



Coaches Supporting Continuous Improvement: Tier 1 Problem-Solving

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mimtsstac.org



All About Me: Kristen Rizzuto-Hellebuyck



- Mom
- Literacy & Dyslexia Consultant
- Literacy coach/instructional consultant
- Classroom teacher

Activity 1.0: All About You

- In the chat, please add:
 - Your name
 - Coaching role
 - Your location
 - A “win” related to supporting continuous improvement since Session 1

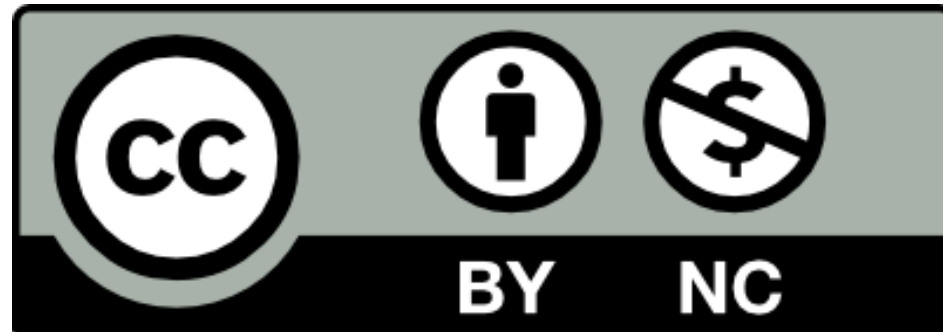


Acknowledgments

The content for this training day was developed based on the work of:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
- The IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University
- Center on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- National Center for Systemic Improvement
- National Center on Improving Literacy
- Neuhaus Education Center
- Jason Harlacher, Jon Potter, and Adam Collins

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Group Agreements

We are **Responsible**

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

We are **Engaged**

- Share “air time”
- Plan to participate in multiple ways
 - Chat, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, unmute
 - Ask questions

Purpose

- This professional learning series is designed to equip literacy coaches with the knowledge and tools to lead continuous improvement efforts through the strategic use of data and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.
- Coaches will strengthen their ability to collaborate with teachers using the four-step problem-solving process to drive equitable, evidence-based decisions that improve literacy outcomes for all students.

Intended Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Deepen understanding of the MTSS framework, with an emphasis on supporting teachers in using data to inform Tier 1 instruction
2. Deepen knowledge of leveraging data to support teacher growth and maximize coaching impact
3. Collaborate with colleagues to reflect on practice, share insights, and strengthen coaching actions aligned to grade-level implementation plans

Setting Up Our Time for Success

- Engage and Reflect
 - Dropbox link with resources
 - Active participation (chats, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, etc.)
- Apply
 - Coaching collaboration
 - Action planning and next steps



Activity Overview: Learning Map Reflection

- Use the digital template or grab a blank piece of paper
- Label each section
- Use this to "map" your learning, capture big ideas, and keep track of action steps

MTSS and Instructional Coaching	Continuous Improvement
Connections to Current Practice	Action Steps

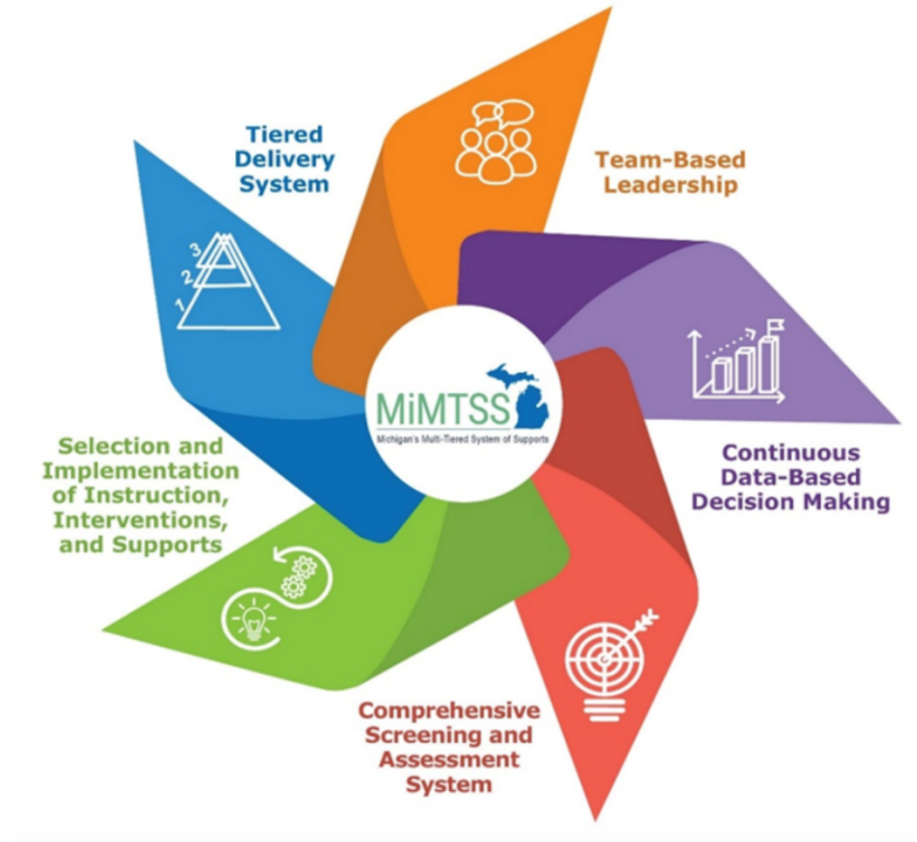
Agenda

- 1.0 MTSS and Instructional Coaching (rapid review)
- 2.0 Coaches Supporting Continuous Improvement
- 3.0 Coaching Collaboration
- 4.0 Action Planning and Next Steps

