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Implementation Fidelity and a Middle School Reading Program

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PRESENTATION**

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Abstract

Middle school reading scores throughout the state of California have been predominantly less than average in recent years. An unknown problem existed that stems from the implementation of reading programs at the middle school level. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the level of fidelity to a reading program at a local school. Six teachers participated in the investigation. Six themes were identified during the implementation of the reading program. The results of the study lead to social change because it provides an opportunity for community programs, school programs, and social programs to be implemented with high fidelity.

Doctoral Capstone

Problem

In the United States, two in three students are not reading at grade level and need intervention (The U. S. Department of education, 2018). At the middle school level the problem is exacerbated. Schools are trying to mitigate this problem, but data reveal a different outcome.

The problem addressed in this investigation was the lack of program fidelity within a schools' reading program.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the level of fidelity during the implementation process of a reading program at a local middle school.

Significance

Schools can understand how to use data to increase implementation fidelity

Increasing implementation fidelity leads to the delivery of a program as intended

The school can learn how to develop an after-school reading program structured around existing reading performance gaps

ELA teachers can work collaboratively to create a school-wide implementation checklist geared to increase fidelity in a reading program

Theory

The **theory of andragogy** (Knowles, 1984) provided the framework for this study

Relevant Scholarship

Actionable steps in Implementation Fidelity achieve success primarily because data is collected to understand why the program was successful (Smith, Finney, & Fulcher, 2017, p. 72).

A reading program needs clear and measurable data to set learning expectations (Mitchell, Baron, & Macuruso, 2018, p. 180).

Incorporate sustained and targeted teacher training; thus, teachers are a vital component of the implementation process (Bethune, 2017).

Teacher-student interactions using student learning outcomes and learning targets during the intervention program is essential (Kratz, Xie, Marcus, Pellecchia, Stahmer, Locke, Beidas, and Mandell, 2018).

The use of an implementation fidelity checklist to measure student outcomes and level of fidelity (Little, Riggs, Shin, Tate, and Pentz, 2015).

Introducing an assessment cycle in a reading programs allows a school to measure student outcomes (Fine & Lee, 2017).

Teacher reflection creates an environment of growth mindset in the classroom (Wlodarsky, 2018).

Performance feedback increases the level of fidelity during the implementation of a reading program (Schles & Robertson, 2019).

Research Question

RQ 1: How and in what ways are teachers implementing the reading program?

RQ 2: How structured is the reading intervention curriculum at GS?

RQ 3: What are the teacher's perception of the reading curriculum at GS?

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to recruit 12 teachers from a middle school. The teachers were emailed and asked to take part in a survey.

From that group, 6 teachers took part in this qualitative case study.

The chosen teachers had prior experience with the implementation process of a reading program.

Procedures

The survey consists of years of teaching experience, level of familiarity with the implementation of reading programs, and familiarity with the five constructs of Implementation fidelity (adherence, dosage, quality of instruction, differentiation, and participant responsiveness)

Six candidates were invited to take part in the investigation.

One-hour interviews at the school site.

A follow-up interview was conducted with 3 teachers because more data were needed/clarification of the initial interview responses.

Analysis

A semi-structured interview protocol was used. The Interview consisted of 15 sub-questions that were compartmentalized into the three research questions..

The interviews were recorded and immediately transcribed verbatim.

The data was separated into three section, one section for each research question.

To immerse myself in the data each section was casually explored

The next step was to code each section using broad categories. These categories were derived from the 5 constructs of implementation fidelity and the theory of Andragogy

The major codes were used to develop 6 emerging themes

Findings

The qualitative case study revealed six major findings.

RQ 1: How and in what ways are teachers implementing the reading intervention curriculum at the school?

- **Theme 1:** Problems with program expectations (adherence)
- **Theme 2:** Inadequate amount of dosage (dosage)

RQ 2: How structured is the reading intervention curriculum at the school?

- **Theme 3:** Lack of uniformity during program differentiation (differentiation)
- **Theme 4:** Issues with pacing plan during the intervention (adherence)
- **Theme 5:** Lack of quality of instruction in the reading program. The program did not set a criteria for quality of instruction (quality of instruction)

RQ 3: What are the teacher's perception of the reading curriculum at the school?

- **Theme 6:** Willingness to make a difference. Teachers want to succeed and do their best (Teacher Responsiveness)

Note: Adherence, Dosage, Quality of Instruction, Differentiation, and Teacher Responsiveness are the 5 constructs of Implementation Fidelity.

Interpretation

Schools need to understand the elements that affect implementation fidelity thoroughly. Schools must provide their teachers with sustained training throughout the intervention. The collection of fidelity data should be used to drive the intervention program. The collection of fidelity data should support changes to the program. Intervention reading programs work; it is the implementation process that needs attention.

Limitations

The study focused on six teachers and one school.

The case study focused on English teachers.

The lack of classroom observations would provide further evidence of implementation fidelity.

Recommendations

Providing teachers with guidance to the implementation process. A one-hour training session before the initiation of the reading program.

Collecting data using a checklist, observations, and survey. The data collected from these tools would provide a more practical workshop.

The research can focus on how the outcomes of the investigation are associated with implementation fidelity.

Social Change Implications

Understanding how implementation fidelity positively impacts student outcomes can lead to social change as schools begin to close the reading gap within school-aged children.

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