Welcome participants to the training on Fidelity. Introduce yourself (selves) as the facilitator(s) and briefly talk about your professional experience as it relates to RTI implementation. Consider asking participants about their current knowledge/experience with RTI. This presentation includes a brief review of RTI, but if participants are new to RTI you may consider including the entire What Is RTI presentation found in the RTI Implementer Series Module 1: Screening http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-implementer-series-module-1-screening or additional information from the other training modules http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-implementer-series-modules.

This module focuses on the importance of implementing the RTI framework with fidelity. As we practitioners implement the elements of RTI with fidelity, we will strengthen the power of RTI to improve outcomes for students.

RTI may be implemented using a standard intervention protocol or a problem-solving approach based on the model of the school or district. This presentation will focus on a standard intervention protocol approach, which incorporates consistent, and often scripted, empirically validated intervention programs intended for students who have similar academic or behavioral needs. Standard intervention protocols can facilitate quality control because their structure allows for evaluation of implementation fidelity.
In today’s presentation we will cover
• a review of the essential components of RTI,
• the basics of fidelity and why it is important,
• fidelity as it relates to the different essential components,
• monitoring and measuring fidelity, and
• improving fidelity and identifying and addressing potential barriers to fidelity.
Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to:

- Understand fundamental components of fidelity and how it may vary across the essential components and the RTI model
- Monitor fidelity using multiple methods
- Promote fidelity and identify and overcome potential barriers to fidelity

Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to:

*Read slide.*
This section provides a review of the essential components of RTI and the Center’s definition of RTI. This will provide context for the remainder of the presentation.

If participants are not familiar with RTI it may be particularly important to deliver the “What Is RTI?” slides at the beginning of this presentation. The What Is RTI presentation with speaker notes can be found in the RTI Implementer Series Module 1: Screening, which can be found at http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-implementer-series-module-1-screening. Additional information can also be found in the Progress Monitoring Module: http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-implementer-series-module-2-progress-monitoring and the Multi-level Prevention System Module: http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-implementer-series-module-3-multi-level-prevention-system.
Defining RTI

- Response to Intervention (RTI) integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems.

(National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010)

Although not required, it is recommended that participants have access to the one-page What Is RTI? placemat (http://www.rti4success.org/pdf/What_is_RTI_2010_07_14_placemat.pdf), a supplement to the Essential Components of RTI – A Closer Look at Response to Intervention, for easy reference.

The National Center on RTI uses a definition for RTI that includes what the Center considers to be the essential components. Response to Intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. It is important to point out that RTI is a school-wide prevention system, as opposed to a prereferral process for special education, and it is multi-level as opposed to multitier. There are three levels of prevention in an RTI framework, and states, school districts, and schools can have multiple tiers within those three levels of instruction to prevent poor learning outcomes.
Defining RTI

- With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions based on a student’s responsiveness; and
- RTI may be used as part of the determination process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities or other disabilities.

(National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010)

The second part of the definition highlights the essential components of an RTI framework.

- The first component involves **schools identifying students at risk for poor learning outcomes**. This process is commonly referred to as universal screening.
- The next component involves **monitoring student progress** through progress monitoring.
- The third component relates to **providing evidence-based interventions based on a student’s responsiveness**. It is not merely the delivery of interventions that is important; there must be a multi-level prevention system in which students have access to increasingly intense levels of instruction and interventions.
- The last component involves using data (e.g., screening or progress monitoring) to **adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions based on student responsiveness**. In other words, there is an explicit, systematic process for data-based decision making.

Some people mistakenly believe that RTI involves only special education. It is important to remember that RTI is a school-wide, multi-level prevention system that results in data that may be used as part of the determination process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities or other disabilities in accordance with your state’s law.
In summary, RTI is a preventive framework. RTI is not a new name for a prereferral process. The intent of RTI is to improve outcomes for all students while providing immediate supplemental supports to students at risk for poor learning outcomes. RTI may be a component of a comprehensive evaluation for specific learning disability determination, but this is not its overarching purpose.
Essential Components of RTI

- Screening
- Progress Monitoring
- School-Wide, Multi-level Prevention System
  - Primary level
  - Secondary level
  - Tertiary level
- Data-based decision making for
  - Instruction
  - Evaluating effectiveness
  - Movement within the multi-level system
  - Disability identification (in accordance with state law)

So, as you saw in the definition, the Center has identified four essential components for RTI:

- **Screening**: a system for identifying students at risk for poor learning outcomes
- **Progress monitoring**: a system for monitoring the effectiveness of the supports provided to students
- **School-wide, multi-level prevention system**: at least three increasingly intense levels of instructional support
  - **Primary** – the core instruction and curriculum
  - **Secondary** – instruction that is supplemental to the primary level that provides supports targeted to students’ needs
  - **Tertiary** – instruction that is also supplemental to primary, but more intense than secondary
- **Data-based decision making for**
  - **Instruction** – determining who needs assistance, what type of instruction or assistance is needed, whether the duration and intensity are sufficient, etc.
  - **Evaluating effectiveness** – evaluating the effectiveness of the core curriculum and instruction for all students, interventions, and the RTI framework.
  - **Movement within the multi-level system** – when to move students to more or less intense supports, who is responding or not responding, etc.
  - **Disability identification** – when to refer for special education evaluation, how the student compares to his/her peers, whether he/she has received appropriate instruction, etc. This is, of course, in **accordance with state law**.
The Center has developed this graphic to highlight the RTI framework. Many of you probably associate the red, green, and yellow triangle with RTI. In reality, the triangle does not represent the RTI framework; it only represents one component, the multi-level prevention system. The Center graphic takes into account all of the essential components, and most importantly, the use of data to make decisions, which is often absent from the traditional RTI triangle.

