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RTI in Middle and High Schools

By William N. Bender

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *RTI in Middle and High Schools* by William N. Bender. *RTI in Middle and High Schools* discusses the innovations of RTI, differentiated instruction, and instructional technologies together, and suggests solutions for the complex challenges that will need to be addressed during the RTI implementation process.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or by an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to towards implementing RTI successfully.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to implement RTI in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Response to Intervention: A Catalyst for Change

1. In your own words, what is RTI? Whom does RTI serve?
2. How do the three tiers of RTI differ from one another? Who is responsible for instruction at the different tiers?
3. How can a leadership team promote success in RTI implementation? Consider the “RTI Issues and Decisions for the Leadership Team” (pp. 13–14). Which questions are critical for your RTI leadership team to address? Why?
4. In what areas has research shown RTI to be effective?
5. Consider the “Guidelines for Developing a Tier 2 RTI Intervention” (pp. 22–23). If your school already has a Tier 2 intervention plan, does it meet these criteria? Are any guidelines being neglected?
6. After consulting figure 1.4 (pp. 32–35), what do you think this form does well? What aspects of this RTI program would you like to see at work in your own intervention program?
7. What information do you or your colleagues need in order to plan a new or revised RTI process?

Chapter 2

Existing RTI Structures in Middle and High Schools

1. What are some of the obstacles to implementing RTI in departmentalized schools?
2. What was Berkeley Springs High School’s approach to screening? What are the pros and cons of using these methods for screening in middle and high schools?
3. What are parallel periods? In order for doubling to be an effective RTI method, what guidelines should be followed to ensure continuity and intensity of Tier 2 intervention?
4. What are some measures for assessing RTI effectiveness? How do these measures address different issues?
5. What made Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School’s Tier 3 program unique? What questions must be addressed when developing a Tier 3 intervention plan?
6. Consult the “Strategies for Making Time for Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI Instruction” on page 59. What are the tradeoffs associated with the different strategies? Which strategies might work best for your school or district? Why?

Chapter 3

Differentiating Instruction in Middle and High School Classes

1. What are the three modifications Tomlinson recommends in order to support differentiated instruction? How might educators design projects with these three modifications in mind?
2. What are some of the different learning styles presented in this chapter? Why is it important for educators to be sensitive to the different learning styles?
3. What can brain-scanning techniques like fMRIs show us regarding learning? What kinds of activities can promote brain-compatible learning?
4. What are dendrites? How do dendrites affect the learning process?
5. Review the “Gender Differences That Impact Learning” on pages 77–79. How might an understanding of these gender differences promote more effective differentiated instruction?
6. With the differences in learning styles, generation, and gender in mind, are there any ways in which the instructional practices within your own district or school might be modified to better accommodate a diverse group of learners?
7. What does the acronym SHEMR stand for?

Chapter 4

Developing Tier 1 Differentiated Instructional Lessons for Middle and High School Classes

1. What are the assumptions of the traditional lesson plan? Why are these assumptions typically irrelevant in today's classrooms?
2. Compare the two columns of the “Traditional Lesson Plan and Differentiated Modifications” on page 89. How do the modification options build on what you learned in chapter 3 about brain-compatible learning activities?
3. How can learning centers aid in differentiated instruction? What are some guidelines to follow in order to ensure learning centers are consistent, engaging, productive, and brain compatible?
4. What are the dangers of assigning highly differentiated activities every day? What are the benefits of incorporating an appropriate amount of differentiation into whole-group instruction?
5. How can a differentiated classroom foster an effective Tier 2 intervention program?

Chapter 5

Supporting RTI and Differentiated Instruction With Modern Instructional Technologies

1. Why does the author prefer placing computers in each classroom, rather than building computer labs?
2. What is the “one-to-one” initiative? What environment is this practice modeled after?
3. Consider the different hardware and software options used for instruction. Which do you think might be practical tools for your classroom, school, or district? Why?
4. How can each of the different web-based tools outlined in the chapter aid in RTI and differentiated instruction? Have you used any of these tools already, and if so, what has your experience been? After reading the chapter, are there other web-based instruction tools that you are interested in exploring in your classroom, school, or district?
5. How can educators use caution while taking advantage of web-based tools for instruction? Specifically, what information should never be posted on the Internet, in order to ensure student safety?
6. How do textbooks differ from Internet resources in terms of accuracy? How can these differences be used to build students’ media literacy skills?

Chapter 6

RTI and Differentiation in Reading

1. What obstacles hinder reading instruction in middle and high schools? How does reading instruction and skill requirement change after elementary school?
2. What are the different cognitive strategies that the author recommends? Briefly explain how each of these strategies can be used to aid in reading comprehension.
3. Why do Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions often include supplemental reading curricula? Which supplemental programs detailed in this chapter might be helpful to include in your school or district's reading plan? Why?
4. What three measures should be used to assess reading skills? How can each of these measures be put into practice? Why is it a good idea to evaluate students using all three measures?
5. In what way is Clark County's RTI plan unique? What are the pros and cons of using a plan similar to this one?
6. What are some factors that affect whether or not Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions should overlap?
7. Whose responsibility is it to determine whether a student should be placed in special education?

Chapter 7

RTI and Differentiation in Writing

1. What are the six different types of writing? How are these types taught within middle and high schools? What are the benefits of building student skills in each type of writing?
2. Why is it important to encourage both strong mechanics and higher-order thinking?
Review the “Cognitive Strategy Instruction Guidelines for Writing Instruction” (pp. 174–175). How can you include the learning strategies discussed in this chapter in your classroom, school, or district?
3. Why are notetaking skills important? What has research shown regarding notetaking methods?
4. How can the various web-based writing tools the author proposes enhance writing instruction?
5. How might an RTI program address writing, even in schools in which writing is not directly taught?

Chapter 8

RTI and Differentiation in Mathematics

1. What are the benefits of peer tutoring? What peer tutoring options does the author present, and how do they differ from each other?
2. How does problem-based learning seek to engage students?
3. What strategies can transform mathematics instruction into an opportunity for critical thinking? What challenges often arise when students attempt more complex story problems?
4. Consider the different supplemental mathematics curricula options presented in the chapter. Which options might be useful in your school or district's RTI plan? Why?
5. What is the purpose of mathematics dynamic assessment (MDA)? How often and in what way should MDA be used? What can MDA reveal about each individual student?
6. How does the case study presented at the end of this chapter model successful Tier 2 intervention?