10 Success Factors for Getting the Best Results From Your Literacy MTSS

First 5 Success Factors

1. Group by skill deficit (not “yellow” or “red” groups)
2. Use diagnostic assessments
3. Implement a walk-to-intervention model
4. Monitor progress with an appropriate assessment
5. Flood the intervention block with extra instructors

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Factor #1

#1

1. Group by skill deficit
   (not “yellow” or “red” groups)

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Instructional Recommendation Levels are “Urgency Indicators”

- Need more information for placing students in groups

TOO MUCH
Too Little
ENOUGH
For Grouping

2. Use diagnostic assessments

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4 Types of Assessments

- Screening
- Diagnostic
- Progress Monitoring
- Outcome

Purpose of Assessments

Medical Model Analogy

Universal Screener
DIBELS™

Triage Nurse or Internist

Diagnostic Screener
PASI™ & PSI™

Specialist & Additional Testing
Features of an Effective Diagnostic

What to Look For

- Measures 1 subskill at a time
- Skills measured in order of complexity
- Keeps subskill scores separate – adding them together masks deficits
- 10 probes is adequate
- 3 forms
  - Form A for initial assessment – 1st group placement
  - Forms B & C for progress monitoring

Scoring a Phonics Diagnostic

- Score reflects errors on target phonics pattern
- Notes show errors on other skills

**Skill 3: Consonant Blends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>blend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jord</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>blend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example from 95 Percent Group’s Phonics Screener for Intervention™ (PSI)**

Score reflects errors on target phonics pattern
Notes show errors on other skills

Error on blend & vowel

Error on sight word

Use PHONICS Diagnostic Data to Group Students with Similar Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Beginning Phonics Skills</th>
<th>Advanced Phonics Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Important are Diagnostic Assessments?

“Diagnostic assessment is the gateway to being able to group by skill deficit, which is probably the most essential requirement for robust results.”

7 Characteristics of an Effective Diagnostic Assessment

1. Allows assessing multiple subskills
2. Assess skills in order of complexity
3. Keep indicator scores separate
4. Has at least 2 alternate forms (B & C)
5. Provides guidance on skills by grade levels
6. Takes a brief time to administer
7. Advises against assessing all skills at one time

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An Issue With Current Thinking...

“Too frequently the teachers' paradigm is that they send students out of their class for intervention. Somebody else teaches “those kids.”


Intervention in the Classroom With Support

- Writing Workstation
- Library
- Teacher with Small Skill Group
- Computer Workstation
- Aide or Title I teacher with intervention group
- Listening
“Walk-to-Intervention”
Grouping Across a Grade Level

3rd Grade
4 Classrooms
94 students
6 Staff Members

- Fluency Group
  - 30 students
  - Classroom Teacher # 3

- Decoding Group
  - 4 students
  - Spec. Ed. Teacher

- Advanced Word Study Group
  - 18 students
  - Classroom Teacher # 2

- Enrichment Group
  - 30 students
  - Classroom Teacher # 4

- Decoding Group
  - 6 students
  - Reading Teacher

- Decoding Group
  - 4 students
  - Classroom Teacher # 1

3rd Grade
4 Classrooms
94 students
6 Staff Members

10 Advantages of the Walk-to-Intervention Approach

1. Multiple specific skill groups taught at the same time.
2. Every group has an instructor.
3. All classroom teachers are teaching small groups during intervention time.
4. Less extra help is required.
5. Group sizes are varied based on need.
6. Any grade level – even kindergarten – can use this model.
7. Collaboration among grade-level colleagues is encouraged.
8. Struggling readers are not singled out.
9. Teachers can specialize in what they teach during intervention time.
10. An unintended positive consequence emerges in the form of “our kids”.

“With Walk-to-Intervention the grade-level team thinks and acts more systematically.”

10 Success Factors for Getting the Best Results From Your Literacy MTSS
Duke Energy Power of Reading Summit – Nov. 2018

95 Percent Group’s Framework to Improve Reading Achievement

ASSESS
Point out deficit skills to know where to begin each student’s intervention, eliminating guessing.

INSTRUCT
Teach with targeted, hands-on products to engage learners and address gaps in their skills.