If you look to the far left, you see screening; to the far right, progress monitoring; and at the bottom, the multi-level prevention system. The three outer components require and are necessary parts of data-based decision making, which is why the arrows travel in both directions. If the three other components are in place, but data-based decision making is absent, then, technically, RTI is not being implemented.

In the inner ring, you will see the phrase “culturally responsive,” meaning the screening tools, progress monitoring tools, core instruction, interventions, and data-based decision making procedures should all be culturally responsive. In the same ring, you will notice the phrase “evidence-based,” implying that all components are evidence based. If these components are implemented through a cohesive model, student outcomes should improve.
This section of the presentation will focus on defining fidelity and the importance of implementing the components of RTI with fidelity.

This Think-Pair-Share activity is optional. The purpose of the activity is to engage the audience and conduct an informal assessment of the audience’s knowledge of fidelity.

Think about what words come to mind when you hear the term fidelity. 
Give participants approximately 20 seconds.
Pair and share with your neighbor/table and list as many words as you can.  
Give participants approximately 2-3 minutes. 
Allow two or three pairs/tables to orally share their lists.
This slide provides a basic definition of fidelity and some other language that may be used interchangeably with fidelity.

Fidelity refers to how closely prescribed procedures are followed, and in the context of schools, the degree to which teachers implement programs as intended by the program developers. It also relates to the quality of the implementation. This will be described further in the following slide.

If we are implementing RTI with fidelity, we are using our curriculum and instructional and assessment practices in the same way over time, throughout the day, and across lessons, and we are using them correctly, as they were intended to be used. In other words, we are using the practices (curriculum and instructional/assessment practices) with consistency and accuracy. It is also important to point out that you may often see fidelity used interchangeably with integrity.

Throughout discussions of fidelity it is important to ensure that teachers believe they work in an open, non-threatening environment that values their skills and expertise and where they can learn from their colleagues. With a system of open communication and productive feedback, fidelity checks of classroom techniques and the essential components of RTI can be a useful and supportive way for teachers to collaborate and form a stronger teaching network.
This Ask the Expert video featuring Dr. Doug Fuchs addresses the following question: **We hear a lot about fidelity of implementation when talking about RTI. What does this really mean?** (5.17 minutes) **Click play to watch the video.**

*Here is a sample from the video. Doug Fuchs: “Look, this is how we developed the program, this is the program. If you deliver the program the way we have detailed it, it’s a good bet that you will get results as we did. So what we’re really saying is, we’re encouraging fidelity of treatment implementation, meaning we’re encouraging you to implement our program the way we implemented it when we validated it. Importantly, this doesn’t mean that practitioners can’t take a validated instructional program, customize it to their own students and circumstances, and do better and have their children do even better than the children who participated in our research.”*
This slide provides a more in-depth look at the components of fidelity often discussed in the literature (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Gresham et al., 1993; O’Donnell, 2008). While the elements or components of fidelity and their organization may vary, this provides one example of a way to think about fidelity. The slide includes five elements of fidelity adherence, exposure, quality of delivery, program specificity, and student engagement.

- **When we discuss adherence** we are focused on how well we stick to the plan/curriculum/assessment—do we implement as the plan/curriculum/assessment was intended to be implemented based on research?
- **Exposure/duration** refers to how often a student receives an intervention and how long an intervention lasts. When thinking about fidelity we are considering whether the exposure/duration being used with a student matches the recommendation by the author/publisher of the curriculum.
- Not only is it important to adhere to the plan/curriculum/assessment, it is also important to look at the **quality of delivery**. This refers to how well the intervention, assessment, or instruction is delivered. For example, do you use good teaching practices?
- Another component is **program specificity** or how well the intervention is defined and different from other interventions. Having clearly defined interventions/assessments allows teachers to more easily adhere to the program as defined.
- Just as quality of delivery is important, it is important to also focus on **student engagement** or how engaged and involved the students are in the intervention or activity. Following a prescribed program alone is not enough.
If we are not consistent and accurate, how do we explain the student's lack of response? Or, for that matter, a student’s excellent response? If we haven’t implemented the protocol as intended we cannot attribute a good or poor response to that procedure. We can’t link, or attribute, student outcomes to the instruction provided. If we have implemented with fidelity, we can evaluate the RTI model and adapt and adjust instruction based on student response.

It is important to remember that implementing a program or process as intended is not the end goal. But only by verifying fidelity practices can a link between student outcomes and instruction be established with any degree of confidence.

For additional information on evaluating the RTI model, review the NCRTI Considerations for an Evaluation Plan training module. This can be found at http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/things-consider-when-developing-rti-evaluation-plan
Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) concluded that positive student outcomes are particularly dependent on 3 aspects of fidelity within an RTI framework:

- **Fidelity of implementation at the SCHOOL level**—this is the degree to which the RTI process is implemented with fidelity, and would include an evidence-based curriculum and instructional system that spans multiple levels, valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring practices, and the use of clear rules for data-based decision making.

