

## PLC/Book Study Guide for *RTI Success*

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and Alice Woodrow, Ed.D.**

This guide is designed as a professional development resource and can be used to facilitate a book study or as a learning experience for a professional learning community (PLC). Facilitator notes are provided for additional support and explanation in planning and overseeing your school's or group's sessions. Before beginning the study, the facilitator would ideally read the entire guide and the book.

For each session, participants will be asked to read a chapter of the book. They may also be asked to consider certain ideas or make notes prior to attending a session. Each section of the book study guide includes suggested questions and discussion topics for use during the group session.

Please note that the preparation work is listed at the beginning of each session's text. Feel free, however, to adjust, modify, or add to the suggested tasks as necessary to meet your group's needs and objectives.



# Introduction

To be completed before the introduction book study:

- Read the book's introduction.

**Facilitator note:** *It may be helpful to show book study participants the PDF presentation associated with RTI Success: Proven Tools and Strategies for Schools and Classrooms to offer an overview of the book. The presentation can be found in the digital content of the book.*

1. On pages 3–4, the book states six benefits of RTI:

- increased focus on early intervention
- targeted instruction based on student needs
- instruction driven by assessment
- improved quality of instruction
- focus on positive relationships in the classroom
- increased schoolwide collaboration

Based on your current understanding of RTI, what opportunities and challenges do you anticipate in each of these areas with the implementation of RTI in your school?

2. As a whole group, list some questions you hope to have answered by the end of this book study.

**Facilitator note:** *Keep this list of questions handy as you conduct the book study. Determine what chapter each question best aligns with and add it to the discussion on the appropriate day.*

3. Also as a group, discuss what Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) you already have in place at your school for academics and behavior. How were they implemented? Do you have questions, concerns, or ideas about these systems?

**Facilitator note:** *During each discussion, it is helpful to acknowledge what is already in place and what is currently working before moving on to how to improve.*

# Chapter 1: Response to Intervention

To be completed before the chapter 1 book study session:

- Read chapter 1.
- Using Figure 1.1 RTI's Instructional Tiers on page 13, write down the assessments, interventions, and instructional strategies that you are currently using in your classroom for Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. Create your own "RTI triangle" (similar to the one in the figure) indicating what is currently happening at each tier in your classroom/building.

**Facilitator note:** Begin the session with the question: *Why will RTI benefit our school?*

1. With a partner, review the RTI triangle each participant completed for this session. Then have partners share with the whole group.
2. Which tier (or tiers) does everyone think is in good shape? For which tier (or tiers) do we need to improve our variety of assessments, interventions, and strategies?
3. Return to partners. With your partner, review Figure 1.5 Core Beliefs and Key Elements of RTI on page 18. Discuss each core belief and key element (as well as the related actions, if time allows) and reflect on where your grade level, building, or district is for each of these beliefs and where you want to be.

# Chapter 2: Setting Up RTI Teams and the Problem-Solving Process

To be completed before the chapter 2 book study session:

- Read chapter 2.
- While reading chapter 2, select one sentence, one phrase, and one word you find to be significant. Highlight your selections. You will be asked to share these during the group discussion.
- Complete the “RTI School Baseline Survey” found on pages 42–43.

**Facilitator note:** *You may want to collect the surveys before this session and compile the results into the summary form (pages 44–45) for discussion during the whole-group meeting.*

1. You were asked to highlight one sentence, one phrase, and one word you found important in this chapter. Read these aloud for your group members. When all participants have shared their selections, discuss areas of overlap and difference as well as why people made the choices they did.

**Facilitator note:** *If you have a large group, you may want to break into small groups for the discussion of significant sentences, phrases, and words.*

2. Review figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 (on pages 31, 32, and 34) on tiered teaming structures. After discussing each figure, ask the following questions: What collaborative group (or groups) does your grade level or building have that fits this description of a teaming structure, including at the relevant tier? Do you have a member who fits each role and/or fulfills some of the functions shown in the figure?
3. After reviewing all the figures, is there a tier for which you need to create a more collaborative group in order to fit the RTI framework? If so, how can you begin to put this in motion?
4. Review the RTI problem-solving process as described on pages 34–38. Compare and contrast it to the problem-solving process you currently use. Does it align with your current process? Also pay special attention to figure 2.4 (page 36). Do you have team roles established as described in that chart? If not, what steps can you take to begin implementing this type of structure?

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**Facilitator note:** *For the next activity, be sure to have blank copies of the “RTI Collaboration Log” from pages 49–50 of the book.*

5. Break into small groups of three. Review the RTI in Action box on page 39, which discusses a Tier II fourth-grade grade-level meeting. Next, using a case study from *your* school, fill out a blank “RTI Collaboration Log” as a group to practice a Tier II collaborative teaming process.
6. Return to the large group and reflect on this activity. What did people find interesting about the collaboration log? What was challenging? What more would they like to learn about this process?

