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Fidelity of Implementation within an RTI Framework

National Center on Response to Intervention Webinar
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RTI Center Partners

- American Institutes for Research:
  - *Nancy Safer, Darren Woodruff, Amy Elledge, Maurice McInerney, and Stephanie Jackson*
- Vanderbilt University Researchers
  - *Lynn Fuchs, Doug Fuchs, and Don Compton*
- University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning
  - *Don Deshler and Daryl Mellard*

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Outcomes for the Day

Background Knowledge

- How fidelity flows through the entire RTI Framework
- An understanding of fidelity at the whole school level
- An understanding of fidelity at the classroom level

Development

Examples of HOW to develop a system to assess fidelity

- Action plans to get you started
- Tools to use in your school

Implementation

Beginning implementation at your school

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What is Fidelity?

- Fidelity of implementation refers to how closely the prescribed procedures of a process are followed. (Mellard & Johnson, 2007)
- In other words, fidelity of implementation is “the degree to which teachers and other program providers implement programs as intended by the program developers.” (p. 240)

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The Real Goal = All Students Improve

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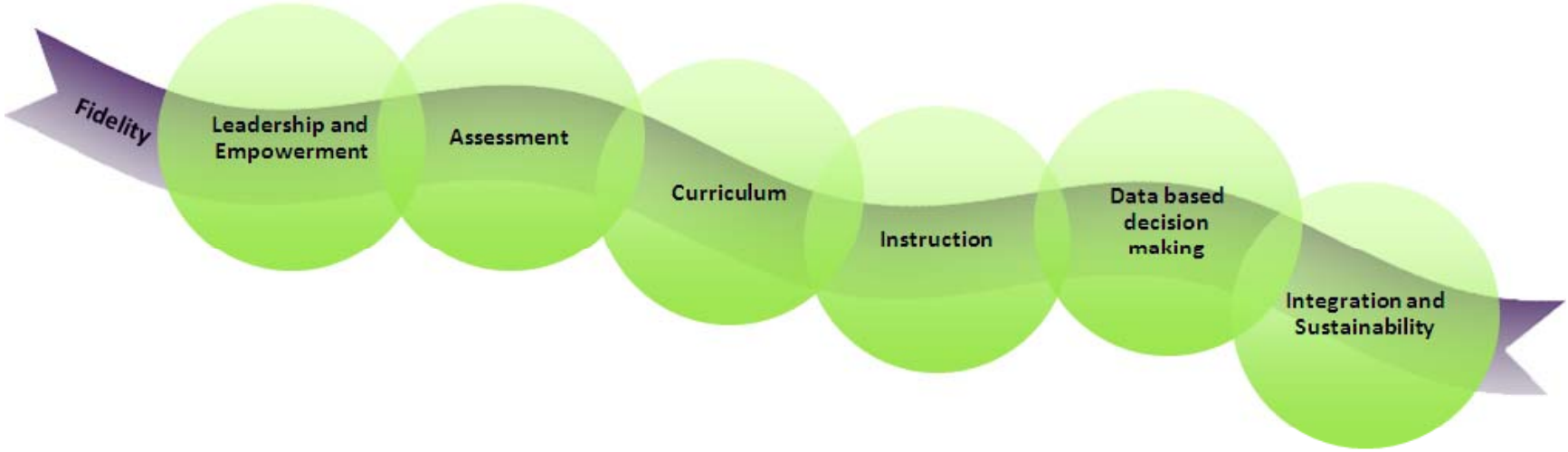
RTI Principles and Practices



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Positive student outcomes are dependent upon --

- Fidelity of implementation of process (at the school level)
- Degree to which interventions are empirically supported
- Fidelity of intervention implementation (at teacher level)

(Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008)