- The use of **interventions supported by evidence**—this is the **degree to which implemented interventions** have high-quality evidence supporting their effectiveness.

- **Fidelity of implementation at the classroom or teacher level**—this is the degree to which teachers implement interventions and assessments with fidelity and to make sure they are using quality curricular and instructional materials and interventions as intended.
This is an optional activity based on information from PBS Newshour (2008).

We are now going to watch a brief video that highlights the importance of fidelity.

To view the video click the link below or have the following webpage on hand (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/health/jan-june10/gawande_02-08.html).

In the video we saw how the use of the checklist helped to save lives. The use of measures to assess fidelity in schools can help to improve student achievement.

It is important to recognize that change, such as implementation of fidelity measures, is not easy, and there will likely be initial resistance. When Dr. Gawande was asked about resistance to this process, he answered that their surveys show that about 20 percent of surgeons thought it was a waste of time and felt it could get in the way. They have their way of doing things that they say has worked perfectly well, so they don’t need to improve things. But he adds that when people have tried it, 80 percent say they are glad to have the checklist and wouldn’t go back to prepping for surgery any other way.

It is also important to recognize that checklists such as the one seen in the video do not result from a lack of faith in the surgeons or in teachers, but from the challenge of juggling and managing a wealth of information. These fidelity measures shouldn’t be viewed as punishment, but as an opportunity to learn and prevent mistakes.
When we think about fidelity, we have to consider both fidelity to the RTI model that the school, district, or state has developed and fidelity within each of the essential components.
What would fidelity look like at the whole-school level, when we are considering the RTI framework implementation?

The school would have a plan for regularly checking to make sure its RTI practices at the whole-school level faithfully follow its RTI framework. With integration of fidelity practices within the RTI framework, staff members have a clear sense of what they need to do and how to do it. They understand that fidelity checks are routinely applied to, and sustain, RTI practices at the whole school level. These RTI practices include

- **An evidence-based curriculum and instructional system that spans multiple levels**
  - This is a curriculum that is consistent and accurate and also includes grade-level components across the three instructional levels. For example, if fourth graders are studying the Civil War at the primary prevention level, curriculum for the students in fourth grade secondary and tertiary levels also includes the Civil War.

- **An assessment system that is valid and reliable**
  - This is an assessment system that we can rely upon to accurately inform us about students’ risk status—a screening system to let us know which students may have reading or other achievement-related difficulties. This valid and reliable assessment system also informs us about students' progress.

- **The implementation of clear rules for data-based decision making**
  - When analyzing a student’s progress monitoring graph, school staff members use set guidelines to help them determine whether a student needs a new intervention or needs to have instruction at a more intense level.

Let’s look at fidelity within the essential components of RTI in more detail.
Fidelity does not touch just one or two aspects of RTI—it is a thread that runs through all the components of RTI—the multi-level prevention system, screening, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making.

- Fidelity is important when we are providing instruction and interventions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—ensuring that we are implementing the instruction or interventions consistently and as intended.
- Fidelity is important as we screen for students at risk.
- The same is true for progress monitoring. We want to make sure that school staff members who monitor student progress use the progress monitoring tools the right way and interpret the data correctly.
- Data-based decision making, too, should be implemented as intended. Decision rules that have been carefully determined and put in place should be followed.

Fidelity practices are an integral part of the RTI model and of each of the components of RTI. The practices involving the levels of instruction, screening, progress monitoring, and decision making must all be faithful to the plan as a whole.

Throughout this section, remind participants about the five areas of fidelity discussed earlier in the presentation: adherence, student engagement, quality, exposure/duration, and program specificity.
Fidelity and Screening & Progress Monitoring

- Staff are trained in how to deliver and score the screening and progress monitoring assessments and are familiar and comfortable with the assessment
- Staff follow guidelines of the assessments and do not provide additional context or assistance to students during the assessment
- School uses an established timeline for assessing students for screening and progress monitoring

To conduct screening and progress monitoring with fidelity, it is important to consider how the assessments are delivered or administered, how they are evaluated or scored, and how the results of the assessment are entered into a data system or tracked.

During administration, the tester may give incorrect instructions, provide inappropriate assistance, or alter assessment protocols. For example, a small protocol change, such as reducing time allocations or altering access to certain materials, may unnecessarily put some students at a disadvantage by making their scores inaccurately low. Conversely, providing additional assistance that violates administration instructions may inflate students’ scores, making them appear not at risk when they are.

During evaluation, the evaluator may incorrectly score a student’s response, may incorrectly interpret a student’s response, or may be more lenient in scoring certain responses. It is important to follow the test publisher’s scoring rules to ensure consistency and minimize errors across evaluators. Evaluators can introduce bias while grading assessments. For example, they may unconsciously project correct responses into student answers where they do not exist.

Errors can also occur in data entry—particularly manual data entry. For example, scores may be incorrectly entered because of simple mistakes, or errors may also arise from disagreements in data entry procedures. Many screening and progress monitoring assessments are computer-based and therefore help to limit data entry issues, but these can still occur.

To improve fidelity within screening and progress monitoring administration, evaluation, and data entry, it is important to ensure that testers have been adequately trained and that they are very familiar with the assessment they are using. Checklists and guidelines can also help to ensure that testers administer, score, and track assessments as the publisher intend.

