Make "It" Happen

Using Implementation Science with Wilson® Programs

Exploration

Installation

Initial Implementation

Full Implementation

Make "It" Happen

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**MAKE "IT" HAPPEN: USING IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE WITH WILSON®
PROGRAMS**

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Today's students must be prepared to compete on a global level. This has raised expectations for the education system, which now calls for all teachers to use evidence-based curricula, instructional practices, and technology in the classroom. Concurrently, student performance standards have raised the bar on student achievement. In trying to meet these expectations and goals, schools and districts face several major challenges:

1. Teaching all teachers to use effective programs as intended (fidelity).
2. Sustaining those programs for generations of students to come.
3. Scaling programs that work to all classrooms in a school or all schools in a district.

When the shared goal is to improve outcomes for all students, the solution requires one to understand implementation science and its relevance to the process of change within the context of schools and districts.

A Formula for Success

For decades, it has been clear that despite the best intentions to incorporate evidence-based or promising practices into all classrooms, intended outcomes are difficult to achieve. In exploring the many reasons why this happens, researchers and practitioners have found an approach that can work. In the "Making it Happen" approach to implementation, there is a systematic and intentional strategy of utilizing best practices to build implementation capacity in a school or district (Duda, Fixsen, & Blase, 2013; Greenhalgh, Robert, MacFarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004; Hall & Hord, 1987). The approach works because it shifts the burden of accountability away from individual staff providing the interventions and places it on the system. This is where the field of implementation science focuses its attention.

The field of applied implementation science is based on research examining elements that lead to the successful use of new programs or practices in a manner that results in the intended outcomes. In a school or district, this may mean implementing a new program or set of practices to better meet students' needs. But this is just one variable in a larger equation. Implementation science research indicates that stakeholders in the school or

district need to pay attention to and build strategies around the following formula for success:

$$\boxed{\text{Effective Interventions}} \times \boxed{\text{Effective Implementation Methods}} \times \boxed{\text{Enabling Contexts}} = \boxed{\text{Intended Outcomes}}$$

As this formula illustrates, effective interventions alone do not lead to solving the challenges that schools and districts face (Fixsen, Blase, Duda, Naoom, & Van Dyke, 2010). Guided by this formula, one can see that each of the three components is critical, and that schools and districts should attend to the selection and appropriate use of effective interventions, use of effective methods to support school staff in their expertise of the interventions, and development of contexts within the educational setting that enable these initiatives to sustain for generations to come.

The pages that follow provide a high-level overview of each of the components in the formula for success, focusing particularly on the Active Implementation Frameworks (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005)—what they are, key characteristics, and connections to the Wilson programs. These pages set the stage for describing the journey of each school and district featured in the profiles published separately.

Overview of Active Implementation Frameworks

To better meet students' needs, a school or district may implement a new program or set of practices. But any time you introduce these you create a shift in the culture of the school or district. How the shift is managed makes all the difference. Implementation science provides a structure to successfully manage the use of new programs or practices. In general terms, it is a platform that can help schools and districts apply programs with fidelity (as intended) and sustain those programs. Using this model, it is important to keep in mind the end goal (so that students can experience the benefits of effective programs and practices) while understanding:

- **"What"** is the usable intervention being implemented?
- **"Who"** is accountable for ensuring the program is being delivered as intended?
- **"When"** is the organization ready to make the needed shifts to support the use of the program until it is fully embedded and has become "education as usual?"
- **"How"** do you create a system that will support and sustain these programs and practices?

These questions are integral to what are called the *Active Implementation Frameworks*. In 2005, the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) released a monograph synthesizing

implementation research findings across a range of fields (Fixsen, et al., 2005). Based on these findings, NIRN developed five overarching frameworks referred to as the Active Implementation Frameworks. These are depicted in Figure 1. In order to achieve sustainable and scalable programs/practices to improve outcomes for all students, the frameworks need to be fully integrated and applied across all levels of the education system.

