

Learning Bites: Engaging in Continuous Improvement



Implementing, Monitoring, Adjusting, and Evaluating

In continuous improvement there are a couple of sayings, “The minute you start implementing, you start monitoring.” and “What gets monitored, gets done.” To that end, this article addresses several considerations that must be taken into account when implementing, monitoring and adjusting your plan.

Implementation

Implementation is an iterative process. The MICIP cycle moves from assess needs to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate—and a key element of the MICIP mindset is that the overall process is comprised of many smaller versions of this same cycle, including multiple cycles of implement, monitor, and adjust.

Monitoring fidelity should be guided by a [strategy implementation guide](#) (directions for [creating a strategy implementation guide](#)). A strategy implementation guide identifies the critical components of strategy implementation and what implementation looks and sounds like.

If a strategy implementation guide does not exist as part of strategy design, one of the first tasks during installation should be the development of a guide and a fidelity monitoring tool aligned to it.

This guide and tool will be helpful in: self-monitoring, monitoring as part of a small professional learning community, and/or monitoring across the entire plan by the building improvement team.

The MICIP team has provided a template [strategy implementation guide](#) and directions on the [MICIP web page](#).

Data monitoring both implementation fidelity and impact should be collected at both the district and the building level and brought back to the district team for consideration. This data should guide decisions regarding adjustments to the plan either throughout the district or in an individual building

If adjustments are needed, what kind might they be e.g. differentiated professional learning, resource allocation, seeking different strategies, other forms of support, etc.?

Monitoring

Monitoring data should also guide decisions about when to move between implementation stages. For example:

- What does the data say about when to move from installation to initial implementation?
- What does the data say about moving from initial implementation to full implementation?
- What does the data say about moving back to a previous stage?
- Should the entire district move at one time or do timeframes vary by building?

It is also critical that a district monitor the effectiveness of its systems as part of implementation. Implementation is frequently impacted by the presence or lack of strong systems to support it. This requires returning to the systems framework and aligned tools being used by the district and asking questions such as:

- Are the necessary systems components in place?
- How might the status of the systems be impacting implementation and impact? What kind of adjustments need to be made to either install or strengthen them?

Finally, there are some additional questions that should be part of monitoring:

- To what extent are those responsible implementing the monitoring activities by the due dates?

Review the six components of the hexagon tool for this strategy, particularly those aligned to the MICIP evaluation tool (See below). In the areas where the ratings were low, are they moving in a positive direction? In the areas where the ratings were higher, are they staying at a high level?

- Capacity
 - To what extent are we supporting implementation of the goal with sufficient human, financial, technology, material, and time resources?
- Fidelity
 - To what extent are we implementing the strategies as intended? To what extent are we implementing the entire plan as written? What does the implementation data say?
- Scale/Reach
 - To what extent are we reaching the target population, e.g., the number of schools, teachers, grade levels, students, etc.
 - To what extent are we implementing the intended stage of implementation (exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation)
- Impact
 - To what extent are we reaching our interim targets? What does the interim target data say?
 - What will you communicate regarding the results of the monitoring process? To whom?
 - What will you communicate regarding adjustments to the plan? To whom?

Evaluating the Goal

When you reach the End Target date for your goal, it's time to evaluate your progress based on the target measures and the measures of implementation fidelity.

The evaluation tool aligns with four of the categories of the Hexagon Tool.

- Capacity
 - To what extent did we support implementation of the goal with sufficient human, financial, technology, material, and time resources?
- Fidelity
 - To what extent did we implement the strategies as intended?
 - To what extent did we implement the entire plan as written? What does the implementation data say?
- Scale/Reach
 - To what extent did we reach the target population, e.g., the number of schools, teachers, grade levels, students, etc.
 - To what extent did we implement the intended stage of implementation (exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation)
- Impact
 - To what extent did we reach our end targets?
 - What does the end target data say?

Together, these monitoring and evaluation questions address the evaluation process required receiving federal funds and they replace the former Program Evaluation Tool (PET).

After the questions have been answered, the district should decide:

- Based on the data, should the goal be revised, e.g., revising the targets, adjusting strategies and/or activities, etc.?
- Based on the data, should the goal be maintained, with continued allocation of resources and monitoring?
- Based on the data, should the goal be discontinued and archived?