

# **Building Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading Success**

*A workshop by Stephanie Stollar, Ph.D.*

## **VIEWING GUIDE**



# Workshop Recording and Materials

## Part 1

- Introduction
- Definition of MTSS
- Research Findings
  - Reading Isn't Natural
  - The Simple View of Reading
  - Most Reading Problems Can Be Prevented
  - Explicit Instruction is More Effective
- Structures and Systems: MTSS



## Part 2

- Components of MTSS
  - Assessment System
  - Tiered Instruction
  - Teaming, Leadership and Collaborative Problem-Solving
  - Professional Learning



## Session Materials

- Slides, handouts, and worksheets can be found at this link



# Introduction (6:02)

**"MTSS is the framework through which we implement what is known in the reading research."**

Dr. Stephanie Stollar is an assistant professor of Reading Science at Mount St. Joseph University, the founder of the Reading Science Academy, and a founding member of an alliance for supporting reading science in higher education.

Dr. Stollar has previously worked as an educational consultant, school psychologist, and Vice President of Acadience Learning Inc. She is a seasoned expert in structuring systems to allow for the prevention of reading difficulties.

This guide is designed to support **principals, vice-principals, and other educational leaders** to learn more about the basics of reading science. We have developed discussion prompts and brief exercises to support leaders as they watch recordings from Dr. Stollar. These activities can be done individually or with a team. We have provided approximate timestamps for each section and, where applicable, have linked to handouts or extension documents.



# Part 1: Defining MTSS (13:35)

Dr. Stollar outlines the underlying assumptions of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework.

**Pause and consider:** how do these assumptions align with your **core beliefs** as an educator?

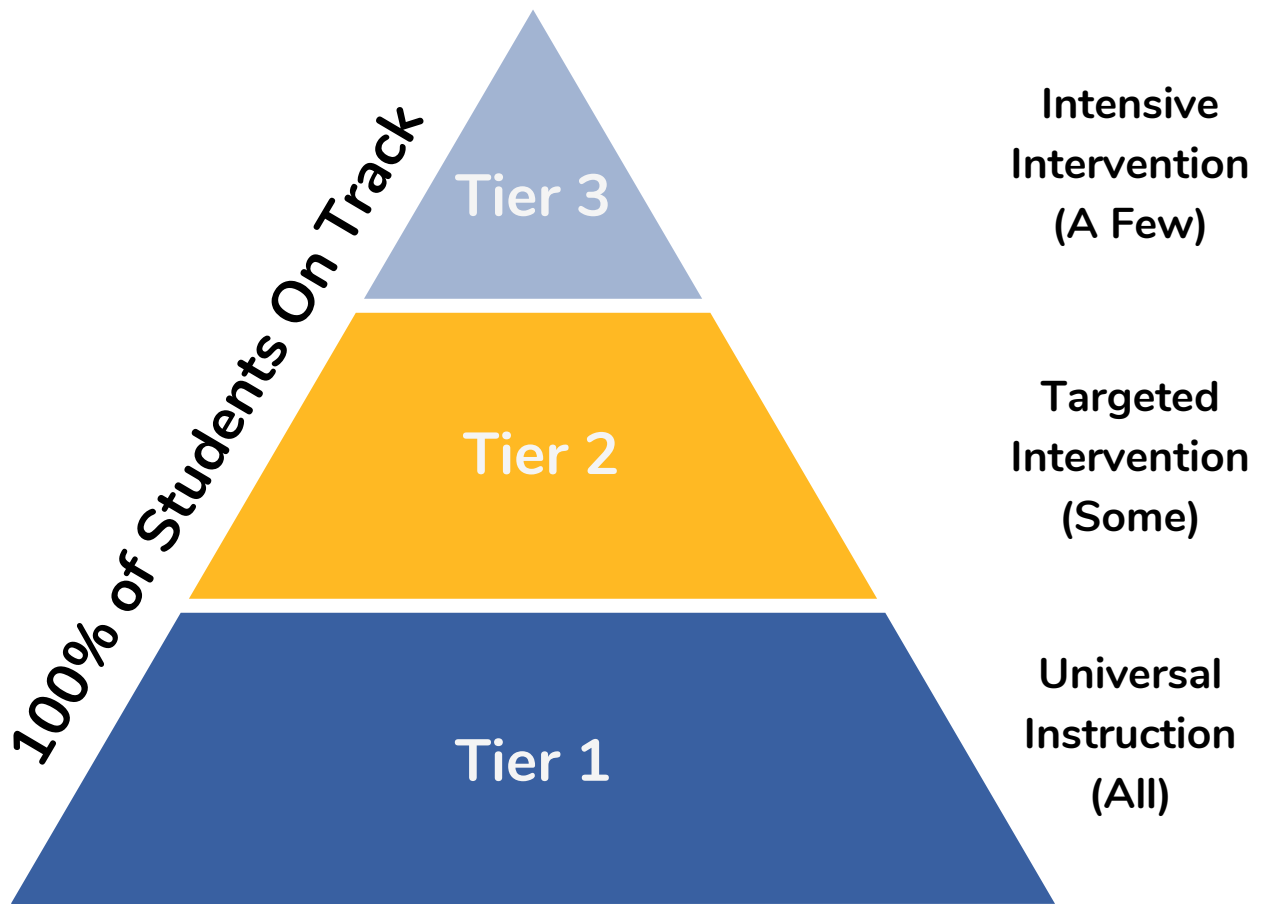
Explicit instruction often uses examples and non-examples. Dr. Stollar gives examples and non-examples of MTSS by highlighting differences from business as usual.

