

# Tier I and II Observation Checklist

## Description & Purpose

### *Theoretical Background*

The *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* is an integrity measure used to assess the extent to which schools are implementing the critical components of the problem-solving process during data meetings addressing Tier I (i.e., core instruction) and/or II (i.e., small groups) instruction. Implementation of new practices such as PS/RtI is a gradual process that occurs in stages, not a one-time event (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Because many educational reform efforts fail due to lack of implementation (Sarason, 1990), it is critical that implementation integrity be examined. Several methods for examining implementation integrity exist. These methods can be divided into three categories: **self-report**, **permanent product reviews**, and **observations** (Noell & Gansle, 2006).

### *Description*

The *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* is an observation protocol used to examine implementation integrity of the components of problem solving. The instrument contains 20 items that assess which key roles and responsibilities are represented (nine items) and which components of the four steps of the problem-solving process (i.e., Problem Identification, Problem Analysis, Intervention Development/Support, and Program Evaluation/RtI) are present (11 items) during data meetings. Trained observers complete the checklists while attending data meetings by checking present or absent. Spaces for additional notes or explanations are provided to allow observers to clarify their responses if needed. In addition, an option of “not applicable” is provided for selected items for which it may be defensible to not complete the identified component.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* is two-fold. The first purpose is to provide a reliable source of information on the extent to which educators implement PS/RtI practices when examining Tier I and/or II instruction. The second purpose is to examine the extent to which educators with key roles and responsibilities during data meetings are participating. Importantly, observation pro-

**Self-report:** Individuals responsible for implementation provide information on the extent to which the practices occurred.

**Permanent Product Reviews:** Relevant documents (e.g., graphs, notes, worksheets) related to implementation are examined for evidence of the target practices.

**Observations:** Individuals directly observe applications of the target practices when they are expected to occur.

ocols tend to result in more reliable data than self-report and permanent product review methodologies. However, observations are a more resource-intensive data collection method that often requires training, time to travel to meetings, time to attend meetings when they occur, etc. Typically, a combination of the three implementation integrity assessment methods can be used to maximize use of resources and provide a reliable picture of what practices are being implemented. Therefore, decisions regarding how much to use observation protocols such as the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* should be made based on resources available to conduct observations.

## Intended Audience

### *Who Should Complete the Tier I and II Observation Checklist?*

It is highly recommended that individuals completing the checklist have expertise in the PS/RtI model and skills in conducting observations. Specifically, observers must understand the problem-solving process to identify the extent to which steps are occurring during Tier I and/or Tier II data meetings. The title of individuals completing the checklists is not as important as the skill sets needed. Staff with the requisite skill sets in schools that have worked with the Florida PS/RtI Project are PS/RtI Coaches; however, school psychologists, literacy specialists, or educators from other disciplines may possess the requisite knowledge and skills or be candidates for professional development.

### *Who Should Use the Results for Decision Making?*

School-Based Leadership Team (SBLT) members should receive data on implementation levels from the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist*. SBLTs are comprised of approximately six to eight staff members selected to take a leadership role in facilitating PS/RtI implementation in a school. Staff included on the SBLT should have the following roles represented: administration, general education teachers, student services, special education teachers, and content specialists (e.g., reading, math, behavior). SBLT members should receive training on the PS/RtI model including strategies for facilitating implementation (i.e., systems change principles and strategies referred to in the Introduction). Individuals on the team also should adopt certain roles and responsibilities to ensure efficient and productive planning and problem-solving meetings. Important responsibilities include a **facilitator**, **time-keeper**, **data coach**, and **recorder**, in addition to providing expertise in the particular content areas or disciplines listed above.

District-Based Leadership Team (DBLT) members also should receive the results for the district's schools individually as well as aggregated at the district level. Members of the DBLT provide leadership to schools implementing PS/RtI practices. Examples of leadership provided by DBLT members include facilitating the creation of policies and procedures to support implementation, providing access to professional development targeting the knowledge and skills of educators in the district, and meeting with schools to review implementation and student outcomes. Staff included on the team mirror the SBLT in terms of representation of disciplines and roles and responsibilities.

#### **Facilitator:**

Responsibilities of facilitators tend to include preparation for meetings, ensuring participation and involvement of team members, encouraging team members to reach consensus regarding decisions being made, and keeping the conversations focused on the task being discussed (e.g., problem-solving student performance, planning for professional development).

#### **Timekeeper:**

Timekeepers are responsible for providing periodic updates to team members regarding the amount of time left to complete a given task or discussion during meetings.

**Data Coach:** Data coaches provide assistance with interpreting data and using it to inform decisions.

**Recorder:** Recorders are responsible for taking notes for the purpose of capturing the important discussions and outcomes of meetings.

Importantly, SBLTs and DBLTs may find it helpful to work with a PS/RtI Coach or other stakeholder with expertise in PS/RtI practices to discuss findings from the checklist. Coaches can assist with interpretation of the results as well as facilitating problem-solving to address barriers to implementation.

### **Directions for Administration**

#### ***Step 1***

Identify the content areas and grade levels the school(s) target for implementation. Schools and districts vary in terms of how quickly they plan to scale-up PS/RtI practices. The literature on PS/RtI implementation suggests that a long-term, multi-year plan for incrementally scaling-up new PS/RtI practices should be followed (Batsche et al., 2005). However, educators may decide to attempt scaling-up faster for myriad reasons (e.g., can dedicate more resources to the initiative, mandates requiring practices be implemented immediately). Therefore, it is important for stakeholders responsible for facilitating data collection or directly completing the checklist to understand which content areas and grade levels schools are targeting for implementation. This information can be used to help develop a plan for sampling data meetings.