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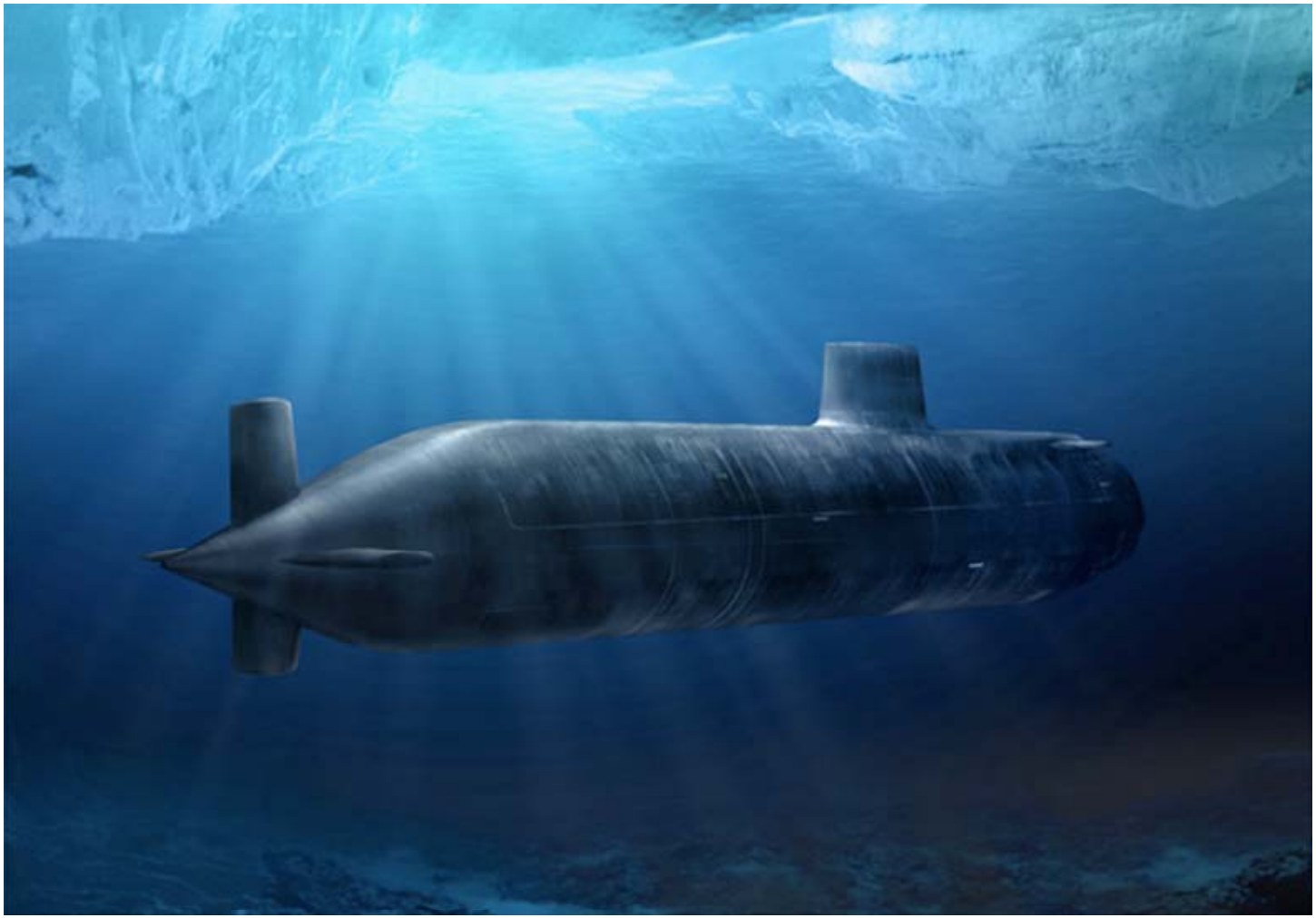
RTI: Surface vs. Deep Views



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Surface or Deep?
P (Success) = ?

"We (the teachers) are the ones that drive it (RTI) and the administrators are also in the driver's seat just in another car."

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Setting the Stage

- Establish a climate for RTI; get buy-in from administration, teachers, staff, students, parents
- Ensure strong leadership with support systems, such as appropriate resources and professional development
- Understand the "active ingredients" for RTI implementation, and components such as tiered interventions, screening, and progress monitoring

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Creating the Culture

- Leadership and staff must:
  - Know what is expected
  - Do what is expected
  - Communicate with one another through feedback channels
  - Check the system regularly to ensure that the process is being implemented with fidelity – make sure it is working!

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What Does Fidelity Look Like at the Whole School Level?

