Fidelity of Implementation within an RTI Framework

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The University of Kansas
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• Vanderbilt University Researchers
  o Lynn Fuchs, Doug Fuchs, and Don Compton

• University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning
  o Don Deshler and Daryl Mellard
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
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)
The Real Goal = All Students Improve
RTI Principles and Practices
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)
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.”
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
Creating the Culture

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

- Student Responsiveness
- Adherence
- Program Differentiation
- Exposure
- Quality of Delivery

Dane & Schneider, 1998; Gresham et al., 1993; O’Donnell, 2008
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
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
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
Program Differentiation

• How well do you differentiate one intervention from another?
• How well do you avoid inserting pieces from other interventions; contamination; polluting?
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
What have we learned so far?

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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
## Applying Fidelity Elements within your RTI Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Adherence</th>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>Quality of Delivery</th>
<th>Program Differentiation</th>
<th>Student Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
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<td>Data-based Decision Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration/Sustainability</td>
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</table>
# Sample Fidelity Protocol

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

- **Teacher Characteristics**
  - Confidence, self-efficacy and animation
  - Communication ability

- **Professional Development**
  - Concrete, detailed instruction
  - Administrative resource person
  - Coaches

- **Program Characteristics**
  - Less complex
  - Specifically stated essentials
  - Unambiguous instructions
  - Easy administration
### The Power of Coaching

(Joyce & Showers, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAINING COMPONENTS</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill Demonstration</th>
<th>Use in the Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory and Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Demonstration in Training</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Practice &amp; Feedback in Training</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Coaching in Classroom</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<td>95%</td>
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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)
The Cycle of Benefits

- Fidelity of implementation
- Increased program credibility
- Increased staff motivation
- Consistent positive student outcomes
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?
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
What’s Been Covered?

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**Development**
- Examples of HOW to develop a system to assess fidelity
  - Action plans to get you started
  - Tools to use in your school

**Implementation**
- Now that you have the knowledge and tools, you can begin fidelity implementation.
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
References


Rowan, B., Correnti, R., & Miller, R. J. (2002). What large-scale, survey research tells us about teacher effects on student achievement: Insights from the *Prospects* study of elementary schools. *Teachers College Record, 104*(8), 1525–1567.