# Chapter 3: Creating and Sustaining Positive Learning Environments

To be completed before the chapter 3 book study session:

- Read chapter 3.
- As you read through the chapter, jot down things you are already doing to incorporate your students' interests and learning preferences into instruction.

**Facilitator note:** *This is a good chapter for a jigsaw activity. Divide your PLC / Book Study group into pairs or small groups and assign each group one of the chapter's tools for building a positive learning environment. In the small groups, have participants summarize their tool and discuss or show how they would use it in their classrooms. Then ask each group to report back to the large group. This way all participants have a summary and a sample application of each tool.*

1. Go around the room and have all participants briefly state what types of activities they are already using to incorporate their students' interests and learning preferences into instruction. What more would they like to try?
2. Facilitate the jigsaw activity described above. Which of the chapter's tools generated excitement among the group? How do participants see these tools working in their classrooms? What else would they like to know about building and sustaining positive learning environments?

# Chapter 4:

# Academic Assessment

To be completed before the chapter 4 book study session:

- Read chapter 4.
- Make a list of all assessments used in your classroom, grade level, department, or building.

**Facilitator note:** *This would be a good time to see if there were any questions posed by participants at the beginning of the PLC/Book Study regarding assessment. Make sure to address those questions in the course of this session.*

1. After reading this chapter, what do you see as the differences between a screening assessment and a diagnostic evaluation? Discuss a situation in which you would use each one.
2. Similarly, discuss what you see as the differences between progress monitoring assessments and summative assessments, and name a situation in which you would use each one.
3. Break into small groups of two or three people and discuss how assessment data is used in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III interventions. Ask: Why do you think a student would likely move from Tier I support to Tier II support? Why would a student move from Tier II supports to Tier III supports? And when might a student move from Tier III to Tier I or II? Discuss any questions members have about assessment and movement among RTI tiers.

**Facilitator note:** *For the next activity, be sure to have blank copies of the “Educational Profile” from pages 102–118 of the book.*

4. Refer to the “Educational Profile” on pages 102–118. Still in small groups, have each group member think of a student who has previously received multiple interventions. Using the information at hand about the selected student, complete the educational profile. This provides practice on documenting interventions over time and on creating a living document detailing all significant information regarding a student. Encourage all group members to later more fully complete the “Educational Profile” about each of their selected students and to continue using the profile as a guiding tool throughout the RTI process.



# Chapter 5: Purposeful Grouping

To be completed before the chapter 5 book study session:

- Read chapter 5.
- Bring a recently developed lesson plan to this session.

1. Discuss the idea of purposeful grouping. How can it benefit classroom instruction? What grouping methods are participants currently using? Which other methods would they like to try?
2. Using the lesson plan each member brought to this session, determine what grouping method would be most appropriate for each part of a given lesson: whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, or individual instruction. Next, for any small-group instruction within the lesson, use pages 123–125 to determine the most purposeful small-group option for that part of the lesson.

**Facilitator note:** *Depending on the size of your book study, you could do the above activity as a whole group or in smaller groups.*

3. Break into pairs or groups of three. In these small groups, consider each classroom grouping strategy and choose a lesson that would work well with that strategy. Explain the purpose behind each choice. What makes the chosen lesson and the chosen grouping strategy good partners? Do members have any questions about how to use these grouping strategies?

# Chapter 6: Co-Teaching

To be completed before the chapter 6 book study session:

- Read chapter 6.
- Bring a lesson plan to this session that can be reimagined or redesigned as a co-taught lesson.

1. Discuss the following question: In what ways might co-teaching address some of the challenges of implementing RTI?
2. Next, split participants into five small groups. Assign each group a co-teaching model (complementary teaching, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and shared teaching) and give each group sticky notes of a different color. On individual sticky notes, have groups write a short answer to each of the following questions regarding their assigned model:
  - What is the model name and summary of the model?
  - What is the lead teacher’s role?
  - What is the support teacher’s role?
  - What are the key attributes of the model?
  - Which evidence-based strategies would you use with this model?
  - How does the model work with differentiated instruction?

**Facilitator note:** *On a whiteboard or other surface, write the above five questions as headers horizontally across the board. Ask participants to put their sticky notes under the appropriate heading.*

Once everyone has placed their sticky notes on the board, have each small group share the “story” of each model by reading across the board.

3. Ask each participant to review the tips provided on pages 137–140. Have them select the tip that speaks to them the most. Next, have each participant reflect to the large group on which tip they picked and why they picked it.

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4. Have participants pair up with their co-teacher if they have one. If not, have each person choose a partner and act as co-teachers for this activity. Using one of their lesson plans, have each co-teaching team work through the lesson plan, selecting the co-teaching models that would best support each phase of the lesson. Be sure to have participants address the best models to use at Tier I and Tier II instruction using the reproducible lesson plan documents found on pages 151–152.
  5. Afterward, pose the following questions to the whole group:
    - How can co-teaching help you with instruction?
    - How do you see co-teaching as a partner or complement to RTI?
    - What else would you like to learn about co-teaching?