- A valid and reliable assessment system is in place
- Curriculum is evidence based and includes grade level components across tiers
- Instructional practices are evidence based and follow set parameters
- Staff follow clear data based decision-making rules
- Fidelity checks are predetermined and routinely applied
- Integration and sustainability practices are followed
- Staff regularly communicate using same vocabulary

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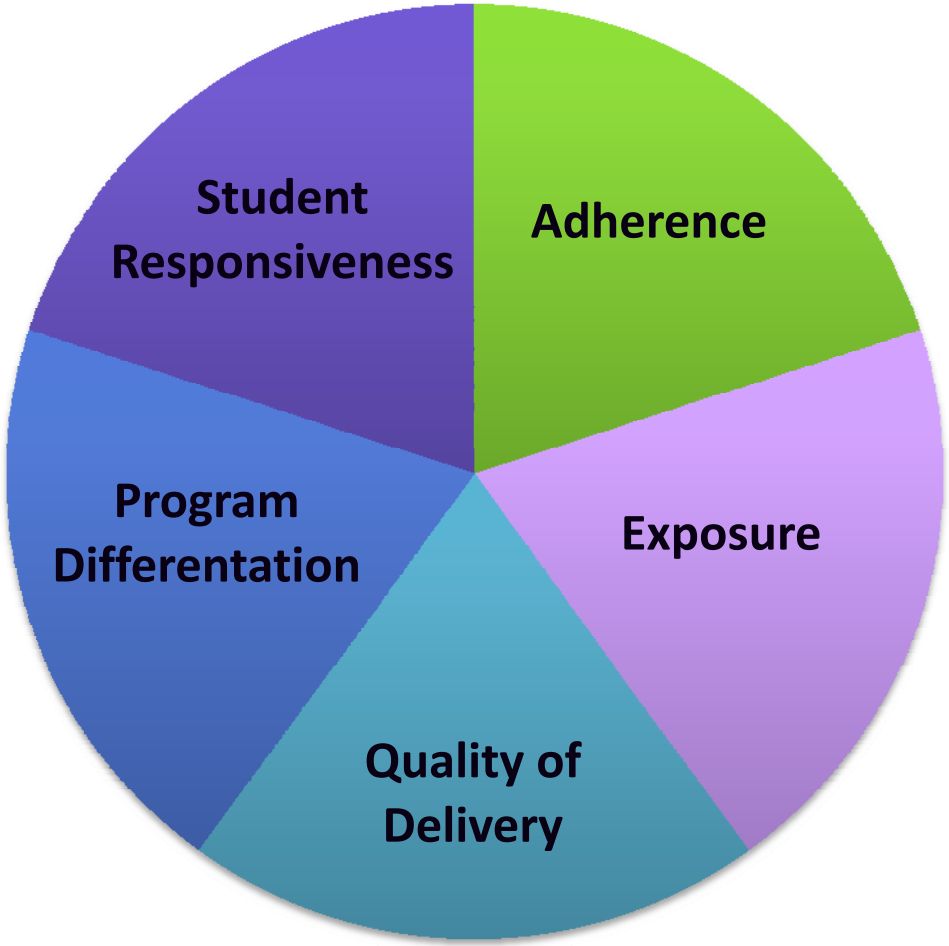
Five Elements of Fidelity



Dane & Schneider, 1998; Gresham et al., 1993; O'Donnell, 2008

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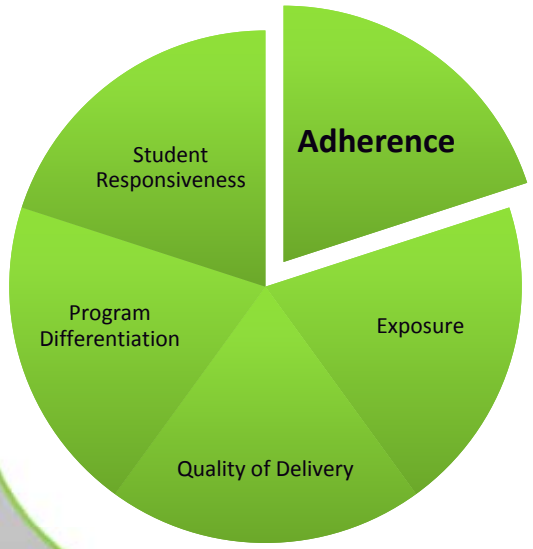
Adherence

- How well do you "stick to the plan?"
- How well do you stay true to the intervention and not drift from the core elements?



