Antecedents to Outcomes:

Assessing Curricular Alignment and Program Quality as a Precursor to Understanding Outcomes

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Agenda

- Discuss the importance of assessing curricular alignment and implementation in understanding outcomes.

- Discuss the evaluation of the implementation of an extended learning time program in a large urban district in the northeast.

- Present a classroom observation protocol used to triangulate findings in the second year of the study.

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The bridge between a promising idea and the impact on students is implementation, but innovations are seldom implemented as intended.

—Berman & McLaughlin, 1976

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Fidelity of Implementation

- *Fidelity of implementation* is traditionally defined as the determination of how well an intervention is implemented in comparison with the original program design during an efficacy and/or effectiveness study.

- Failure to establish fidelity can severely limit the conclusions that can be drawn from any outcome evaluation.

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Fidelity of Implementation in Education

- The extent to which the project was implemented as proposed or planned.

- A measure of the basic extent of use of the curricular materials.

- Opportunity to learn.

- To implement an innovation faithfully in practice—that is, to use it as it is 'supposed to be used,' as intended by the developer"

- The relationship between an intended program and an enacted program.

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Criteria for Measuring Fidelity of Implementation

- Adherence
- Duration
- Quality of delivery
- Participant responsiveness
- Program differentiation

---O'Donnell, 2008

Criteria for Measuring Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity to structure

Fidelity to process

Curriculum Alignment

- In the context of education, *alignment* can be broadly defined as the degree to which the components of an education system—such as standards, curricula, assessments, and instruction—work together to achieve desired goals.

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Curriculum Alignment

intended ⟷ enacted ⟷ learned ⟷ assessed

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Curriculum Mapping

- Maps can reveal strengths and emphases in the scope of the curriculum, and can depict points and degrees of integration. These maps can also reveal gaps in coverage in the scope of the curriculum.

  - - Kopera-Frye, Mahaffy, Messick, & Svare (2008)

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Curriculum Map

Course	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome 5
Course 1					
Course 2					
Course 3					
Course 4					
Course 5					
Course 6					

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ELT Enrichment Program

- Large urban school district

- Implemented in 12 schools

- 5 community partners.

Goals:

- Enhance student motivation and interest in learning through exposure to hands-on, experiential learning activities not available in regular classrooms.

- Increase time for teachers to collaborate on instruction.

- Improve student achievement.

Assessing Implementation of an Extended Learning Time Enrichment Program

Purpose: Explore the impact of the enrichment program on youth development and determine quality and fidelity of program delivery and implementation in order to provide feedback to the district.

Research Questions

1. Are partners consistently providing engaging, high quality enrichment and youth development activities?

2. Do partners actively participate in meetings and partnership activities (e.g., joint planning, professional development)?

3. Are partnership activities productive, focused, and effective?

4. Is the partner operating in a cost-effective manner?

5. What factors contribute to success or challenges of ELT enrichment activity delivery, by school and partners?

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Methodology

Mixed Methods Design

- Document Review

- Key Informant Interviews

- Focus Groups with Classroom and Enrichment Teachers

- Student Surveys

- Parent Surveys

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Year 1 Findings

Implementation was impeded by:

- Lack of student engagement during enrichment time
- Disruptive behavior
- Lack of classroom management skills among enrichment teachers
- Lack of curricular coherence and instructional quality

ELT Enrichment Classroom Observation Protocol

Purpose: Assess quality of delivery and participant responsiveness (student engagement) in four dimensions of enrichment classrooms.

- Classroom Environment
- Student Engagement
- Classroom Management
- Instructional Strategies and Activities

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Document

- Student behaviors that exhibit engagement/disengagement
- Teacher behaviors thought to facilitate student engagement and learning
- Teacher behaviors related to classroom and behavior management.
- Classroom/Environmental factors that contribute to student engagement and learning
- Evidence of Individualized/differentiated instruction.
- Lesson Plan existence/adherence
- Evidence of alignment with Common Core Standards

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Classroom Environment

+	-
There are few, if any instances of student to student misbehavior (e.g. physical fighting, persistent bullying, and persistent use of discriminatory or derogatory language. (CE)	There are instances of student confrontation with the teacher. Student uses derogatory language, threatens, or gets physical. (CE)
There are few, if any confrontations, acts of disrespect, or use of derogatory language between students and teacher. (CE)	There are instances of flagrant student to student misbehavior. E.g. physical fight, persistent bullying, persistent use of discriminatory or derogatory language. (CE)
There are enough materials for all students to participate in activities. (CE)	Learning environment is unsafe (broken glass, vats of chemicals, etc.) (CE)
There is enough space for the activity to occur. (CE)	A lack of materials impeded teacher's ability to teach lesson and/or student learning. (CE)
The room presents no safety concerns. (CE)	There is not sufficient support or supervision.
There are enough staff in the room to provide support to students, particularly those that need extra help. (CE)	Supervision is not adequate for helping students who need extra help. (CE)

Observation Protocol-Student Engagement

Student Engagement	+	-
On task		
Enthusiasm		
Interest		
Interaction with teacher		

Data Collection

- 46 Observations in 12 schools across K-8 grade levels.

- Signed consent was obtained prior to each observation.

- December 2015 through March of 2016.

- At least 2 classrooms in each building.

- 20-30 minute observations.

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Analysis

- Notes summarized by classroom and four dimensions under study.

- Summaries and notes were transferred to an analysis table that included cells for each dimension, content analyzed and coded either +, =, or -.

- These codes were totaled by school and dimension and percentages computed.

Initial Findings

Number and Percent of Classrooms					
	+		=		-
Engagement	25	55%	10	22%	10	22%
Management	17	37%	11	24%	18	39%

Note: In one class engagement was not rated as students were taken to the playground so no instructional activities occurred.

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Considerations in Analysis

- Content of enrichment varies from school to school.

- Students lack choice in enrichment activities.

- Behavior in many schools across the district is generally difficult to manage, especially at the middle schools.

- New code of conduct is only in second year.

- High enrichment staff turnover.

- Staff typically not experienced educators.

- Number of staff in room varied by program.

- Cultural competence of staff may affect engagement and behavior.

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Conclusions

- It is not known if student engagement and classroom management have improved at program sites since last year.

- Adding observations to the study allowed for more objective understanding of program implementation and quantifies the degree to which quality instruction and programming exists across schools and agencies. Relationships between observational data and student outcomes can now be more clearly assessed.

- Observational data about program implementation can help explain perceptual differences among program participants and shed light on outcome findings in the second year of the study.

- Assessing implementation of whole school intervention is difficult due to the complexity of the educational setting, the number of sites under study, and the amorphous nature of evolving programs. A lack of clarity of program theory can also complicate implementation.

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