How prevention curricula are taught under real-world conditions: Types of and reasons for teacher curriculum adaptations

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Introduction

• Development, evaluation, and implementation of educational interventions is an important research area.
• Fidelity is especially concerning as programs are taken to scale.
• Debate over fidelity/adaptation suggests:
  • Adaptation is unnecessary and should be avoided.
  • Adaptation is inevitable and should be managed.
• The challenge, in light of this debate, is to identify what adaptations are being made and when they are consequential to program outcomes.
• This study delves into the former by describing the types of and reasons for teacher adaptation of the keepin’ it REAL school-based substance use prevention curriculum.

Questions

Because the current literature on types of and reasons for curriculum adaptation is slight, this current study seeks to more fully understand the degree to which implementers adapt curricula, the types of adaptations, and the reasons implementers give for these adaptations.

RQ1: To what degree do implementers adhere to the prevention curricula?
RQ2: How do implementers naturally adapt drug prevention curricula?
RQ3: What reasons do implementers give for adaptations?

Degree of Adaptation (Adherence)

Teacher Reports
Teacher Reports - 700 surveys from 31 teachers - Completed after each lesson (1-10) per class

Observer Reports
Observer Reports - 276 video recordings - Randomly selected 4 lessons per class

Methods and Data

Types of Adaptation

Lesson Content
Lesson Format

Delivery Timetable
Delivery Setting

Lesson Adaptations

Types of Adaptation

Teacher Reports

Observer Reports

A considerable amount of adaptation was present, with observers noting more than teachers.

Reasons for Adaptation

CONSTRAINTS RESPONSIVENESS TO STUDENTS
Time (short day; too much material to cover) Students’ ability (attention span; comprehension)
Institutional (school assemblies; fire drills) Students’ engagement (facilitate participation; support engaging class)
Personal (forgetfulness; discomfort with content) Technical (no electricity, equipment problems)

Conclusion

Understanding implementation processes can be crucial to guiding refinements in interventions. Two suggestions:
• Structure curricula with delivery in mind (e.g., 30 minute lessons; core components)
• Train/support implementation of content as well as optimal delivery methods (e.g., interactive delivery; SAFE methods).