

Fidelity of Implementation

Overview

Fidelity of implementation is the delivery of instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered (Gresham, MacMillan, Beebe-Frankenberger, & Bocian, 2000). Fidelity must also address the **integrity** with which screening and progress-monitoring procedures are completed and an explicit decision-making model is followed.



RTI and Fidelity of Implementation

The RTI process must be implemented with fidelity, meaning that teachers must adhere to curriculum and assessment protocols. The ultimate aim of a fidelity system is to ensure that both the school process of RTI and classroom instruction at various tiers are implemented and delivered as intended. This aim must be balanced with the school's existing resources.

To assure fidelity of implementation, monitoring procedures must be in place to measure teacher adherence to the protocols. Monitoring can include a combination of such things as checklists, videotaping, peer feedback, and outside monitoring.

To assure the success of RTI implementation, schools must support continuous professional development and training opportunities for professional staff. This is particularly important as new staff join the school.

~The National Center on Response to Intervention, 2008

Improved outcomes in student learning are “the product of effective innovations and effective implementation efforts” (Wallace, Blasé, Fixen, & Naoom, 2008).

Specific proactive practices that help to ensure fidelity of implementation include the following:

- Link interventions to improved outcomes (credibility)
- Definitively describe operations, techniques, and components
- Clearly define responsibilities of specific persons
- Create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components
- Create a system for feedback and decision making (formative)
- Create accountability measures for non-compliance

~The National Center on Response to Intervention, 2008

The following is a list of resources that may be helpful in achieving fidelity of implementation:

http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=733&Itemid=2

Wallace, F., Blasé, K., Fixsen, D., & Naoom, S. (2008). Implementing the findings of research: Bridging the gap between knowledge and practice. Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service.

Yap, K., Aldersebaes, I., Railsback, J., Shaughnessy, J., & Speth, T. (2000). Evaluating whole-school reform efforts: A guide for districts and school staff (2nd ed.). Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.



**The Florida Department of Education will monitor fidelity of implementation, in selected schools and districts, and provide support through Regional Support Teams.
~ Florida Differentiated Accountability Plan**

Key Indicators of RtI Fidelity in General Education

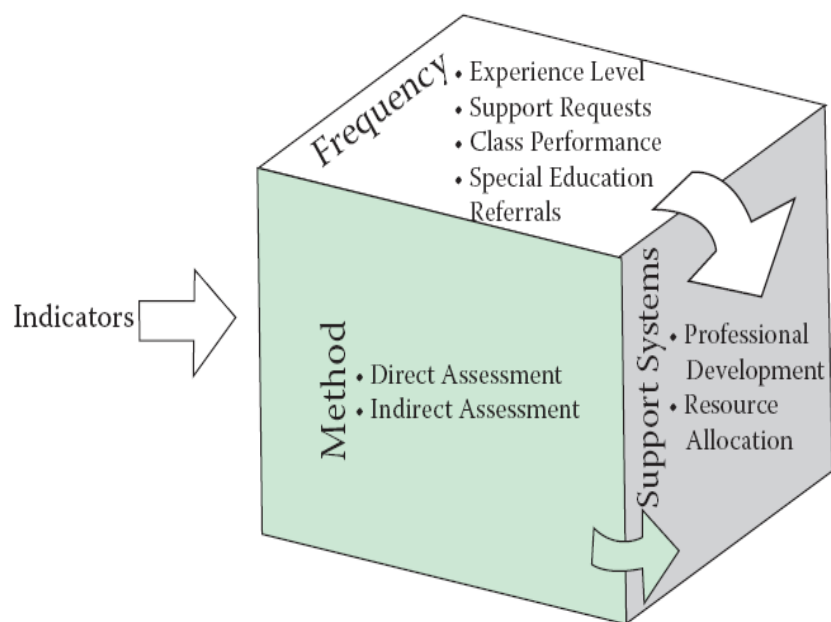
- 80-85 percent of students pass tests
- Improved results over time
- High percentage of students on trajectory
~Reschly & Gresham, 2006

Instructional Integrity: Challenges

Gresham et al. (2000) and Reschly and Gresham (2006) noted several factors that may reduce the fidelity of implementation of an intervention:

- **Complexity.** The more complex the intervention, the lower the fidelity because of the level of difficulty. (This factor includes time needed for instruction in the intervention).
- **Materials and resources required.** If new or substantial resources are required, they need to be readily accessible.
- **Perceived and actual effectiveness (credibility).** Even with a solid research base, if teachers believe the approach will not be effective, or if it is inconsistent with their teaching style, they will not implement it well.
- **Interventionists.** The number, expertise, and motivation of individuals who deliver the intervention are factors in the level of fidelity of

“No program—no matter how sound it is— can have impact if its essential elements are not used” (Yap, Aldersebaes, Railsback, Shaughnessy, & Speth, 2000).



To keep fidelity manageable for schools, a three-dimensional approach has been conceptualized:

1. **Method.** Different tools provide various kinds of information.
2. **Frequency.** The frequency with which checks are conducted varies depending on the situation.
3. **Support Systems.** The feedback and professional development opportunities needed to implement a process with fidelity are provided to staff.

In using this three-dimensional model, a proactive approach will help promote the implementation of RTI as intended, with more intensive support being provided as needed.

~The National Center on Response to Intervention, 2008

Key Components

Keys components leading to instructional integrity within the RtI framework are:

- Systematic curriculum
- Effective instruction
- Direct instruction
- Specified instructional materials
- Checklist of key instructional components
- CBM assessments
- Videos and/or observations of classroom instruction
- Results graphed against goals and comparison groups
- Student progress monitored
- Decisions regarding curriculum and instruction based on data

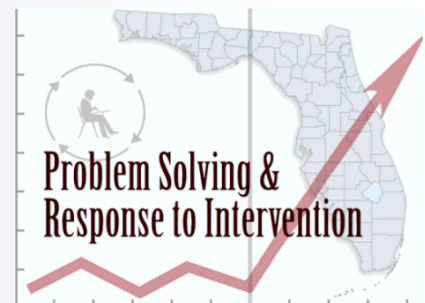


~National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, 2006

Implementing instruction with fidelity is a key factor of highly qualified teaching.



Provided by:



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This document was developed for PS/RtI, a special project funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional and Student Services (BEES), through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.