



Building Success with MTSS

Facilitated Virtual Learning Institute | 45 continuing education hours

September 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026

Course Designer & Facilitator



Katie Novak, Ed.D.

<https://bit.ly/m/NovakEducation>

Katie Novak, Ed.D. is the Founder and Executive Director of Novak Education, is an internationally renowned education consultant, a practicing leader in education, the host of [The Education Table Podcast](#), and [has authored 16 books](#), published by CAST Professional Publishing, Corwin, Routledge and IMPress. Katie designs and presents workshops both nationally and internationally focusing on the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and universally designed leadership. With a global reach spanning 33 states and 28 countries, Novak's guidance has significantly shaped educational practices on an international scale.

Course Description

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is essential to building an inclusive and equitable school system. A strong MTSS requires us to consider how we lead, share responsibility, collaborate, build community, provide professional learning, choose high-quality curriculum, allocate resources, and more. It also requires us to provide an accessible Tier 1 education for all learners. Simply put, we cannot “intervention” our way out of a weak Tier 1 foundation. Through this course, we will explore what MTSS is and explore concrete action steps that can transform systems that do not serve our educators or our learners. We will explore how to create a vision and theory of action to drive MTSS, and dive into scheduling, professional learning, tiered interventions, and data-based decision-making as means for improving the outcomes of our learners.

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- Explore and understand what MTSS is and how it is different from RTI
- Dive into the system drivers that build multi-tiered system of support
- Examine current systems to determine what components of an MTSS are in place and what is not yet in place
- Create visions, theories of actions, and planning models to support both students and educator learning
- Unpack current systems and learn best practices for becoming more equitable and inclusive in our learning environments

Text

In Support of Students: A Leader's Guide to Equitable MTSS. Novak, Katie; Rodriguez, Kristan. Wiley. 2023

Available in audiobook, paperback, or ebook. For group rates, contact Victoria Finley - vfinley@wiley.com.

All other materials are freely linked within the course.

Course Requirements

This course requires teams to be engaged and prepared for each and every assignment. The course will be offered online yet teams and individuals will have the opportunity to communicate with fellow participants and the instructor through Canvas discussion boards as well as through monthly synchronous sessions. Teams will be expected to collaborate on projects - **only one project per team will be reviewed and graded**. Teams will be expected to pass in work by the due date, but will also be given the opportunity to revise and improve upon their work (just as students in their class should be given the same respect using the UDL framework).

All work in this course will be asynchronous plus each team will receive a 1-hr live consulting session with Dr. Katie Novak at a time of their choosing (may be split into two 30-minute sessions).




Assignment Submission

Ensure that all work is completed within the month it is assigned. Since assignments build on each other, it is critical for teams to make time each month to complete each module. While not everyone needs to explore every resource, there should be a requirement for each team member to explore resources as assigned, attend team meetings, and contribute to the collective artifact.

Evaluation & Grading Policy



Assignments/Discussions will be graded based upon the following rubric:



Assignments will be an opportunity to bring together everything you have learned within a module. **Create** an amazing product or post to share with your **network**! Take a **risk** and share your learning in a new way - lots of options and choices available! I will provide feedback on a single-point rubric. Learn more about [universally designed rubrics here](#).

 Killing it! Evidence of going above and beyond answering the essential question	 You Got This! The target/goal criteria	 Almost There! Evidence of working toward answering the essential question
	Product is an original creation that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">models an understanding of MTSS and UDL	


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly cites evidence from the module so it's clear how the module and live sessions impacted learning about MTSS and district/school practices is clearly organized and accessible to multiple stakeholders 	
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Course Modules


MODULE	Topics
	<p>Module 1: What is MTSS?</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the components of a multi-tiered system of support Learn how MTSS and RTI are different Evaluate what components of an MTSS are currently in place in your system <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What is a multi-tiered system of support and what components are already in place in our system?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore resources from each module lesson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 1: What is MTSS? Lesson 2: How are MTSS and RTI Different Lesson 3: UDL and Tiered Supports Assignment: Complete the MTSS Self-Assessment as a district team.
	<p>Module 2: Creating a Vision for Inclusive and Equitable Practice</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a vision and theory of action to guide implementation of MTSS in your district. <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How can a district-wide vision and theory of action help guide the implementation of MTSS?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore resources from each module lesson