#### ***Step 2***

Determine which data meetings schools use to examine Tier I and/or II instruction. Schools and districts conduct different types of data meetings at different times of the year. Observers should determine which meetings address Tier I and II issues, who is involved in those meetings, and when they occur. Examples of common meetings include leadership team meetings, grade level meetings involving teachers, team meetings, and meetings during which small-group interventions are planned. Meetings focused on Tier I issues tend to occur 3-4 times per year whereas meetings focused on Tier II instruction may occur more frequently (e.g., monthly). Importantly, the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* should NOT be completed at meetings where individual student focused problem-solving is occurring.

#### ***Step 3***

Develop a plan for sampling data meetings examining Tier I and II instruction. Once relevant data meetings are identified, a plan for sampling meetings should be developed. Although observing all meetings to assess implementation integrity may be ideal, it may not be realistic for many schools and districts given available resources. Decisions regarding how to observe a sample of meetings should be made based on personnel and time available as well as what other implementation integrity data will be collected. For example, Project RtI Coaches were asked to observe three data meetings per pilot school (i.e., one meeting following each universal screening conducted throughout the year). Because pilot schools did not always schedule meetings months in advance, Project staff believed that randomly selecting meetings was not feasible for Coaches. Therefore, Coaches were asked to sample one grade level's data meetings throughout the year. In other words, if

a school had identified reading as their target subject area and grades K-2 as their target grade levels, then the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* was to be completed during data meetings in which reading data for one of those grade levels and/or groups of students from within those grade levels were discussed. Because implementation integrity also was being assessed using self-report and permanent product methodologies, Project staff decided that this sampling would provide adequate information on the extent to which PS/RtI practices were observed (i.e., the data could be compared with other sources of information on implementation integrity). *Tiers I & II Observation Checklist Administration Summary* (in *Supplements*, page 140) contains an example of sampling procedures developed by the Project for PS/RtI Coaches.

#### ***Step 4***

Determine who to contact at schools to schedule observation days and times. Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of conducting observations is scheduling days and times to conduct them. Schools and districts vary in terms of when these meetings are scheduled and the extent to which they may be rescheduled or cancelled. Therefore, it is recommended that observers identify a contact person at each building (e.g., principal, literacy specialist) to determine when and where the observations should be conducted based on the plan developed in Step 3. A contact person will not only allow observers to schedule observations but also could be a valuable conduit should meetings be rescheduled or cancelled.

#### ***Step 5***

Conduct the observation at scheduled meetings. Checklists should be completed for each content area and grade-level specified in the plan developed in Step 3. General guidelines for scoring items on the checklist were created by the Project and are available in *Supplements*, page 142. It is important that the person completing the checklist have a thorough understanding of the problem-solving process because those participating in the meeting may not follow the problem-solving process in the exact order in which the steps are listed on the checklist. In other words, the observer needs to be knowledgeable enough of the problem-solving process to be able to identify components of problem solving that may not be clearly indicated or occur in a particular order during the meetings.

#### ***Step 6***

Complete inter-rater agreement procedures when applicable. Ensuring that observations are completed accurately is critical to data collection. For this reason, it is recommended that two observers rate the same meeting periodically. This procedure allows observers to discuss differences and come to consensus regarding how to score particular items when conducting future observations. The extent to which these inter-rater agreement procedures take place depend on the time and resources available to observers. It is recommended that observers reach 85% inter-rater agreement to continue completing observations independently. Inter-rater agreement levels below 85% may indicate that retraining is necessary. An example of

how inter-rater agreement procedures were established for Project PS/RtI Coaches is available in *Supplements*, page 141.

Common issues to address when completing observations: There are a few things to keep in mind when conducting observations. As individuals completing the checklist may be part of the school staff or assigned to coach them, they may find themselves participating in the meetings they are observing. If the person completing the checklist is also participating in the meeting, it is important that they not influence the meeting to reflect components of the checklist. The observer should try to remain more of a passive participant and refrain from offering ideas or suggestions that would influence the completion of the checklist. The checklist should be completed with an objective perspective of what occurred during the meeting. In addition, other staff participating in the meeting may behave differently simply because they know they are being observed. Thus, the observer should try to complete the checklist as unobtrusively as possible to avoid influencing the members' actions in ways that are not reflective of those that occurred during typical meetings.

### Frequency of Use

When determining how often observers should complete the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist*, it is important to consider the resources available within schools and districts so that plans for data collection are adequately supported. Important considerations include the time needed for completion of the instrument; the time required to enter, analyze, graph, and disseminate data; the personnel available to support data collection; and other data collection activities in which SBLT members and school staff are required to participate. Completing the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* requires a thorough understanding of content related to the problem-solving process and implementing PS/RtI models. The extent to which individuals with this content knowledge are available and/or can be thoroughly trained will impact how often the checklists can be completed. In other words, decisions about how often to collect data using the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* should be made based on the capacity to administer, analyze, and use the information to inform plans to scale-up PS/RtI implementation.

Although schools and districts will need to make adjustments given available resources, general recommendations for completing the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* are provided below.

General recommendations are to have a trained observer complete the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* during a sample of scheduled Tier I and II focused data meetings. The number of meetings observed depends on the resources available and the total number of meetings scheduled. The occurrence of school-wide and small-group intervention data meetings can depend on the frequency of universal screenings and progress monitoring that occurs. For example, if a school collects universal screening data in reading three times a year, it is recommended that a sample of meetings is observed each time screening data are collected. See *Supplements*, page 141 for an example of how often Project PS/RtI Coaches were asked to complete the observation checklist.