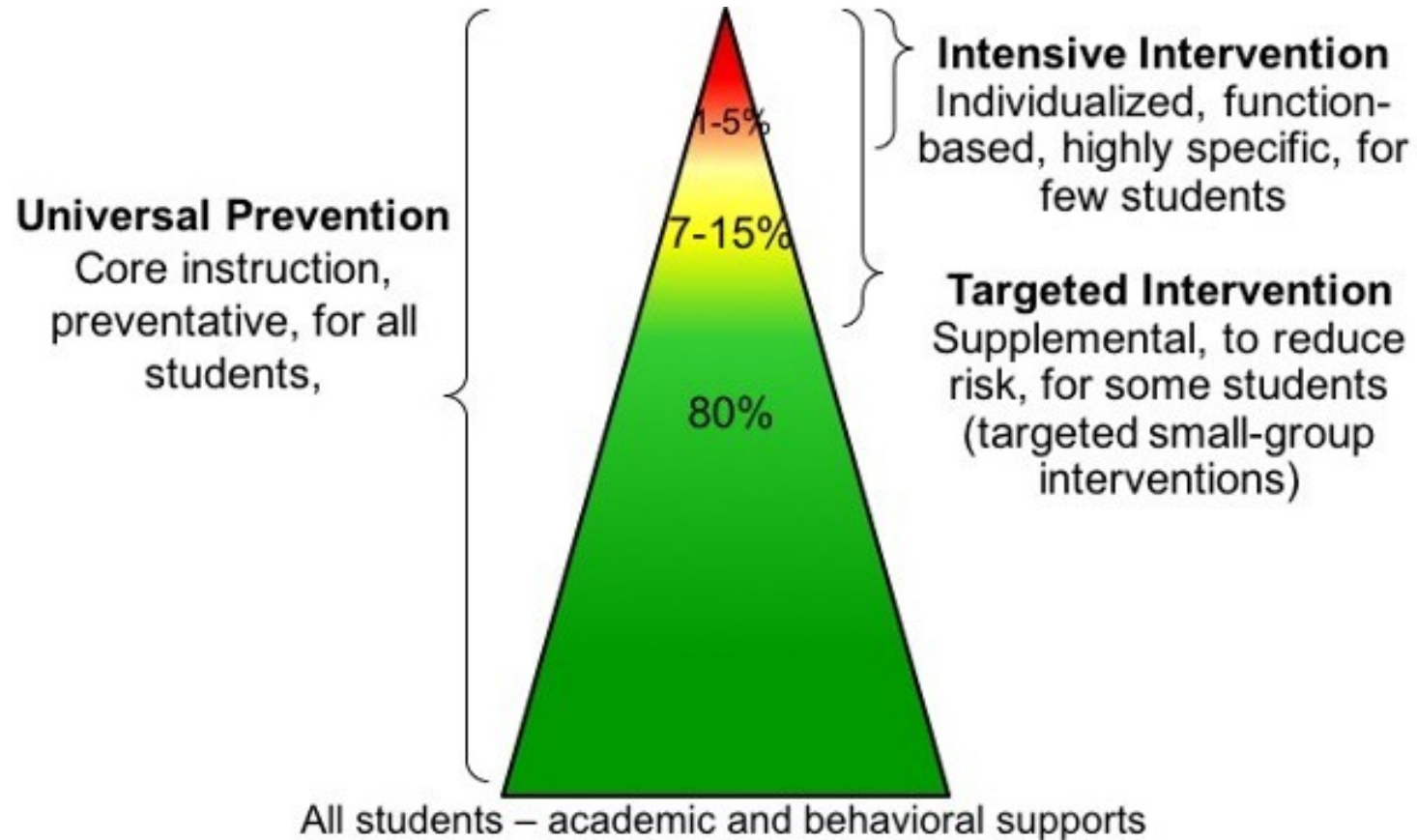
1.0 MTSS and Instructional Coaching

Rapid Review

MTSS Essential Components



Michigan Department of Education (MDE) MTSS Practice Profile (2020)



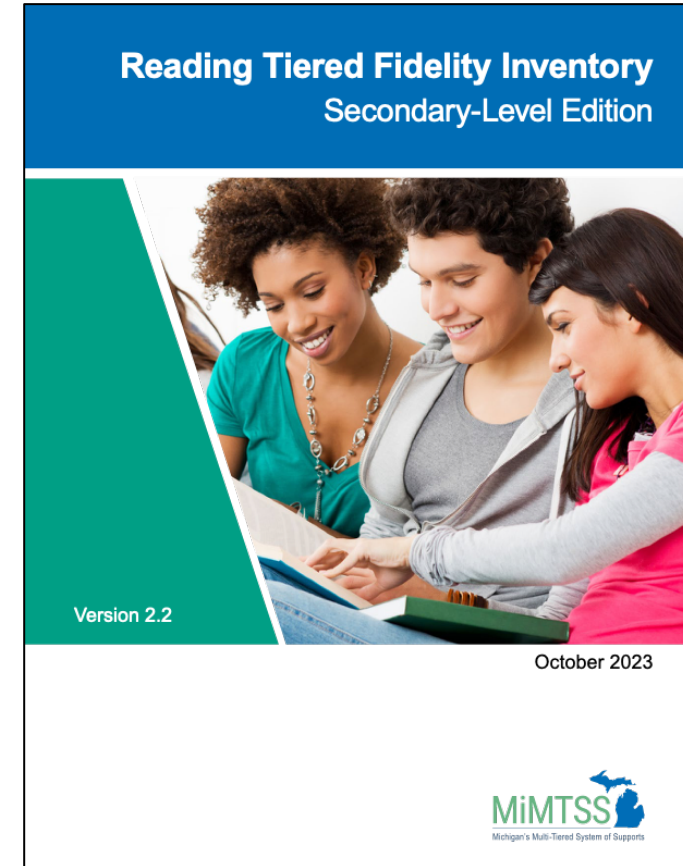
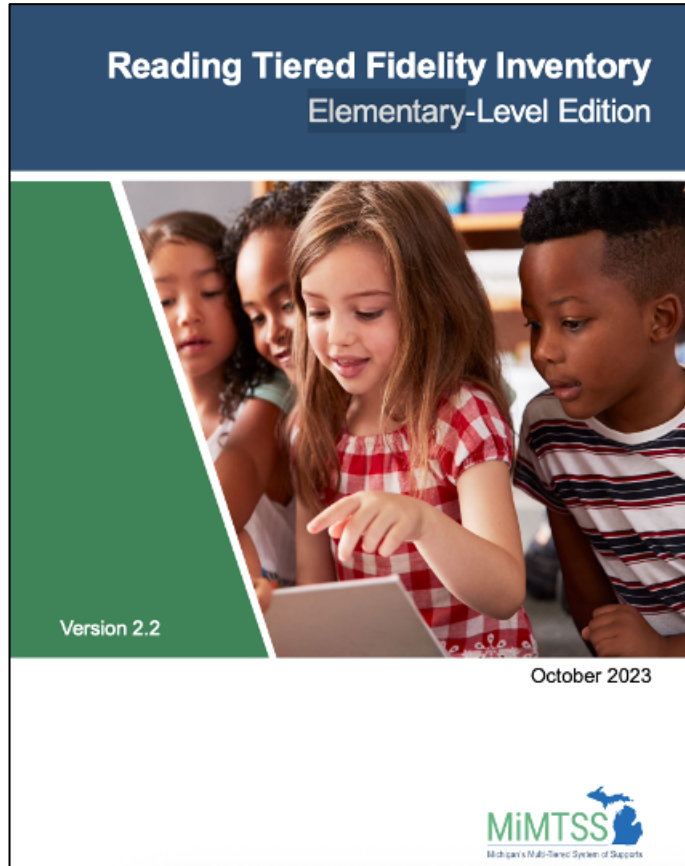
Tiered Delivery System