Another important consideration for fidelity with screening and progress monitoring assessments relates to the duration/exposure or timeline when assessments will be delivered. It is important to have an established timeline for assessment—for example, scheduling the three times a year when screening will take place prior to beginning of the school year for screening and conducting progress monitoring assessments at regular intervals (weekly, biweekly, monthly).
Think about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity when implementing screening and progress monitoring.

- **Think** about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity when implementing screening and progress monitoring.
- **Pair** with a neighbor.
- **Share** your thoughts.

Use the Essential Components of RTI and Fidelity Handout to note what was discussed.
Fidelity is important across all three levels of the multi-level prevention system, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention, but each level has distinct considerations for fidelity. These are detailed in the following slides.
Within the primary prevention level, fidelity should be to the program components or core components of the curriculum. Curriculum programs used within the primary prevention level will vary based on schools and districts. The curriculum used in primary prevention might not be scripted, but it should include high-quality instruction that is comprehensive given the age group and content area. Primary prevention should also include differentiation, where teachers use student assessment data and knowledge of student readiness, learning preferences, language, and culture to offer students in the same class different teaching and learning strategies to address their needs. Teachers may use whole class, small group, dyadic, and independent practice during primary prevention.

Within the primary prevention curriculum program there should be an established delivery timeframe that is consistently implemented. If the curriculum suggests that 90 minutes of reading instruction is provided five days a week, teachers should ensure that they are implementing reading instruction for that time period throughout the week.

Throughout instruction within the primary prevention level, it is important for teachers to ensure that students are engaged and involved in the lessons.
### Fidelity at the Secondary Prevention Level

- Staff adhere to clearly articulated, validated evidence-based interventions that are aligned with the core curriculum
  - Explicitly follow evidence-based program as it was designed
  - High-quality instruction
- Staff implement intervention based on the duration and timeframe defined by the program developer
  - For example: Provide 30 minutes of reading instruction per day, 3–5 days per week in addition to core
- The group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students
- Students are engaged throughout interventions

Within the secondary prevention level, the focus is on **adherence to clearly articulated, validated, and evidence-based interventions**. Teachers should be **explicitly following evidence-based programs as they were designed** by the program developer and using **high-quality instructional practices**. Secondary level prevention programs also have explicitly defined **durations and timeframes**. For example, you may be providing 30 minutes of reading instruction per day three days a week in addition to the core curriculum. The group size for the intervention should be determined by the **optimal group size according to research for the age and needs of students**, and **students should be actively engaged throughout the interventions**.
Within the tertiary prevention level, fidelity is focused on **fidelity to an explicit individualized student plan** that was **developed by a team to address the student’s needs**. This may include **adaptations from an evidence-based intervention**, such as those used at the secondary prevention level. **Data-based individualization is used to adjust the plan** to better address students’ needs. **High-quality instruction** and adherence to all pieces of the plan should occur throughout intensive interventions. The **duration and frequency** of intensive support should also be consistent with that determined in the **student plan**. For example, a student might receive more intensive **reading instruction 30 minutes a day five days a week**. The **group size for interventions should be optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of the students** and students should be **engaged** and attentive throughout tertiary interventions.

**Note:** Fidelity at the tertiary level may differ from fidelity at the secondary level as a result of individualizing instruction to meet the needs of students who did not benefit from evidence-based secondary interventions. While components of evidence-based interventions may continue to be implemented, educators use data-based individualization to shape interventions to students’ needs and develop an individualized student plan. At the tertiary level, therefore, the fidelity is to the individualized student plan and the components of that plan rather than components in the core curriculum (primary prevention) or an evidence-based intervention (secondary prevention). Learn more about intensive interventions and data-based individualization at the National Center on Intensive Intervention’s website, [http://www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org).
Think about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity across primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention levels, and identify how these may be different across the prevention levels.

- **Think** with a neighbor
- **Pair** with a neighbor
- **Share** your thoughts

Use the Essential Components of RTI and Fidelity handout to note what was discussed.
To ensure that data-based decisions are made consistently and with fidelity across students, classes, and schools, data teams should establish routines and procedures for conducting data reviews, including regularly scheduled meetings with meeting agendas and meeting procedures established. This will allow teams to understand what they are looking for, how they will look for it, and how they will know if they have found it. Consider the following:

**What are you looking for?**
- Data fishing can be fun but may lead to problems. It can cause sites to delay the use of data (especially if there are a lot of data), change the focus of the analysis, and miss important trends or issues. Identify what you are interested in knowing prior to your data analysis. If you are unclear as to what you are looking for, conduct an analysis of the more critical outcomes first (graduation, reading performance) and then focus on outcomes in other areas. It is important to set priorities.
- Identify what you are looking for at all levels of analysis (district, school, grade, class, students) and levels of prevention (efficacy, struggling students).

**How will you look for it?**
- Develop a plan for how you will systematically analyze your data. This can increase the efficiency of your data-analysis activities. It also helps manage the output many data systems offer. Only the most critical data are needed at first. The plan allows you to know where to delve deeper.

**How will you know if you found it?**
- Determine how much evidence is needed for the team to identify success or lack of success. Once identified, the team can continue moving through the problem-solving process to develop a plan of action.

