Assessing Readiness to Implement Social-Emotional Learning Interventions

Shannon B. Wanless, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology in Education
School of Education
University of Pittsburgh

Implementation

- High quality implementation increases the effectiveness of school-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

- Unfortunately, intervention implementation varies widely (Weise, 1992; Weisz, Sandler, Durlak, & Anton, 2005).

- This high degree of variability is concerning because higher levels of implementation often relate to better outcomes for children (Hansen, 2001).
What is fidelity of implementation?

• The extent to which teachers implement new intervention practices in the manner in which they were designed.

• Also known as “treatment integrity”, “adherence”, “implementation quality”, etc. (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 1998; Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zine, 2005).
“The best strategy may well be to provide coaching and support where it is most needed to ensure that all teachers implement the program effectively.”

How can we figure out who is going to implement our interventions successfully, **BEFORE** we spend our resources training them?

-A more efficient use of training resources.
-A more individualized approach to training that may increase efficacy.
Studying Predictors of Implementation with the *Responsive Classroom®* Approach

**Study 1: Ask the teachers!**
- Using focus groups to ask teachers what they perceived to influence their implementation.

**Study 2: Triangulation with quantitative data.**
- Following up the most salient focus group theme with quantitative data.

**Study 3: What about teacher characteristics?**
- Using baseline quantitative data to examine the role of teacher characteristics.

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Responsive Classroom®

www.responsiveclassroom.org
Northeast Foundation for Children
Responsive Classroom®

- School-based SEL intervention for K-6th
- 10 main teaching practices to promote social and academic development.

- Practices include:
  - Morning Meeting
  - Conscious Teacher Language
  - Respectful Logical Consequences
  - Academic Choice
Responsive Classroom Efficacy Study (RCES)

- **PI:** Dr. Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman, Center for Advanced Study of Teaching & Learning (CASTL), University of Virginia
- Three-year cluster RCT (random assignment at the school level)
- 24 schools in the mid-Atlantic
- 2000 children and their teachers from grades 2-5

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Study 1: Ask the teachers!

1. Schools/Administration

• “Gatekeepers of Change” (Berends, Bodily, & Kirby, 2002; Desimone, Payne, Fedoravicius, Henrich, & Finn-Stevenson, 2004).

• Principal support has related to implementation, but what does support mean exactly? (Marshall & Caldwell, 2007; Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003).

2. Intervention Coaches

• Coaching produces change in teacher practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Grierson & Gallagher, 2009, Wallace, Blasé, Fixsen, & Naoom, 2008).

• Implementation varies systematically by differences in coaching (Downer, LoCasale-Crouch, Hamre, & Pianta, 2009).
Study 1: Ask the teachers!

3. Other Teachers

- Interacting with supportive colleagues supports implementation (Fine, 2010; Franke, Carpenter, Levi, & Fennema, 2001).

4. Students

- Smaller class sizes, higher rates of students living in poverty, and more ethnic minority students relate to high levels of implementation (Berends, et al., 2002; Zvoch, 2009).

- Higher student interest in the intervention topic relates to higher rates of teacher implementation (Ringwalt, et al., 2003).
Initial Conceptual Model

Setting Level Influences

- Schools/Administration
- Intervention Coaches
- Other Teachers
- Students

Fidelity of Implementation
Study 1: Ask the teachers!
Research Questions

1. What are the setting level factors that support and create barriers to implementation?

2. What specific mechanisms do teachers perceive to account for the relations between setting level factors and teachers’ implementation?

Study 1: Ask the teachers!
Participants and Procedure

• Eight Focus Groups, Summer after First Year of Implementation
  – 33 3rd grade teachers out of 63 randomly assigned to the intervention group volunteered to participate in focus groups.
  – Not significantly different from sample, based on the following:
    • Gender: 31 female, 2 male
    • Education Level: 17 with at least a Master’s Degree
    • Age: 34.27 (10.80) years
    • Teacher-Rated Use of RC Practices at Baseline

• Structured Protocol, yet room for following leads. Final Questionnaire.
Study 1: Ask the teachers!

Analytic Strategy

- Transcripts were independently read, re-read, and coded for supports and barriers for the four setting level influences and other. Students folded into other.
- Dropped the need for supports and barriers.
- Independently organized quotes into 12 codes based on content (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Dropped 4 lesser codes, and clustered the 8 into 3.
- Questionnaire responses were tabulated.
Study 1: Ask the teachers!

RQ 1: Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greatest Support</th>
<th>Greatest Barrier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools/Administration</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Coaches</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teachers</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study 1: Ask the teachers!

RQ 2: Findings

• **Principal buy-in**
  – Motivation, Consistency, Accommodation

• **Individualized Coaching**
  – Real-world Applications, On-demand Resources

• **Psychologically Safe Context**
  – Validation, Pace, Social Support

Study 1: Ask the teachers!

This study:

- Provides specificity to definitions of influences on implementation
- Makes us wonder if principal buy-in, in particular, can be quantitatively assessed
Study 2: Triangulation

- Principals all said they wanted to participate in RCES...
- But 70% were perceived as barriers to implementation.
- Who could help us quantitatively rate principal buy-in?
- Different raters have different internal reference groups, experiences with the construct, and demographic characteristics (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Mashburn, Hamre, Downer, & Pianta, 2006).
Revised Conceptual Model

Psychologically Safe Context

Principal Buy-In

Individualized Coaching

Fidelity of Implementation
Study 2: Triangulation

Reporters

Principals tend to rate their schools more favorably than teachers (Bingham, Haubrich, & White, 1993; Desimone, 2006).