Examples:

- Primary level: Following the progress monitoring procedure
- Secondary and tertiary levels: Making sure all pieces of the intervention have been implemented as intended

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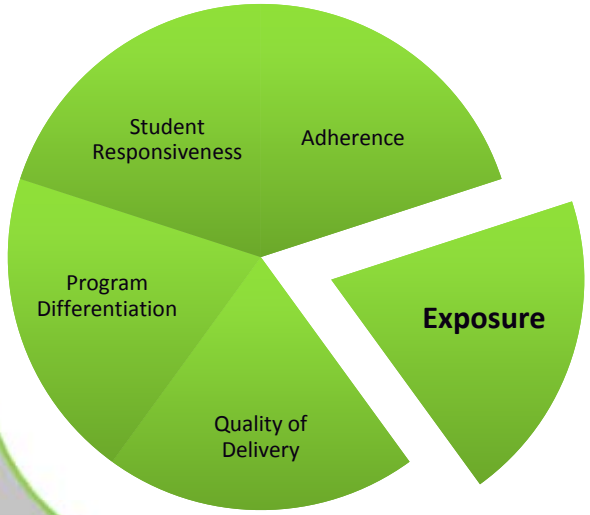
Duration/Exposure

- How often does a student receive an intervention?
- How long does an intervention last?



Examples (in elementary schools):

- Primary level: Providing 90 minutes of reading instruction five days a week
- Secondary and tertiary levels: Progress monitoring a minimum of every two weeks for academics

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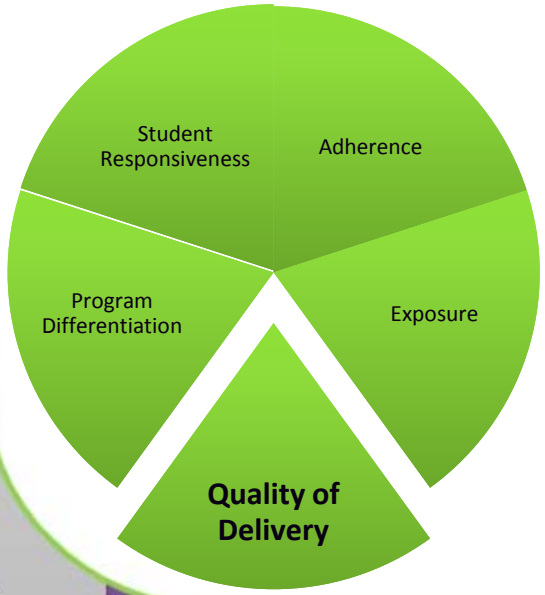
Quality of Delivery

- How well was the intervention or instruction delivered?
- Were good teaching practices used?

Examples:



- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards followed
- Teacher enthusiasm evident
- Time for student questions and feedback provided
- Student groups and transitions effectively managed

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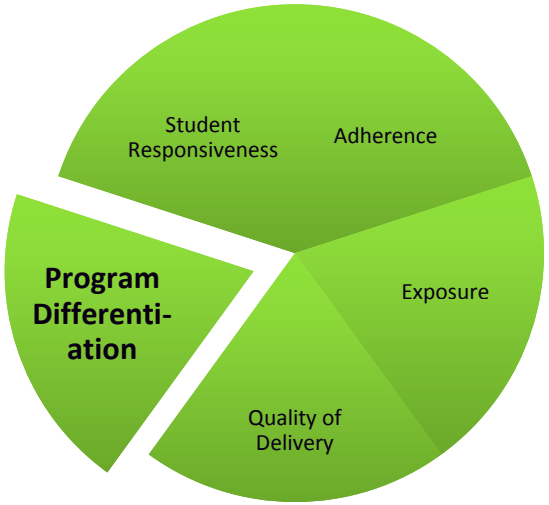
Program Differentiation

- How well do you differentiate one intervention from another?
- How well do you avoid inserting pieces from other interventions; contamination; polluting?



