Co-Developing Professional Learning to Bring the Science of Reading to Students with Extensive Support Needs

Alice Williams M.S.CCC-SLP
Jenny Root, Ph.D., BCBA
Zellayne Hutchins, EdS

DBIR Principle 1: Focus on persistent problem of practice

The Curriculum Committee of a local center-school created a Theory of Change to guide their decisions and activities.

- Resources Inputs
  - Read articles on critical life skills
  - Form a master list of skills
  - Establish a list of characteristics for potential curricula (i.e., uses EBPs, contains accessible content for multiple levels of difficulty, etc.)
  - Secure videos of teachers implementing curricula
  - Reject any curricula that has not been used successfully across classrooms

- Committee Activities
  - Create a grade-band list of EBPs curricula that has been used with students with extensive support needs. Must meet minimum requirements listed previously.
  - Teachers will have curricula for their students. There will be a continuum of curricula that weaves through grades.
  - Students will make progress across grades.

- Outputs
  - Visual supports for the EBP to use during instruction

- Impact

DBIR Principle 2: Commit to interactive, collaborative design

- Participatory process with multiple stakeholders
  - School: administrators, teachers, related service providers
  - District: special education director & coordinator
  - FCRR: faculty, doctoral students

Object of design: Professional development (PD) & support for teachers & paraeducators

Curriculum Committee identified two EBPs to target

Goal of READUP Research-Practice Partnership between school district and FCRR:
Increasing reading achievement for all students through research, innovation, & engagement

DBIR Principle 3: Develop theory, knowledge, & practice related to classroom learning (outcomes) & implementation (process) through systematic inquiry

Researchers provided PD during faculty meetings, support during established grade-level meetings

- Chair of Curriculum Committee tailored and provided parallel PD & support for all paraeducators with administration support

- Teachers were given visual supports for the EBP to use during instruction

- Researchers made demonstration videos modeling how to use EBPs with learners with a variety of communication styles

All materials from model lesson were shared, including data sheets matching model video

DBIR Principle 4: Develop capacity for sustaining change in systems

Researchers attended end-of-year Curriculum Committee meeting; discussed barriers & identified activities to address them in the next school year

- READUP leadership reviewed outcomes to identify needs and set priorities for the next school year

- Reading Coach now incorporates training on EBPs into induction for new hires (teachers and paraprofessionals) and provides support / coaching for implementation