## Technical Adequacy

### *Content Validity Evidence*

To inform development of the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist*, Project staff reviewed relevant literature, presentations, instruments and previous program evaluation projects to develop an item set that would be representative of the critical components of implementing PS/RtI practices during data meetings. Specifically, Project staff reviewed literature and publications related to problem-solving (e.g., Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Batsche et al., 2005) and systems change (e.g., Curtis, Castillo, & Cohen, 2008; Hall & Hord, 2006) to identify critical components of the problem-solving process (for more information, please see page 2 of this document) and important roles and responsibilities (for more information, please see page 127 of this document) that should be represented in meetings. Relevant information was identified, analyzed, and used to select those components that would be assessed by the instrument.

### *Inter-Rater Agreement*

Preliminary analyses of *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* data suggests that use of the instrument has resulted in consistent scoring across trained observers. Two observers independently completed the checklist for the same meeting on selected checklists and calculated inter-rater agreement estimates using the following formula: agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements. The average inter-rater agreement estimate derived from 40 independently observed data meetings during the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years was 95.22%.

## Scoring

### *Analysis of Responses to the Tier I and II Observation Checklist*

The Florida PS/RtI Project has primarily utilized two techniques when analyzing data for formative evaluation purposes. First, the mean rating for each item can be calculated to determine the average implementation level evident in data meetings observed. Second, the frequency of (i.e., frequency distribution) each response option selected (i.e., Absent and Present) by observers can be calculated for each checklist item.

Calculating item means provides an overall impression of the implementation level of problem solving steps. When calculating average implementation levels, a value of “0” should be used for items checked *absent* while a value of “1” should be used for items checked *present*. Calculating average implementation levels can be done at the domain and/or individual item levels. Examining implementation at the domain level allows educators to examine general patterns in (1) having key roles and responsibilities represented (personnel present); and implementing the components of (2) Problem Identification, (3) Problem Analysis, (4) Intervention Development/Support, and (5) Program Evaluation/RtI. A domain score for each of the five domains measured by the instrument may be computed for checklists completed by computing the sum of the ratings of the items that comprise the

**Content validity:** Content-related validity evidence refers to the extent to which the sample of items on an instrument is representative of the area of interest the instrument is designed to measure. In the context of the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist*, content-related validity evidence is based on expert judgment that the sample of items on the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* is representative of the critical components of problem solving at the Tier I and II levels.

For example, if an observer selected *Absent, Present, Present* when completing Items 10-12 that comprise the “Problem Identification” section, the values corresponding with those responses would be added together to obtain a total value of 2 (i.e.,  $0+1+1=2$ ). The total value of 2 would be divided by the number of items (3) to obtain the domain score (i.e.,  $2/3 = .67$ ). A domain score of .67 could be interpreted as the team implementing more of the components of Problem Identification than were missed (i.e., a score of .5 would represent half of the components within a domain implemented and a score of 1 would represent implementation of all of the components within a domain).

domain. These values can then be added together and divided by the number of items within the domain to **produce an average level of implementation for each domain**. The five domains and the items that comprise them are as follows:

- **Domain 1** (*Key Roles and Responsibilities; i.e., Personnel Present*): Items 1-9
- **Domain 2** (*Problem Identification*): Items 10-12
- **Domain 3** (*Problem Analysis*): Items 13-14
- **Domain 4** (*Intervention Development/Support*): Items 15a-16c
- **Domain 5** (*Program Evaluation/RtI*): Items 17-20.

Average levels of implementation also can be examined by item. Calculating the mean rating for each item within a domain allows stakeholders to identify the extent to which educators are implementing specific components of PS/RtI. This information can be used to identify specific steps of the process that may need to be addressed systematically (through professional development, policies and procedures, etc.) but does not provide information on the range of implementation levels.

Calculating the frequency of meetings in which PS/RtI practices were present or absent for an item, on the other hand, provides information on the range of staff implementation levels. This information can be used to determine what percentage of schools, grade levels or other units of analysis (e.g., districts, intermediate versus primary grade levels) implemented or did not implement components of PS/RtI. When making decisions about how to address implementation levels, information on the number of schools, grade levels, etc. implementing a particular component can help inform decisions regarding moving forward with implementation. For example, questions such as “Should we address implementation with a few schools versus all of them?” or “Are there particular steps that many schools struggle with?” might be more easily answered with frequency data.

It is recommended that key stakeholders analyze *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* data in ways that best inform the evaluation questions they are asking. The data collected from the instrument can be used to answer a number of broad and specific questions regarding the extent to which educators are implementing the PS/RtI model. To facilitate formative decision-making, stakeholders should consider aligning the analysis and display of the data with specific evaluation questions. For example, questions regarding general trends in implementation of the four problem-solving steps may best be answered by calculating and displaying domain scores. Questions about implementation of specific components of the problem solving process may best be answered by calculating and displaying the number of meetings at which the components were present. In other words, identifying which evaluation question(s) are currently being answered will guide how to analyze the data and communicate the information to facilitate decision making.

### **Technology Support**

School personnel should consider using district supported or commercially available technology resources to facilitate analyses of the data. Software and web-

based programs vary in terms of the extent to which they can support administration of an instrument (e.g., online administration) and automatic analysis of data, as well as how user-friendly they are. Decisions about what technology to use to facilitate analysis should be made based on available resources as well as the knowledge and skills possessed by those responsible for managing and analyzing data from the survey.

