

Common Principles of Effective Practice (CPEP) and Implementation:
A Framework for Integrating Initiatives and Sustaining Evidence-based Practices

Implementation of Instruction/Intervention as Intended

What is meant by implementation of instruction/intervention as intended?

Simply stated, *implementation of instruction/intervention as intended* refers to the degree to which an educational innovation, practice, or program is put into action as planned. Putting a practice in place as planned means that it is put into place in a way that is comparable to the original program design that yielded the documented positive impact (Mihalic, 2002). It is not sufficient nor is it best practice to pick a practice that is not supported by research and do it well, nor is it enough to identify an evidence-based practice and implement it poorly. **For a student to achieve the positive outcomes from a specific practice/innovation or instruction it must be shown to be empirically effective and it must be implemented with a high degree of fidelity (as intended).**

		IMPLEMENTATION	
		Effective	NOT Effective
PRACTICES	Effective	Student Benefits	
	NOT Effective		

(Fixsen and Blase, 2005)

Implementation of instruction/intervention as intended has a number of synonyms, such as fidelity of implementation, treatment integrity, efficacy of implementation, procedural reliability, and intervention integrity. It is an important methodological consideration for educational researchers and practitioners in order to draw valid conclusions about the extent to which a practice leads to (is directly connected with) specific student outcomes (Sanetti and Kratochwill, 2009). It has been identified as one of the eight *common principles of effective practice* that the Minnesota Department of Education recognizes as integral component of a systemic framework needed to support and sustain educational innovations.

Why is it important to attend to implementation of an intervention as intended?

Without reliable and valid measures of the fidelity of interventions, there would be a lack evidence to support the internal validity of the practice (Dumas et al, 2001). Despite this importance, measures of fidelity have been largely overlooked in education research. Greenwood (2009) suggested that highly effective disciplines like aviation, engineering and medicine (i.e., where mistakes or careless implementation can potentially incur disastrous consequences) have the common characteristic that their practices are closely aligned to the

results of empirical experimental science. Lessons are learned and codified into practice based on a long history of implementing the practice in a specific manner. Because of this rigor, policies in these fields are subject to immediate change when findings clearly show a new practice (or different implementation of a practice) provides better outcomes. Evidence trumps clinical judgment. **It is this focus on clear *reproducible* outcomes that allow these practices to be taken to scale.**

How is fidelity of implementation measured?

Since the adoption of federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) as well as requirements for implementation data in proposal requests from granting agencies such as the Institute for Education Sciences (Sanetti and Kratochwill, 2009), new attention is being placed on the importance of quality of implementation and how it is measured. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006), researchers are beginning to be required to ensure scientific integrity by describing how fidelity will be measured, how often it will be evaluated and the degree of acceptable variance during a study. In the educational arena, checklists are increasingly being developed and used periodically during implementation to be sure key components of the intervention are being put into place as intended. Fidelity of implementation has the potential to become a shared tool providing researchers, policymakers and practitioners the opportunity to co-create effective, efficient, relevant and durable systems and practices resulting in positive outcomes for students.

Minnesota Example: School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The Minnesota Department of Education, in partnership with evaluation partners and SW-PBIS Regional Implementation Projects, has committed to providing annual fidelity of implementation evaluations, School Evaluation Tool (SET) developed by the PBIS National Center, www.pbis.org (Horner et. al, 2004). It is being conducted by reliability-checked SET evaluators for ALL schools who are in or who have completed the SW-PBIS two-year training cycle. Long-range sustainability plans are being developed to create district and state infrastructure to provide fidelity data for implementing programs to ensure ongoing student benefit.

References

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