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Taking Action: A Handbook for RTI at Work™

By Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Janet Malone

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Taking Action: A Handbook for RTI at Work™* by Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Janet Malone. *Taking Action* presents why the three tiers of response to intervention (RTI) form the most effective process that teacher teams can use to support each student's specific learning needs.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or 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 promote a healthy school culture.

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

Chapter 1

The RTI at Work Pyramid

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1. In your own words, describe the purposes of the three tiers of the RTI at Work pyramid. Why is the RTI at Work pyramid inverted from the view of the traditional pyramid?

2. Provide an example of an essential action that must be coordinated across an entire school, which would appear on the left side of the RTI at Work pyramid.

3. In what areas of work have you taken sole responsibility but you should shift to take lead responsibility? Why is this the case?

4. By what needs do the authors suggest students would be targeted for interventions if education did not have any labels? How do the authors suggest students be grouped instead of by a school funding label?

5. How does an intervention differ from a prevention, and how does extension differ from enrichment?

Chapter 2

A Culture of Collective Responsibility

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1. Define *collective responsibility*. What is your school's mission statement? How do you collectively work to meet this mission, and how could you adjust your practices to better meet your school's stated mission?

2. What five essential actions must a school or district take to build a cultural foundation fit for a successful multitiered system of supports?

3. What two assumptions must educators reach consensus on before they can establish a system of interventions, and why do these assumptions carry so much importance?

4. Describe the four steps a leadership team must take at the start of leading change in implementing a system of interventions.

5. How can you do the *right work* to implement collaborative time with your teacher team and have everyone involved and focused? Where does the key to team success lie?

6. What three types of outcomes should team norms address, and what considerations should teams make to form and enforce their norms? Create a few team norms for your collaborative teacher team, and explain how they will each improve the team's work.

Chapter 3

Tier 1 Teacher Team Essential Actions

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1. List the five essential actions that collaborative teacher teams must take to set up a firm RTI foundation.

2. Provide an example of a shortcut you have seen perpetuated that leads to a lack of complete commitment to creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

3. What four steps should teacher teams take to create an essential standards unit plan? Deconstruct your own essential standard to identify its learning targets.

4. Describe the teaching-assessing cycle. What four actions should teams focus on as they become familiar with the teaching-assessing cycle?

5. What are the linchpin of the PLC process? What makes them so important?

6. Why should teachers think of RTI as *response to instruction and intervention*?

Chapter 4

Tier 1 Schoolwide Essential Actions

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1. Describe the five steps a leadership team can take to help ensure all students have access to essential grade-level curriculum. Why must schools make sure all students have access to a minimum sequence of classes for applying to university?

2. What types of involvement should leadership teams consider as they determine how to proceed with ensuring access to essential grade-level curriculum? Answer the questions listed on page 135. What do your answers tell you about the level of involvement you find best for making decisions?

3. How does your school coordinate its essential academic and social behavioral expectations so students experience consistency in the rules all their teachers expect them to follow? How could your school improve these efforts?

4. What steps should teacher teams take to identify, teach, and support their schoolwide behavior expectations?

5. Do you often find yourself predicting which students will struggle? What criteria lead you to these assumptions, and what actions do you take based on these assumptions? Are these actions harmful or helpful, and why is this the case?

Chapter 5

Tier 2 Teacher Team Essential Actions

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1. Define what skill interventions and will interventions each target, and provide an example of each type of intervention.

2. What is *flexible time*, and why do school leadership teams need to build this time into their school timetable? How frequently should schools schedule this flexible time, and how can they schedule students into this time in a streamlined way?

3. What does it mean to act as a model learner? Describe a model learner you have encountered in your education or in your career.

4. How do immediate prerequisite skills differ from foundational prerequisite skills? Provide an example of each type of prerequisite skill.

5. What benefits does progress monitoring have when it is correctly implemented?

6. In what ways can teachers plan to extend learning for students who master essential standards?

Chapter 6

Tier 2 Schoolwide Essential Actions

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1. Why do schools need to feature supplemental intervention time in their weekly schedules? What criteria should a school leadership team consider when creating a master schedule that makes time for supplemental interventions?

2. Briefly describe the seven steps a school leadership team should take to make a schedule that best suits the school.

3. List the five steps teachers must follow to systematically give every student the help he or she needs. Which of these five steps must a school do perfectly, and why is this the case?

4. For what reasons do report cards not function as the most effective way to gain teachers' input on student progress or to target Tier 2 interventions? What steps does your school take to identify students who could use extra help, and how could it improve these efforts?

5. What pitfalls and drawbacks arise from relying on an individualistic "leave it up to each teacher" approach to behavior interventions?

6. Briefly describe the protocol-driven process and the problem-solving model for targeting student interventions. Which of the suggested tools for ensuring students' access to schoolwide interventions do you think would most help your efforts, and why is this the case?

Chapter 7

Tier 3 Schoolwide Essential Actions

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1. List the six universal skills of learning.

2. What is universal screening, and why should schools adopt this process? When and to which students should teachers administer a highly diagnostic screening tool?

3. How does Marcel Proust's statement "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes" relate to the establishment of a site intervention team?

4. How is summer school commonly designed, and why do these traditionally implemented practices not align with the traits of effective interventions?

5. Briefly describe the six essential characteristics of an effective intervention.

Chapter 8

Tier 3 Intervention Team Essential Actions

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1. Name the three essential responsibilities that a school intervention team has at Tier 3. Which of these three responsibilities carries paramount importance in Tier 3 interventions, and why is this the case?

2. Provide an example situation that illustrates why a school's leadership team and intervention team must coordinate at Tier 3. Why should a principal serve on both the leadership team and the site intervention team?

3. What are protocols, and what do they help site intervention teams accomplish in their conversations?

4. To bring sufficient intensity to Tier 3 interventions, what factors should site intervention teams consider?

5. What questions should site intervention teams answer when they are identifying a student for special education?