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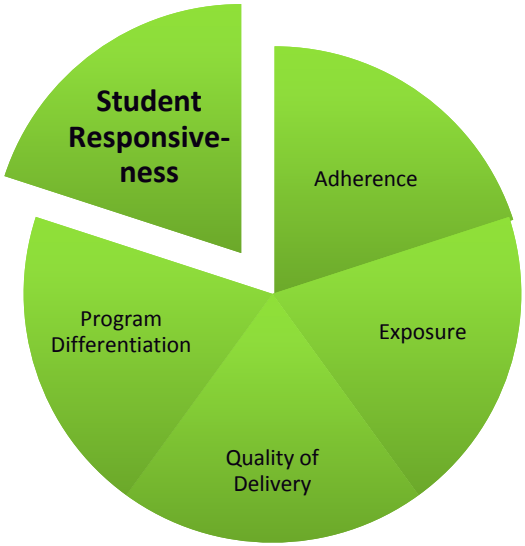
Student Responsiveness

- How engaged and involved are the students in this intervention or activity?



Examples:

- Amount of time students spend on task
- Levels of enthusiasm for activity
- Extent students feel they learned what was expected
- Number of students meditating with their eyes closed and heads on their desks

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What have we learned so far?

Background Knowledge

- How fidelity flows through the entire RTI Framework
- An understanding of fidelity at the whole school level
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Examples of HOW to develop a system to assess fidelity

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Tools to Assess Fidelity

- Adherence
  - Components as self-report checklist
  - Screening and progress monitoring data
  - Observation of teaching methods
  - Observation checklist
- Exposure
  - Records of how often screening and progress monitoring conducted
  - Observation of teaching duration
- Quality of Delivery
  - Observation of teaching strategies and techniques
  - Self-report on knowledge of content, techniques used, and reflection on lesson
- Program Differentiation
  - Component checklist
- Student Responsiveness
  - Student progress
  - Student survey

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Applying Fidelity Elements within your RTI Framework

	Adherence	Exposure	Quality of Delivery	Program Differentiation	Student Engagement
Leadership	✔	✔			
Assessment	✔	✔	✔		✔
Curriculum	✔	✔			✔
Instruction	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Data-based Decision Making	✔				
Integration/ Sustainability	✔		✔	✔	

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Sample Fidelity Protocol

Indicator	Tool	Frequency	Feedback/ Follow-up
New curriculum/new intervention	• Coaching • Direct observation with checklist	- 2-3 x/ semester	• Coaching • Peer support
Comparatively low class average; increase in number of at risk students	• Direct observation with checklist • Student work sample • Teacher log	- 1 x/ month - Weekly	Professional development
Established instruction/interventions	• Student data • Observation checklist		
New administrator	• Student data • School data • Observation of classroom instruction • Walk-through		
Early second semester score slump	• Walk-through • Teacher self-report • Student data		
Teacher request	• Walk-through • Observation with checklist • Videotaping		

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Other Factors Related to Fidelity

- Organizational Characteristics
  - Principal support
  - School culture
  - Quality of leadership
  - District support
  - Staff morale
  - Readiness to change
- Program Characteristics
  - Less complex
  - Specifically stated essentials
  - Unambiguous instructions
  - Easy administration
- Teacher Characteristics
  - Confidence, self-efficacy and animation
  - Communication ability
- Professional Development
  - Concrete, detailed instruction
  - Administrative resource person
  - Coaches

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The Power of Coaching

	OUTCOMES (% of Participants Who Demonstrate Knowledge and New Skills in a Training Setting, and Who Use New Skills in the Classroom)		
TRAINING COMPONENTS	**Knowledge**	**Skill Demonstration**	**Use in the Classroom**
Theory and Discussion	10%	5%	0%
+ Demonstration in Training	30%	20%	0%
+ Practice & Feedback in Training	60%	60%	5%
+ Coaching in Classroom	95%	95%	95%

(Joyce & Showers, 2002)