## Training Required

### *Training Recommended for Individuals Completing Observations Using the Tier I and II Observation Checklist*

Qualifications of the observer. Personnel in charge of conducting observations using the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* should have a thorough understanding of the PS/RtI model. If individuals with expertise in PS/RtI are not available, observers should receive thorough training in the PS/RtI model prior to being trained to use the checklist. Skills and experience in conducting structured observations are recommended but not required.

Content of the training. It is highly recommended that trainings on conducting observations using the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* include the following components:

- Theoretical background on the relationship between implementation integrity and desired outcomes
- Each item should be reviewed so that observers have a clear understanding of what is being measured. The *Item Scoring Description* located in *Supplements*, page 142 is a useful tool for providing observers with guidance on how to score each item.
- In addition to explaining the rationale for the instrument and what each item measures, trainings should include modeling, opportunities to practice, and feedback to participants. First, participants in the training should be provided the opportunity to watch a video recorded data meeting while a trained observer models completion of the checklist. The trained observer can pause the video frequently, indicating which items s/he is completing and why s/he checked absent or present for that item. Next, participants should be provided the opportunity to practice completing the measure independently while watching another recorded data meeting. Trained observers can choose to pause the video and ask participants how they scored certain items or allow the video to finish before reviewing. Participants and the trained observer should discuss how they scored the items and come to consensus regarding how to score those items on which disagreements occurred in the future. Finally, participants should complete the checklist independently on a third recorded data meeting. Following the completion of the video, participants should calculate inter-rater agreement with a partner by dividing the number of agreements by the number of agreements plus disagreements. It is recommended that 85% agreement be reached among participants before conducting observations independently.

- Finally, the training should include a review of the school, district, or other agencies' plan for conducting observations so that the participants can learn what observations they will be responsible for and ask questions about the plan.
- ***Training Suggested for Analyzing, Interpreting, and Disseminating Tier I and II Observation Checklist Results***

The knowledge, skills, and experience of educators in analyzing, interpreting, and using data for formative decision-making vary. If the stakeholders responsible for these activities possess the knowledge and skills required then training specific to the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* may not be necessary. However, should the stakeholders responsible for using the data lack any of the aforementioned skill sets, training and technical assistance is recommended. Topics on which support might be provided on are:

- Appropriate use of the checklist given its purpose and technical adequacy
- Guidelines for analyzing and displaying data derived from the instrument
- Guidelines for interpreting and disseminating the results

The contents of this manual provide information that can be used to train stakeholders on the aforementioned topics should it be necessary.

## **Interpretation and Use of the Data**

### ***Examination of Broad Domains***

When interpreting the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* data, it is recommended to start by examining the five broad domains measured by the checklist (i.e., roles and responsibilities represented [personnel present], Problem Identification, Problem Analysis, Intervention Development/Support, and Program Evaluation/RtI). Educators can examine graphically displayed data to evaluate trends in implementation levels in each domain measured. Each of the methodologies for scoring mentioned above (i.e., calculating average implementation levels at the domain and item levels and calculating the frequency/percent of specific components present measures at the item level) can be used to examine the broad domains. One methodology used frequently by Project staff when examining data from the *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* is to take note of the percent of components present within each domain. The percent of components within each domain present is the conceptual interpretation of the domain score (i.e., the formula described above for calculating average implementation at the domain level can be interpreted as the percent of components present within the domain). This type of visual analysis (an example of a graph used is provided below) allows educators to determine the extent to which the major steps of problem solving are occurring as well as whether important roles/responsibilities are represented at data meetings. This approach can be used to examine implementation levels for any given administration as well as to examine trends over time.

### *Identification of Specific Needs*

Each item within the domains also can be graphed to examine trends in which components tend to be implemented more or less frequently. Considerations when identifying which components are being implemented at relatively high versus low levels include what training educators have received and how long implementation has been occurring. Given that educators must possess the necessary skills to implement and that implementation takes time, key stakeholders will need to identify components of the process that require additional strategies to facilitate increased implementation versus allowing already existing plans (e.g., professional development to be delivered, pending procedure changes) the time to take effect. Barriers to implementing the problem-solving process with integrity may include systemic issues such as school policies that are inconsistent with PS/RtI practices, lack of time for meetings so that teams can engage in the problem-solving process, lack of professional development dedicated to the skills required, among others. Given the multiple interacting variables that impact implementation, it is important to consider all aspects of the system that contribute to or impede implementation when developing plans to address barriers.

Although conducting observations is a reliable method for examining implementation integrity, available resources may limit the extent to which they can be conducted. Given this reality as well as the importance of using multiple sources of data to address evaluation questions, it is recommended that data from observations be compared with other data/information on integrity (other tools for examining implementation fidelity are discussed elsewhere in this manual).

### *Data Dissemination to Stakeholders*

It is important that dissemination and examination of implementation integrity data among key stakeholders on implementation integrity be included in a plan to scale-up PS/RtI practices. It is recommended that these key stakeholders be identified and data be shared with them as quickly and frequently as possible following times when the checklist tends to be completed. This time line allows stakeholders such as SBLT members to discuss implementation levels suggested from the observation data, develop or alter implementation goals, and design strategies (e.g., professional development, access technology resources, develop procedures) to facilitate increased levels of integrity. DBLT members may also want access to data from schools to plan for professional development and other types of support provided at the district level. Additionally, SBLT and DBLT members may find it helpful to have a coach or facilitator discuss the data with members participating in meetings to facilitate interpretation and problem-solve barriers to implementation.