Figure 1: Active Implementation Frameworks

Fixsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)
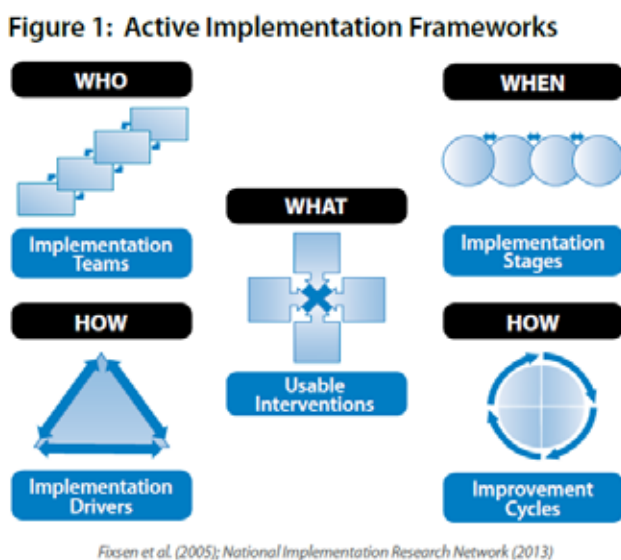
As the research and experience in applied implementation science evolved, the Active Implementation Frameworks also evolved (Fixsen, et al., 2010; Duda, et al., 2013; NIRN, 2013). Based on further study, NIRN linked the Active Implementation Frameworks to an overarching formula for success. Figure 2 illustrates how the Active Implementation Frameworks fit within the formula for success. In the figure, the box for "What" or "Usable Interventions" corresponds to the Effective Interventions variable in the formula. The other four Frameworks (Who/Intervention Teams, When/Implementation Cycles, How/Implementation Drivers, and How/Improvement Cycles) correspond to the Effective Implementation Methods variable in the formula. The final variable, Enabling Contexts, is represented by the grey circle encompassing the other variables.

Figure 2: Linking the Formula for Success with the Active Implementation Frameworks
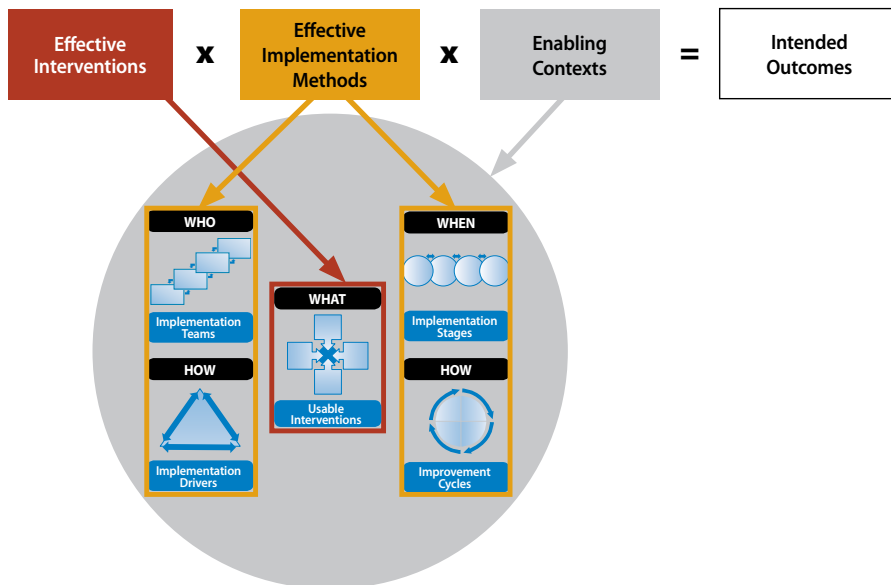
To help provide a deeper understanding of how a school or district might work toward achieving the intended outcomes of the selected intervention, the following sections explain how to create an effective implementation process (system) and leverage or create a supportive context. It offers a brief description of the application of Active Implementation Frameworks within the "formula for success," starting with Effective Interventions, moving to the Effective Implementation Processes, and finally, addressing Enabling Contexts.

Effective Interventions

| Effective Interventions | X | Effective Implementation Methods | X | Enabling Contexts | = | Intended Outcomes |
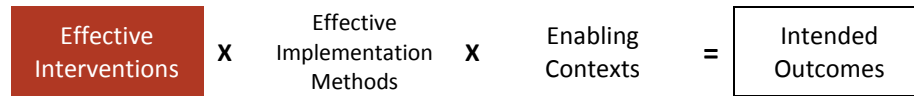
The first variable in the formula to improve and sustain positive student outcomes is "Effective Interventions." This is the "What" or "Usable Intervention" of the Active Implementation Frameworks. It can also be described as the evidence-based program or practice selected for use.

The "What": Usable Interventions
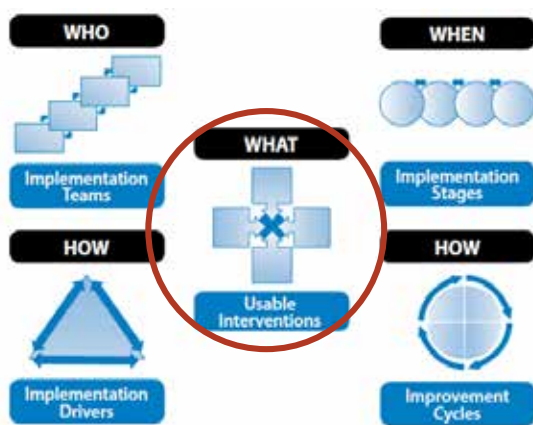
Fixsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)

Usable interventions are the "non-negotiable" core components that are critical to building an implementation infrastructure. Usable interventions include: clear description of the intervention, essential functions, operational definitions, and performance assessments (NIRN, 2013).

