Overview

Once a program or intervention has been developed and evaluated, what happens next? Researchers have often assumed that the next step is simple or technical – simply spread the word – disseminate. Numerous texts have been written bemoaning the fact that this is unlikely to happen. The typical reason given is that researchers don’t do a good enough job of developing user friendly applications or don’t publish their findings in a way that practitioners can use them. In this course we focus on another set of issues, which is that using an intervention with some evidence of effectiveness requires what we have termed Translational Skills. These skills are the critical missing step between finding what appears to be an effective intervention and figuring out how to use the intervention in another setting. In this class we discuss these skills which include when to decide to go to scale or disseminate a program across settings and how to go to scale. Whereas previous discussion has focused on maintaining fidelity, we ask what are the core or active ingredients in an intervention and which aspects of an intervention were there due to particulars of the society (culture), the context (the funding and other resources available) and of the participants (socio-economic status, race-ethnicity, migrant status, family structure). While not arguing that each setting must create a program from scratch, we provide a critical framework for thinking about the process of dissemination. Each week we focus on one of these topics, asking how they may influence the way a particular intervention is delivered, or what would be effective in a setting. A number of these topics are addressed by guest speakers. Each week involves an activity - students work in groups to translate an intervention focused on the particular week’s readings, we then discuss the issues involved with a mix of student-led discussion based on the readings and brief more structured lectures. The final product will be a paper that takes an intervention and translates it for use in another population that differs from the context in which the intervention was developed. To provide a building block toward the final paper, students will turn in a brief paper describing the intervention of interest and reasons to expect a need for translation at mid-semester and receive feedback on this work.
Course requirements

Your course grade is based on participation (40%) and written products (60%).

Participation entails (1) the regular active participation in class discussions (10%), (2) focused participation - each student will select two class sessions to write and post questions (on our Course Tools site by NOON on Sunday), the two students who posted questions will co-lead discussion for these sessions (20%), and (3) brief presentation of final paper focused on issues and problems to be resolved (described below more fully).

Written products include (1) a short paper (20%) leading to (2) a longer paper (40%). The short paper (5-8 pages) will be due midway through the semester, March 8th (20%). The short paper should represent the first section of the longer paper due at the end of the class.

For the short paper, you need to:

a. Select a prevention program of interest to you – this could be a program that you have worked on, your own design (for advanced students), a program in the published literature, etc.
b. Provide a concise description of the program and its operation, including purpose, staffing, activities, service intensity, etc.
c. Describe the context in which the program was evaluated: participants’ SES, race/ethnicity, age, gender distribution, date, location (region of the US or country outside the US; rural/suburban/urban); did the program implementers address community entrée issues? What was the level of intervention (individual, family, school, neighborhood, community…)? How did program implementers recruit - how were people identified and enrolled in the intervention?
d. Identify (in a paragraph or less) the level of evidence for the program’s success.
e. Provide a description of the program theory - the basic social science theory from which the intervention has been built, e.g., what does the intervention propose makes for well-being or positive mental health, how is the intervention to create change, what are the underlying causal mechanisms through which the intervention is posited to operate.
f. Describe briefly the context into which you will translate this intervention - a different culture/race/ethnic/SES group, same group but different setting, gender, age group, different level of intervention, group with differing vulnerabilities.

For the long paper:

The final paper builds on the feedback you got from the short paper description of an intervention and a new context to translate it into. By cutting up the paper in this way, we can give you feedback (and if there is a problem with your choice of intervention/choice of new context, give you a chance to change course) and you will have the time to go through all the steps of translation in writing your paper. When you write the final paper, you do not need to repeat information from the short paper, if you have not made any changes, simply attach the short paper, if you made changes, alert us to focus on them.
The final paper topic is: *Translation of a prevention intervention into a different context*. This is about a 15 page paper, if desired; this can include a substantial rewrite of the short paper and as relevant, improvement of the short paper grade.

Having described the context of the previous intervention, you will describe the translation you chose - given the focus on culture and poverty, these should be included in your paper, you may add other translations - to another age group, moving up or down in level of intervention (individual, group), change in context or venue (after-school, in-school, community or church-based). The goal is to try out the translation process and discuss the issues that you need to deal with to do the translation. Below is a detailed description of what you are adding to the short paper to create the long paper.