- Principals
- Teachers

Outside observers have been found to have greater predictive validity than self-reports (Borkenau & Liebler, 1993).

- Intervention Coaches for Teachers (CTs)
- Intervention Coach for Principals (CP)
Study 2: Triangulation
Research Questions

1. Are reports of principal buy-in significantly related to teachers’ observed implementation?

2. To what extent do reports of principal buy-in converge across raters?

Study 2: Triangulation

Participants

Teachers
• A new cohort of teachers
• 4th grade intervention teachers in the end of their second year of implementation.
• All 48 participated
• 39 were female, 32 had at least a master’s degree, $M=10$ years (2-34) teaching experience.

 Principals
• All 13 principals participated and 12 were the same as in Study 1.
• 10 were female, $M=7$ years (2-20) as principals.
Study 2: Triangulation

Participants

CTs

• 6 CTs, all employed by NEFC, same as in Study 1.
• 4 were female, 5 had at least a master’s degree, $M=8$ years (6-12) coaching experience at NEFC.

CP

• One CP from NEFC worked with principals throughout RCES.
• Female, former principal of an RC school, extensive experience with implementing schools.
Study 2: Triangulation Measures

Observed Fidelity of Implementation
- Classroom Practices Observational Measure (C-POM; Abry, Brewer, Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007)
- 16 items, live coded, 3 times per year during mathematics instruction.

Principal Buy-In Questionnaires
- Teachers: 6 items ($\alpha=.74$)
- Principals: 2 items ($\alpha=.70$)
- CTs: 8 items ($\alpha=.88$)
- CP: 11 items ($\alpha=.95$)
**Study 2: Triangulation**  
**RQ 1: Findings**  
Multilevel models of relations with implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>Standard Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **MODEL 1**  
Teacher | .05          | .02            | .10             |
| **MODEL 2**  
Principal | .67          | .19            | .20             |
| **MODEL 3**  
CTs      | 1.00         | .19**          | .07             |
| **MODEL 4**  
CP       | .98          | .10*           | .05             |

***=p<.001, **=p<.01, *=p<.05

### Study 2: Triangulation

#### RQ 2: Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>CV</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher Rating</td>
<td>2.96 (.58)</td>
<td>19.59</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principal Rating</td>
<td>3.73 (.38)</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CT Rating</td>
<td>2.58 (.81)</td>
<td>31.40</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CP Rating</td>
<td>1.77 (1.08)</td>
<td>61.10</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.65***</td>
<td>.86***</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Observed Implementation</td>
<td>1.72 (.30)</td>
<td>17.44</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001, **=p<.01, *=p<.05

Study 2: Triangulation

- Do CT/CP ratings relate to implementation because they are from an outside perspective, or because they items reflected unique aspects of principal buy-in?
  - More concrete behaviors such as returning phone calls

- Across Study 1 and Study 2 we narrowed in on the importance of principals and coaches, but we can’t help but wonder...
Study 3: What about teachers?

1. Initial teacher beliefs (Efficacy) and practices (Alignment) can influence teachers’ pathway through implementation (Bruce & Ross, 2008; Evans, 1996; Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, 2010).

   • In previous studies of RC greater teacher self-efficacy and having teaching priorities similar to RC were related to greater implementation (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004).

2. Start at baseline!

   • Coaches cannot rate principal buy-in at baseline with our items. This is when we need to determine how to individualize supports.
Study 3: What about teachers? Research Questions

1. What is the relation between teachers’ initial alignment with the intervention and initial perceptions of their efficacy with observed implementation of RC after training was complete, two years later?

2. What is the relation between initial alignment and efficacy with implementation via engagement in RC training?
Re-Revised Conceptual Model

Psychologically Safe Context
- Coach-Rated Principal Buy-In
- Individualized Coaching

Fidelity of Implementation

Teacher Alignment & Self-Efficacy

Engagement
Study 3: What about teachers?
Participants & Measures

- Same 4th grade teachers, principals, and CTs as Study 2.
- Same observed implementation measure (CPOM)
- CT rated Engagement in Training, 7 items, ($\alpha=.76$)

**Alignment**
- Teacher-rated 46 items, ($\alpha=.92$)
- CLASS Emotional Support, ($\alpha=.88$; Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008)

**Efficacy**
- Teacher-rated Efficacy in Classroom Management, 4 items, ($\alpha=.89$)
- Teacher-rated Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate, 5 items, ($\alpha=.70$)
Study 3: What about teachers?

Lingering Questions

• Mechanisms underlying Observed Emotional Support relation.
  – Alignment with aims of RC or with training style?

• Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate: Overconfidence?
  1. How much can you do to make the school a safe place?
  2. How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school?
  3. How much can you do to get students to trust teachers?
  4. How much can you do to help other teachers with their teaching skills?
  5. How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and the administration?

• Why via engagement and not direct?
Lingering Questions Regarding Generalization

- Can SEL interventions be categorized into “levels of change” that would interact with how predictors relate to implementation?
- How can we create an implementation readiness screening tool to help individualize our supports for SEL implementation?
- Next steps: Examining Psychologically Safe Context at baseline.
Thank you.

Shannon B. Wanless
5937 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
School of Education
University of Pittsburgh
230 Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260 US

swanless@pitt.edu