



SISEP

State Implementation and Scaling-up
of Evidence-based Practices

January
2021
SISEP eNote

Equity in Implementation: Leveraging Initial implementation to Challenge Systemic Inequities

Initial implementation begins when practitioners first begin to utilize a program or practice. In this period of trial and learning, implementation is not perfect as the infrastructure is being critically examined for areas of improvement and inequities are being challenged, called out, and addressed at all levels of the system. [Click to Tweet](#)

To attend to the implementation of programs or practices in ways that disrupt the current system to achieve equitable outcomes, districts and schools should:



Use data regularly to inform decision-making and improve implementation of the program/practice.



Measure fidelity in the use of the program/practice and monitor for improvement on outcomes of interest, focusing on reducing disparities.



Expect variability in the quality of implementation and work to address any barriers or needs at all levels of the system.



Collect evidence for feasibility of implementation, such as

- increase in use of the program/practice with fidelity;
- increase in staff confidence and skill in using the program/practice;
- increase in coaches'/supervisors' confidence in supporting staff; and
- meaningful engagement of recipients and families in the program/practice.

Initial implementation allows practitioners the time and space to try out a new program or practice and continuously improve their knowledge and skills to implement it well. Additionally, implementation teams and their transformational leaders embrace this stage as a period of action research; a time to disengage from those beliefs, practices and policies that maintain ongoing inequalities and actively address each level at which discriminatory practices exist.

During initial implementation, it is important seek regular feedback and information from practitioners, leadership, and support staff, review data with a focus on current inequities, and involve practitioners and stakeholders in the problem-solving process.

Equity in Implementation



Use data regularly to inform decision-making and improve implementation of the program/practice.

Both quantitative and qualitative data must be used to reflect on how well the program or practice is being implemented and whether it is moving the needle for students. Data teams should question the weight placed on certain types of data (relying primarily on administrative/student outcome and not incorporating observation, survey, or focus groups) and how we disaggregate data to explore differences between and across groups (e.g., by race/ethnicity, gender, disability/ability).

At team meetings, take a look around the room and ask the following:

- who is here and who is missing?
- why might they have been excluded?

When making decisions using data, ask the following:

- Who will benefit by this decision?
- Who will be marginalized by this decision?
- What will this team do to mitigate this gap?

Diversity in lived experience and thought is essential to any continuous improvement process. [Click to Tweet](#)



Measure fidelity in the use of the program/practice and monitor for ongoing improvement.

Fidelity is defined as the degree to which a program or practice is implemented as intended. As fidelity is being measured, it is important to reflect on how the measure was developed and how practitioners were selected and trained, and are being coached. Measures should be co-created with those implementing the program or practice and considered as developmental and not as a formal evaluation tool. Training and coaching should not only reflect what knowledge, skills, and experiences practitioners are coming with, but also the setting and context in which the program or practice is being implemented and supports are provided in.

“What if we realized the best way to ensure an effective educational system is not by standardizing our curricula and tests but by standardizing the opportunities available to all students?”



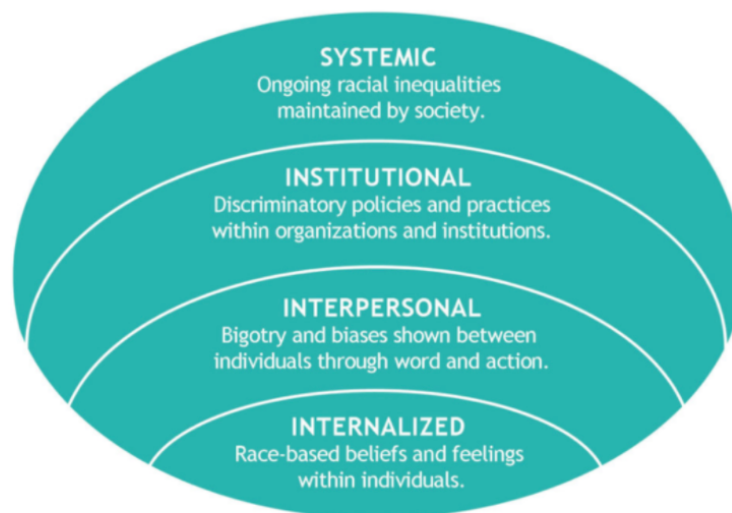
-Ibram X. Kendi



Expect variability in the quality of implementation and work to address any barriers or needs at all levels of the system.

Variation is normal in initial implementation; however, it is important that implementation teams seek to understand and respond to variability beyond just looking at what needs to change at the point of implementation (practitioner-level) – barriers might need to be addressed at the school, district, region or state levels. Additionally, asking the question of “how is racism operating here?” at each level of the system can open the door to exploring policies and practices that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) - students and practitioners alike (see the figure below). For example, do differences exist in the quality of implementation between BIPOC and white practitioners who have the same coach? If so, how is power operating and how is implementation being supported through school resources (if they are available)? [Click to Tweet](#)

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Source: Lietz, M. (2018, August 27). 5 Mind-Blowing Realities About Race (That White People May Not Know). Emmanuel Gospel Center. <https://www.egc.org/blog-2/2018/5/23/3u8bsicsasybnnco5bea7vculw6m9s>.

W. Edwards Deming said that,

“every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.”

As efforts launch to support practitioners to begin implementing a program or practice with fidelity, assumptions are made about the type of support practitioners receive and how such support is provided, how data are reviewed and disaggregated, and how feedback is received and incorporated into action.

There is no question that race is operating, but the questions should be both **“how is it operating”** and **“what can be done to address it.”**

Then, we must begin to act.

Check out next month’s e-Note on:

Supporting Virtual Instruction.

To Learn More:

- [Implementation Stages Planning Tool](#)
 - [Lesson 7: Implementation Stages Planning Tool](#)

Other Resources:

- Jones CP, 2000, Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale, American Journal of Public Health, 90, 1212-1215
- Jones CP, 2018, Toward the Science and Practice of Anti-Racism: Launching a National Campaign Against Racism, Ethnicity and Disease, 28, 231-234

Other News from SISEP:

- Check out new resource state of Kentucky: Co-creation of Kentucky’s [Usable Innovation: A How To Guide](#)
- Save the Date for SISEP Active States Forum June 15th – 16th. More information coming soon!





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