To facilitate discussions about implementation issues, one helpful strategy is to provide stakeholders with guiding questions. The use of guiding questions is designed to facilitate discussions about each school's implementation data, including potential strategies for increasing the use of PS/RtI practices. Listed below are examples of guiding questions used by the Florida PS/RtI Project to facilitate discussions regarding implementation integrity. These guiding questions were de-

signed to facilitate discussions about each school's data, including current level of problem-solving implementation and consistency between observation data and other implementation integrity measures (e.g., other data sources are discussed elsewhere in this manual). However, stakeholders can generate additional guiding questions to better meet the needs of their school.

- What are the patterns?
  - ♦ What patterns are evident among each of the individual items on the checklist and across all data sources?
  - ♦ What steps of the problem-solving process are occurring more frequently? Less frequently?
  - ♦ Are there any current indicators that show a zero or low level of implementation? Why?
  - ♦ Have these been targeted in the past?
    - Do barriers exist with consensus or infrastructure?
    - Other priorities?
    - Meetings not happening or focusing on implementation?
- How have you progressed in implementing the Problem-Solving Model with fidelity?
  - ♦ Looking across all fidelity measures (CCC, SAPSI, and Observations), what are the general levels of implementation? What are the general trends?
  - ♦ Do the data from the Critical Component Checklist and Observations support what is evident in the SAPSI items 22a-22i?
  - ♦ Are there discrepancies among the different sources of data with using the Problem-Solving model?
    - How might these discrepancies be interpreted?

### **School-Level Example of Tier I and II Observation Checklist Data**

The following example demonstrates how key stakeholders may use data derived from the Tier I and II Observation Checklist to inform PS/RtI implementation. Data from the Tier I and II Observation Checklist are displayed graphically. Following the graph, background information on the school's initiative and an explanation of what is represented on the graph is provided. Finally, ways in which the data were used by the school to monitor progress and identify needs is discussed. Importantly, although the example occurs at the school-level, the concepts discussed can be generalized to other units of analysis (e.g., district-level, state-level).

#### ***Context for the Data***

Tropical Elementary has been working toward implementing a PS/RtI model for the past two school years. The first year was focused on developing consensus among staff regarding implementing PS/RtI, addressing some infrastructure needs, and piloting implementation in kindergarten. During the second year, Tropical Elementary began implementing the PS/RtI model when addressing Tier I reading content in grades K-2. The SBLT at the school decided that they would need to assess implementation of the problem-solving process during Tier I focused