Tier 1 Teaming Structures

- District/ISD Teams
- School/Building Teams
- Grade-Level /Department Level Teams
- Classroom



MTSS Implementation Tools



Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (R-TFI) (2023)

MTSS Framework: A System for All Learners

- Tier 1: Universal instruction and differentiation for all students
- Tier 2: Supplemental, targeted interventions intended for some learners who require more (support/extension) beyond Tier 1
- Tier 3: Intensified/individualized intervention instruction for students most at risk
- Big Idea: Tier 1 instruction is the primary prevention of reading failure

Adapted from MDE MTSS Practice Profile (2020)

MTSS Tier 1 Commitments

- Tier 1 serves **all students**: a strong core equals fewer Tier 2/Tier 3 needs
- High-quality, evidence-based instruction (combination of whole group and small group)
- Includes lessons in phonology, sound/symbol associations, orthography, syntax, morphology, and semantics
- Includes the ongoing use of data to inform instruction and to help identify learners who may need additional support

R-TFI (2023)

Activity 1.1 Tier 1 Universal Screening

Fill in the blank:

1. Universal screening equals early _____ system
2. Administered at least _____ times per year
3. Data is used for _____
4. Provides information on overall Tier _____ effectiveness
5. Evaluates progress on the goal(s) and activities outlined in the _____

MTSS Coaching Connection

“Literacy coaches advise in developing schoolwide and classroom infrastructure to meet the collective and individual needs of pupils using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).”

Coaching...

- has the power to drive effective implementation of all MTSS areas
- helps transfer learning from training into practice
- ensures fidelity of and strengthens Tier 1 instruction

Public Act (PA) 146 (2024); National Center for Systemic Improvement (2025)

Distinguishing Between Coaching Types

Systems Coaching

- Focuses on developing a School Leadership Team's capacity to effectively install, implement, and sustain the use of MTSS

Instructional Coaching

- Focuses on improving instruction in a discipline using a particular strategy, practice, or program



Activity 1.2 Coaching Components

Part 1: System-Level Coaching

1. Locate the R-TFI that represents you
2. Review item 1.2
3. Self-assess your current level of implementation

Part 2: Instructional Coaching

1. Locate the R-TFI that represents you
2. Review items 1.17
3. Self-assess your current level of implementation



Activity 1.3 Learning Map Reflection

- Take 60 seconds
- Add key ideas, information, and/or questions to your Learning Map

MTSS and Instructional Coaching	Continuous Improvement
Connections to Current Practice	Action Steps

2.0 Coaches Supporting Continuous Improvement



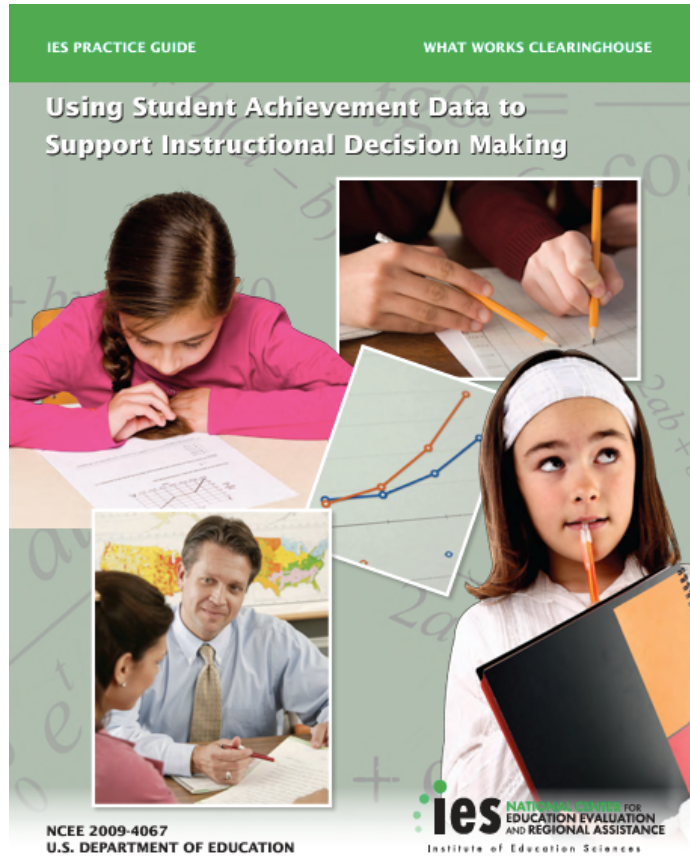
Activity 2.1 Coaching Hat Rapid Fire

- Think about all the roles you play as an instructional coach
- For the next minute, type into the chat as many “coaching hats” or responsibilities as you can think of
- Don’t over think it- just go!

Why Engage in Continuous Improvement?

- A cornerstone of implementing a MTSS framework
- Identifies possible risk, monitors progress, and measures the effectiveness of instruction
- Increases the effective use of evidence-based practices
- Maximizes learning outcome for ALL students

What Does the Research Say?