To achieve success in reaching the intended outcome, one must apply an intervention with proven evidence that it leads to the intended change. Wilson Language Training's three programs—Fundations®, Just Words®, and the Wilson Reading System®—have a demonstrated record of improving students' outcomes in literacy, student engagement, and social-emotional behaviors, and improving teachers' instructional practices. These outcomes are possible due to each program's clearly defined guidance on how to implement it with fidelity and the accompanying comprehensive professional development aligned to that guidance (Blase & Fixsen, 2013).

Schools and districts across the country have achieved improved outcomes for students using one or more of the Wilson programs.[1] Using the language of the Active Implementation Frameworks, the adoption of one or more of the Wilson programs is the "what" or "usable intervention" in a

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[1] Summaries of studies document program effectiveness can be found at: http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/.

school or district. These research-based reading and spelling programs for all ages are multisensory, structured curricula that can be integrated into a school or district's multi-tiered system of support. The following highlights each program. It is important to note that each is clearly defined, contains fidelity measures for teachers and trainers/coaches, and includes recommendations, based on best practices, on how to plan for and implement the program.

Fundations® provides a carefully structured decoding and spelling curriculum using engaging, multisensory techniques for grades K–3. It thoroughly teaches the foundational skills of reading and many of the writing and language standards found in rigorous college- and career-ready standards such as the Common Core State Standards. Fundations is implemented as a word-study and handwriting supplement to the core literacy program.

Just Words® is a highly explicit, multisensory decoding and spelling program for students in grades 4–12 and adults who have mild to moderate gaps in decoding and spelling proficiency but do not require intensive intervention. The Just Words curriculum provides a sophisticated study of word structure appropriate for students beyond elementary school. It provides direct and explicit instruction of "how English works" for both decoding and spelling automaticity.

Wilson Reading System® is a highly structured remedial program for students in grades 2 and beyond requiring intensive intervention. The Wilson Reading System directly teaches the structure of the language to students and adults with a language-based disability or dyslexia and other students who have been unable to learn with other teaching strategies, or who may require multisensory learning instruction.

For more information about each of these programs, please go to: http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/.

Effective Interventions Summary

It is important to be clear "what" it is that teachers or other staff should be doing in order to implement an effective program (e.g., Fundations) as intended, so that students can experience the known benefits and outcomes. When it is clear what people are doing to be successful, the school or district leadership team can make intentional decisions for how to create or repurpose systems to align professional development and resources in a manner that supports high fidelity use of the selected interventions.
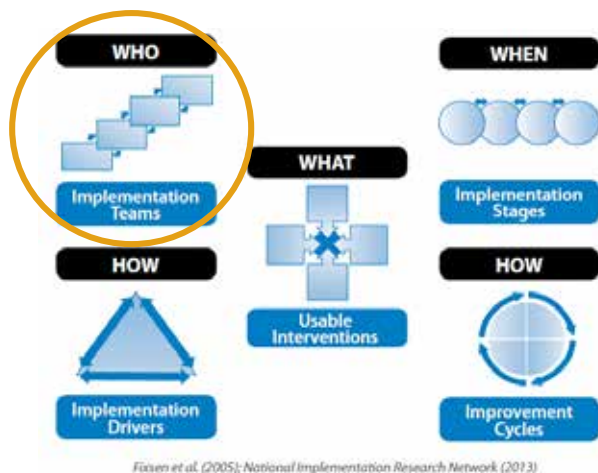
Effective Implementation Methods

Effective Interventions **X** Effective Implementation Methods **X** Enabling Contexts **=** Intended Outcomes

Once interventions and/or programs and practices are selected or adopted, it is critical to build local implementation capacity to engage in and sustain the work. This includes the application of the following Active Implementation Frameworks that can be used at any level of the system to support the people who are involved in this important work and to create an aligned system that will lead to the intended results:

- Who: Implementation Teams
- When: Implementation Stages
- How: Implementation Drivers
- How: Improvement Cycles

The "Who": Implementation Teams

Fixsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)

An Implementation Team consists of 3 to 5 members who are skilled in multiple areas associated with the tasks to be performed in the intervention, active implementation components, and data collection. This team is accountable for ensuring that all staff are supported in implementing the program with fidelity and that the system is facilitating this new way of work (NIRN, 2013).

The role of the Implementation Team is to ensure that a usable intervention is selected, follow the tenets of an effective implementation process, and set the stage for an enabling context. An Implementation Team should comprise a core group of at least three to five members who have dedicated time (e.g., part of their job description) to address the system changes needed to support the new program or practice and have the knowledge and skills to implement and use evidence-based programs.