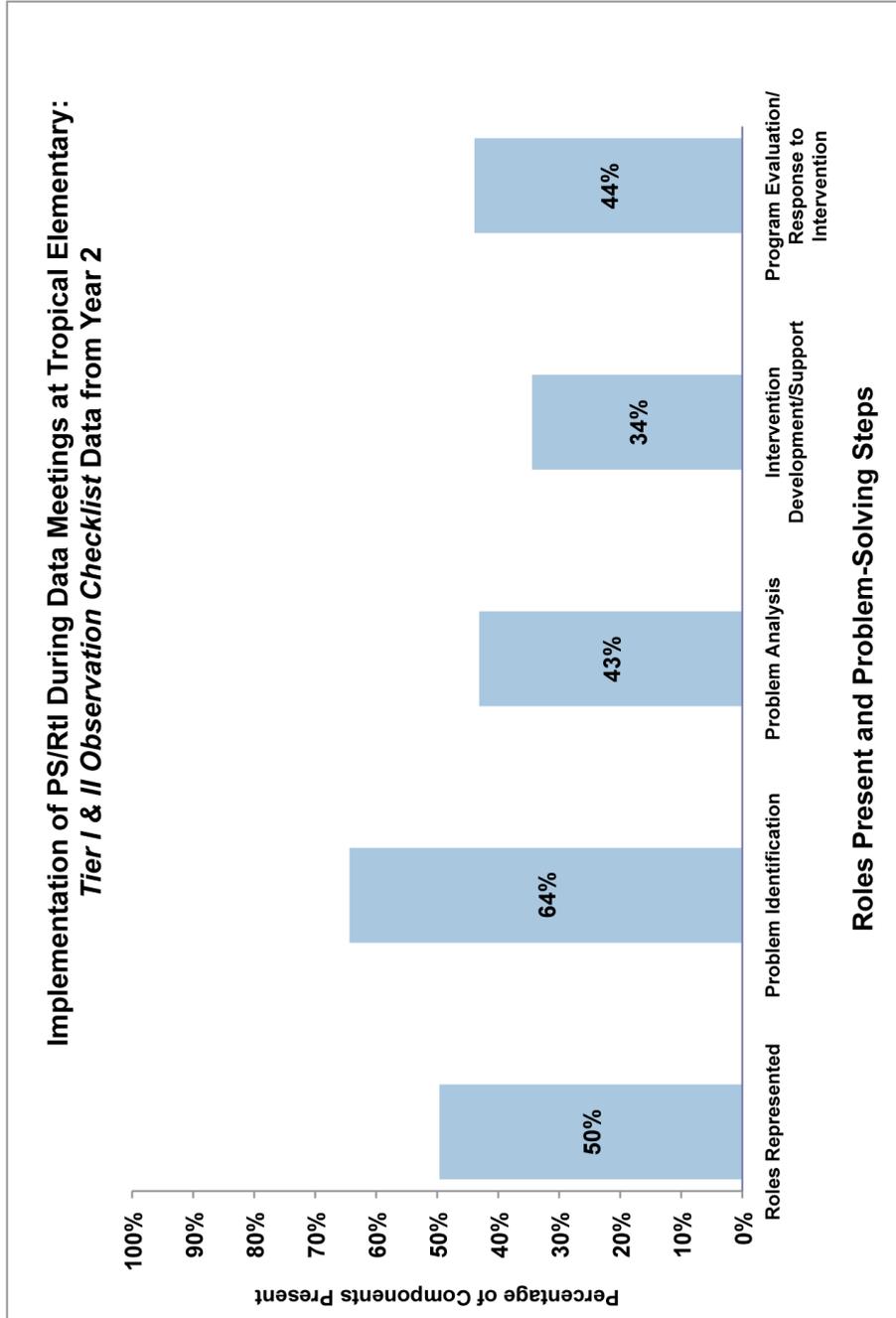


Figure 8. School-Level Example of Tiers I and II Observation Checklist Data Display

data meetings throughout the school year. The PS/RtI Coach serving Tropical Elementary scheduled and completed observations for the Fall kindergarten, first, and second grade-level team meetings during which core instructional issues were discussed. Following the observations, the PS/RtI Coach graphed the observation data for the SBLT at Tropical Elementary to identify steps of the problem solving process that were being implemented, what roles/responsibilities were represented, and to identify areas that needed additional support. In Figure 8 above, the bars represent the percentage of components marked as present across the checklists completed for grades K-2. The percentage was calculated by adding up the number of components present within each domain and dividing by the total number of possible components present within the domain.

### *Interpretation and Use of the Data*

Examination of broad Tier I and II Checklist domains. Immediately evident in Figure 8 above is that Tropical Elementary experienced some success implementing PS/RtI in grades K-2 but low levels of implementation occurred for the majority of steps. The SBLT and PS/RtI Coach discussed that Problem Identification was a relative strength (64% of components assessed were implemented across grades K-2) but that the data suggested that implementation needed to be addressed across all domains observed. With the exception of the Problem Identification step, 50% or less of the critical components of each step/domain were observed.

Identification of specific needs. The SBLT and Coach discussed many potential barriers to higher levels of implementation. After some deliberation, the team decided to investigate why only 50% of the roles and responsibilities were marked as present during data meetings. Specifically, the team decided to conduct an item-level analysis to identify which roles and responsibilities were present versus absent. Looking at the data by item demonstrated that an identified facilitator was present only 33% (i.e., one out of three meetings) of the time. Given the importance of facilitators to successful problem solving, this area was identified for further discussion. Additionally, the role of timekeeper was marked as absent during all meetings observed. This was also a concern as tasks were not completed during meetings. Upon discussing the reasons that these two responsibilities went mostly unfulfilled, the team discovered that they had not concretely assigned anyone to be a facilitator or timekeeper. In terms of the facilitator, the SBLT discussed that the school psychologist (also a member of the SBLT) had taken an active role in facilitating the one meeting she was able to attend; however, the grade-level meetings for two of the grade levels occurred on days that she served other schools. Based on these discussions, the principal agreed to work with the K-2 teachers to schedule the remaining Tier I focused data meetings for the school year on days the school psychologist was at the school. In addition, the PS/RtI Coach agreed to train another SBLT member to facilitate data meetings using the PS/RtI model. Regarding the role of timekeeper, the special education teacher on the SBLT volunteered to take on the role for future meetings as she attends all the primary grade-level team meetings. Finally, the SBLT developed a poster that included identifying who will be the facilitator and timekeeper to act as a reminder prior to starting team meetings.

Monitoring of implementation using *Tier I and II Observation Checklist* data over time. Following the Winter data meetings in grades K-2, the SBLT at Tropical Elementary and the PS/RtI Coach met to examine levels of PS/RtI implementation. A quick look at the results (not displayed here) indicated that 65% or greater of the components assessed by the checklist were observed for each domain. The team felt that these data were consistent with their perceptions of more fluidly engaging in problem-solving and agreed that the data represented progress. Furthermore, the team discussed that having an identified, trained facilitator and timekeeper at each meeting helped with implementation of the steps. Finally, SBLT members discussed remaining barriers to engaging in the process with higher levels of integrity and developed an action plan to address selected obstacles.

## Tiers I & II Observation Checklist Administration Summary

### Tiers I & II Observation Checklist Administration Summary 2009-10 School Year

This document is intended to provide you with a summary of the administration procedures for the *Tiers I & II Observation Checklist* during the 2009-10 school year. Below you will find information on what levels of implementation the instrument assesses, the methods used to assess implementation, how and when to complete the checklists, procedures for completing inter-rater agreement checks, and dates that the checklists are due to the Project. Please contact Jose Castillo ([castillo@coedu.usf.edu](mailto:castillo@coedu.usf.edu)) with any questions or issues related to the completion of this checklist.

*What is the purpose of this instrument?*

- Assesses implementation of a PS/RtI model at the Tier I (i.e., core instruction) and/or II (i.e., small groups) levels.
- Critical components of the problem solving process are used to determine how much of the process is being implemented and which components tend to relate to better student performance in schools

*For which schools, content areas, and grade levels is this instrument completed?*

- Completed for **pilot schools only**
- **Content areas** assessed can include reading, math, and/or behavior. For Project purposes, PS/RtI coaches should complete this instrument for only those content areas being targeted by the pilot schools
- **Grade levels** assessed can include K-5. For Project purposes, PS/RtI coaches should complete this instrument for only those grade levels being targeted by the pilot schools.

