Module 3d: Implementation Fidelity
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ASSESSMENT

Plan

1. Asking a Question (Purpose)

2. Designing an Assessment Study

3. Assessment Instruments (validity and reliability)

4. Analyzing Results

5. Using and Communicating Results

6. Celebrating Results (follow-through and reflection)

Implement

Follow-through

Resources

http://www.ndsu.edu/vpsa/assessment/resources_for_assessment/implementation_fidelity/

• Above website includes a template for use

• Fisher (2014): The Importance of Implementation Fidelity Data for Evaluating Program Effectiveness
Learn How to Juggle
1. I will describe juggling
2. Watch a juggling video
3. Explain critical juggling techniques
4. In-class practice
5. Evaluation
Example (from Fisher paper)

- Orientation program wasn’t achieving its goals
- Should the whole program be scrapped and replaced with something else?
- Auditors pretended to be students and participated in the orientation program
- Identified areas where students weren’t engaging in the program and issues (such as a video that couldn’t be heard clearly)
- Addressing these issues of implementation then became the priority instead of reworking the whole program
Why do an Implementation Fidelity Assessment Project?

- You’ve designed a program around learning outcomes
- You’ve selected learning outcomes assessment instruments and have an implementation method for the end of the program
- Post-program results are disappointing
- Do you scrap the program?

Why do an Implementation Fidelity Assessment Project?

- You’ve promised to do certain things for a grant project
- One essential reporting element for the grant is whether or not the things you promised to do were actually done
- Has programming “drifted” from what was originally started?
Why do an Implementation Fidelity Assessment Project?
• You’ve hired 6 GAs to each lead a different group of students through a program
• Each GA has flexibility to “cover” each topic however he or she desires
• But, essential that all aspects of the program are covered by all GAs
• Are they all covering all of the topics that should be covered?

Adherence and Quality: Two Critical Aspects
• Adherence
  – Extent of match with what was planned
• Quality
  – Clarity
  – Compelling or memorable
  – Appropriateness of delivery technique
  – Responsiveness / engagement
  – Exposure
Adherence

- Whether or not the specific features of the program were implemented as planned
- Planning based on learning outcomes or other outcomes for the event
- Requires careful planning (no “winging it”)
  - One benefit of implementation fidelity is the requirement for careful planning of programs!
- Often will include amount of time to be spent on the topic (which can be checked by the auditor)

Adherence Example

- Planned to describe 3 student support services:
  - Disability Services
  - Counseling Center
  - Student Health Service
- Participants have lots of questions about DS so you run out of time and don’t talk at all about SHS

Quality

- Wait, isn’t adherence sufficient?
- Program elements can differ in the quality of their implementation
  - Sound of a video can be distorted
  - Presenter might gloss over important aspects
  - Length of session might be too long and participants stop paying attention
  - Unexpected behaviors (such as longer bathroom breaks for some) may result in low quality implementation
What is “Quality?”

• This has been a long-debated question! (see Harvey and Green, “Defining Quality,” 1993)
• In implementation fidelity studies, the focus is usually on “Quality as Fitness for Purpose”

Quality as Fitness for Purpose

“If something does the job it is designed for then it is a quality product or service.”

• Essential that the auditor (and those leading the program) know what the program is trying to accomplish!
• Some level of subjectivity, BUT sometimes it can be very obvious and auditors can bring a level of expertise

Common Aspects of Quality

• Clarity
  – Was it obvious to the participants what the key message was?
• Compelling or memorable
  – Will participants likely remember the key message after leaving the program?
• Appropriateness of delivery technique
  – Were there any issues that impacted the delivery? Was the selected technique appropriate and implemented properly?
• Responsiveness / engagement
  – Did participants appear engaged with the material?

• Exposure
  – Were all participants exposed to the critical aspects of the program?
  – “Opportunities to learn”
  – Sufficient time used on the topic?

Key Steps in doing an I.F. assessment
• Program planning and planning the implementation fidelity assessment
• Identify the auditors and have a pre-meeting
• Finalize the template for the assessment
• Arrange for a visit to discuss findings after the assessment

Selecting Auditors
• Self-audit a good choice
• I can serve as an auditor if you want
• Helpful to have someone with insight or some expertise in the area
• Consider bringing in someone from another campus to do this assessment and perhaps as part of department / program review (con: $$)
Using Results

1. Low Fidelity
   - Program was implemented as intended, but outcomes and impacts were not as planned due to unexpected operational or procedural issues.
2. High Fidelity
   - Program was implemented as intended, and outcomes and impacts were as planned.
3. Medium Fidelity
   - Program was implemented, but outcomes and impacts were not as planned due to unexpected operational or procedural issues.
4. Central Fidelity
   - Program was not implemented as intended, and outcomes and impacts were not as planned.

Final Tips

- Use a template (we can look at it together)
- The evaluative aspect can be hard for staff – BUT, who wants to do something poorly for many years and never know it?
- One key benefit is the requirement for detailed planning of the event prior to assessment and explaining the planning to the auditor
- Should be used as one part of comprehensive assessment (Needs -> Fidelity -> Outcomes)

Going Forward

- Developed a "checklist" for teams to use during the planning, development, and implementation of an implementation fidelity assessment
- Goal is not to "check" every item on the list – rather goal is to encourage thoughtful reflection and opportunity to catch errors before they occur