Team Purpose: The purpose of the Implementation Teams is to build and continuously improve the system at the school or district level in a manner that will support and sustain the use of the selected programs and practices over time. As a result, Implementation Teams typically include members of the leadership team or other staff who have the ability to make key decisions on the selection and use of evidence-based programs and practices as well as the system that will support their use. The team will need to attend to the alignment of all components of the system so that the programs and practices are implemented with fidelity, which will allow all students involved to experience the full benefits. This may mean aligning professional development activities and supporting organizational shifts (such as scheduling). Implementation Teams are also responsible for creating pathways of communication with stakeholders, such as families, community members, policymakers, and other Implementation Teams that may reside in the school or district. Implementation Team functions should align with leadership activities and other strategic or improvement plans at the school and district level.
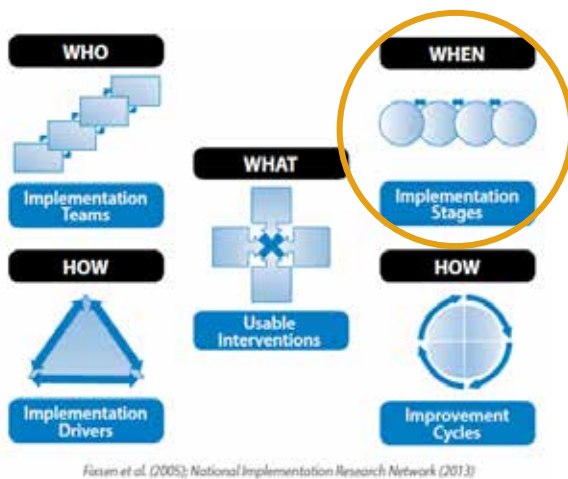
Team Membership: Recruiting Implementation Team members does not necessarily mean hiring new staff for these positions. Many times, schools and districts already employ these talented individuals. Therefore, building this team may mean repurposing current positions or existing teams and supporting them with the time, authority, and capacity to engage in this work. The total number of Implementation Team members may depend on the size of the organization, availability of staff, and the complexity of integrating the new program or practice into their existing organizations. It is not uncommon for new members to temporarily or permanently join the team, depending on the stage of implementation, activities addressed during that period, or the specialized skills needed (e.g., training from the program developer or support from an information technology specialist to build a database).

Implementation Teams come together around a common goal and purpose: to create a transparent, efficient, and aligned system that supports the use of important and effective programs. The following sections will further describe the specific activities that Implementation Teams can use to identify current organizational strengths, support educators, and create the necessary conditions to help ensure sustainability.

Wilson partners with schools and districts as they begin planning to implement the Fundations, Just Words, or WRS programs, and facilitates the development of an Implementation Team by providing guidance on how to formulate a team. The Implementation Team is composed of both Wilson staff, and school and district staff. Generally, Wilson will have a minimum of three staff members on the Implementation Team and the school/district will have a minimum of three. Wilson staff members on the team include the Literacy Advisor, who helps envision a working plan and

TIP: Implementation Team members should have sufficient time dedicated to supporting the process of achieving the goals, and have the authority to make decisions toward achieving those goals.

serves as a consultant to the district regarding organizational and leadership challenges; the Literacy Specialist, who will train, coach, and certify teachers; and an Implementation Administrator, who develops the annual implementation plans (called COMPASS, which stands for "Comprehensive Plans to Achieve Success and Sustainability") in collaboration with the Literacy Advisor, and assists with Wilson technical support. School and district staff on the Implementation Team consist of those who will be leading the implementation process, which might include district administrators, program coordinators, and principals and reading coaches from participating schools across a district. Wilson assists participating schools and districts in determining who should participate on the Implementation Teams.

The "When": Implementation Stages

Fixsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)

The implementation process is not linear. It is a mission-oriented process that typically takes 2-4 years and involves multiple decisions, actions and corrections. The process includes four "Stages" (Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, Full Implementation) that will lead to the long-term survival and continued effectiveness of the new practice or system improvement. Conducting stage-appropriate implementation activities is necessary for successful service and systems change (NIRN, 2013).

To facilitate change at the classroom, school, district, or state level, a plan that helps staff negotiate the journey through the stages of implementation must be established. This plan should engage and support teachers and administrators so that they are able to make full, effective use of the new interventions in their educational settings. Understanding the stages of implementation facilitates intentional planning for change, which results in:

- **Alignment of activities to the applicable stage, increasing the likelihood of moving successfully through the stage and on to the next one**
- **Preparation for activities and challenges that will be encountered in the next stage**
- **Reduction in wasted time and resources**
- **Increased likelihood of sustained and improved use of educational practices**

Research suggests it can take from *two to four years* to fully and successfully make an evidence-based program, practice, or effective educational innovation operational (Fixsen, Blase, Timbers, & Wolf, 2001; Panzano & Roth, 2006; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). The implementation process begins when a gap to improving outcomes for students is identified, and a process for selecting possible interventions to address that need is determined. Decisions are made at that point for what to adopt, how to support the new intervention, and how to sustain high fidelity use of the practices so that all students can benefit. The process includes four stages comprising key components and processes that can lead to the long-term survival (sustainability) and continued effectiveness of any intervention in the context of a changing world. The four stages are:

- **Exploration** – Identification of the need for change, learning about possible interventions that may provide solutions, learning about what it takes to implement the intervention effectively, developing stakeholders and champions, assessing and creating readiness for change, and deciding to proceed (or not).