GROUP
Place students in groups with similar skills deficits and instructional needs.

Best Practices in Assessment

4 Key Decisions about Progress Monitoring (PM)

1. How often?
2. Which assessment tool for each group?
3. Who will administer PM assessments?
4. How can we ensure data are accessible to all who need it?

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Often Progress Monitoring With Diagnostic Assessment is Best

25 PA skills assessed in Diagnostic vs. 2 skills in Universal Screener

95 Percent Group’s Phonics Continuum
Skills Mastered at Grades 1–3

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Factor #5

5. Flood the intervention block with extra instructors

Who are possible “interventionists”?

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Factor #6

6. Use intervention time wisely

“Struggling readers are under a time line – they urgently need to catch up to grade level, and there are only so many resources a school can devote to one student.”

Use Intervention Time Wisely

**DON'T** waste time on skills they have mastered  
**DO** teach what students need

How do you do that?

- Use continua to instruct in a sequence  
- Assess periodically

Use Continuums to Provide Sequence of Skills for Intervention

Factor #7

7. Be aware of what make intervention effective

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Characteristics of Routines

- Multisensory  
  - Uses multiple modalities  
- Cueing  
  - Hand signals  
  - Verbal cues  
- Minimal teacher talk
How Do We Teach Letter-Sound Correspondence? (Orthographic Mapping)

Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping

Steps 95 Percent Group Recommends:
- Say the word
- Fingerstretch the sounds
- Count the sounds
- Draw around the boxes
- Pull down one sound at a time
- Write the letters below each box
- Say the word

7 Colors

Consonants
Consonant Digraphs
Short Vowels
Long Vowels
Vowel Teams
R-Controlled Vowels

Factor #8

8. Provide teachers with intervention lesson materials

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What Holds Teachers Up?

“The MTSS process may sound simple or even just sound like good teaching practice, but it is not only really hard, it is a huge amount of work. While the district and the school have a part to play, the bulk of the work falls on the teacher...”

Mas, 2016

Teacher quote on blog of Seattle Public Schools

What Holds Teachers Up?

“For it (MTSS) to work the district (or someone) would have to create all these little, tailored lessons like additional skill practice in a specific skill like long division... I think this may be one of the really big problems with the MTSS implementation: this district hasn't built the catalog of lessons. Instead, they are relying on the teachers to create them”. (Mas, 2016)

Teacher quote on blog of Seattle Public Schools

9. Invest in professional development

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How Important is Walk-to-Intervention?

“MTSS in literacy is not about the stuff you buy; it’s about implementing new structures, processes, and instructional materials so that the school undergoes a paradigm shift in how teachers identify and address struggling readers.”

What’s the difference between professional development and training?

PD Topics for Administrators
- Understanding of MTSS goals and objectives
- Knowing state and district requirements
- Building buy-in with staff
- Communicating the rational for MTSS
- Understanding building-level decisions
- Adding intervention blocks to school’s schedule
- Determining optimal delivery model
- Planning PD for staff
- Inspecting quality and fidelity of tiers
- Setting expectations

PD Topics for Reading Coaches
- Extensive training on assessments
- Interpretation of data
- Evaluation of tiers and recommending improvements
- Moving students between groups
- Program training
- Facilitation strategies to lead team-level meetings
- Access to outside experts

PD Topics for Teachers
- Understanding the goals and purposes of MTSS
- Administering and scoring all assessments
- Placing students in groups
- Evaluating instructional effectiveness
- Steps when students aren’t making progress
- Teaching materials with fidelity
Factor #10

10. Inspect what you expect

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Grade Level - 1st Grade Pyramids

Beginning of Year
- Benchmark 40%
  - Strategic – Below 35%
  - Intensive Well Below 25%

Middle of Year
- Benchmark 55%
  - Strategic – Below 30%
  - Intensive Well Below 15%

Informal Spontaneous Observations

Minnesota-Toronto Study

“High-scoring principals frequently observed classroom instruction for short periods of time, making 20-60 observations a week, and most of the observations were spontaneous.”

The School Principal as Leader
The Wallace Foundation