Data reviews should occur on a logical and pre-determined schedule to ensure that timely decisions are made based on data. Teams should also establish explicit decision rules for assessing student, class, grade, and school-level progress. For example, they may consider articulating, in writing, specific decision rules for when—
- More than 80% of students are above cut score
- Less than 80% have reached the cut score: Do we strengthen the core instruction and curriculum? Do we add an intervention?
- Lack of progress is evident: What do you do? Do you make a plan?
- Student progress varies by target group (e.g., Title I, special education, low SES)

Writing down processes helps to ensure consistency despite changes in data team members and allows team members to ensure they follow the same process and rules with all student-, class-, and school-level data.
Think about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity for data-based decision making.

- **Think** about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity for data-based decision making.
- **Pair** with a neighbor.
- **Share** your thoughts.

Use the Essential Components of RTI and Fidelity Handout to note what was discussed.

---

**Think** about the negotiables and non-negotiables of fidelity for data-based decision making.

*Give participants approximately 20 seconds.*

**Pair** and **share** with your neighbor/table.

*Give participants approximately 2-3 minutes.*

*Allow two or three pairs/tables to orally share their lists.*

*Use the Essential Components of RTI and Fidelity Handout to note what was discussed.*
Measuring fidelity will allow us to understand whether the essential components and the RTI framework have been implemented with integrity.
The best way to monitor fidelity is to measure it. Fidelity can be measured through self-report data, observations, or logs and lesson plans. We will discuss each of these in more detail.

Note: You may want to refer participants to the Measuring Fidelity Handout. During the following slides, participants can take notes about the different fidelity measures in the first columns of the handout. The remainder of the handout will be completed at the conclusion of the section.

Note: These slides are also available in Things to Consider When Developing an RTI Evaluation Plan, which can be found at http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/things-consider-when-developing-rti-evaluation-plan
Self-report data can include questionnaires, surveys, or interviews, and may provide an indicator of teacher knowledge as well as the context of implementation. Although these measures can be very efficient to conduct, they are often unreliable when used alone because they are subject to bias. For example, reports may include exaggerations or under-reporting in an attempt to make the responder look better.
Conducting observations can be done by developing checklists of critical implementation components, recording and listening to sessions at random, doing spot checks, conducting peer observations, and implementing peer coaching. Direct observations are the least efficient but most reliable form of fidelity measurement. Observations provide an outside and real-time perspective on what is going on, rather than relying on the memory of the person implementing RTI. The reliability of observations can be increased by ensuring the observers are trained, using multiple observers with a goal of achieving high inter-rater reliability (a high level of similar responses), and using detailed checklists and observation tools that anchor responses in specific behaviors or practices. While conducting observations eliminates the potential bias caused by the individual reporting on him- or herself, it may create situations where the individual being observed acts differently when being observed.
Logs, Lesson Plans, Student Work

- Allow evaluation of what was done
  - Content covered
  - Student progress
- Considerations
  - Moderately efficient
  - Moderately reliable
  - Less information about delivery, dosage, adherence to scripts or lesson components (if applicable)

Reviewing logs and lesson plans and student work allows evaluation of what was done. It could include looking at the content covered and student progress. Reviewing logs, lesson plans, and student work is moderately efficient and moderately reliable. It provides less information about delivery, dosage, and adherence to scripts (if applicable) than other measures of fidelity, however.
We just discussed three main ways to assess fidelity of implementation: self-report; observation; and logs, lesson plans, and student work. We are now going to look at some examples of what states use to evaluate implementation in these areas.
The National Center on Response to Intervention developed the integrity rubric and accompanying worksheet as a means for schools and districts to assess or self-assess their progress in implementing RTI.

Summarize the slide.

Note: It may be helpful to provide participants with copies of the integrity rubric and worksheet for their reference. If you have extra time, consider providing participants time to look at the integrity rubric and discuss the different components. It can be found at www.rti4success.org. A webinar, “RTI Integrity Framework: A Tool for Monitoring and Evaluating RTI Implementation,” focused on the integrity rubric is provided on the NCRTI website at http://www.rti4success.org/subcategorycontents/webinars. A second webinar, “We're 'Doing RTI' – A Closer Look at Implementation,” discusses the experiences of schools and districts in Washington State that used the integrity rubric. It can be viewed here: http://www.rti4success.org/webinars/video/1036.
The RTI Essential Components Integrity rubric and the RTI Essential Components Integrity worksheet are for use by individuals responsible for monitoring the school-level fidelity of Response to Intervention (RTI) implementation or as a measure of self-assessment. They may also be used by schools for self-appraisal; however, they were not designed for compliance monitoring and therefore should not be used for this purpose. The rubric and the worksheet are designed to be used together, and are aligned with the essential components of RTI.

The sections of the rubric are exactly aligned with the sections of the worksheet.

The rubric provides a five-point rating scale and descriptions of practices that would score a 1, 3, or 5. If a school’s practice seems to fall between the described ratings, the school is assigned a rating of 2 or 4. For example, a school judged to be performing at a level higher than the rubric describes for a 3 rating but not quite at the level described for a 5 would receive a 4 rating.

Let’s take a look at the rubric to illustrate this.

