


**IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE**

AN INTRODUCTION OF FUNDAMENTALS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS


Presented by  
**Bob Mata**  
RSDSS Project Director III

Division for School  
Improvement/Regional Systems of  
District and School Support

 **Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**  
Leading Educators • Supporting Students • Serving Communities

## Overview

- 1 Introduction
- 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation
- 3 Core Implementation Components
- 4 Results and discussion
- 5 Conclusions/Next Steps



## 1 Introduction



### ❖ Implementation Defined

- The process of putting a defined practice or program into practical effect—to pursue to a conclusion.
- Two sets of activities and outcomes
  - Intervention-level
  - Implementation-level

## 1 Introduction



### ❖ Degrees of Implementation

- Paper – new policies and procedures
- Process – new operating procedures put in place to conduct training, provide supervision, change information reporting forms/formats, etc.
- Performance – putting procedures and processes in place and are assessed for outcomes

## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Stages of the Implementation Process

- Exploration
- Installation
- Initial implementation
- Full implementation
- Innovation
- Sustainability

## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Exploration

- Purpose: assess potential match between needs and the necessary resources to make a decision to proceed (or not).
- Don't confuse "adoption" with actually putting the program or practice into effective use.

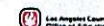
## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Installation

- Resources are secured to prepare the system for the evidenced-based effort.
- Availability of funding, staffing needs, and necessary policies are in place.
- Determine reporting frameworks and outcomes expectations.
- This is commonly known as “start up.”

## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Initial Implementation

- What is observed? Examples: changes in skill levels, capacity building, culture “shift,” etc.
- Commonly referred to as the “awkward stage.”
- Takes place at a time when the program is struggling to begin and confidence in the decision to adopt the initiative is being tested.
- Attempts to implement new practices effectively may end at this point.

## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Full Implementation

- New learning is integrated into practices, policies and procedures.
- Effort becomes fully operational.
- Realities of "doing business" of the initiative are in place.
- Evidence:
  - practitioners carry out the evidence-based practice or program with proficiency and skill
  - administration supports and facilitates the new practice or program
  - community has adapted to the presence of the innovation.

## 2 A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Innovation

- Evidence-based practices or programs are fully implemented.
- Opportunity is presented to learn more about "transfer" with fidelity.
- Caveat – first implement the practice or program with fidelity before attempting to innovate.
- "Rule of thumb" - Adaptations made after a practice or program has been fully implemented with fidelity were more successful than modifications made before full implementation.



## A Conceptual View of Implementation



### ❖ Sustainability

- What takes place after full implementation and innovation—especially as skilled practitioners, leadership, funding streams, and program requirements change.
- The goal is the long-term survival and continued effectiveness of the implementation site in the context of a change within an organization.



## Core Implementation Components



### ❖ Core components

- Refer to the most essential and indispensable components of an intervention practice or program.
- The more clearly these core components are known and defined, the more readily the program or practice can be implemented successfully.

### 3 Core Implementation Components



- ❖ If these core components are not clearly expressed, time and resources may be wasted during implementation.
- ❖ The speed and effectiveness of implementation depends upon knowing exactly what has to be in place to achieve the desired results –no more, no less.

### 3 Core Implementation Components



- ❖ Core components are also referred to as “implementation drivers.” They include:
  - Competency drivers – selection of staff, training (professional development), and coaching.
  - Organization drivers – decision support data systems, facilitative administration, and systems interventions.
  - Leadership drivers – technical and adaptive.

3

Core Implementation Components



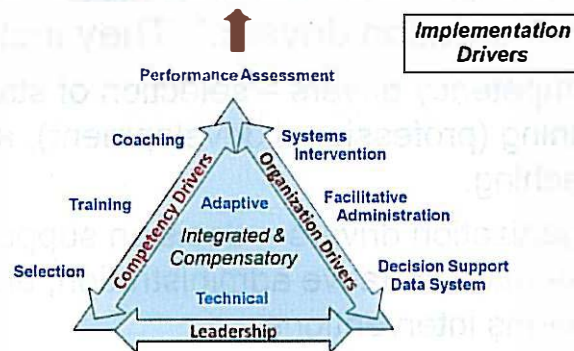
- ❖ Implementation drivers:
  - Are interactive and integrated
  - Compensate for one another so that a weakness in one component can be overcome by strengths in other components.
- ❖ They are integrated and compensatory.