You need to select a prevention intervention which has some evidence base (efficacy or effectiveness study) in a specific context. Pick a different context; i.e., a different culture, country, population group (based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, class, geographical area, or other diversity focus), and/or a substantially different recruitment or delivery setting (e.g., criminal justice versus mental health, school systems or community-based NPO’s vs. medical setting, etc.), or a different social problem (domestic violence vs. juvenile delinquency), etc. Your paper needs to identify the issues that need to be addressed in adapting or altering the intervention to fit this new context.

You will need to cover:

a. Is what you know about the new context likely to influence the underlying theory – etiology of the problem, change mechanisms? What would an alternative theory look like?

b. Is what you know the new context likely to affect how the intervention should be implemented (Why)? Implementation is broadly construed to include who should be the target population, eligibility criteria, recruitment/enrollment strategies, and program characteristics – intervener characteristics, program activities, program intensity and duration.

c. Given the changes described above, should criteria for the program’s success be the same or different? (Why?)

1. January 12 Evidence-based practice (Daphna Oyserman)

Development of this course was funded in part by the National Institutes of Health as part of a training grant to teach prevention research. About a third of the students are prevention research trainees - all are welcomed to participate.

To set the stage, in this class I will first overview the semester and the structure of the class; Carol will discuss the final paper.

The topic of the session is evidence Evidence-Based Practice. This serves as an initial introduction to the semester's focus on translating interventions from one setting to another, here we ask, what makes for evidence and how do we create it. As it turns out, in addition to a good theory about human behavior and motivation, a key
basis is a good thesis of what came before. We will overview the promise of one key technique - meta-analysis, as well as other structured approaches for 'counting' evidence.

A more detailed discussion of meta-analysis as a technique is provided on Monday Jan 26 3:30-5:00 by Michael Borenstein at the Institute for Social Research, 426 Thompson Ave, sixth floor. All students are welcome but not required to attend.

Readings are lectures as well as


January 19  No Class – MLK Holiday
2. January 26  Going to scale: A framework for understanding dissemination (Daphna Oyserman)

Typically we imagine that if an intervention is evaluated and works, then it should be used elsewhere. In this class we will discuss what happens when programs are or are not adopted and begin to discuss a model of the steps required for dissemination – taking a program that is successful into the field for others to adopt. A simple way to think of it is to ask oneself what evidence would I, another decision maker or a policy maker need and how would he or she learn about, understand and judge the quality of the evidence.

The first reading gives an overview (Solarz) and the second is a particular framework, both are the result of large scale collaborative discussions and provide thoughtful answers to these issues. The Solarz is long but broken up and I think very easy to read, about 25 pages are the overview relevant for this class, at the end there are specific program area examples that are particularly helpful to get concrete examples. You do not need to read the bios of the participants and other pieces that are more ‘big picture’ unless they interest you, but they may be of use at some later point.

The Kellam piece is by a grandfather or maybe the grandfather of the field and though straightforward, should be read slowly since each thing said in a sentence or phrase is actually important groundwork for the rest of the semester.

Readings:

3. February 2  Alternative models: Persuading the community, reaching clinicians, experimental social innovation. (Carol Mowbray)

In addition to the prevention science approach to dissemination, the issue has been grappled with within community and clinical psychology and psychiatric services. The readings give a taste of these slightly different takes and points of emphasis. The experimental social innovation model focuses heavily on what can be done to make routine societal change programs. The pair of readings describing this is Hazel & Onaga (2003) for the theory and Sullivan (2003) for the specific example. From the clinical area, the question is of course how to link what practitioners do and what clinical trials test the brief reading pair on this is Fishman (2000) and Seligman (2000) – they do not solve the problem but do bring it into sharp relief. Continuing on the clinical focus, but turning to psychiatric services for the seriously mentally ill, Hohmann & Shear (2002) provide a useful outline of the pitfalls that can occur when the transition from clinical (efficacy) to field (effectiveness) is not carefully planned. Roger Weissberg and Mark Greenberg are central to the field of prevention research but each also was trained in other perspectives as well – they finish off the readings with an integration of community action and prevention science – again with a focus toward translation to dissemination.