- **Installation** – Establishment of the resources needed to use an intervention and the resources required to implement it as intended.

- **Initial Implementation** – The first use of an intervention by teachers and others who have just learned how to use it and who are working in school and district environments that are just learning how to support the new ways of work.

- **Full Implementation** – The skillful use of an intervention that is well integrated into the repertoire of teachers, and routinely and effectively supported by successive building and district administrators.
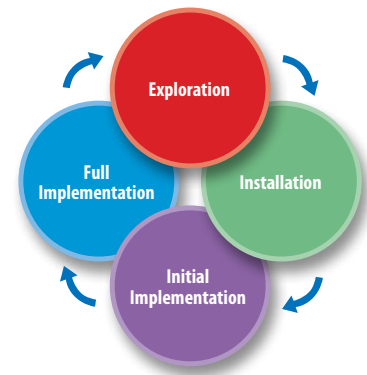
The stages are not linear and each one does not have a crisp beginning or end. For example, there are times when an organization will move among stages due to changes in staff, funding, leadership, or unsuccessful attempts at employing the intervention with high fidelity. Identifying the stage of implementation where the intervention is at that particular point in time allows for opportunities to provide targeted and developmentally appropriate support for staff, helps to manage expectations, and allows for more efficient use of resources. This is particularly true for districts, who must support schools and adjust support, helping to fill in gaps when changes in funding and staff turnover occur.

Guided by this research, Wilson collaborates with schools and districts implementing Wilson programs to develop annual COMPASS (implementation) plans. The plans are based on an awareness of the school and district's stage of implementation, and delineate activities that support the initial use or scaling up of the Wilson program(s), including professional development activities in the coming school year.

The "How": Implementation Drivers

Fixsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)
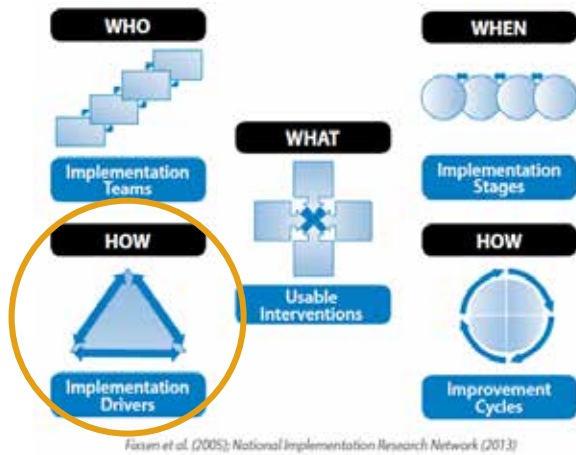
Implementation "Drivers" are key elements of capacity and infrastructure that influence a program's success. The components are integrated and compensatory. This means they work together, and that a weakness in one component can be made up for with strengths in the others (NIRN, 2013).

The Implementation Drivers framework describes a set of best practices that improves the likelihood of creating an efficient and aligned system that will support the use of the selected intervention so that the intended outcome can be achieved. Identified by Fixsen, et al. (2005, 2010), this set of nine Implementation Drivers can be organized into three categories:

1) *Staff Competenc*e: Drivers designed to support personnel in their use of the new program;
2) *Organization Supports*: Drivers that are used to help align programs, policies, procedures, and opportunities to ensure that new interventions have the supports and buy-in to be used as intended; and
3) *Leadership*: Drivers that acknowledge the importance of leadership and support current and future leaders in an organization.