• *What methods are used to complete this instrument?*

- **Observation** is the primary method by which PS/RtI coaches complete this checklist.
- Coaches attend data meetings focusing on Tier I and/or II instruction/intervention. These meetings can include different compositions of school personnel (e.g., School Based Leadership Teams, Grade-Level Meetings) as long as the purpose of the meeting is to focus on Tier I and/or II instruction. This observation checklist should NOT be completed at meetings where individual student focused problem-solving is occurring.

*How do I score this instrument?*

- Each item is scored using a 2 point scale:
  - ♦ Absent
  - ♦ Present
- No scoring rubric accompanies this instrument. Because coaches complete the checklist in real time during a meeting, they need to be able to make quick decisions about whether a critical component was present or absent. To help prepare coaches prior to meetings and review what each critical component assesses, a review of each item is provided below.
- *When is this instrument completed?*
- This checklist is completed 3 times during the school year by dividing it into windows

- **Windows** represent a time period within which coaches should attend data meetings relevant to Tier I and/or II instruction for the target content areas and grade levels. Windows used for the Project are:
  - ♦ August-November
  - ♦ December-March
  - ♦ April-July

*How many of these checklists do I complete?*

- One checklist is completed per window per pilot school. Choose the primary content area focus for your pilot school and one target grade level. For whichever content area and grade level is selected, coaches will complete one checklist per window. For example, if a school is targeting reading and math in grades K and 1, a coach would need to choose either reading or math and either grades K or 1. If the coach chose math and kindergarten, then 1 checklist would be completed for that content area and grade level during each window.
- *How do we conduct inter-rater agreement for this checklist?*
- Inter-rater agreement scoring procedures must be used for the first meeting that a coach completes a checklist on during the first (i.e., August-November) and third (i.e., April-July) windows for one of his/her schools. If the coach and his/her inter-rater partner achieve 85% agreement, then the coach does not need to have another trained rater independently complete a checklist at the same meeting until the next window for which inter-rater agreement is required. If the coach and his/her partner do NOT achieve 85% agreement, then the coach needs to have a partner independently complete a checklist at the next meeting(s) at which s/he observes until 85% agreement is reached.
- Inter-rater agreement procedures should be applied at the start of the first (i.e., August-November) and third (i.e., April-July) windows for each coach until 85% agreement is reached. Inter-rater agreement checks are NOT required during the second window (i.e., December-March).
- Coaches or RCs identified as the inter-rater partner should complete the checklist at the same meeting independently. Following independent scoring, coaches should use the *Tiers I & II Observation Checklist Inter-Rater Agreement Protocol* to record agreements and disagreements for each item and calculate the overall percentage of agreement. This estimate will be used to determine if the 85% agreement criterion was reached to discontinue inter-rater agreement procedures until the next window for which inter-rater agreement checks are required.
- Coaches/RCs should then discuss any disagreements and attempt to achieve consensus regarding how to score the item in the future when similar situations arise.

*When are the checklists due to the Project?*

- The checklists are due approximately one week after the conclusion of a window.
- **Due dates** for each window's checklists are:
  - ♦ August-November: **December 18, 2009**
  - ♦ December-March: **April 9, 2010**
  - ♦ April-July: **July 31, 2010**

*Item Scoring Description*

Personnel Present

Items 1-9 are meant to assess what personnel and roles are represented at the data meetings. Because some of the personnel listed below may also serve as data coaches, facilitators, recorders, and/or timekeepers, one person at the meeting may result in present being checked for multiple items. However, to count an individual for more than one item, it must be clear to the coach that the individual is actually performing one of the four functions mentioned above in addition to his/her job title in the school.

1. **Administrator:** The Principal or Assistant Principal is present for the majority of the meeting.
2. **Classroom Teacher:** At least one classroom teacher is present for the majority of the meeting.
3. **Parent:** At least one parent is present for the majority of the meeting.
4. **Data Coach:** A person whose job it is to explain and/or address questions about data used is present for the majority of the meeting.
5. **Instructional Support:** A least one person is present who represents Instructional Support personnel (e.g., Reading Specialist/Coach, Title I teacher, Intervention teacher) for the majority of the meeting
6. **Special Education Teacher:** At least one special education teacher is present for the majority of the meeting.
7. **Facilitator:** A person whose role it is to facilitate the team’s progression through the problem solving process is present for the majority of the meeting.
8. **Recorder:** A person whose responsibility it is to write down the outcomes of the process is present for the majority of the meeting.
9. **Timekeeper:** A person whose responsibility it is to prompt participants at the meeting about how much time is left to problem solve is present for the majority of the meeting.

Problem Identification

10. **Data were used to determine the effectiveness of core instruction:** Quantifiable data were used to calculate the degree to which core instruction was effective.
11. **Decisions were made to modify core instruction and/or to develop supplemental (Tier II) interventions:** Decisions were made to modify core and/or supplemental instruction that were linked to the decision that was made about the effectiveness of core instruction.
12. **Universal screening (e.g., DIBELS, ODRs) or other data sources (e.g., district-wide assessments) were used to identify groups of students in need of supplemental intervention:** Data from assessments such as DIBELS or local benchmarking assessments were included in decisions to identify students in need of additional support.

Problem Analysis

13. **The school-based team generated hypotheses to identify potential reasons for students not meeting benchmarks:** Potential reasons for students not meeting benchmarks were discussed prior to developing an intervention plan.
14. **Data were used to determine viable or active hypotheses for why students were not attaining benchmarks:** RIOT (Review, Interview, Observe, Test) procedures were used to determine which reasons discussed are the most likely barriers to students attaining benchmarks.