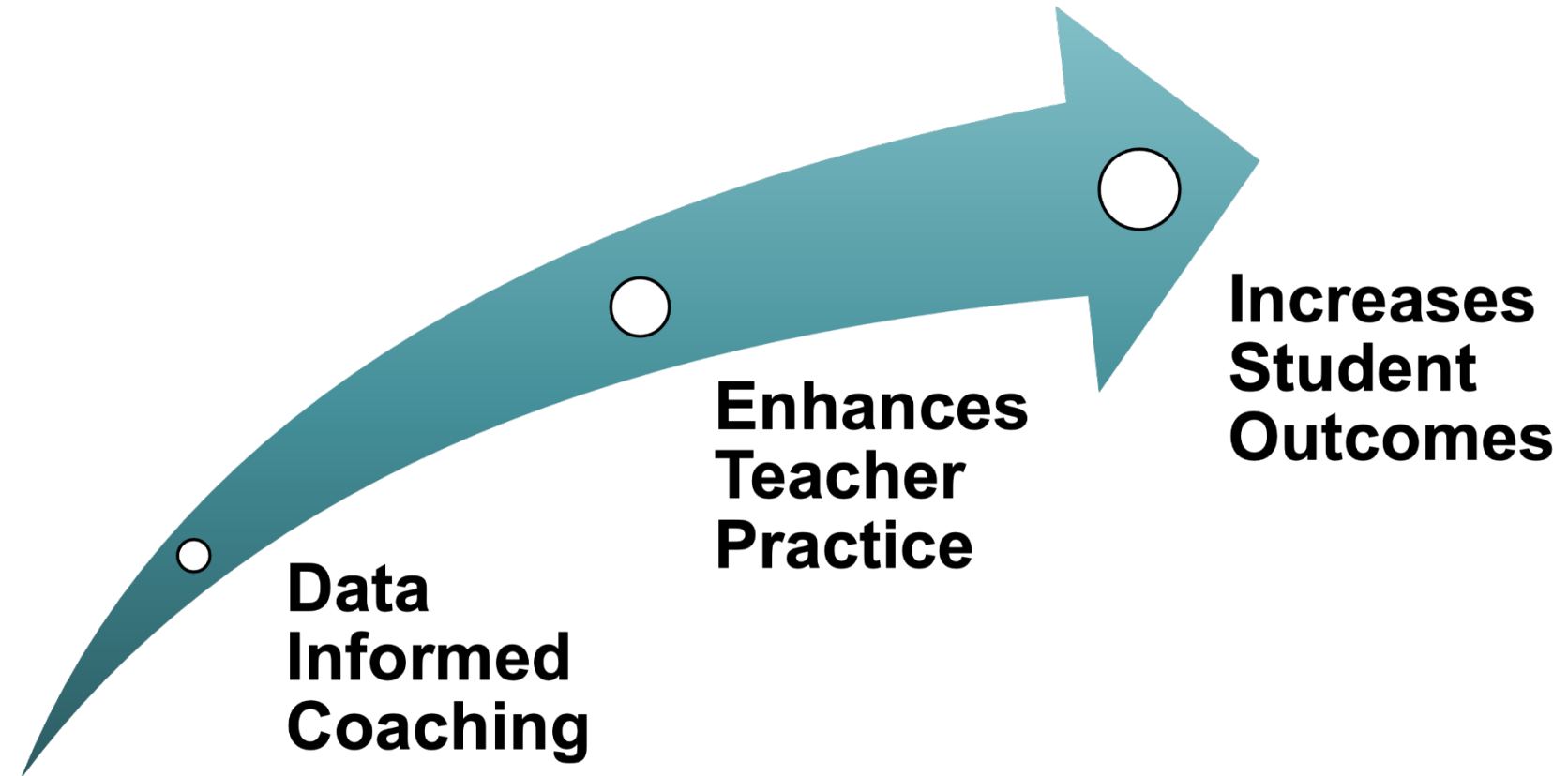
1. Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
2. Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
3. Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use.
4. Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
5. Develop and maintain a districtwide data system.

IES Practice Guide: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making, 2009

Continuous Improvement: Coaching Connection

- Coaching with a purpose
- Tier 1 implementation plans should inform coaching priorities
- Coaches provide the support structure for implementing change
- Coaching builds teacher capacity
- Coaching lives within the system - not outside it

Using Data to Transform Impact





Activity 2.2 DBDM Components

Part 1: SLT DBDM

1. Locate the R-TFI
2. Choose a district or building you currently support
3. Read through items 1.5 and 1.6
4. Highlight their areas of strength and need

Part 2: Grade-Level DBDM

1. Locate the R-TFI
2. Choose a building or grade level
3. Review items 1.20 and 1.21
4. Highlight their areas of strength and need

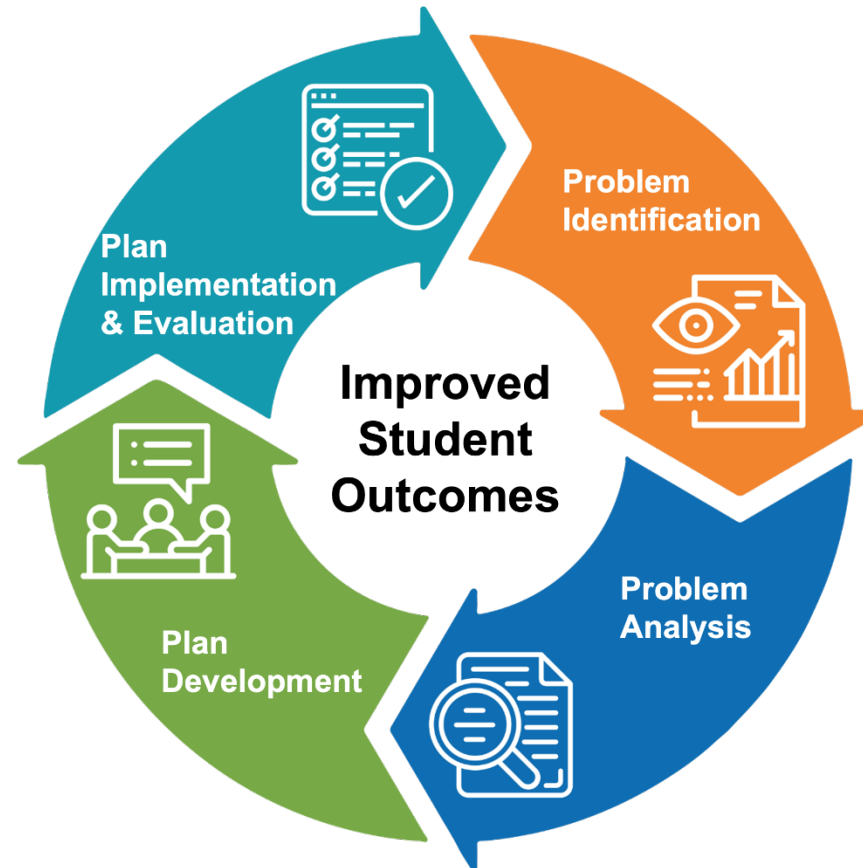
What is the Result of Data Review?

A **team**

- Uses **data** to develop or refine its **plan**
- Develops a **summary** of the plan to **communicate** to stakeholders
- Ensures the district/school **follows through** on the plan

In order to **improve outcomes** for students

Continuous Improvement Problem-Solving Process



MDE MTSS Practice Profile (2023)

Tier 1 Problem-Solving Process

Universal Tier 1 Problem-Solving Process

Version 1.0
August 2025



Purpose:

- Guides teams through a structured continuous improvement process
- Designed to be customize
- Supports problem-solving facilitation