3

Core Implementation Components



Improved outcomes for students



Graphics by Steve Goodman, 2003

© Fixsen & Blase, 2008



### Core Implementation Components



- ❖ Challenges facing core implementation components due to organizational dynamics.
- ❖ Importance of “feedback loops.”
- ❖ Any change in the process or content of any one implementation driver requires adjustments in other implementation drivers as well.



### Results and discussion



- ❖ Selection
  - Essentials competencies of staff who use the core intervention components in their interactions with students.
  - The critical functions of implementation consist of staff training, coaching staff on the job, regularly assessing fidelity, and using that information (data) to improve performance.
  - The extent of knowledge and direct experience in the specific program or practice might be more critical for some positions than others.



## Results and discussion



### ❖ Training (Professional Development)

- Must be useful, takes into account adult learning styles, and ultimately beneficial to those who will receive the intervention or practice (e.g., students).
- “Train and hope” does not work.
- Training by itself does not result in positive implementation.
- Other “training essentials.”



## Results and discussion



### ❖ Coaching

- Work-based, opportunistic, readily available, and reflective (i.e., debriefing, discussions, etc.)
- Coaching roles: supervision, teaching while engaged in practice activities, assessment and feedback, provision of emotional support.
- Training problems faced by coaching:
  - Underdeveloped skills
  - Fragility
  - Incompleteness



## Results and discussion



### ❖ Performance Assessment

- Importance of transparency of processes and procedures.
- Fidelity measures.
- Positive recognition.
- How others are informed about implementation efforts.



## Results and discussion



### ❖ Decision Support Data System

- Context fidelity measures
  - Completion of training (number and percent)
  - Acceptable practitioner to coach ratios
  - Availability of colleagues with special skills (as needed)
  - Availability of resources
- Compliance fidelity measures
  - Provide an outline of the core implementation components and their use by those trained
- Competence fidelity measures
  - Verify the extent to which the core intervention components were delivered with skill and attention

4

Results and discussion



❖ Facilitative Administration

- Core components of evidence-based practices or programs do not exist in a vacuum.
- Helps to carry out program evaluation functions as well as provides guidance for decision making and resources assurance.

4

Results and discussion

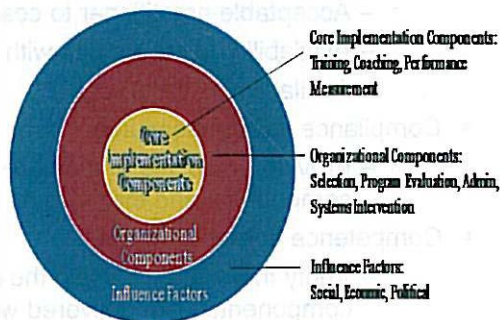


❖ Facilitative Administration

Core implementation components that must be present for implementation to occur with fidelity and good outcomes.

Figure 5

Multilevel Influences on Successful Implementation



#### 4 Results and discussion



##### ❖ Elements important to organizational change:

- Commitment of leadership.
- Involvement of stakeholders.
- Implementation task force or team.
- “Unfreezing” current organizational practices.
- Resources and re-training for new organizational roles.
- Alignment of organizational structures.
- Commitment of ongoing resources and support.

#### 5 Conclusions/Next Steps



##### ❖ Evidence for what does not work by itself:

- Information dissemination.
- Training (no matter how well done).

5

## Conclusions/Next Steps



### ❖ What does work:

- Multilevel approaches that insure successfully integrated and compensatory efforts.
- Systems alignments and structures that move the implementation of an initiative from exploration through sustainability.

Source Document for this Introduction:  
Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature  
Fixen, Naom, Blasé, Friedman, Wallace  
NIRM - University of Florida - 2005

The logo for the Los Angeles County Office of Education, featuring a stylized 'L' and 'A' inside a circle, with the text 'Los Angeles County Office of Education' below it.



**Thank You**

For more information:  
Contact Bob Mata  
[Mata\\_robert@lacoec.edu](mailto:Mata_robert@lacoec.edu)  
562-922-6792

Los Angeles County  
Office of Education

