



★ It's in the Bag ★

Book Study Groups have long been one of the least expensive and most enjoyable ways for educators to grow professionally. Study groups provide structured time for reflection on student work and classroom practice. A book study group can be formed in your school, your district, or even online. The study group method is invaluable in bringing together groups of colleagues who can use the classroom as an arena for studies, discussions and experience exchange and turn it into a “laboratory” for trying out new teaching methods skills and practices gleaned from the books studied. The hallmarks of a successful book study group are teacher engagement, superior use of time, and sustainable changes in student achievement.

Facilitator's Guide

Resources available for Checkout: *Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice (2005)*. Brown-Chidsey, R. & Steege, M.W. Guilford Press: New York.

Book Description: *Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice* provides guidance with the why's and how to's of RtI.

Framing the Context of a Book Study: Powerful Tools for Learning:

Two powerful venues for deepening understanding, impacting student outcomes and contributing to the growth of learning organizations are professional learning communities and communities of practice. One of the most effective ways to make your school a learning organization is to create a professional learning community or a community of practice. The concept of a professional learning community (PLC) is a powerful influence around the work of restructuring schools. According to Rick Dufour in *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, the fundamental role of schools is “learning, not teaching.” While Dufour acknowledges that this is

“an enormous distinction,” he notes that the emphasis on learning leads those within the school to place their focus and energy on three important questions:

1. What is it we want all students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when students experience difficulty?

Another option for helping schools and districts is to create a community of practice. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A community of practice (CoP) makes connections from person to person for mutual inquiry and learning about a practice or issue. Everyone’s voice is needed. Participants develop a shared identity and share a repertoire of knowledge and experiences (Wenger, 2003). Both professional learning communities and communities of practice move system stakeholders from knowing to doing.

A Book study becomes a powerful tool that these communities can use to engage in powerful, professional discourse. A building or existing PLC or CoP may want to add a book study as another tool to aid in professional development. When your school or team begins planning their book study, keep the above questions in mind as a way to frame all discussions around student learning and school improvement.

Facilitating Successfully:

In order to facilitate the study groups most effectively, a district, school or team may want to consider the following:

- Treat study groups as a school-wide teacher professional development model.
- State the purpose for the book study groups in terms of specific student needs (these needs should be based on an analysis of student data).
- Study groups can be job-embedded, with principals freeing up time during the school day, or during superintendent conference days, faculty meetings, etc.
- Groups should be small and manageable, their work “published.”
- Study groups need support from administrators.
- Work within study groups is built around the participants’ search for knowledge according to their own needs and the needs of their students.
- Members meet regularly and work according to a study plan that they often develop themselves (the plan will include how often to meet, for how long, how many chapters will be discussed per meeting, where to meet, etc.).

- Everyone in a study group is responsible for getting the work done and for achieving the jointly agreed upon goals.
- The goals of a study group can be:
 - To offer a good method for teachers to cooperate more actively in order “to awaken their students’ minds” about sustainable development.
 - To integrate sustainable development into all curriculum subjects.
 - To provide teachers with the opportunity to share both good and bad teaching experiences and to get support from colleagues and professional books.
 - To encourage teachers to work together to solve a problem.
 - To get teachers motivated to pursue education for sustainable development—to make a difference.
- The facilitator should engage in the following behaviors:
 - Be diplomatic – suggest, but don’t subscribe.
 - Act as an advisor.
 - Be respectful.
 - Be professional, relaxed and be present in the situation.
 - Don’t intervene too much – let the group work on what they feel is important.
 - Encourage, inspire and support.
- During the last meeting, ask these questions:
 - What positive outcomes did we achieve?
 - What problems did we encounter?
 - What lessons have we learned that could be useful to other groups?
 - What do we do next?

The following section contains reflection and dialogue suggestions and questions broken out by chapter. These are designed to facilitate thinking and discussion around ***Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice.***

Chapter 1: What is Response to Intervention (RtI)?

