Coaching to Success: Piloting a Framework to Establish Inclusive Model Early Childhood Classrooms Across an Entire State

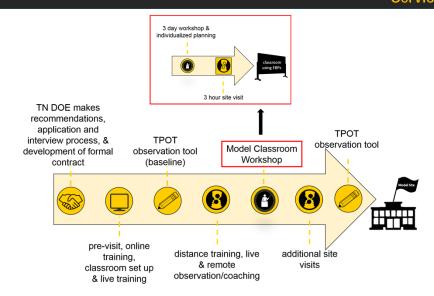
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Introduction

In the United States, every child has the right to receive an education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) and federal early childhood programs encourage preschool children with disabilities be educated in general education classrooms with typically developing peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Abundant evidence reveals that high quality inclusive environments benefit both students with and without disabilities. Despite this evidence, less than half of preschool aged children with disabilities receive their education in a regular early childhood classroom. Lack of quality professional development for educators is likely one barrier to inclusive practices (Barton, 2015). Furthermore, rural schools, due to their geographic location, often have challenges recruiting qualified teachers and providing professional development rooted in evidence based practices (Arnold, et. al., 2005). The framework described below aims to alleviate some of the aforementioned issues by creating more inclusive preschool classrooms with high-quality practices across a rural state.

Service Model





- DOE partners recommend classrooms that are already inclusive (50/50) or would agree to create an inclusive classroom.
- An application and screening process is used to identify the most appropriate fit for model classroom development.
- District personnel sign a contract to clarify expectations and ensure accountability.



- Classroom staff visit a previous model classroom.
- TRIAD created an online curriculum containing 6 series (26 modules).
 Curriculum topics include: intro to ASD, environmental arrangement, schedules, reinforcement, communication, and circle-time. Teachers complete the curriculum.
- Initial implementation of the strategies presented through the curriculum is supported through live and tele-based consultation and feedback from TRIAD behavior analysts.



 The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) is used to evaluate the classroom environment and teacher practices both at the beginning and end of the school year



- The model classroom receives both in-person and tele-presence based coaching throughout the school year.
- The model classroom staff receives 8 days of inperson coaching.
- Participants who attend the workshop, receive a follow up, 3 hour site visit at their home school.
 During this visit, TRIAD behavior analysts provide feedback on goals that the participants set during the workshop. Formal data is collected via procedural fidelity forms.



- 24 early childhood educators from the Model Classroom region attend a 3 day workshop at the Model Classroom site.
- Participants learn about the evidence based
- strategies being utilized in the Model Classroom.

 Participants also observe strategies being used in the classroom and have the opportunity to practice the strategies with the students in the
- Participants work with TRIAD behavior analysts to set goals for their own classroom.

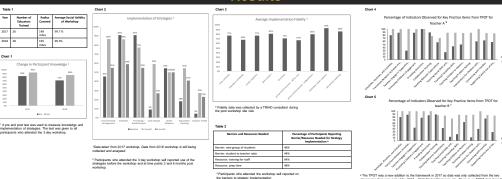


Each year, this framework adds one Model Classroom to a specific TN region.



 Each year, this framework also provides training to 24 educators and thus creates 24 classrooms using evidence based practices.

Results



Discussion and Future Directions

Data was collected from both the teachers that attended the workshop and from the Model Classroom teachers

- The data in Table 1 shows that in total 54 educators attended the workshops at the Model Classroom sites.
- The participants that attended the workshops spanned a geographic distance on average of 156.5 miles, demonstrating that these workshops pulled participants from a wide physical area.
- Social Validity collected after the workshop demonstrated that participants were extremely satisfied with the professional development they received.
 Furthermore, Chart 1 depicts that every participant made knowledge growth from pre to post workshop.
- Chart 2 shows how often the teachers implemented the strategies that were taught in the workshop. On some strategies, there was a drop in
 implementation from baseline to the 2 month follow up. It is hypothesized that this drop occurred because teachers thought they were correctly
 implementing the strategies at baseline; however, after the workshop, the teachers identified that they in fact twee not implementing the strategies with
- Chart 3 shows the average fidelity of strategy implementation. Fidelity for reinforcement, especially token systems, was high thus showing that teachers
 not only frequently used reinforcement (chart 2) but they could implement it correctly.
- Table 2 shows the two highest reported barriers to strategy implementation and the two highest reported resources needed for strategy implementation.
 The data suggests that early childhood classrooms not only need more staff, but they need the staff to have more training.
- The data from charts 4 and 5 represent the teachers who partnered with TRIAD for an entire year to become a Model Classroom. The TPOT data shows large growth from baseline to follow up across almost every key domain. This growth proves that ongoing live and remote coaching can drastically change teacher behavior and the practices in a classroom.

There is large evidence that this framework improves the quality of the Model Classroom site and that the site then becomes a high quality location to the accessfully string not not evidentions. This framework is hower hat creating a model site, parent with professional development, can build the capacity of an entire region. Further directions include adding training components for classroom para-professionals and revising training elements so that more deucators can paratise in the training.

References and Acknowledgements

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