SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

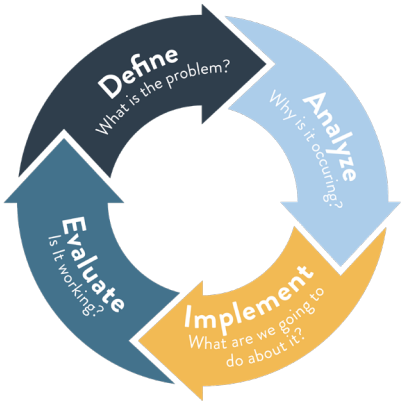
Four-Step Problem-Solving Protocol

The Four-Step Problem-Solving Process is the common data-based problem-solving model named in South Carolina's MTSS Framework and Guidance Document.

"The State Department of Education shall establish and provide training and support for a statewide MTSS framework that must contain a common data-based problem-solving model, on-going student assessment, and a layered continuum of supports using evidence-based practices." (Section 59-33-520 in Act 213 of 2018)

Four-Step Problem-Solving Model:

- **Define** the Problem: What is the problem?
- **Analyze** the Problem: Why is it occurring?
- **Implement** a Plan: What are we going to do about it?
- **Evaluate** the Effectiveness of the Instruction/Intervention: Is it working?



Four-Step Problem-Solving Protocol

The Four-Step Problem-Solving Protocol is a workflow that guides MTSS Leadership Teams through the problem-solving process. The protocol includes defining problems discovered when reviewing data, analyzing why problems are occurring, selecting and implementing intentional instruction/intervention, and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan in improving outcomes in data.

Materials to Gather in Advance

To keep the process efficient and effective, members should arrive prepared and focused for each step.

- **Step 1 Define:** Relevant data should be gathered ***prior to the meeting*** and accessible to all members during the meeting.
- **Step 2 Analyze:** The ICEL/RIOT Matrix tool and summarized record of review/interview/observation/test information should be accessible to all members prior to the meeting.
- **Step 3 Implement:** A menu of evidence-based interventions and progress-monitoring tools should be accessible to all members for decision making.
- **Step 4 Evaluate:** All progress monitoring data should be completed and shared with the team prior to the meeting. District/School decision trees should be accessible to all members.

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Four-Step Problem-Solving Protocol Worksheet

Record the following information at the initiation of the data-based problem-solving process.

Meeting Information			
School/Grade Level			
Meeting Requested By			
Meeting Date(s)			
Focus (class/group/individual)			
Facilitator			
Note-Taker			
Time-Keeper			
Attendees (names/roles)			

Step 1: Define the Problem	
Identify the initial concern. The concern should be based on data. (List data type and source.)	
Using data, what is the current level of performance?	
Using data, what is the grade level expectation (benchmark)?	
How are classroom peers performing?	
What is the gap between current performance and benchmark data?	
State your goal.	

Step 2: Analyze the Problem	
Generate multiple hypotheses addressing why the gap exists. Decide if each hypothesis is linked to instruction, curriculum, the environment, or the learner. Predict a desired outcome if an intentional action occurs. Collect relevant information (RIOT). Examine all information collected to determine if each hypothesis is valid.	
State your hypothesis for why the gap exists.	The gap exists because…

Step 2: Analyze the Problem	
Does this hypothesis imply that the gap exists because of a problem with instruction, curriculum, the environment, or the learner?	
Predict what the outcome will be if this action occurs.	If/when..., then...
After examining (or collecting) evidence from a broad range of information sources (RIOT), describe findings that confirm or rule out this hypothesis.	
Is this hypothesis valid?	Yes/No
State your hypothesis for why the gap exists.	The gap exists because...
Does this hypothesis imply that the gap exists because of a problem with instruction, curriculum, the environment, or the learner?	
Predict what the outcome will be if this action occurs.	If/when..., then...
After examining (or collecting) evidence from a broad range of information sources (RIOT), describe findings that confirm or rule out this hypothesis.	
Is this hypothesis valid?	Yes/No

Step 3: Implement a Plan	
Describe the recommended intervention to close the gap.	
What resources are needed to implement the intervention?	
Is this intervention Tier 1 (entire class need), 2 (small group need), or 3 (need for a few students)?	
Who will deliver the intervention? (name/role)	

Step 3: Implement a Plan	
Describe the implementation. Include frequency, duration, and location.	The instruction/intervention will occur for ___ weeks. There will be ___ sessions per week, and each session will be ___ minutes long. This will occur in (location) _____.
What progress monitoring tool will be used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention?	
How often will progress monitoring occur? (weekly, every two weeks, monthly, etc.) Who is responsible for progress monitoring?	
Where/when will progress monitoring data be collected?	
Schedule a date to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.	Date:

Step 4: Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Intervention	
Date of review/evaluation	
Is the response to the intervention positive, questionable, or poor?	
If **POSITIVE**, determine if support should continue, the goal should be increased, or the support should fade. Share comments and action steps.	
If **QUESTIONABLE**, determine is the intervention was implemented as planned. (Yes/No) **If yes,** should intervention intensity be increased? **If no,** what strategies will occur to ensure implementation? Share comments and action steps.	

Step 4: Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Intervention	
If **POOR**, determine is the intervention was implemented as planned. (Yes/No) **If yes,** was the intervention selected aligned to the validated hypothesis? Are there other hypotheses to consider? Was the problem identified correctly? **If no,** what strategies will occur to ensure implementation? Share comments and action steps.	
What is the outcome of the data-based problem-solving process? What are the next steps?	

References:

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Wright, J. (2010). The RIOT/ICEL Matrix: Organizing Data to Answer Questions About Student Academic Performance & Behavior. Retrieved from: https://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/rti_riot_icel_data_collection.pdf