Overview

Helpful Hints

It might be beneficial for the first day of the book study to actually read chapter one during the time allotted and discuss RtI and what the participants currently know about it. It may also be beneficial to frame the discussion around the following question:

Based on what you read, what is one thing that would look different than what is standard practice in your school?

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do we currently support our teachers when we have students who are struggling behaviorally or academically?
2. What response structures do we currently have in place?
3. How does our current problem solving process address the needs of students?
4. Is it similar to what was described in this chapter?
5. Would our current local policies support the “big ideas” presented? If not, what would need to be done to align them?
6. The chapter noted that teachers may not be adequately trained to analyze student performance data. What do we think about our teachers’ current skills in this area?
7. How do we currently respond when students are not meeting expectations?
8. How do we professionally advocate for ourselves when we need assistance with a student or groups of students (academically or behaviorally)?

Chapter 2: NCLB, IDEIA, and Rtl: Linkages across National Education Policies

Overview

Helpful Hints

Discussion questions for this chapter could address how the district, building, and individuals are implementing the education policies mentioned in the chapter title.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. What evidence based practices are we currently using?
2. How do our local policies align with the national education policies?
3. How do we evaluate our current programs and any new programs to determine if they are evidenced-based practices?
4. How do we support the teachers in finding evidence based instructional practices?
5. How do we communicate the success or failure of programs to teachers?
6. How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our instruction?
7. How do we know if what we are doing is evidence-based?
8. Does our service delivery model align with the current research on best practices for children with disabilities?

Chapter 3: Rtl Instead of Discrepancy Models

Overview

Helpful Hint

This chapter will be very important for school psychologists, so be prepared to have extensive discussion if psychologists are in the group.

Another consideration is that this chapter recommends additional testing after the team determines that an initial evaluation needs to be made. There are other models that do not require additional testing be completed if the data collected through the Rtl process is sufficient and an eligibility decision can be made. Additionally, KSDE does not require that additional testing be completed.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do our current practices differ from what was described?
2. What do we have in place that is in alignment with what was described and what would we need to improve upon?
3. Is our core or Tier 1 curriculum based on scientifically validated instruction?
4. The group should spend some time discussing the idea of prevention versus waiting to fail.
5. How do we support the teachers in utilizing scientifically validated practices?
6. What is our standard in which to evaluate instructional practices?
7. Does our professional development support scientifically validated practices?
8. How do we communicate our beliefs about instruction and learning to the faculty?
9. How do we ensure the faculty doesn't view Rtl as one more "hoop" to jump through?
10. How do we evaluate our own practices to ensure we are utilizing scientifically based research?
11. When considering a new methodology or program, how do we know if it is scientifically validated? Does it matter? If our data indicate the students are performing up to expectations, do we need to change?
12. How could the Rtl model improve what we are already doing to identify children with disabilities?
13. What is the role of published standardized tests?
14. What do they contribute to determining instructional needs?
15. Does our current method of identification and assessment yield results that improve instruction?
16. What support would we need to change?

17. Do we have enough knowledge about the core curriculum and instruction to be confident that research validated practices are being utilized?
18. How do we ask the above in a sensitive and collaborative manner and how do we support the core? What is our responsibility with implementing the core?

Chapter 4: Core Principles of RtI

Overview

Helpful Hints

It might be helpful to begin with a discussion of the current interventions being used in the schools and areas that might be lacking or need more choices to fit student needs.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do we insure we are being responsible in making sure interventions are evidence-based? – Think district level, building level, classroom level?
2. What role does each of the above professionals have in ensuring proper utilization of evidence-based practices?
3. How should treatment integrity be handled, as this could create uncomfortable situations for faculty?
4. From what sources do I draw upon when creating interventions for students (experience, research, colleague, student data, what's available, etc.)?
5. How do I feel about someone else evaluating the treatment integrity of an intervention I have created and/or am implementing?
6. How does the current service delivery model of psychological services align with the standards presented?
7. What needs to change?
8. Whose role should it be to evaluate treatment integrity?
9. Do we have a sufficient pool of evidence-based interventions to draw from and implement with integrity?

