

Adapting Research and Professional Development to the Needs of Diverse Learners

Considerations from the Directed Consultation Approach

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Rural Diversity

Diverse Rural Places

- Differences in resources, opportunities, and access
- Differences in culture, values, and expectations for youth

Diverse Rural Schools

- Configurations, size (population and area served), and student characteristics
- Workforce characteristics, administrative structure, staff roles (multiple hats)

Diverse Rural Students

- Race, ethnicity, culture, language, strengths, abilities, and instructional needs
- There can be vast student differences across and within schools; within classrooms

Evidence-Based Programs (EBP_s)

- Standardized programs that have been shown to work in experimental studies
- Manualized with specific guidelines for implementation and use
- Reduce teachers' use of practices that do not work
- Promote dissemination and use in real world settings
- Create What Works Clearing House and other federal supports for schools' adoption and use of practices that are based on evidence

Diversity and Constraints for Standardized EBP_s in Rural Schools

- May assume structures, circumstances, or resources that are not available
- Lack of a critical mass of students who have a specific need (one of everything)
- Lack of specialists or central office support (i.e., resources) for program uptake
- Low relevance and lack of practicality of use across school (diverse needs)
- Need to ensure against using professional development time and resources for teaching manualized programs that are ill-fitted and do not address the needs of students, teachers, and classrooms

General Lack of Use of EBP_s

- Teachers are not aware of EBPs or the What Works Clearinghouse
- Teachers do not feel research is relevant to them
- Teachers are more likely to look to other teachers, Pinterest, and other non-evidence based sources for intervention ideas and support

Supported Professionalism

- With the focus on standardized assessments and instructional approaches that correspond with assessments, teachers feel a sense of constrained professionalism
- How do we foster teachers' use of EBPs while also supporting their capacity to make instructional modifications and facilitate their ability to effectively adapt strategies to the needs of their students and local resources and circumstances
- Directed consultation was developed as research-practice partnership model aimed at addressing this by promoting “supported professionalism”

History and Foundations of directed consultation

Development and Pilot Work

- Elementary, middle, and high school - rural Alabama (literacy, social, classroom management)
- Elementary – Rural NC Inner Coastal Region (social, behavioral, classroom management)
- Middle school in Appalachian Region of VA and WV (academic, behavioral, social)