Activity 2.3 Preview and Prepare

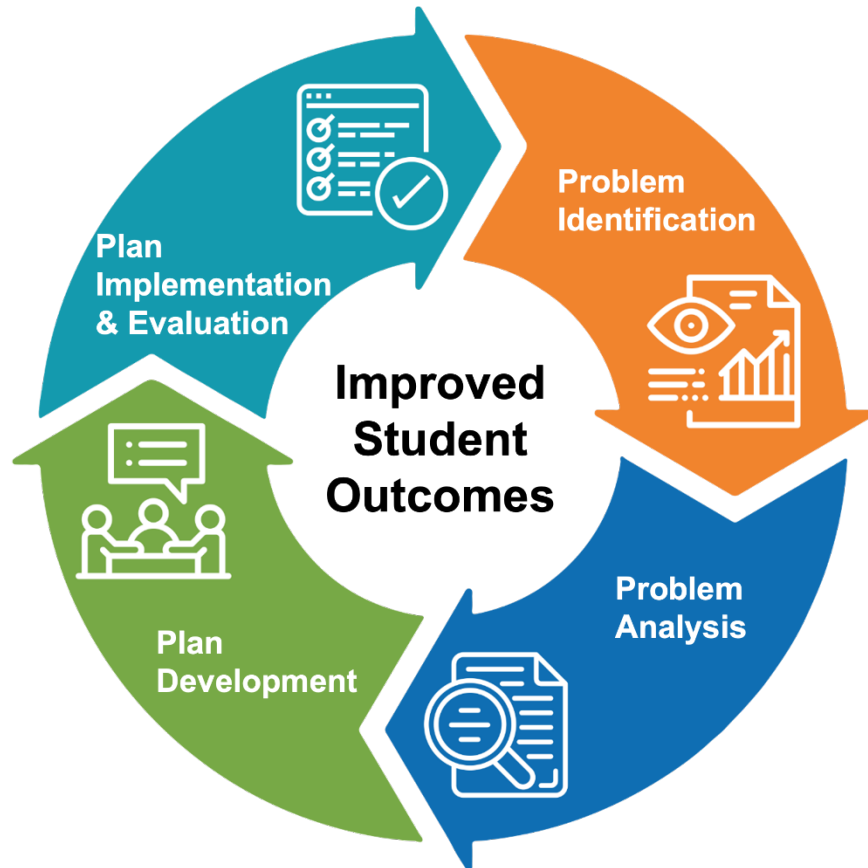
Universal Tier 1 Problem-Solving Process

Version 1.0
August 2025



- 2-3 minutes to skim the document
- As you browse, think about:
 - What stands out to you about the overall structure of the process?
 - Any surprises?
 - Confirmations?
- Be prepared to share

Step 1: Problem Identification



Action Steps:

1. Review and analyze overall risk
2. Review and analyze overall risk indicator comparison data (winter and spring only)
3. Determine the effectiveness of Tier 1 supports

Determine Effectiveness of the Tier 1 Reading Supports

- Is Tier 1 reading instruction sufficient for most students (80% or more at low risk)?
- Did at least 95% of the students who began the year at low risk remain at low risk? (Winter and Spring only)

Problem Identification: Coaching Connections

Coaching Tasks

- Gather data reports
- Guide teams through each action item, facilitate reflection
- Support data interpretation/build data literacy
- Document findings/next steps

Coaching Moves

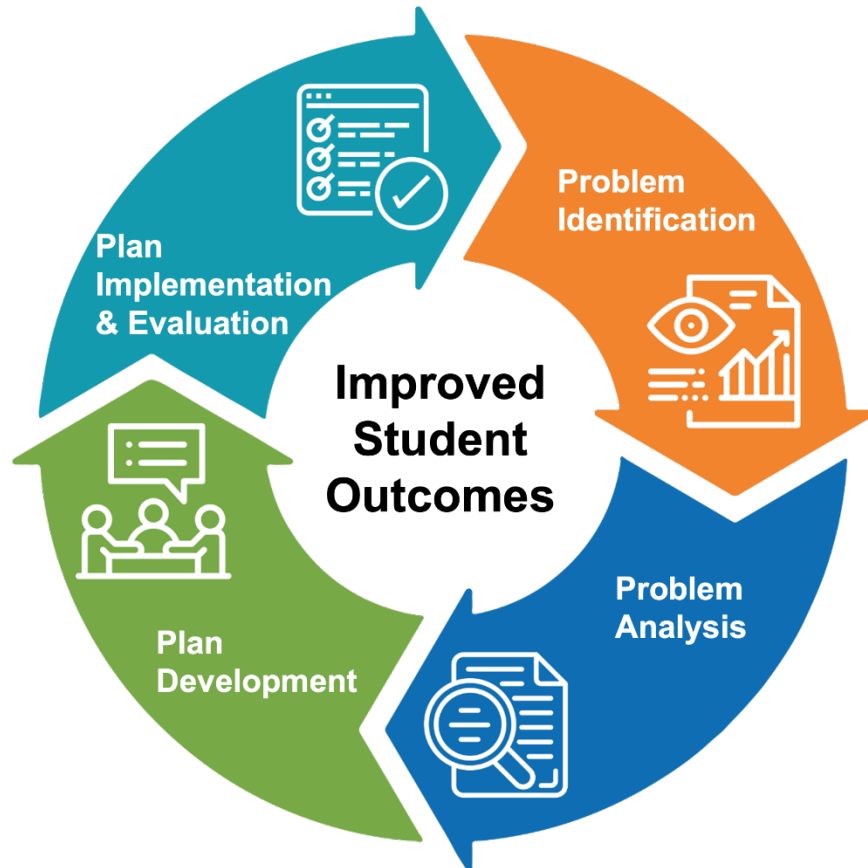
- Ask probing questions
- Summarize and synthesize key takeaways
- Ensure focus on the data (not on opinions)
- Frame findings as opportunities for improvement, not judgement



Activity 2.4 Pause and Process

- What “coaching moves” do you use most naturally during Step 1?
- How confident are you in facilitating discussions that keep the team focused on evidence (rather than assumptions)?
- What strategies do you use to develop shared ownership?
- What might you do differently to deepen data literacy?
- What would you add that isn’t already represented?