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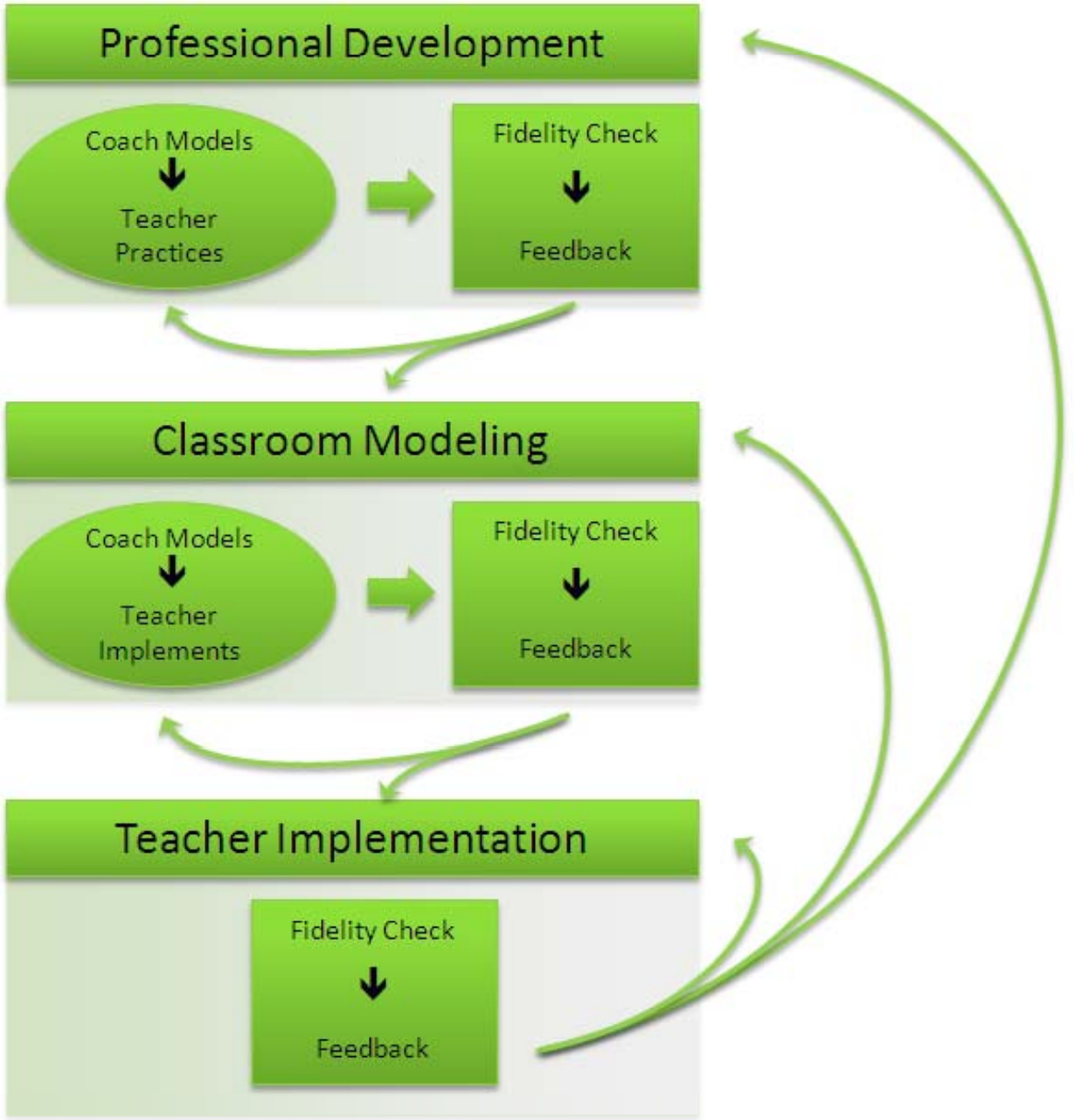

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Practices to Ensure Fidelity of Implementation

- Definitively describe the system of components, procedures, and techniques; include feedback and decision making
- Clearly define responsibilities of specific persons (coaches, teachers, administration)
- Create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components
- Link fidelity data to improved outcomes data
- Approach instructor observation in a positive manner emphasizing problem-solving
- Create accountability measures for noncompliance

(Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008)

