Examining a Framework for Literacy Improvement
Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) are both frameworks of instructional design that support all students in making progress towards and exceeding mastery of grade-level content standards.
What do these MTSS visuals have in common?
RtI Guiding Principles
International Literacy Association, 2009

Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches - RtI must be part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to language and literacy assessment and instruction that supports all prek-12 students and teachers.

Instruction - RtI is first and foremost intended to prevent problems by optimizing language and literacy instruction.

Responsive Teaching and Differentiation - The RtI process emphasizes increasingly differentiated and intensified instruction or intervention in language and literacy.

Assessment - An RtI approach demands assessment that can inform language and literacy instruction meaningfully.

Collaboration - RtI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among professionals with relevant expertise in language and literacy.

Expertise - All students have the right to receive instruction from well prepared teachers who keep up to date and supplemental instruction from professionals specifically prepared to teach language and literacy.
RTI must be part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to language and literacy assessment and instruction that supports all preK–12 students and teachers.

Commission on RTI Guiding Principles, 2009
“MTSS is more than just a process of providing interventions to a small group of students. Rather it is a school reform model and with it comes a new way of thinking and doing business in education.”

Harlacher, Sakelaris, Kattelman, 2014

My school’s tiered system is ________ because...
VISION: All K-5 students reading proficiently at grade level.

Quality Core Instruction:
- Instruction is systematic and explicit
- Opportunities for connected/meaningful reading and writing
- Tailored instruction for ELL students
- Instruction at each student’s literacy developmental level based on formal and informal assessments
- 90 minutes core, 30 minutes supplemental

Data-Driven Decision Making:
- Use data to effectively differentiate instruction and intervention
- Systematic process to analyze data and make instructional decisions
- Conducted within existing data support structure

Tiered Interventions:
- Tier III: Individualized interventions with in-depth problem analysis
- Tier II: Standardized interventions with small groups
- Tier I: Universal screening and quality core curriculum and instruction

Professional Learning:
- A group culture that compares data to focused expectations (standards) for teaching and learning
- A shared commitment to the model leads to coordinated efforts and collaboration
- Structures to support embedded and ongoing learning
**Quality Core Instruction**
- Word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation
- Emphasis on skills and abilities that students need to access content in all academic areas
- Access to high-quality, readable texts & explicit instruction
- Social discourse and learner-centered classrooms
- Social responsibility through multicultural literacy

**Data-Driven Decision Making**
- Use data from formative and summative assessments to effectively differentiate instruction and intervention
- Systematic process to analyze data and make instructional decisions
- Conducted within a cohesive data support structure

**Tiered Interventions**
- Tier 1: Universal screening and quality core curriculum/strategy instruction across the content-areas
- Tier 2: For students with adequate decoding skills but struggle in vocabulary & comprehension
- Tier 3: For students two or more years behind who need intense, focused intervention

**Professional Learning**
- A shared commitment to improved literacy for students across all contents
- Structures to support embedded and ongoing learning
- A group culture that compares data to focused expectations (standards) for teaching and learning
Only once a strong and well targeted instructional core is in place, can we begin to build interventions that will serve as truly supplemental and supportive instruction. 

Lesaux, N. K., & Marietta, S. H., 2011
RtI is first and foremost intended to prevent problems by optimizing language and literacy instruction.
Quality Core Components support:

- common language in both literacy instruction and environment
- alignment of essential components of reading with standards and instruction
- ongoing literacy coaching
Time for instruction is key to a schoolwide effort; effective schools allocate and reallocate time thoughtfully.

Walpole & McKenna, 2004
Students who do not meet grade-level goals in literacy profit from supplemental instruction of 30-40 minutes per day of extra instruction or from instruction in smaller group settings.

Foorman & Torgeson, 2001
Connected and Meaningful Lesson

- Explains value/relevance to real world
- Activates background knowledge
- Engages students in the practice of reading and writing
- Makes reading/writing connections
Systematic and Explicit Instruction

Gives students a clear understanding of expectations

Helps students organize knowledge

If steps are clear, it is easier to try

Why?
## Quality Core Instruction

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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www.PRESScommunity.org
Assessment is the key to RTI and to effective instruction in general, but even the most reliable and valid assessment system is meaningless until the data are interpreted and used.

Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K., 2013
Data Driven Decision Making supports:

- the meaningful use of assessments
- a systematic process to analyze literacy data
- reflection on current data use and decision making
An RTI approach demands assessment that can inform language and literacy instruction meaningfully.
Assessments and Problem Solving

Tier 1
Screening Data

Tier 2
Diagnostics
Progress Monitoring

Tier 3
Problem analysis is central to the RTI process and should occur at all three tiers.

Christ, Burns, & Ysseldyke, 2005
The key is knowing which questions to ask and how to use data to answer them.

Burns, Riley-Tillman, & VanDerHeyden, 2012
Identifying classwide problems could help evaluate the instructional environment (Tier 1), which is the first step in any assessment to intervention model.

Burns & Gibbons, 2012; Shapiro, 2010
(One) reason that students might not perform a task sufficiently is that they lack prerequisite skills for completing the task. This difficulty is often referred to as a skill deficit.

Hosp & Ardoin, 2008
Approximately 5% of the student population in school districts that utilized a response-to-intervention (RTI) model is not successful in tiers 1 and 2.

Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005
## Data-Driven Decision Making

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**DRAFT**

- Use data from formative and summative assessments to effectively differentiate instruction and intervention.
- Systematic process to analyze data and make instructional decisions.
- Conducted within a cohesive data support structure.

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Practitioners should implement a three-tiered RTI model with confidence that they are engaging in research-based practice that benefits students.

Matthew K. Burns Ph.D.
http://www.rtinetwork.org
The RTI process emphasizes increasingly differentiated and intensified instruction or intervention in language and literacy.
Tiered Interventions support the:

- understanding of research-based interventions
- identification of appropriate interventions
- implementation of tiered interventions
Classwide Interventions

You can’t intervene your way out of a whole class problem, there are too many students and not enough resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Students Below Benchmark at Screening</th>
<th>Students Below Benchmark after Classwide Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade Class 1 (20 students)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade Class 2 (23 students)</td>
<td>13</td>
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Tier 2 Interventions

Targeted interventions are identified so that the intervention is directly linked to the problem and therefore has a high likelihood of being successful.
Tier 3 Interventions

One of the core components of tier 3 is the use of a Problem Solving Team (PST) to generate hypotheses about student difficulties from a variety of data.

Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K., 2008
Intensify instruction and assessment at tier 3

- Consider variables to intensify instruction
- Individualize assessments
- Increase frequency of progress monitoring
- Reduce group size
- Increase amount of instruction time

http://www.rtinetwork.org
# Tiered Interventions

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**Tier III:** Individualized interventions with in-depth problem analysis

**Tier II:** Standardized interventions with small groups

**Tier I:** Universal screening and quality core curriculum and instruction

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**DRAFT**

- **Tier 3:** For students two or more years behind who need intense, focused intervention
- **Tier 2:** For students with adequate decoding skills but struggle in vocabulary & comprehension
- **Tier 1:** Universal screening and quality core curriculum / strategy instruction across the content-areas

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Capacity must be evident in practice and be ongoing. Front-end training is insufficient. It does not translate into improvements in the daily cultures of how people need to work in new ways.

Fullan, M., Cuttress, C., & Kilcher, A., 2005
All students have the right to receive instruction from well prepared teachers who keep up to date and supplemental instruction from professionals specifically prepared to teach language and literacy.
Professional Learning components support:

- the understanding of embedded professional learning
- the implementation of research-based practices
The expertise of teachers is strongly connected to general student achievement and in particular, student achievement in reading.

Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010
It must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with implementation.

There must be support for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses specific challenges.

Teachers’ greatest challenge comes when they attempt to implement newly learned methods into the classroom.

The Center for Public Education, 2013
Principles for Effective Professional Learning for successful implementation of a newly learned practice:

- Significant and ongoing support for teachers
- Participate actively
- Model

http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org
## Professional Learning

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www.PRESScommunity.org
Strong instructional leadership is essential for successful MTSS implementation.

Coyne, et. al, 2016
Collaboration

RtI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among professionals with relevant expertise in language and literacy. Success also depends on strong and respectful partnerships among professionals, parents, and students.
The most important outcome of teacher collaboration is that all students succeed - not just those within a few classrooms.

http://www.education.state.mn.us/
It has become self-evident that schools in which faculty members feel a **collective responsibility** for student learning **produce greater gains** than do schools in which teachers work as isolated practitioners.

Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996
VISION: All students reading proficiently at grade level.