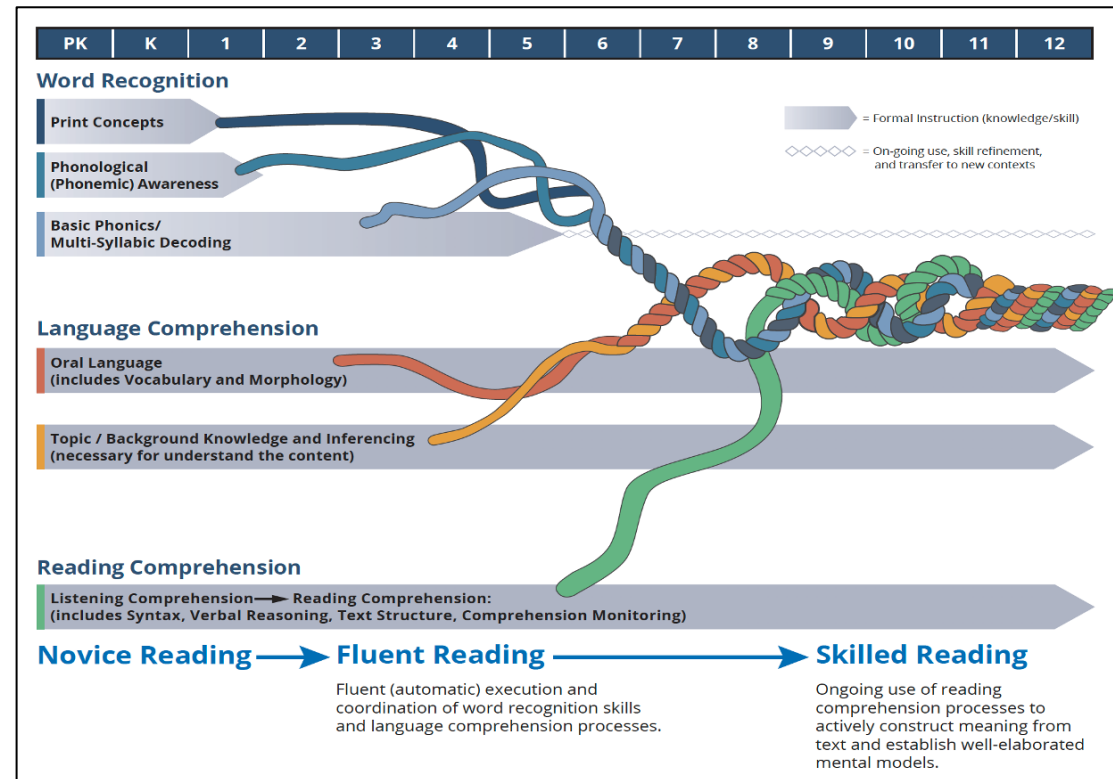
Step 2: Problem Analysis



Action Steps:

1. Review/analyze subtest data
2. Complete subskill analysis and data interpretation
3. Determine the most important common instructional need

Reading Learning Progression



St. Martin et al. (2022)

Problem Analysis: Coaching Connections

Coaching Tasks

- Support data interpretation
- Facilitate reflection on root causes (not just surface-level issues)
- Ensure analysis remains focused and actionable

Coaching Moves

- Ask analytic questions
- Summarize/synthesize
- Highlight connections. challenge assumptions
- Prioritize actionable focus



Activity 2.5 Peer Collaboration

Task: Review the data scenario and discuss:

- What Tier 1 trends are evident? What data points might you draw attention to? What would you celebrate?
- What resources would you utilize to support data reflection?
- What coaching priorities would support improved outcomes?

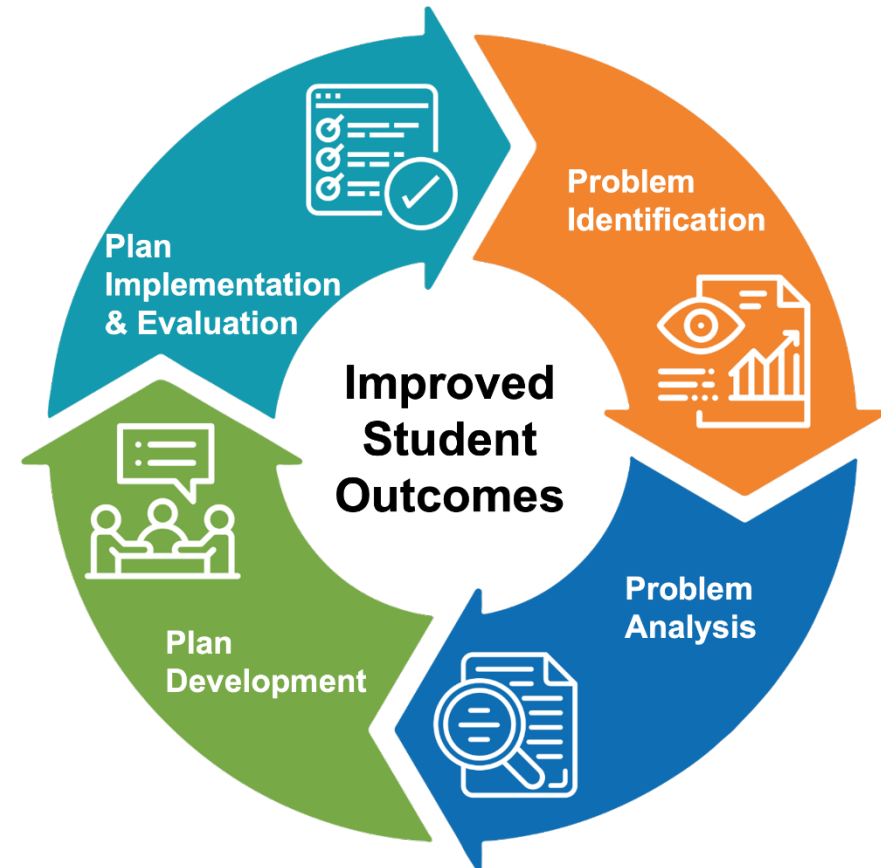
Wrap Up: Groups will add their notes and/or “big ideas” to the response sheet

Debrief: One person from each group will summarize key takeaways

Step 3: Instructional Plan Development

Action Steps:

1. Create a goal statement
2. Develop an instructional plan
3. Determine a monitoring plan





Activity 2.6 Plan Breakdown

School Implementation Plan

1. Locate the R-TFI
2. Read through item 1.3

Grade-Level Implementation Plan

1. Locate the R-TFI
2. Review item 1.19

Plan Development Details

- Goal statement
- Whole group plan
- Small group plan
- Alignment across tiers
- Monitoring and support plan

Plan Development: Coaching Connections

Coaching Tasks

- Facilitate goal setting
- Guide decisions
- Answer questions/offer suggestions
- Document plans/next steps
- Share resources

Coaching Moves

- Ensure alignment to evidence-based strategies/practices
- Help prioritize data informed actions
- Plan next steps for coaching

Coaching Move: Use the Evidence

Evidence-Based

- Demonstrates effectiveness through rigorous studies (often quantitative)
- It is defined in Public Act 146/147 and consistent with federal guidance

Research-Based/Informed

- Grounded in existing theories, guided by the best available evidence, but may not have undergone rigorous testing to demonstrate effectiveness
- Not in Public Act 146/147

Coaching Language You Might Use

- “Let’s ground our next steps in evidence-based practices that we know move learning forward”
- “This strategy is research-informed, but do we have strong evidence it actually improves _____”
- “If we want to change the data, we need practices with a demonstrated impact on student outcomes”



Activity 2.7 Reflect and Connect

Take a minute and reflect on the following questions:

1. What's your biggest takeaway about the plan development stage of the problem-solving process?
2. What confirms what you already know and/or do?
3. What new ideas are surfacing?
4. What questions do you still have?