Figure 3: Implementation Drivers

Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Duda, M. A., Naoom, S. F., & Van Dyke, M. V. (2008)
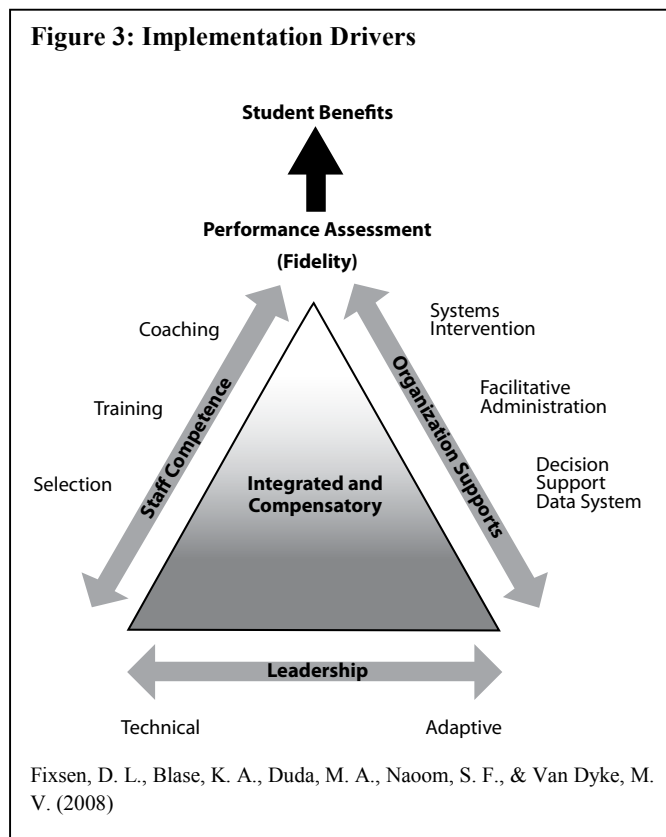
Due to the integrated and compensatory nature of these drivers (meaning that they work together), they are depicted as three sides of a triangle (see Figure 3).

Staff competence drivers, found on the left side of the triangle, are designed to build staff confidence and competence in the use of the new intervention, program, or practice. This category of drivers requires identifying what teachers and other staff should be doing in order to use the intervention as intended, otherwise known as fidelity of implementation. From there, schools or districts may **select** (hire new or recruit existing personnel) individuals who already demonstrate many of the skills needed to implement the program with fidelity. If an individual or group of individuals does not have all of the skills needed to implement the program, targeted and efficient **training** would then be provided to develop and encourage the use of those skills. Finally, as documented by the well-known meta-analysis by Joyce and Showers (2002), training should be accompanied by **coaching** in order to lead to behavior change or use of the new skills in the classroom. **Coaching** offers support in real time and is individualized to match the needs of each teacher or staff. Rethinking how to build the capacity of staff while minimizing excess time and resources on professional development is a key to creating more competent and confident staff.

Organization support drivers, found along the right side of the triangle, provide the structure for ensuring that evidence-based programs are used as intended, sustained over time, and positioned to better "weather" external factors such as changes in funding, mandates, and staff. In a school or district setting, these drivers include policies, procedures, and other structures that play a role in supporting the success of the intervention being implemented. A robust **Decision Support Data System** advises the Implementation Team on how well the intervention and implementation processes are functioning**.** Through **Facilitative Administration,** additional resources and supports can be put into place and barriers intentionally removed at the school or district level so that the new program can be used with fidelity. And, when challenges to supporting this new work arise, the use of **Systems Intervention** may be required in order to build a more supportive context. This includes additional financial, organizational, or other types of support from external sources that can be found outside the immediate school or district, and can be used to create a more supportive environment for implementing and sustaining the new program. In the case of a school or group of schools this may mean assistance from the district. In the case of a district or group of districts, this may mean assistance from the state.

Leadership drivers are at the base of the triangle since they are the foundation of selecting, supporting, sustaining, and scaling up any new evidence-based program or practice. The purpose

of these drivers is to support existing leaders at all levels of the system as well as future leaders in a school or district. Building a system to implement a new program is difficult work. Two of the biggest challenges are that current systems are being disturbed and new, more transparent systems are being created. Heifetz and Laurie (1997) recognize two levels of leadership styles required to address these challenges: technical and adaptive. Technical leadership is required when there is a straightforward problem that has a straightforward solution (e.g., a need to change the school schedule to incorporate an intervention period, or buying more materials for classrooms). Adaptive leadership is required when the problem or the solution is not entirely clear, or the solution requires a nuanced response (e.g., too many students are not reading on grade level despite a school-wide effort to improve performance, or staff are reluctant to use a new intervention). Both types of leadership are necessary to move a new program forward in the implementation process.

Paying attention to and developing these drivers in a school or district helps to:

- ✓ Develop, improve, and sustain educators' competence and confidence to implement effective educational practices and supports **(Staff Competence Drivers)**
- ✓ Ensure sustainability and improvement at the organization and systems level (**Organization Support Drivers**)
- ✓ Guide leaders to use the right leadership strategies for the situation **(Leadership Drivers)**

Within each stage of implementation, this set of drivers affects the capacity and infrastructure of the system that, in turn, affects the intended outcome. To learn more about the implementation drivers, please see the Active Implementation Hub: http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/.

When implementing Wilson programs, Wilson Literacy Specialists provide coaching and training to enhance the competency drivers. While selecting the right staff and providing initial training are important, coaching in the classroom is critical for teachers to be able to implement the program(s) as intended. Wilson also supports the organizational drivers by involving administrators in training and coaching sessions, which gives them a stronger understanding of the implementation process. This understanding helps administrators to align policies and practices that build a supportive environment that facilitates the use of new practices, modification of old practices, and reduction of roadblocks to effective implementation. Support for the organizational and leadership drivers comes from Wilson's Literacy Advisors, who draw on their expertise as former school district leaders themselves to guide administrators implementing Wilson programs through technical and adaptive challenges encountered along the way.