**Note:** As we mentioned earlier there is a difference in the reliability of self-report data and external observation. Using an external evaluator to observe and fill out the rubric is more objective and reliable than relying on self-report data provided in the worksheet. Filling out the worksheet still provides benefits for the school, as they are able to see what evidence is available to support their assessment of implementation.
Here is the first page of the integrity rubric.
As you can see, the rubric describes a rating of 1 as **insufficient evidence that the screening tools are reliable; or that correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong; or that predictions of risk status are accurate.**
Review the slide.

Note: Early implementers often rate themselves higher and stronger than those that have been implementing RTI longer. Remember that the goal of the integrity rubric and worksheet is to provide feedback and areas for schools to work on while implementing RTI; they are not for compliance monitoring. Therefore, schools should not think that a low rating is a bad thing, but rather as something to improve upon over time. We know from implementation science that implementation takes time, 3-5 years for full implementation. If schools in early stages of implementation rate themselves higher, they minimize their opportunities to fully address some of the challenges to implementation and may make it difficult for themselves to fully implement RTI. Those that have been implementing RTI for longer may rate themselves more critically as they continue to refine and improve their RTI model.
Here is an example of the worksheet.
As you can see, the screening tools section includes the following questions:

1. **What tools do you use for universal screening?**

2. **When your school selected the screening tool(s), how much attention was paid to the evidence from the vendor on the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the tool?**

3. **Does your school have documentation from the vendor that these tools have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate (including with subgroups)?**

4. **Do you have reason to believe that the screening tool(s) that you use may have issues with validity, reliability, or accuracy (including with subgroups)? If so, please explain.**

Washington State has developed an online version of the NCRTI integrity rubric, which can be found at http://wds.insttech.washington.edu/rti/. Additional information about Washington State’s use of the integrity rubric and an interview protocol that the state developed can be found in the webinar “We're ‘Doing RTI’ – A Closer Look at Implementation,” presented by Dr. Rebecca Zumeta, coordinator of technical assistance and product development for the NCRTI, and Mike Jacobsen, director of assessment in RTI in Washington State’s White River School district. The webinar can be found here: http://www.rti4success.org/webinars/video/1036
The RTI State Database provides resources on a number of topics related to Response to Intervention (RTI), including measures of fidelity. Resources were compiled by the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) in an effort to share examples and information across states. They were gathered from public sources (e.g., websites, SPPs, APRs) and are intended only to provide examples—not recommendations—of RTI implementation and fidelity measures in the field.

In the next few slides, we will show examples from a number of states. Each of these tools can be found in the state database. There are many more resources available online.

Note: The RTI State Database was last updated in spring 2012. More recent information from states may be found on state websites. The trainer should determine whether participants would like to have any of the following examples as standalone handouts. All of the examples provided in the upcoming slides are for illustrative purposes, and may not align to the NCRTI’s language and essential components.
This is an example of Colorado’s RTI implementation rubric for the district level. The RTI implementation rubrics are a set of rubrics that serve as an overview of implementation for RTI.

Rubrics are available for the classroom, school, and district level. Each rubric describes what RTI looks like across the six components of RTI (problem solving, curriculum & instruction, assessment, leadership, family & community partnering, positive school climate) and across four growth stages (emerging, developing, operationalizing, optimizing).

The purpose of the rubrics is to

1. Serve as an informational resource (i.e., blueprint, roadmap of RTI implementation)
2. Measure fidelity of RTI implementation
3. Assist with planning for an action plan or school improvement plan

Visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/rti/ to find each of the rubrics focused on the district, school, and classroom level as well as additional materials. The state began developing these rubrics in 2010, and they have been available since winter 2011.
This is an example of a self-report form that was developed by the state of Connecticut. For each item in the self-assessment, an individual

- Records the rank priority—high, medium, or low
- Provides evidence to support each item
- Records the rank level of implementation—not yet, initial, partial, or full

This is an example of an interview form developed by Connecticut to help evaluate the RTI process. An interviewer may ask similar questions to staff in different roles, such as the administrative team, teachers, and support staff, to obtain multiple perspectives on the RTI model in the district or school.

Interviews also should be conducted with the district and school data team. Questions may include the following (click for animation):

- What is the purpose of your team?
- What are the activities of the team?
- What are the expectations of the team?
- How often do you meet? How long is the meeting?
- How is the agenda for the meeting determined?
- How are decisions determined?
- How are strategies for student improvement determined? How are they evaluated?
- How does the data team influence classroom/school-wide practice (e.g., coaching teachers, support personnel)?
- Give an example of how the data team supports improvement in student outcomes (e.g., academic or behavioral).

This resource can be found here: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/cali/srbi_observation_interview_protocol_october_2008.doc. This document was developed in 2008.
This is an example of a permanent product form developed by Connecticut. This form is used to examine screening and progress monitoring data. The assessments that are used within the district are listed and information is provided about each assessment.

You can view this resource here: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/curriculum/cali/assessment_inventory.doc. It was last revised in February 2012.
The next two slides provide two examples of methods for conducting direct observations, as developed by Connecticut. The first example lists key areas that the observer should be looking for on his or her walkthrough.

- The observer would write down evidence of practice, notes, or comments for each of these key areas.
- The observer may also record the readiness level (beginning, developing, proficient, or exemplary) observed for each of these key areas.