Alignment of Coaching and Tier 1 Plans

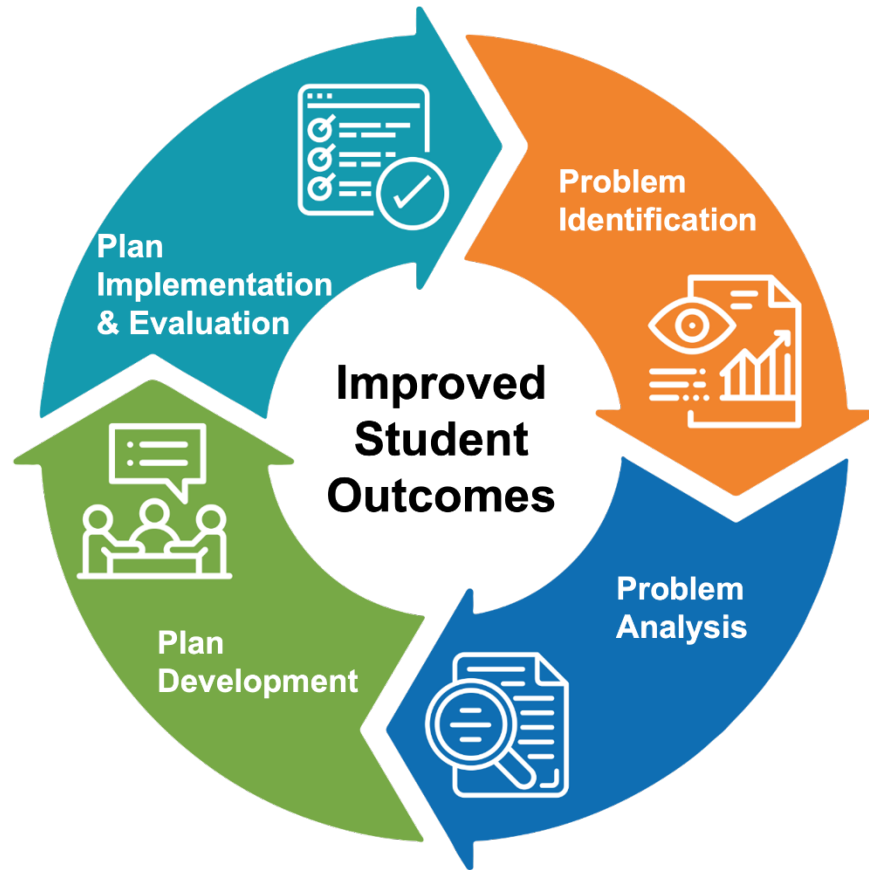
- Tier 1 implementation plans become the focus of coaching supports
- Coaching cycles are structured around Tier 1 priorities
- Ensures coaching is embedded, purposeful, driven by data, and directly impacts student outcomes



Activity 2.8 From Plan to Practice

1. Review the sample Tier 1 implementation plan
2. Think about:
 - What elements of the plan are already clearly defined?
 - What barriers to implementation could arise?
 - Where might coaching support be needed?
3. Outline specific actions a coach could take to support successful implementation (think about what the teacher might need to be successful)

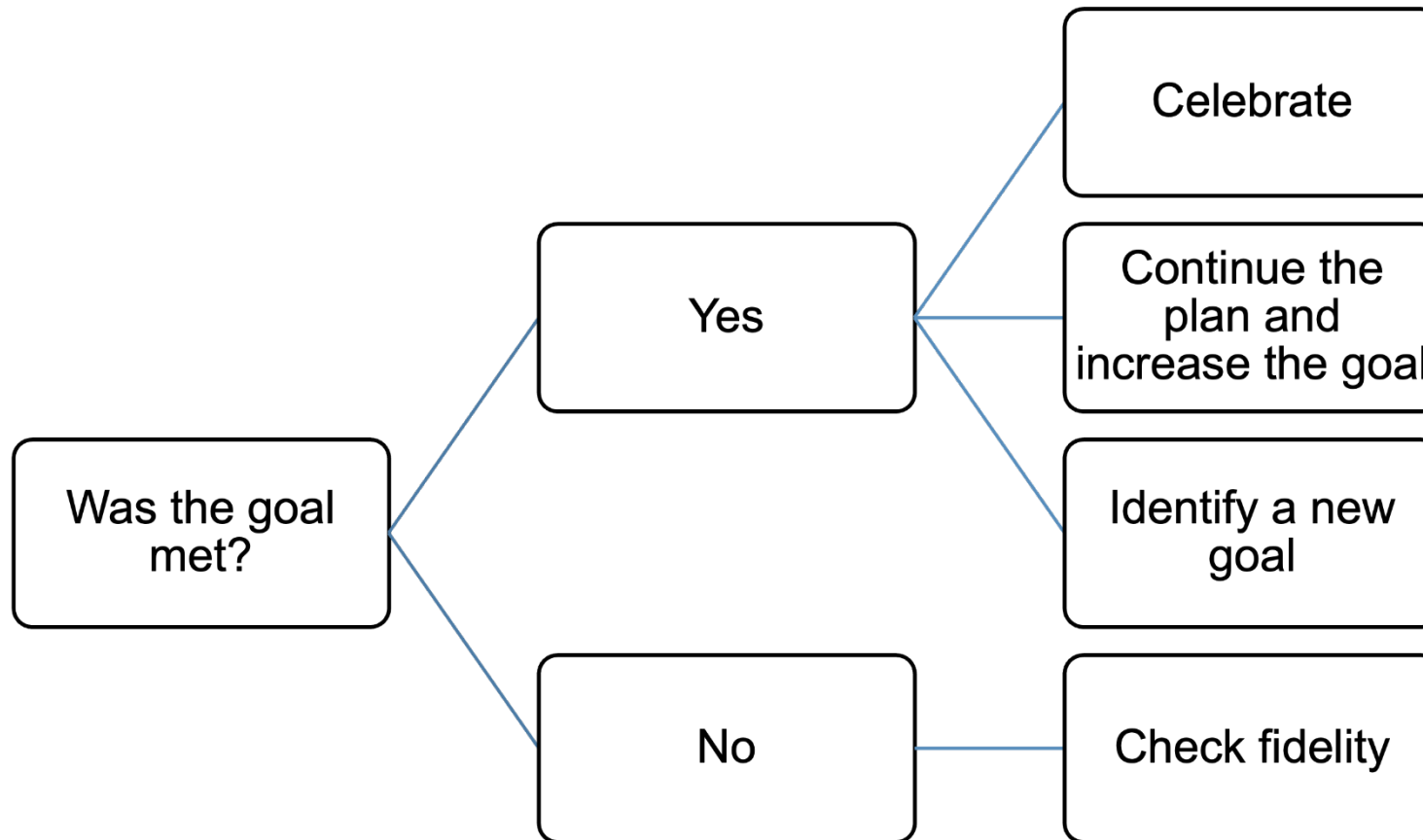
Step 4: Plan Evaluation



Action Steps:

