Implementing Implementation Fidelity

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In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.

Maybe Yogi Berra, Maybe Albert Einstein, Maybe someone else
• Define Implementation Fidelity (IF)
• Articulate why Implementation Fidelity is important
• Outline the steps for implementing an Implementation Fidelity study
• Determine where to begin implementing Implementation Fidelity studies on your campus
What is Implementation Fidelity?
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Implementation Fidelity is the degree to which an intervention or program is delivered or implemented as intended.

Why is Implementation Fidelity Important?

“Only by understanding and measuring whether an intervention has been implemented with fidelity can researchers and practitioners gain a better understanding of how and why an intervention works, and the extent to which outcomes can be improved” (p. 1).

Carroll, et al., 2007.
Why is Implementation Fidelity Important?

- Informs the understanding of impact of intervention on intended outcomes.
  - Why didn’t we see the level of mastery we expected?
  - Why did students in some course sections perform better than others?

- Lack of implementation fidelity can lead to faulty conclusions about program (initiative, curriculum) effectiveness.

- Lead to improved programs initiatives, interventions
- Lead to better use of resources (time, human, financial)

Reasons for deviating from planned program

• Program/Curriculum “drift”
• Excluding or shortening program curriculum/activities due to time constraints
• Shortening class meetings
• Cancelling class meeting due to illness or conference attendance
• Weather-related closures
• Substituting curriculum for extraneous or time-sensitive information
• Changing mode of delivery
• COVID-19
Implementing IF Studies

1. Implementing IF Studies
2. Determine Learning Outcomes
3. Develop and Implement Assessment Strategies
4. Gather and Analyze Data
5. Use results to implement changes designed to improve
6. Implementation Fidelity Study

Components of an IF Study

- Program Differentiation
  - What components or features of the program/curriculum facilitate the mastery of the outcome?

- Adherence
  - Was the curriculum/program delivered according to plan?

- Exposure
  - Was the program/curriculum fully implemented?

- Quality
  - Was the curriculum/program delivered competently?

- Responsiveness
  - Are students/participants actively engaged in the program?
How to ensure IF

- Self report
  - Addresses coherence
  - Checklist
  - Verbal report
  - Online submission
  - Frequency depends on program

- Observation
  - Addresses coherence
  - In person
  - Video or Audio recording
  - Frequency depends on program
  - Participant feedback

- Validity of self-report
  - Inexpensive
  - Time efficient
  - Beneficial to other instructors/facilitators

- Validity of delivery under observation
  - More accurate report
  - Time consuming
  - Labor Intensive

Breitenstein, et al., 2010.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Adherence (Y/N)</th>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>Quality (1-3)</th>
<th>Responsiveness (1-3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planned Time</td>
<td>Actual Time</td>
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</table>
Interpreting IF Results

Program not implemented as planned. SLOs were met. No conclusions can be drawn about program effectiveness. More information needed about SLO mastery.

Program implemented as planned. SLOs were met. Evidence indicates intended program/curriculum effective at achieving SLOs.

Program not implemented as planned. SLOs were not met. No conclusions can be drawn about program effectiveness or SLO mastery. New study is needed.

Program implemented as planned. SLOs were not met. Additional evidence, beyond program effectiveness, is needed to determine why SLOs were not met.

Implementation Fidelity
Working with faculty and staff to implement IF procedures

- Overcoming the challenges
  - Lack of understanding of IF
  - Lack of resources to conduct IF
  - Lack of requirements to conduct IF

- Implement IF procedures in academic programs, student affairs, student support services (mentoring, coaching), even administrative units.

- Include IF in your meta assessment rubrics

Gerstner & Finney (2013)
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