**Pause and consider:** Looking at the characteristics of the traditional model of service delivery, what is working in your system? What are the pain points? How do her comments on the limits of a referral system resonate with you?

"I knew from my work in early childhood that prevention was very possible, and it was powerful."



# Part 1: Defining MTSS (34:56)



Dr. Stollar introduces the triangle graphic that will be a common thread across the workshop. Have you seen a similar model before? Is the tiered approach a feature of any of your board's policy documents?

Tiered instruction originated from a public health model. Does this enhance your understanding of the model?

"If we want to improve student reading outcomes, we need to organize our school systems differently. That's what MTSS is all about."



# Part 1: Research Findings (42:30)

Dr. Stollar summarizes broad sets of research findings around reading development and instruction.

As you listen to these key findings, consider pausing and recording any thoughts, questions, or learnings.

**1. Reading Isn't Natural**

**2. Simple View of Reading**

**3. Prevention**

**4. Explicit Instruction**

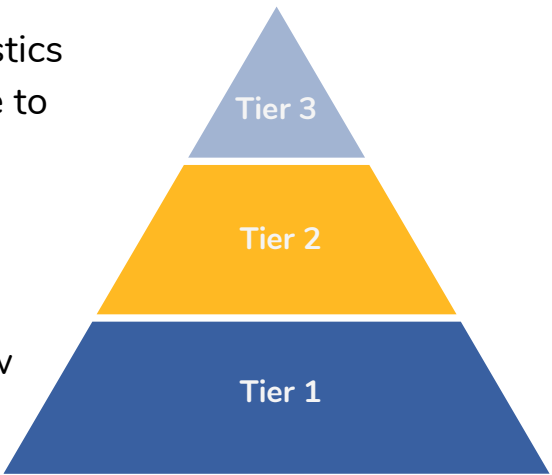


# Part 1: Tiered Instruction (1:24:56)

## "Tier 1 instruction is risk reduction."

Dr. Stollar walks through different characteristics of each tier of instructional intensity. Feel free to pause and use this organizer to collect key details on tiered instruction.

What are the goals of this tier? What does it look like? Who gives it? Who receives it? How long and when does this happen?



	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Why?			
What?			
Who?			
When?			



# Tiered Instruction: Your System's Needs

Look at page 3 and 4 of the [MTSS Implementation Guide](#). Complete each section, assessing the different components of each tier of instruction in your school or board. Is each element in place, or not yet?

Record some key conclusions at each tier:

**1. Tier 1:**

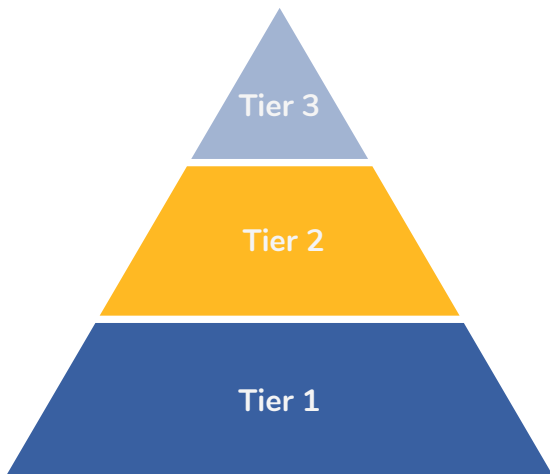
**2. Tier 2:**

**3. Tier 3:**





## Part 2: Core Components (1:58)



Dr. Stollar extends our understanding of tiered instruction by highlighting additional system elements that play a key role in MTSS.

**Pause and consider:** what is your current level of knowledge of these components? What questions do you have?

Core Component	My Current Level of Knowledge	My Questions
Assessment System		
Tiered Instruction		
Collaborative Problem-Solving, Leadership, and Teaming		
Professional Development		

"Four elements of your system that need your attention."



# Part 2: Assessment System (3:25)

A school-wide assessment system is at the heart of a multi-tiered system of supports. As Dr. Stollar walks through the different purposes for assessment in an early reading program, capture key elements of each purpose in this table.

	Screening	Diagnostic	Progress Monitoring	Outcome Evaluation
Who?				
What?				
When?				
Why?				



# Assessment: Your System's Needs

Look at the [Building an Assessment System to Support MTSS](#) handout. Complete each section, considering the different components of purpose for in your school or board. Is each element in place, or not yet?