Additional information on observations can be found here: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/cali/srbi_observation_interview_protocol_october_2008.doc. This observation and interview protocol was developed in October 2008.
The second example is an observation checklist that an observer would use during an observation of the data team meeting process.

- The observer would simply check the box if he or she saw evidence of the key area during the observation period.

Additional information on observations can be found here: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/cali/srbi_observation_interview_protocol_october_2008.doc. This observation and interview protocol was developed in October 2008.
This Delaware form is used for evaluating fidelity of implementation of core instruction.

- Three levels of fidelity of implementation—A, B, and C
- Potential team action steps to improve fidelity of implementation

You can find this resource here:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/profdev/rti_files/District%20RTI%20Planning%20Guide.doc. This resource was developed in July 2007.
Have participants turn to the Measuring Fidelity Handout and complete the handout with their teams. The information in the first three columns is a review of the information just covered in the slides, and the last two columns ask teams to think about how they are currently measuring fidelity and what they might do in the future. Provide 5–10 minutes for this activity. You can also suggest that participants take notes in the first few columns as you go through information in the slides.

Instructions: Use this handout to track information on fidelity and work with your team to determine your current practices to measure fidelity of implementation and make plans for what other measures you could implement to measure fidelity. Instruct teams to select an essential component (screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, or data-based decision making) to use as a lens for this activity.

Remind teams after group time that they can continue this process for the remaining essential components. You may also want to consider assigning an essential component to different groups or tables.

After participants have had time to work as a group, take time to share out with the whole group.
WAYS TO IMPROVE FIDELITY

We have discussed considerations for fidelity across the essential components of RTI and ways to measure fidelity, in this section we will discuss some ways to improve implementation fidelity within the RTI context.
Our goal is to make RTI practices work well so that student success is the norm. Implementing RTI with deeply rooted fidelity is a crucial step in reaching that goal.

To help improve implementation fidelity, we have to assess the current school climate and then do what is necessary to make sure our school has a climate that supports fidelity.

Then, we have to assess, understand, and establish an optimum culture for fidelity practices. This can be a longer process.

Having strong leadership in place is vital in establishing both a climate and culture that supports fidelity.
Developing a school climate and culture that supports RTI implementation and fidelity is not easy. Generating buy-in and support for RTI implementation and fidelity is one of the first steps toward ensuring that everyone is on board and has a basic understanding of what is being undertaken. It is important to—

*Read slide*
Establishing the climate that supports fidelity is dependent on all staff members recognizing and understanding what it expected of them. To do this it is important to—

*Read slide*
Establishing the climate that supports fidelity is dependent on strong and knowledgeable leadership that takes care of its staff with well-chosen resources, professional development, and follow-up. This includes—

• Ensuring there are channels for open communication across staff
• Developing schedules that support grade and content-level teams to work together to plan and review instruction and progress
• Providing professional development so staff are able to meet expectations and implement the essential components with fidelity (including training on assessments, instructional strategies, etc.)
• Providing follow-up, including re-training and coaching. We will discuss coaching more fully in the following slides.
Whether implementers are experienced or just beginning, working with a coach can provide the confidence they often need. It can help an average teacher become a good teacher and a good teacher become a great teacher. Implementers become more comfortable as they become more confident and better prepared. Working with a coach and seeing success helps to convince teachers of the usefulness and importance of implementing RTI with fidelity.

There are different types of coaching that may occur and different models for each of these types of coaching. Examples include

- **Peer coaching**: Colleagues work together to coach each other. For example, teachers observe each other and provide open and constructive feedback to help each other improve their practice.
- **Administrator coaching**: A principal observes and provides feedback to staff members.
- **External or expert coaching**: An external expert works with staff and provides feedback to help staff learn.

It is important to remember that coaching aims to provide open and honest communication for learning and should not be used for punitive purposes. A more detailed example of a coaching process is described in upcoming slides.
You may be familiar with this set of data, from Joyce and Showers (2002), about the power of coaching.

In the far left column, you see a list of training components related to professional development. The first row of percentages relates to professional development that involves only theory and discussion. The successive training components are cumulative, so for Row 2, the percentages relate to training sessions that involved theory and discussion as well as a demonstration.

Now look at the column on the far right. These are percentages of participants who, after attending professional development sessions, actually use the new skill in the classroom. Use of a new skill in the classroom is, of course, the goal.

Take a minute or two to look at the chart:

- During professional development, if we talked about the theory behind a particular intervention and discussed it, demonstrated it to the participants, and had them actually practice that intervention with feedback, only 5 percent of the participants would end up using it in the classroom.
- But, if we added coaching in the classroom, the percentage of participants who would then go on to use it in the classroom jumps to 95 percent.
This flowchart illustrates a proposed sequence of coaching, modeling, fidelity checks, and feedback. Think about how your professional development might work using this framework.

**Professional Development**
Let’s imagine professional development focused on a new intervention. First, the coach models the new instruction or intervention. The coach may actually model it several times if it is a complex intervention. During one of those modeling sessions, a teacher might conduct a fidelity check on the coach. Next, the teacher practices while the coach does the fidelity check. The coach then uses the fidelity checklist to provide feedback to the teacher.