Chapters 5 & 6: Single-Subject Experimental Design & Single-Subject Research and Rtl

Overview

Helpful Hints

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do our practices in our current problem-solving process align with what is being recommended?
2. How are we going to do this? How does following a practitioner-researcher model enhance instruction and improve results for children?
3. What professional development would be needed to function as recommended in these chapters?
4. As school psychologists, what would we need to do to support teachers in implementing single-subject experiments?
5. Discuss the key features of effective instruction. Where does homework fit into this?

Chapter 7: Using Rtl Procedures of Assessment of Academic Difficulties

Overview

Helpful Hints

If there are school psychologists in the book study group, be prepared to engage in detailed and intense discussion, as this could be a significant paradigm shift from their current belief system and practices. Keeping an open mind will be critical.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do our current practices in selection of materials and screening assessments align with what is described in the chapter?
2. Are we implementing the core curriculum with consistency? How do we know?
3. We are already doing a lot of testing...how would the Rtl practices enhance/improve what we're already doing?
4. What would be an effective way to do all of this monitoring (including doing the testing and analyzing the results)?
5. How could special education support personnel assist in this process?
6. What role do and should administrators have in the procedures described?

Chapter 8: Using Rtl Procedures with Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Overview

Helpful Hints

When discussing this chapter, have the participants think about all types of diversity, not just racial differences.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. What examples of diversity do we have in our district?
2. How has the community changed over the years? What changes could we predict for the future?
3. How does the community perceive the school?
4. Best practices recommend that schools should view parents as partners and should include them in some degree at all levels of instruction and intervention. How could this be done?

Chapter 9: Using Rtl Procedures as a Part of Special Education Eligibility Decision Making & Chapter 10: Rtl Reports

Overview

Helpful Hints

It may also be helpful to do Chapter 3 in conjunction with these chapters rather than at the beginning.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How do our current procedures to determine special education eligibility align with what is being proposed?
2. Do we have the skills necessary to conduct evaluations in the manner being recommended?
3. How do our state regulations and procedures align with what is proposed?
4. How do our district or cooperative procedures align with what is proposed?
5. Get an evaluation report from the way that eligibility is currently done and compare with what is presented. Which yields better instructional recommendations?

Chapter 11: Training Educators to Use RtI Methods

Overview

Helpful Hints

Although this chapter may appear to be most appropriate for administrators or those individuals responsible for staff development, don't assume that teachers or other faculty would not contribute helpful information for planning. It is a best practice for educators to be able to contribute to creating their own staff development programs and gives ownership.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. After reading the book, what training do you think would be necessary to implement RtI? This could be addressed in a brainstorm fashion where all concerns are recorded and neither evaluated nor prioritized until later.
2. RtI calls for a paradigm shift which represents a change from looking at problems and disability as a problem within the student to viewing a problem as a discrepancy from what is expecting to what is occurring. With this shift, teaching procedures will be evaluated and examined as to how they may be contributing to the concern, which may cause some teachers to feel vulnerable. How do we avoid this or develop a mindset that will enable teachers and other educators to be open to this way of thinking?

Chapter 12: Frequently Asked Questions and Our Best Responses: Some Conclusions about RtI

Overview

Helpful Hints

Reflection and Dialogue

1. This chapter could be done with Chapter 11 or as a wrap up session to address any unanswered questions.



★ It's in the Bag ★

NYSRRC Book Study Guide Program

Feedback Form

Please provide feedback upon completion of the book study. Return this form in the facilitator guide folder.

1. Was the facilitator's guide useful in leading your discussion of *Response to Intervention: Principals and Strategies for Effective Practice*? Why or why not?
2. How can we improve this experience?
3. Would you recommend this to other groups?

