiveness of first instruction. When educators actively address these issues, the critical role of Tier 1 will not be forgotten; it will rise to the forefront.

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