



National Center  
on Response to  
Intervention

# Monitoring Fidelity in RTI

**1. Question:** Turn-key training seems to be how districts cut down costs. Does fidelity decrease with this type of training? Do you recommend it?

**Answer:** *Is Turn-key a company? Regardless, I am not familiar with the term. To improve fidelity, all those with roles must know and understand their roles and responsibilities. On-going support is necessary; one way to provide that support is through coaches.*

**2. Question:** What is the best way to document interventions at a school level, for sharing with administrators, teachers, counselors and pupil personnel services, while keeping in mind confidentiality?

**Answer:** *School level interventions would reflect an aggregation of student information so that individual students would not have to be identified. Even if disaggregation was necessary, a student ID code could be used. The ID code would address the confidentiality concerns.*

**3. Question:** You mention tools that can be used to assess fidelity of the implementation of the core program/curriculum. Where could we find examples of these types of tools?

**Answer:** *We have posted fidelity assessment tools with this presentation. Recall that we are illustrating the content and the process of fidelity assessments so they are not exhaustive, just illustrative.*

**4. Question:** Are fidelity checks done for each student, or as a school do we look at how we are doing with fidelity in general?

**Answer:** *Fidelity issues cut across individual students as well as the whole school. For individual students in the secondary and tertiary prevention levels, we hope that the five elements of fidelity are assessed on a regular, routine basis. After all, if an intervention was not delivered with fidelity, how do you interpret any (positive or negative) outcome? At the school level, we need to have fidelity assessed to ensure that the procedures were followed. These issues become part of ensuring that the due process protections are followed.*

**5. Question:** Some researchers have discussed an "80% integrity" criterion that would align with your "adherence" element. Any thoughts on 80% as a general rule of thumb for time for the intervention? Would we need to make sure that the intervention was provided for at least 80% of the design?

**Answer:** *I don't understand about an 80% criterion for adherence. That seems pretty low since we are not likely to consider that as a sufficient dosage or intensity. Also, I don't know of any empirical studies that would address that criterion or any criterion. We want to know that the intervention was delivered as intended. If you only deliver 80% of the active ingredient, it seems like our expectations for improvement should also be lowered. Wouldn't you interpret the result (responsiveness/non-responsiveness) in light of that drop off?*



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**6. Question:** So fidelity is in question if a teacher chooses what s/he sees as best practice in her classroom (i.e., the "pollution" remarks)? I take it you see RtI as formulaic more than problem-solving. Please discuss that one. Thanks.

*Answer: This seems like a complicated question. First, problem-solving is fundamental to RTI. The steps in problem-solving are well sequenced and understood (e.g., identify the problem from several perspectives, generate working hypotheses to understand the logic, identify an intervention plan and assessment data needed to test the hypotheses, and so on). For classrooms and individual students the expectation is that scientific-research based interventions will be used. That would be part of a "formula" as well as using psychometrically sound assessments. Second, we hope that the screening, progress monitoring, and intervention levels are well described so that they can be applied. This implementation would be another level of formula.*

**7. Question:** If your school or district has adopted a reading core program, such as Houghton Mifflin, and we are to stay away from polluting our core by pulling in older series or activities, what should our literacy coaches or reading interventionists be using?

*Answer: I'm not sure that I am interpreting your question as you intended so I'll offer a couple views. Perhaps one is on target. #1: The interventionists would be supporting the instructors through modeling, feedback, fidelity checks, problem solving about the delivery of that reading core program. #2: The interventionists would provide the curriculum and instruction to the students in the secondary or tertiary levels of prevention.*

**8. Question:** Who should conduct walkthroughs and how often?

*Answer: The walkthroughs are really more like walk-in and sit down and watch. The walkthrough serves as one example of a fidelity check so no one person needs to be designated. Hopefully the RTI leadership team will designate which staff is in the best position to know high quality instruction, the curriculum, and how to support the instructor through feedback and modeling. Frequency should also be intentional. I am less concerned about instructors who are knowledgeable about a curriculum, have high student success, and who show well on fidelity measures. For those instructors, the focus might be more on "drift." For instructors who are new or less familiar with the curriculum and instruction, my expectation is that they will need more support, so judiciously the RTI leadership team needs to develop the procedures to support these instructors. Weekly seems like a minimum, but I can imagine that several times during a week can be helpful when we can pair the fidelity check with the feedback that will support efficacious interventions.*

**9. Question:** What are some suggestions for holding teachers accountable?

*Answer: The question is not just about teacher accountability. Accountability runs throughout the system to include everyone who is making decisions directly linked to students' outcomes. So for all of these people in their varied roles, we want to have clear role delineations, a clear picture of what the expected practice looks like, accurate assessments from multiple perspectives, and needed supports. My greatest concern is that our focus on fidelity is viewed as punitive. We need to use our fidelity assessments to identify supports that are needed, not punishments. The supports can take many forms including professional development, coaching, better data systems, instructional materials, revisions to schedules, grouping plans, staff roles, and such. Such decisions may be painful, but improving learners' outcomes to a high level means that all of us have an important stake.*

**10. Question:** When monitoring fidelity of implementation on a district level by the state, do you recommend looking at the same five elements of fidelity?

**Answer:** Great question. We need to spend more time working with SEAs on their district level fidelity assessment. We don't as yet have that experience to know how that might be formulated. Similarly, I haven't heard of SEAs that have focused much on this question. Seems like the states working with SISEP would have a better handle on this topic as they address implementation drivers.

## National Center on Response to Intervention

If you have comments and questions about this workgroup and its activities, please visit our website [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org) or contact The National Center on Response to Intervention at [rticenter@air.org](mailto:rticenter@air.org).

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