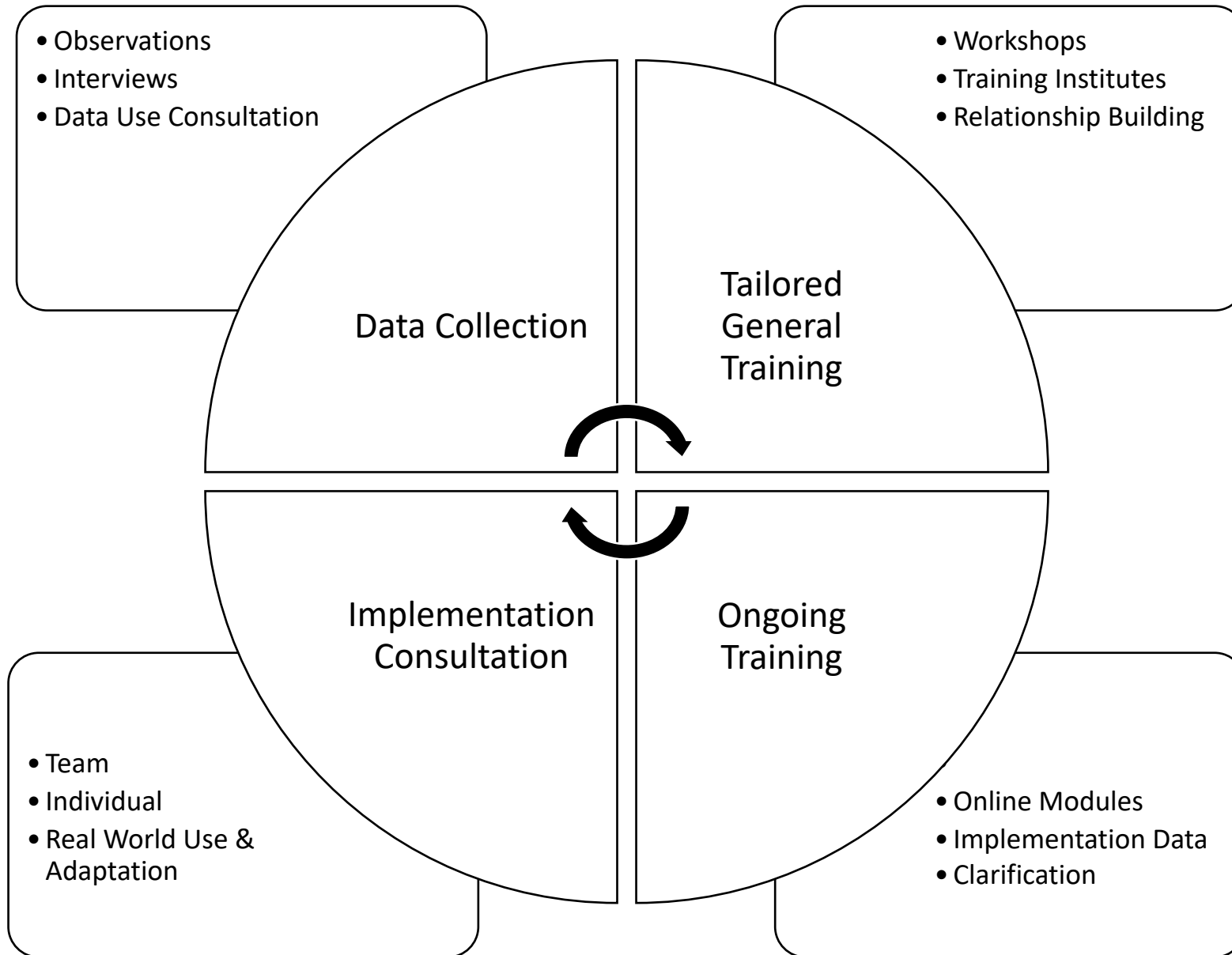
Cluster Randomized Trial

32 rural middle schools in 11 states across US (academic, behavioral, social)

Directed Consultation Focus

- Focus on strategies that align with the resources, strengths, and constraints available to schools/teachers
- Recognize that teachers & other school professionals are the experts about their students/communities
- Build from the “working with what you have” mindset that is the hallmark of rural innovation
- Help teachers tailor strategies to the diverse needs of students
- Facilitate teachers’ collaboration and the establishment of self-sustaining networks of support
- Foster a continuous improvement framework that links EBPs to developmental leverage points that are associated with desired or intended student outcomes

The Directed Consultation Process



Directed Consultation Aims and Goals

- Identify key leverage points both generally and for specific needs/issues
- Identify “EBP core practice elements” that align with focal leverage points
- Align focal leverage points with key “developmental process factors”
- Intervene with “core practice elements” while monitoring the impact on key “developmental process factors”
- Make adaptations in practice element strategies in relation to how the key process factors respond to the intervention
- Monitor and adapt these practice and process elements in relation to outcomes

Logic model of DC Partnership Model

**Scouting Report → Practice Elements → Data Driven Feedback /Adaptation → Process Elements → Student Outcomes
& Teacher Implementation**

Interviews	Key Practice Strategies	Implementation Data	Teacher Attunement	Grades
Observations	--Adapted to Constraints	--Frequency	--Academic	Test Scores
Data Consultation	--Adapted to Resources	--Consistency	--Behavioral	Attendance
Leverage Points	--Adapted to Strengths	--Accuracy	--Social	Discipline
		Student Response Data	Student Engagement	
		--Academic	--Behavioral	
		--Behavioral	--Cognitive	
		--Social	--Social / Emotional	
		Intervention Adaptations		
		--Academic		
		--Behavioral		
		--Social		

Examples: Math Class

- 6th Grade Math Class – “Engaged Learning in the Midst of Chaos”
- 7th Grade Math Class – “Living on the Just Manageable Edge”
- 8th Grade Math Class – “Teaching the Lesson Plan come Hell or High Water”

Examples: Social Dynamics

- 6th Grade Math Class – Struggling student set-up by the “good students”
- 7th Grade Math Class – “They fight each other like brothers and sisters”
- 8th Grade Math Class – “The coercive leader”

Rethinking research

Shift the focus from identifying “programs that work” to a framework for fostering school, teacher, and student success within local circumstances (i.e., how do you make it work for these students in this context with these resources)

Instead of cluster randomized trials in rural schools we should consider designs that focus on:

- Local analytics to monitor continuous improvement
- Adaptive expertise and self-sustaining systems of support for teachers
- “person-in-context” developmental profiles and trajectories linked to pathways to success and desired outcomes

Rethinking professional Development

- View professional development as a research-practice partnership opportunity
- Use the directed consultation process to support teachers while getting their feedback and collecting data on the intervention adaptation process
- Capture local analytic / continuous improvement data along with data on adaptive processes and expertise in a national database to help guide the continuous refinement and innovation of strategies to nuanced circumstances

Reframing rural support efforts

- Federal programs such as EIR, MSP, RELs, and T-TACs as well as state efforts tend to provide a lot of professional development in the use of EBPs
- These programs tend to have some type of mentor that provides training and they may have some type of data support technician to facilitate evaluation and continuous improvement –These roles could become intervention specialists
- Using a model like DC, we should be able to shift the focus from does the “program work” to “how do we make what we are trying to do work here with these students in these conditions and circumstances”
- Such a framework should be particularly well suited for innovative research to support diverse learners in rural schools

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