Intervention Development & Implementation

**15. Modifications were made to core instruction**

- a. **A plan for implementation of modifications to core instruction was documented:** A concrete plan for making modifications to core instruction was developed during the meeting (must include who, what, and when).
  - b. **Support for implementation of modifications to core instruction was documented:** A concrete plan for providing support to the individual(s) making modifications to core instruction was developed during the meeting (must include who, what, and when).
  - c. **Documentation of implementation of modifications to core instruction was provided:** Documentation of the degree to which the modifications to core instruction were implemented as intended was provided during the meeting.
16. Supplemental (Tier II) instruction was developed or modified
- a. **A plan for implementation of supplemental instruction was documented:** A concrete plan for developing or making modifications to supplemental instruction was developed during the meeting (must include who, what, and when).
  - b. **Support for implementation of supplemental instruction was documented:** A concrete plan for providing support to the individual(s) developing or making modifications to supplemental instruction was developed during the meeting (must include who, what, and when).
  - c. **Documentation of implementation of supplemental instruction was provided:** Documentation of the degree to which the supplemental instruction plan was implemented as intended was provided during the meeting.

Program Evaluation/RtI

17. **Criteria for positive response to intervention were defined:** A quantifiable amount (e.g., 1.5 words per week, jump from 60 to 70% of comprehension questions correct, 65% meeting benchmarks to 80% meeting benchmarks) that the students would have improve for the response to be considered positive is decided upon by the team.
18. **Progress monitoring and/or universal screening data were collected/scheduled:** Progress monitoring and/or universal screening data (universal screening data scheduled previously counts for this item) were collected or scheduled to examine student RtI
19. **A decision regarding student RtI was documented:** A decision regarding how well the students responded to instruction/intervention was reached by the team.
20. **A plan for continuing, modifying, or terminating the intervention plan was provided:** A concrete decision regarding whether to continue, modify, or stop the intervention plan was reached by the team.

## Blank Tiers I & II Observation Checklist

Problem Solving/Response to Intervention  
 Developed by the Florida PS/RtI Statewide Project — <http://floridarti.usf.edu>

Observation Checklist

### Tiers I & II Observation Checklist

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Content Area:  Reading  Math  Behavior

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Prior to the Problem-Solving Team/Data meeting, check whether each of the personnel identified in items 1-9 were present or absent. For items 10-20, please check whether the critical component of problem-solving/Response to Intervention was present or absent during the Problem-Solving Team/Data meeting. This form should only be used for problem solving/data meetings focusing on Tier I and/or II issues.

| Critical Component   | Present | Absent | Evidence/Notes |
|--|---------|--------|----------------|
| <b>Personnel Present</b>   |         |        |                |
| 1. Administrator   |         |        |                |
| 2. Classroom Teacher   |         |        |                |
| 3. Parent  |         |        |                |
| 4. Data Coach  |         |        |                |
| 5. Instructional Support (e.g., Reading Coach)   |         |        |                |
| 6. Special Education Teacher   |         |        |                |
| 7. Facilitator   |         |        |                |
| 8. Recorder (i.e., Notetaker)  |         |        |                |
| 9. Timekeeper  |         |        |                |
| <b>Problem Identification</b>  |         |        |                |
| 10. Data were used to determine the effectiveness of core instruction  |         |        |                |
| 11. Decisions were made to modify core instruction and/or to develop supplemental (Tier II) interventions  |         |        |                |
| 12. Universal screening (e.g., DIBELS, ODRs) or other data sources (e.g., district-wide assessments) were used to identify groups of students in need of supplemental intervention |         |        |                |
| <b>Problem Analysis</b>  |         |        |                |
| 13. The school-based team generated hypotheses to identify potential reasons for students not meeting benchmarks   |         |        |                |
| 14. Data were used to determine viable or active hypotheses for why students were not attaining benchmarks   |         |        |                |
| <b>Intervention Development/Support</b>  |         |        |                |
| 15. Modifications were made to core instruction<br>(Note: Circle N/A under the Evidence/Notes column for a-c if a defensible decision was made to NOT modify core instruction)     |         |        |                |

Problem Solving/Response to Intervention  
 Developed by the Florida PS/RtI Statewide Project — <http://floridarti.usf.edu>

Observation Checklist

| Critical Component  | Present | Absent | Evidence/Notes |
|---|---------|--------|----------------|
| a. A plan for implementation of modifications to core instruction was documented  |         |        | N/A            |
| b. Support for implementation of modifications to core instruction was documented   |         |        | N/A            |
| c. Documentation of implementation of modifications to core instruction was provided  |         |        | N/A            |
| 16. Supplemental (Tier II) instruction was developed or modified ( <b>Note: Circle N/A under the Evidence/Notes column for a-c if a defensible decision was made to NOT modify supplemental instruction</b> ) |         |        |                |
| a. A plan for implementation of supplemental instruction was documented   |         |        | N/A            |
| b. Support for implementation of supplemental instruction was documented  |         |        | N/A            |
| c. Documentation of implementation of supplemental instruction was provided   |         |        | N/A            |
| Program Evaluation/RtI  |         |        |                |
| 17. Criteria for positive response to intervention were defined   |         |        |                |
| 18. Progress monitoring and/or universal screening data were collected/scheduled  |         |        |                |
| 19. A decision regarding student RtI was documented   |         |        |                |
| 20. A plan for continuing, modifying, or terminating the intervention plan was provided   |         |        |                |

**Additional Comments:**

---



---



---



---



---