1. Review goals
2. Analyze data for effectiveness
3. Determine impact
4. Decide on next steps

Determine Impact on Student Outcomes



Plan Evaluation: Coaching Connection

Coaching Tasks

- Collect and organize data
- Revisit intended outcomes
- Facilitate data analysis
- Co-develop next steps

Coaching Moves

- Clarify goals and data interpretation
- Link implementation to impact
- Facilitate reflection
- Support decision-making

Activity 2.12 Learning Map Reflections

- Take 60 seconds
- Add key ideas, information, and/or questions to your Learning Map

MTSS and Instructional Coaching	Continuous Improvement
Connections to Current Practice	Action Steps

3.0 Coaching Collaboration

The Coaching Connection

- Assessment and data are the drivers of coaching work
- The Tier 1 implementation plans inform coaching priorities based on real data
- Coaches provide the support structure for implementing change
- Coaching builds teacher capacity

Activity 3.1 Scenario: It's Them, Not Me

- A teacher says:
 - “The students aren’t progressing. It’s because they don’t try hard enough”
 - “I think the problem isn’t reading. They’re just off-task when I am teaching”
- As a coach:
 - How would you respond?
 - How would you shift the conversation from student blame to instructional analysis?
 - How would you guide the teacher to examine instructional clarity, scaffolds, routines, and engagement data?



Activity 3.2 Scenario: Tell Me What to Do

- A teacher says:
 - “OK, we looked at the data. Now tell me what I need to do”
- As a coach:
 - How would you respond?
 - How would you collaborate with the teacher build capacity determine what to do next?

Activity 3.3 Scenario: Let's Stay Comfortable

- A teacher says:
 - “If they pick books they love, their reading will naturally improve. Maybe that should be our main Tier 1 adjustment”
 - “I want to do popcorn reading because I really like using it and it forces my students to pay attention”
- As a coach:
 - How would you respond?
 - How would you coach the teacher to base choices on impact, not preference?
 - How would you respond/redirect the teacher to evidence-based practices?

Why Monitor Implementation?

- Promotes fidelity
- Supports continuous improvement
- Reduces cognitive load
- Provides clear, step-by-step guidance on how to implement a routine or practice

Developing an Implementation Checklist

Two-Step Procedure:

1. Deconstruct the practice (task analysis)
2. Develop the checklist
3. Include quality indicators

Critical Components

- Action or evidence (look-fors)
- Observation outcome
- Notes for feedback
- Specific and observable language

Sample Implementation Checklist

Directions: During the observation, place a checkmark for each step observed/not observed. Tally the number of checkmarks and divide by the total number of applicable steps.

Observed	Implementation Checklist	Implementation Feedback
	Materials organized for student pairs	
	Appropriate text is selected	
	Clear roles for students are assigned	
	Partner 1 reads first, Partner 2 offers feedback	
	Teacher circulates, listens, and gives feedback	



Activity 3.4 Task Analysis Practice

Task: Break down the instructional routine into clear, teachable steps

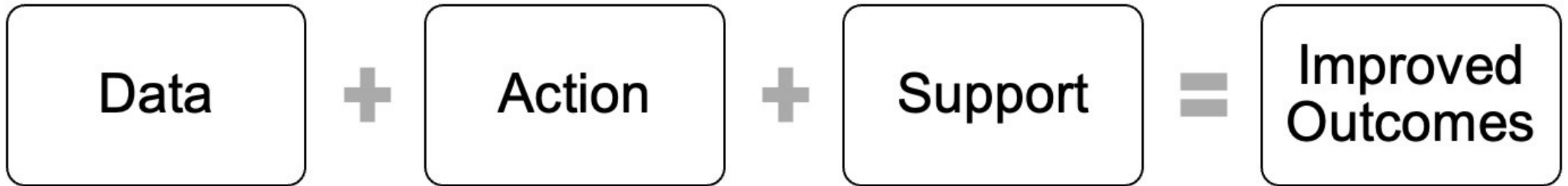
1. Review the phoneme blending routine
2. Deconstruct the routine into critical steps
3. Focus on teacher actions, student actions, language cues, and materials

Debrief: How do you see this impacting your work as a coach?

Bridging Tier 1 Plans with Coaching Priorities

1. Review the Tier 1 implementation plan and ask:
 - What teacher knowledge or skills need strengthening?
 - What instructional routines need to be practiced?
2. Then build coaching cycles around:
 - Co-planning/modeling/observing/providing feedback
 - Monitoring implementation and student response

A Recipe for Success



- Continuous improvement defines *where* Tier 1 needs strengthening
- Implementation plans define *what* needs to happen
- Instructional coaching defines *how* we support teachers to do it

Coaching Action Plan

- Designed to align coaching priorities with Tier 1 goals and plans
- Serves as a shared roadmap for coaches and teachers to:
 - Identify implementation focus areas
 - Outline evidence-based actions
 - Monitor progress
 - Ensure that coaching cycles support student outcomes



Activity 3.5 Data, Planning, Action!

1. As a team, review the sample Tier 1 plan and discuss:
 - What resources, knowledge, skills, or supports might teachers need?
 - What could you as their coach do to support successful implementation?
 - What potential challenges could arise?
2. Draft a coaching plan that outlines the coaching priorities
3. Wrap up and share out with the larger group

4.0 Action Planning and Next Steps



Activity 4.1: Reflect Back

1. Take 2 minutes to reflect and review your Learning Map
2. Make a commitment to your next step(s)
3. Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - 1-minute action plan
 - One thing you can share with a colleague/influencer
 - One affirmation that you are on the right track and the next step

Revisiting Our Intended Outcomes

1. Deepen understanding of the MTSS framework, with an emphasis on supporting teachers in using data to inform Tier 1 instruction
2. Deepen knowledge of leveraging data to support teacher growth and maximize coaching impact
3. Collaborate with colleagues to reflect on practice, share insights, and strengthen coaching actions aligned to grade-level implementation plans

Bringing it All Together

- Strong Tier 1 is critical
- We can't improve what we don't measure
- Analyze with intention. Act with impact
- Coaches ensure fidelity, focus, and feedback at every level
- MTSS and coaching are an ongoing, cyclical processes



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