One of two options might follow, depending on what is needed:
- Additional sessions of modeling and teacher practice
- The teacher is ready to do the instruction or intervention in the classroom

**Classroom Modeling**
In the classroom, the coach models the new practice while actually teaching this to the students or student. Then, when ready, the teacher implements the procedure with another student while the coach does a fidelity check. They might take a minute or two to discuss feedback and follow-up. Depending on the results, the process of coach modeling / teacher implementing could be repeated or the teacher could move to the next level—teacher implementation.

**Teacher Implementation**
Now the teacher is adept at using the new intervention, but fidelity checks and feedback will continue during teacher implementation as needed.

**Note the arrows:**
The pattern of coaches modeling and teachers practicing can be repeated as many times as is necessary to ensure that the teacher is ready to move into the classroom. Classroom modeling by a coach can be repeated as necessary. If a teacher is having a particularly difficult time, he or she can attend a subsequent professional development session and continue the sequence from there.
Most schools face some or all of these barriers as they try to implement something new. We could all name dozens of others. These barriers are also true as we try to implement RTI and its components with fidelity at the school level.

It is important to create some order out of these barriers and plan ways to remove them. Focus on solutions rather than challenges. These barriers may occur across the implementation of RTI with fidelity.
This table also appears in the Overcoming Barriers handout. In this table you will find some ideas about actions to take to overcome possible barriers across the stages of implementation. These may or may not represent your own school. You will also find a blank table, which you can fill out with your school team.

The NCRTI stages of implementation were developed based on the stages of implementation described by Dean Fixsen (e.g., Fixsen et al., 2005). For more information on implementation, view the Implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) training module at http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/implementing-response-intervention-rti

Look at the third box on the top row—the box for “Exploring and Adopting” and “Why.” If your school is thinking of introducing fidelity practices into your already established RTI framework, it would be to your advantage to determine the enthusiasm and dedication of staff members toward RTI. If it is generally high, this bodes well for the introduction of fidelity practices. If staff members are generally lukewarm about RTI, you should do some bolstering before moving ahead with fidelity implementation. If there is general negativity toward RTI it may be best to wait until greater support can be achieved.

If your school is just beginning the exploring and adopting stage of RTI, by all means, introduce fidelity practices; ideally, both RTI and fidelity should be implemented at the same time.

Now look at the box for “Implementing” and “What & How.” During implementation, be sure that you provide staff members with fidelity tools and make sure that they are clearly understood. Ensure, too, that they understand, for example, your protocols for class walk-through and follow-up procedures. These protocols and procedures should be ready to go once you begin installation.

Next look at “Continuously Improving” and “Who.” The focus here is on the role of the coach and how staff members perceive this role. If your school does not have separate staff positions for coaches, how are those acting as coaches perceived? Do staff members understand that when a coach is working with a staff member, this is part of the support system and is in no way part of an evaluation? If you sense any concern or tension among staff members, it might be helpful and ultimately a time saver to have a short meeting or professional development session to clearly define the coach-teacher relationship.

The categories of “Who” (Social System), “What & How” (Technology), and “Why” (Theory) is based on William Reid’s work on institutional change (Reid, 1987).
Think-Pair-Share

- **Think** about
  - Some barriers to achieving fidelity at your school
  - Some potential solutions to overcome these barriers
- **Pair** with a neighbor/group from your school and discuss
- **Share** with the large group
- Take notes about what you discuss using the blank Overcoming Barriers handout

**Think** about
- Some barriers to achieving fidelity at your school
- Some potential solutions for your school to overcome these barriers

**Pair** with a neighbor or a group from your school and discuss

**Share** with the large group
REVIEW & REFLECTION
Let individuals or groups of participants from the same school review and jot down answers on the planning for fidelity handout. Give participants about 5–10 minutes. Have some participants share with the larger group.
Now it is time to sit back and think about the information that you have received during the day. What key pieces will you take with you back to your school? How could all of this be summarized?

Let’s review some of the key activities in setting up the process to ensure that RTI is being implemented with fidelity.

- Define in detail the components, procedures, and techniques related to fidelity practices.
- Clearly define and delineate the roles and responsibilities of staff members. Expectations must be spelled out for staff.
- Develop and enact a schedule and a system for collecting fidelity data at the whole-school and classroom level.
- Conduct positive instructional observations or fidelity reviews with an emphasis on problem solving, not evaluation.
- Plan for feedback and follow up. Make sure all school staff understand the procedures for feedback sessions and what is expected with regard to follow-up and accountability measures.
- Continually link instruction and interventions to improved outcomes so that teachers can see the results of their work. It is encouraging and it justifies the process. Teachers are more apt to repeat a process that worked.
- And, don’t forget the absolutely key role of coaching in professional development!

The research literature is pretty clear (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008; Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009). Higher fidelity of implementation means better results, whether we are looking at the chemistry lab, the hospital setting, the kitchen, or the school. If the rules and procedures are followed, we will have higher fidelity and better outcomes for students.
Need More Information?

National Center on Response to Intervention
www.rti4success.org

RTI Action Network
www.rtinetwork.org

IDEA Partnership
www.ideapartnership.org

Here are three websites for additional information about RTI topics.
Questions?

National Center on Response to Intervention

www.rti4success.org

Are there any questions?
Do you have a good understanding of the tools and materials?
National Center on Response to Intervention

This document was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H326E070004. Grace Zamora Durán and Tina Diamond served as the OSEP project officers. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred. This product is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: www.rti4success.org.