The "How": Improvement Cycles

Ficsen et al. (2005); National Implementation Research Network (2013)
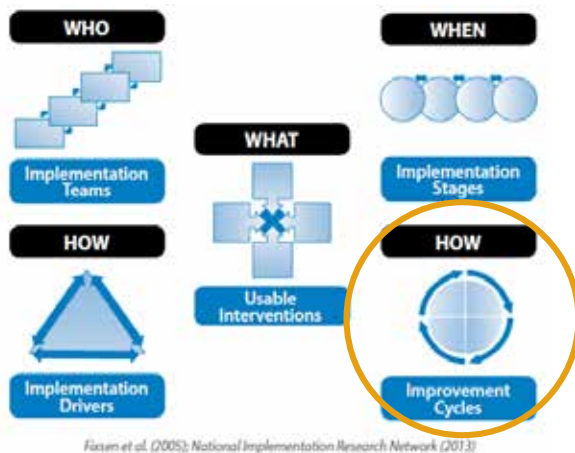
Improvement Cycles are purposeful processes of initiating and managing changes in education practices, school and district functions, and state supports for districts. Improvement cycles may be used to solve smaller challenges that may impact day-to-day activities through larger system challenges in which changes and modifications may be made over time (NIRN, 2013).

Leadership and Implementation Teams must make many decisions when encouraging their staff to adopt evidence-based practices. The use of Improvement Cycles is a helpful process that schools or districts may use to make decisions systematically while engaging in continuous improvement. A common improvement cycle is called the "Plan-Do-Study-Act" (PDSA) cycle (Deming, 1986).

In the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle (see Figure 4), the Implementation Team identifies a goal or current challenge, outlines the way it will approach the challenge using the Plan-Do-Study-Act process, and makes a commitment to follow through with the implementation process outlined. In the "Plan" part of the cycle, the Implementation Team uses the best information it has available to develop a plan for what they want to achieve and how to go about it. The next step is to "do" it. The team puts the pieces in place and sets the plan in motion, leading or observing the application of the plan. Once that portion of the cycle is completed, the "study" phase of the cycle begins. The team studies the impact of the intervention/initiative by analyzing the data collected to see what worked and what needs to be adapted. Finally, the team acts on the results from the study phase. Depending on the situation,

Figure 4: Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle

Deming, 1986
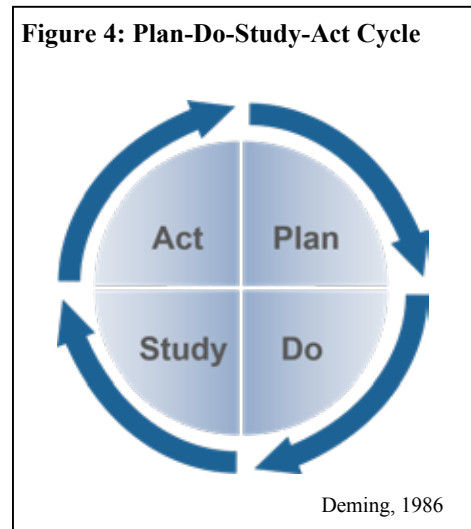
that may be where the cycle ends, or a decision may be made to repeat the cycle using the new information.

Repeating the cycle continues the process of usability testing—testing to determine the best conditions under which the use of the intervention leads to the intended outcomes. Usability testing involves multiple rounds of the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle, gradually modifying conditions (e.g., adding additional staff supports) to determine the best conditions for implementing the program with success.

A major benefit to using improvement cycles is that it promotes deliberate changes and provides opportunities to make necessary adjustments incrementally. Documenting these cycles creates an institutional memory of decisions made and lessons learned that can be passed on to future stakeholders. It also helps keep stakeholders informed of the activities occurring and can provide new opportunities to include their feedback. As a result, this process helps create a supportive environment for evidence-based programs and practices to thrive, build a culture of trial and learning, and ensure that systems supports in place are designed to improve student outcomes.

In developing its programs and professional learning activities, Wilson conducted usability testing following the Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement cycle to operationalize and validate core components of its programs and associated professional learning activities. During the development phase, Wilson identified the core components and active ingredients of each program and further evaluated, improved, or discarded non-essential components until it met the goals defined for the programs and accompanying professional learning. While Wilson's programs and accompanying professional learning activities are now established, Wilson continues to use assessment and evaluation results from several sources to inform its programs and professional development.