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Inclusive Practice for Equity ○ Lesson 2: Communicating High Expectations for All ○ Lesson 3: Vision Statements and Theories of Action to Guide the Work ● Assignment: Create a district-wide vision statement and theory of action grounded in inclusive and equitable practice.
	<p>Module 3: MTSS Action Planning</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review your existing Action Plan through the lens of MTSS and begin incorporating changes that can help transform your system. ● Set expectations for implementation of MTSS by exploring implementation science <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Does our existing action plan meet the needs of all learners? How can we begin to incorporate systems changes to ensure all learners have equitable access to high-quality grade-level learning?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each lesson to deepen your learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Implementation Science and Planning ○ Lesson 2: Technical vs Adaptive Changes ○ Lesson 3: Strategic Planning for Inclusion & Equity ● Assignment: Complete an action plan review protocol.
	<p>Module 4: Safe & Supportive Learning Environments for All</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore how different leadership styles influence change and outcomes. ● Understand why it is important to create an adult learning culture in your district and schools. ● Assess the current level of staff buy-in for the MTSS plan and evaluate the adult learning culture within the district. Develop action steps or strategies to enhance these areas based on findings. <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How can we effectively assess and improve staff buy-in and the adult learning culture to support the successful implementation of MTSS?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each lesson to deepen your learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Effective Leadership Practices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 2: Creating a Culture of Adult Learning ○ Lesson 3: Building Buy-In and Accountability ● ACTIVITY: Conduct a self-assessment to evaluate the current level of staff buy-in for the MTSS plan and the state of the adult learning culture within the district. This assessment will involve some combination of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus Groups: Organize small group discussions with staff members to gather qualitative insights on their perceptions and attitudes towards the MTSS plan and the district's adult learning culture. ● Interviews: Conduct individual interviews with key stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, and support staff, to obtain in-depth feedback on areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. ● Surveys: Develop and distribute surveys to collect quantitative data from a broader group of staff members on their level of buy-in and their experiences with the adult learning culture. <p>Based on the findings, develop specific action steps and strategies to enhance staff buy-in and improve the adult learning culture, supporting the successful implementation of your MTSS plan.</p>
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	<p>Module 5: Unpacking Leadership Drivers</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the importance of shared responsibility & collaboration. ● Discuss the impact of resource allocation on MTSS ● Explore why student, family and community engagement are critical to success <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How can I leverage my resources to ensure that students have access to equitable learning environments?</i> ● <i>What can I do to ensure that the system is built with the people it serves at the forefront?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each lesson to deepen your learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Shared Responsibility & Collaboration ○ Lesson 2: Resource Allocation ○ Lesson 3: Student, Family, and Community Engagement ● Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a survey tool to help gather input from students, community members, or families that will help inform your strategic planning. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine your school schedule and determine what changes you could implement in order to lead to more inclusion and equity in your district.
	<p>Module 6: Unpacking Competency Drivers</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand how to support teachers in becoming more inclusive and equitable in their learning design and instruction? <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How can we design professional learning, and create feedback loops, so that teachers can effectively implement new practices that are more inclusive and equitable?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each section lesson to deepen your learning (2-3 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Staffing Considerations ○ Lesson 2: Professional Development & Faculty Meetings ○ Lesson 3: Feedback & Evaluation ● Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a professional learning plan that will help build internal capacity for Universal Design for Learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OR ○ Create an observation and feedback tool you can use to help teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses and how they can improve their practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OR ○ Create a staff recruitment and onboarding plan to ensure that new staff members have the skills necessary to create equitable and inclusive learning environments.
	<p>Module 7: Unpacking Implementation Drivers</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dive into tiered interventions for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning ● Understand how we can use small and big data to guide decision-making both inside and outside the classroom ● Learn how to identify high-quality curriculum and instruction <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How do implementation drivers help create a system that supports inclusive and equitable practice for all learners?</i> <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each section lesson to deepen your learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1: Evidence-Based Practices for Tiered Interventions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 2: Implementation Fidelity & Progress Monitoring ○ Lesson 3: Data-Based Decision Making ○ Lesson 4: Choosing High-Quality Curriculum ● Take the module assessment to assess what you learned and to move on to the next module. ● Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft a data-cycle and review plan that you can use to provide tiered interventions to struggling learners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OR ○ Conduct a curriculum review for one grade level or subject area and provide a reflection of what you learned.
	<p>Module 8: Looking Forward to Next Year</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reassess where you are as a district in terms of MTSS implementation ● Begin planning for next year by building upon the work created throughout this course <p>Essential Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can we communicate our growth and set intentions for continued improvement through reflection and ongoing feedback loops? <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore 2-3 resources from each section lesson to deepen your learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson 1 - The Power of Reflection ○ Lesson 2 - Sharing successes and next steps ● Assignment: Reflect as a team on what you learned this year. Think about where you started and where you ended up. What are you proud of? What are your next steps? Consider how you can share this reflection with stakeholders from your school or district.

Graduate Level Professional Development Credits

Individuals have the option to receive 3 graduate level professional development credits with successful completion of the course. Once your team is registered, you will be sent a separate link to register individually for 3 graduate-level professional development credits.

Engagement and active participation are paramount for students seeking graduate credit in this course. Beyond attendance and regularly logging into the course platform to explore resources, consistent involvement in discussions, assignments, and collaborative activities fosters deep learning and application of concepts. Active participation not

only enhances individual understanding but also enriches the collective learning experience, contributing to a vibrant academic community. Therefore, a commitment to sustained engagement throughout the duration of the course is essential for achieving the rigorous standards expected at the graduate level.

If your group team receives a grade of C or better, you will receive a completion certificate from Novak Education at the conclusion of the institute . Please check in with your school or district to determine if this alone will be sufficient for salary points or advancement. In order to individually receive the team grade for graduate credit, you must maintain active engagement and participation throughout the course.

Technology

Courses are entirely online. To access them, you'll need a compatible web browser like Chrome or Firefox. For an optimal experience, we recommend using a desktop or laptop computer with a word processing tool or reader (i.e. Microsoft Word, Libre, or Google Docs). While our course platform is mobile-friendly, a larger screen will provide the best viewing and interactive experience. If you need personal assistance or have technical questions, you can [contact us](#) any time.

Novak Education is in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).