Readings:


4. February 9  Fidelity vs. adaptation? What does going to scale really mean? (Carol Mowbray)
This class will begin with student-led discussion of the readings, starting with Wandersman (2003). Then we will break into working groups using the JOBS, Keeping it REAL, and the Sullivan intimate violence interventions as examples, each work group will develop their perspective on the steps these programs have taken toward being evidence based, and being replicable, and consider issues of context/culture in thinking about fidelity vs. adaptation.

Readings:


Other optional readings on these issues (see below)


5. February 16 Combining evidence: Using qualitative and quantitative research to assess and develop translatable research (Daphna Oyserman)

Guest lecturer today is John Reid, Executive Director and Senior Research Scientist, Oregon Social Learning Center. John Reid is a pioneer in development of the field of prevention research. Together with Gerald Patterson, he developed a general theoretical framework for understanding the parenting processes that elicit and sustain antisocial behavior in vulnerable child and the link between parenting and social contexts effects in the translation of early childhood behavior problems into long term aggressive, antisocial, delinquent, and other problem-involvement. Unlike other work in this area, his theory was backed by experimental trials to document that the proposed mediating mechanisms exists and can be moderated by effective interventions. Dr. Reid developed reliable methods to assess interactions and observe the behavior of antisocial children. Based on his experience developing behaviorally-based intervention and measurement and disseminating interventions developed and tested initially in Eugene Oregon, he will discuss whether and how these measures translate across culture and socio-economic context.
Readings will be announced.

FEB 23 Winter Break

6. March 1 Culture and cultural context (Daphna Oyserman)

The next sessions focus on culture and social context as topics to be considered in deciding if a program can be translated and developing an appropriate translation of an intervention. This first session provides a general model of culture and an overview of possible differences in what well-being looks like across the U.S. A second set of readings focus on how aggression may be understood differently in different socio-cultural contexts. We will have student-led discussion and break into groups to work on translating the interventions we have discussed using culture as defined in these studies.

Readings

Culture

American culture

Culture and aggression

7. March 8 Cultural-translations Castro Guest Lecturer (Daphna Oyserman)

Guest Lecturer: Felipe Castro, Arizona Prevention Research Center
Dr. Castro will describe his research at the Arizona Prevention Research Center. The readings below are suggestions and will be amended as we get closer to his presentation.
Readings:


8. March 15  Neighborhood and poverty as social contexts to be considered in translation decisions (Daphna Oyserman)

This session focuses on an overview of what we know about context -- How neighborhoods, housing, and other aspects of social context matter in the everyday health and experiences of children and families. After peer-led discussion, we will use this information to figure out translation of the programs we have discussed until this point in the semester.

Readings:


9. March 22  Key factors in deciding what to translate – Family as a context of intervention  (Carol Mowbray)
This session adds a few readings to the previous session and provides a chance to continue working and thinking about translation with the interface of family, race, and neighborhood. The Kaiser Family Foundation website (linked on Course Tools) is the main reading with the other readings optional. Each student should find those aspects of the website most relevant for his or her work and come prepared to discuss and work on these issues in small groups.

Readings:


**10. March 29**  
**Key factors in deciding what to translate - Program and policy relevance (Daphna Oyserman)**

Guest Speaker: Terrance L. Albrecht, Professor, Department of Family Medicine, Wayne State University

Interventions developed in one context and for a particular problem may seem appealing in other contexts and for other problems, a critical job of prevention researchers seeking to make the translation, is to ask whether this is likely to be appropriate. Dr. Albrecht will use examples from her own research to discuss these issues.

Readings are subject to change as Dr. Albrecht chooses.

Readings:


**11. April 5**  
**Implementation: Monitoring ongoing replication and dissemination efforts (Carol Mowbray)**

This class discusses problems and barriers to appropriate dissemination when replication and translation efforts are not monitored.

Readings:


12. April 12  
**Cost effectiveness (Carol Mowbray)**

Mark Holter, Assistant Professor, U of M School of Social Work will be our guest lecturer today, providing an overview of cost effectiveness assessment - a key component to the process of deciding which interventions are workable and worth disseminating.

Readings to be announced

13. April 19  
**Student final presentations (Carol Mowbray)**

This is the last day of class and each of you will be given time to present the program you are translating with special emphasis on the issues you are still grappling with. As critical members of the translation research team, the goal is that student ‘audience’ members will provide new ideas and suggestions for each classmate. This session typically proves to be extremely interesting for participants – useful for your own paper of course but also provides a bridge to other perspectives and projects.