Having worked closely with diverse schools and districts through their own improvement cycles, Wilson has a strong understanding of how to help others go through this process efficiently and effectively. Wilson works with schools and districts to use improvement cycles to determine the number of teachers who will begin using the Wilson program at the onset of the program implementation, determine how much support that staff will need, and make other decisions

about initial implementation. As the school or district is using the intervention with the support of Wilson staff, the Implementation Team studies the effects. In doing so, they gather data and re-examine information to learn how they impact the use of Wilson programs. Based on all the data gathered, they make decisions about how to act moving forward. For example, the team may decide that additional staff support is necessary and can be achieved through the training of a school-based Facilitator, or they may decide to sustain or scale up use of the intervention to more classrooms in a school or more schools in a district. Using improvement cycles, the team can make the necessary adjustments to better support the use of the intervention.

Effective Implementation Methods Summary

Attending to the *Who*, *When*, and *Hows* of the Active Implementation Frameworks affects the predictability and achievability of the intended outcomes. This means having the right members on the Implementation Team—those with the skills, knowledge, commitment, and authority to make and enforce decisions, knowing where the school or district is in the cycle of implementing the intervention program and acting accordingly, understanding what the implementation drivers are and supporting them in a manner that promotes the outcome, and, finally, understanding and engaging in improvement cycles. Together, these compose effective implementation methods that will help a school or district achieve its intended outcomes.

Enabling Contexts

Effective Interventions **X** Effective Implementation Methods **X** Enabling Contexts **=** Intended Outcomes
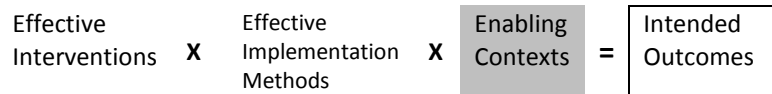
Returning to the formula for success, one can see that selecting effective interventions for implementation and using an effective implementation process are not sufficient to achieve one's intended outcome. The final variable in the formula is an enabling context. It is a fact that living, learning, and working in an educational setting is complex. There are many talented individuals passionate about teaching and inspiring learning. They sacrifice much to ensure that the students they touch become lifelong learners and that they sustain the programs that work. The challenges, or perhaps opportunities, that school staff and leadership must navigate include a multitude of initiatives, limited budgets and time, new or sometimes competing policies and mandates, and shifting priorities. Under these circumstances, a school or district must create a system that allows for continuous improvement (Senge, 2006; Aarons, 2005). A context that is "enabling" is critical so that change is supported, the results align with the intended outcomes, and the successful initiative is sustained over time.

An "enabling" context does the following:

- Fosters a culture of learning
- Fosters a culture of transparency
- Builds and supports leaders at all levels
- Develops and maintains policies and procedures that help create the "space" needed to focus on implementation
- Develops and maintains policies and practices that help remove barriers and practices that do not lead to student benefits, and align functions

Because of the unique combination of variables in each school or district, operationalizing these principles will look different in each setting. Learning how to develop these "enabling contexts" in your educational setting is a critical component to reaching your intended outcome.

Prior to developing a COMPASS plan in a school or district, Wilson surveys the school or district administrator(s) to learn more about the context within which the Wilson program will be implemented. This is followed by in-depth discussions between both parties to further Wilson's

understanding of the local context and help the school/district better understand the implementation conditions for Wilson programs. This information guides the development of the COMPASS plan to incorporate supports that will build a more enabling context in that setting.

Enabling Contexts Summary

Attending to the context within which the intervention will be implemented is a key piece of the formula for success. This requires attention to the culture of the school and district, support for all staff involved in the implementation, and policies, procedures, and practices that can facilitate the implementation of the intervention as planned or intended.

Conclusion

If we are to achieve the educational goals we set for ourselves and our students, it is important to invest in what works. Current research and experience shows that focusing solely on interventions does not lead to the high fidelity use of the intervention. As a consequence, it is challenging to sustain and scale up, and therefore does not lead to student benefits.

When thinking specifically about intervention programs to improve literacy outcomes among students, implementation science offers a formula for success. Wilson programs provide the effective interventions that are a critical variable in achieving improved student outcomes. Of equal importance, Wilson also utilizes and supports effective implementation methods. These key variables in the formula for success are too often overlooked or disregarded by educational program providers. It is the keen attention to these which leads to a system that builds teacher and staff support and thus reliable results for students.

As a whole, implementation science provides a research-based process by which educators can achieve intended outcomes by offering an intentional pathway that creates the capacity to implement any effective intervention. And, it urges us to understand the important role that context plays in determining outcomes. With attention to such detail, making it happen, rather than hoping it happens, will allow you to attain success.

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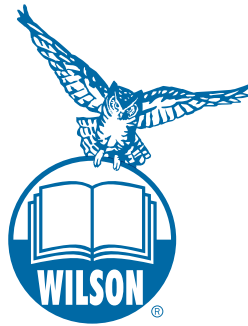
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