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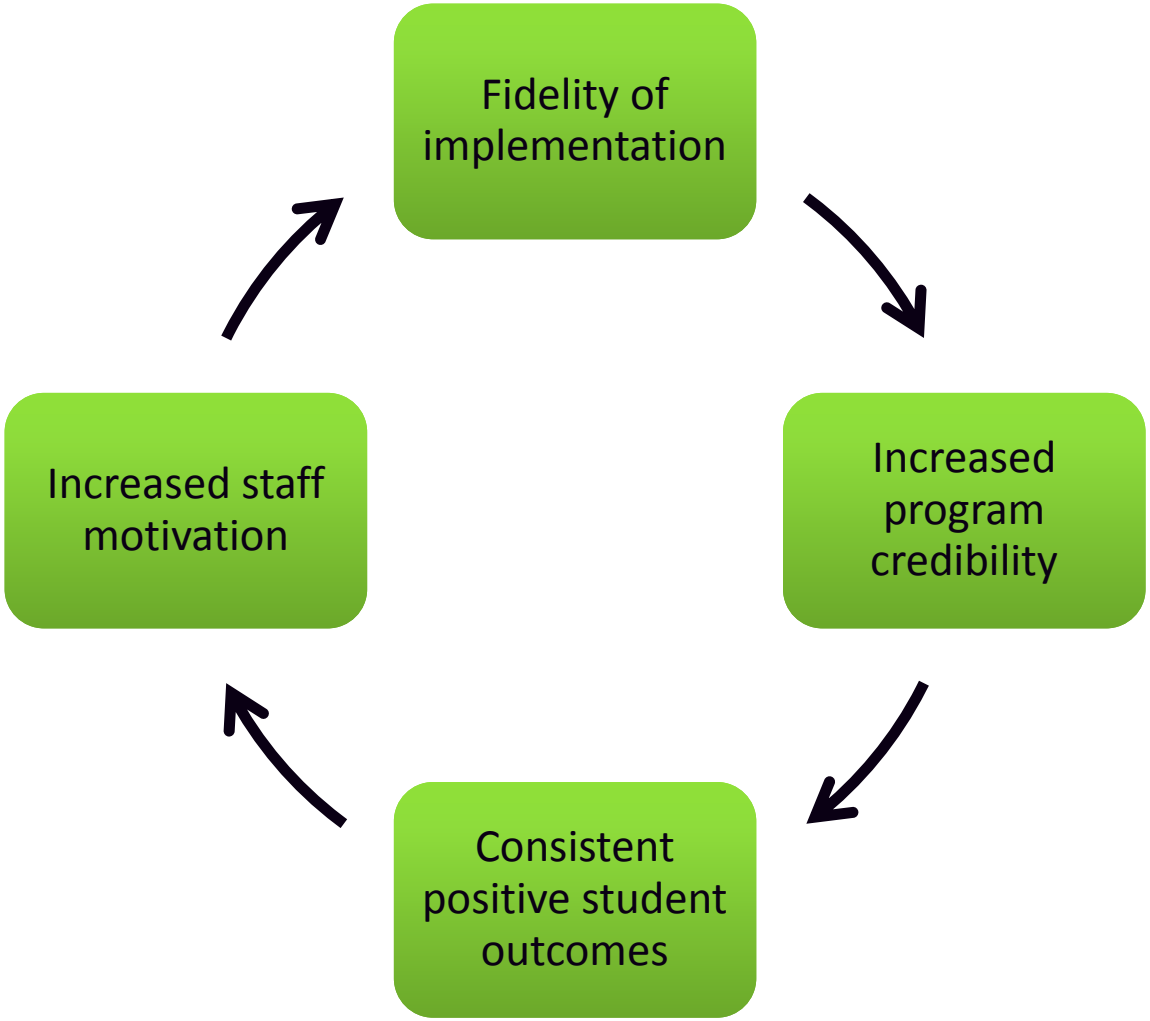
The Cycle of Benefits



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Reflection

1. What do we already have in place to measure the five elements of fidelity?

2. What do we need in order to measure the elements of fidelity adequately?
   - At the whole school for the RTI process?
   - At the primary level?
   - At the secondary level?
   - At the tertiary level?

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Tools to get you started

- Action plan for administrators
- Action plan for teachers
- Example of a fidelity protocol
- Example of a fidelity elements matrix
- High quality instruction matrix
- Example of an instructional walkthrough
- Examples of two student satisfaction surveys
- Examples of two observation checklists

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What's Been Covered?

Background Knowledge

- How fidelity flows through the entire RTI Framework
- An understanding of fidelity at the whole school level
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Development

Examples of HOW to develop a system to assess fidelity

- Action plans to get you started
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Implementation

Now that you have the knowledge and tools, you can begin fidelity implementation.

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THANK YOU!

- I have enjoyed discussing fidelity of implementation with you today. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:
  - Daryl Mellard dmellard@ku.edu
  - Melinda McKnight mmck@ku.edu
  - Sara Prewett saralp@ku.edu

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