**Facilitator note:** *Make sure participants know they can also use figures 6.7 and 6.8 (on pages 149 and 150) as resources for how to use each co-teaching model at Tier I and Tier II and also the roles and responsibilities of each teacher in the classroom.*

# Chapter 7:

## Evidence-Based Teaching

To be completed before the chapter 7 book study session:

- Read chapter 7.
- Make a list of challenges you face (or anticipate facing) in the classroom this year when it comes to implementing evidence-based teaching strategies.

1. Facilitate a think-pair-share activity around this question: What is evidence-based teaching? Encourage pairs (or small groups) to review the chapter as necessary and to think about the proven practices it discusses:
  - set learning goals
  - incite curiosity and activate prior knowledge
  - use visual representations
  - design multiple opportunities to learn content
  - promote higher-level thinking
  - provide strategy instruction
  - use the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework
  - integrate problem-based learning

**Facilitator note:** *If you like, you could consider assigning each pair or group one of the above proven practices to focus on, discuss, and report on to the whole group.*

2. Expand the discussion on setting learning goals, highlighting the idea that allowing students to set learning goals helps them focus their academic efforts and can be a powerful motivational factor. As a group, reflect on specific ways to allow students more opportunities to set their own learning goals.

**Facilitator note:** *If book study participants are not very familiar or experienced with strategies from the book, consider replacing the next activity with an alternative activity: Break the large group into small groups and assign each one a “What to Try When” section (reading decoding and word recognition; language*

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*and vocabulary development; reading fluency; reading comprehension; written expression; math computation; and math reasoning). Next, have each small-group member choose a specific strategy within the given section. (For example, if the group’s assigned section is reading decoding and word recognition, one group member could choose the “Word Families” strategy. Have small groups report to the whole group on their respective sections and strategies, addressing the following core question: What is the strategy and how could it be applied in a classroom to address the area of difficulty?*

**3.** Review the evidence-based programs and strategies from this chapter, including the “What to Try When” charts starting on page 163. Have you used any of these strategies in your classroom before? If so, consider and discuss the following questions:

- What went well?
- What challenges did you encounter?
- What suggestions do you have for other teachers who may wish to try this strategy?
- How can other teachers reach you if they’d like to know more about implementing the strategy?

If you have *not* yet used any of these strategies, which stand out to you as ones you’d like to learn more about?

***Facilitator note:*** We encourage you to view the strategies listed in this chapter as a starting point. Taking inventory of additional strategies and documenting them is an essential step toward customizing RTI to meet your school’s unique needs.

# Final Book Study Session

To be completed before the final book study session:

- Read “A Final Word” on page 226.
- Write down highlights of the book study and any remaining questions you have about RTI and its implementation.

1. Discuss the highlights of the book study. What were the most important takeaways from the sessions? In your opinion, how might these insights improve student learning?
2. Looking back at the questions you had at the beginning of the book study and the list of remaining questions you compiled for this final session, what still needs to be answered? What are the action steps that need to be taken in order to answer these questions?

**Facilitator note:** *As you bring the book study to a close, we encourage you to take time to thank book study participants for their dedication to continued professional development and for their commitment to their students.*

# About the Authors

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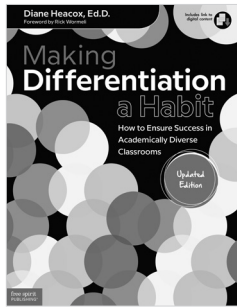


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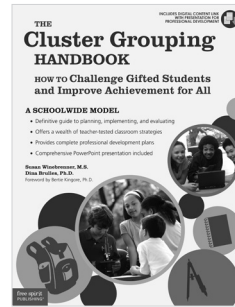
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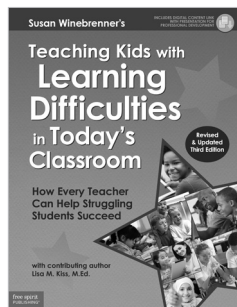
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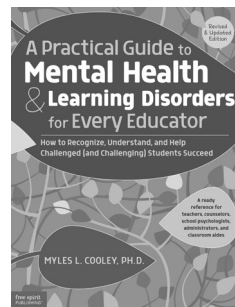


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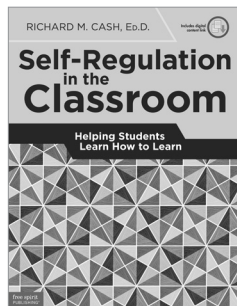


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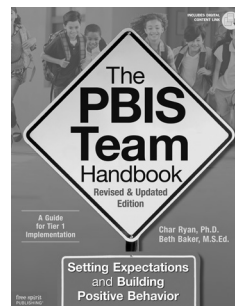


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