

ISA/RtI Professional Development The Role and Characteristics of Teacher Leaders

The teacher leaders serve a critical role, both as a support to building-level personnel as they work to implement new instructional approaches and as their building's main contact with the Study Center to facilitate extended discussion about the implementation of the ISA in an RtI context. A literacy coach or instructional leader is often the logical choice for the role of teacher leader, but not all schools have such positions. Some schools choose to have more than one teacher leader; this distributes the responsibility a bit and allows schools to draw upon the varied talents of their personnel. We are frequently asked about the role of the teacher leader and about the qualifications we feel a teacher leader should have. To a certain extent, these things will vary by district and building, and it is not possible for us to say, specifically, how the teacher leader role will play out in every circumstance. We can share a general set of role expectations however, as well as a sense of the personal and professional characteristics that effective teacher leaders embody.

Teacher leaders will be expected to:

- Participate in 40 hours of professional development related to the ISA and RtI
- Facilitate a web-based book study for classroom and intervention teachers, specialists, and/or administrators in their schools. All materials and resources, including access to the ISA website, will be provided. Book study sessions will be scheduled at the convenience of school personnel.
 - 32-40 hours of actual book study time (during which the teacher leader(s) will serve as facilitator).
 - Preparation time prior to each book study session will vary greatly, depending upon the needs/interests of the group, the facilitators' background in literacy and comfort level with the content, and the number of facilitators in the group.
- Support teachers as they begin to implement ISA-based instruction in their classrooms
 - (Optional) Participate in online meetings with Center staff to reflect on the book study sessions, to hone their expertise, and to explore questions regarding teachers' implementation of ISA-based instruction.

As to the desirable characteristics of teacher leader/facilitators, this is not something that we have specifically researched – but we can make suggestions based on anecdotal evidence. In selecting facilitators we'd look for people who:

- Have experience teaching early literacy learners and who will be teaching such children during the course of the professional development offering
- Are respected and trusted by colleagues
- Have good interpersonal skills – and would be good collaborators
- Are reasonably comfortable with technology
- Have a good sense of humor
- Are reflective about and willing to share their experiences and changes in thinking as they adopt/implement new instructional practices
- Are organized
- Have potential as cheerleaders – enthusiasm for new initiatives is, of course, important

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