Record some key conclusions for each purpose:

## 1. Universal Screening:

## 2. Diagnostic Assessment

## 3. Progress Monitoring:



## Part 2: Elements of Effective Tiered Instruction (1:07:11)

Dr. Stollar highlights some considerations for optimizing instruction in Tier 1. Optimizing Tier 1, or **universal instruction**, is a powerful method to support all students, either directly, or indirectly through reducing risk and freeing up intervention resources.

Take a moment to reflect on some of the guiding questions below.

**01**

### **Schedule**

How can we prioritize one grade level in the schedule?  
What could this look like?

**02**

### **Differentiation at Tier 1**

A common misconception is that Tier 1 instruction is whole group. How can we use screening data to differentiate core Tier 1 instruction?

**03**

### **Stations or Centres**

Students should not learn new content or skills at centres.  
How can we optimize centre activities to give students purposeful practice?

**04**

### **Walk to Read**

Can we consider piloting a walk to read model, perhaps even on a small scale with two classrooms? What could this look like?



## Part 2: Buyer Beware! (1:38:12)

Dr. Stollar gives a clear caution: the first step toward reading science in many systems involves purchasing resources. Unfortunately, this can backfire. Dr. Stollar frames the first key priority: **using good screening data to understand the needs of the system.**

**"The more you know, the better selection you are going to make in a program."**

Take a look at the [Proposed Sequence for Implementing MTSS](#) handout. Consider: where does your system fall on the implementation sequence? What are your next steps?

### **1. Current Goals for My System:**

### **2. Next Steps for My System:**



# Part 2: Leadership and Teams (1:44:14)

MTSS is so much more than just tiered instruction. Dr. Stollar highlights the different teaming groups who use collaborative problem solving within an MTSS.

Take a look at page 1 of the [MTSS Implementation Guide](#) handout. Consider: which teams are in place in your system? How do they communicate?

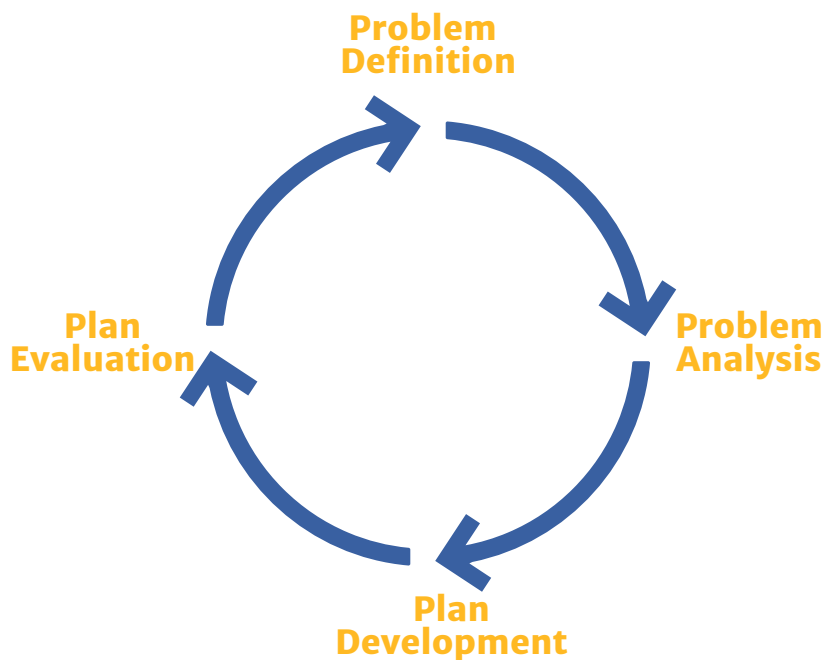
## 1. Teaming: Strengths

## 2. Teaming: Areas for Growth



# Collaborative Problem Solving

This is a process used to make decisions at all levels: student, grade, school, and board. High-quality data (e.g. from universal screening) are used to support collaborative problem solving and data-based decision-making.



**"We're going to make choices about policy, funding, professional learning, staffing, and instruction based on the needs of our students: data-based decision-making."**

We don't just problem-solve at the individual student level. To support improved system-wide outcome, we need to apply this process to **broader levels of the system.**

Take a look at the [Student Problem Solving Form](#), and the [System Problem Solving Form](#).

Is this process familiar to you, or is it newer? How do you support leaders in your system to make decisions, either about individual students or systems? Can you incorporate a collaborative problem-solving approach to make decisions?

Dr. Stollar highlights the time-intensive nature of individual student problem-solving, and points to the importance of optimizing system-wide instruction. Does this resonate with you?



# Challenge, Choose, Collaborate!

Based on this learning experience, engage with the questions below by reflecting on content that is **challenging** your thinking, **choosing** at least one thing you would like to try, and deciding how you will **collaborate** with someone else to assist in implementation.

Category	Response	Action Required
<b>Challenge</b> What is an idea or concept explored today that is <b>challenging</b> your thinking?  What is a challenge you anticipate facing?		
<b>Challenge</b> Which idea or practice will you <b>choose</b> to try from today's discussion?  Which shift in mindset will you choose to further explore?		
<b>Collaborate</b> Who will you <b>collaborate</b> with to make the implementation of an idea or practice seamless and effective?  What do you need to make this collaboration meaningful?		

