



The Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists in Autism (HANDS) in Autism Summer Training 2010 and 2011 Training Evaluation and Fidelity



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Abstract

Measures and Coding Procedures

Table 1. 2010 and 2011 Combined Evaluation and Fidelity Data

	2010 and 2011 Combined Evaluation and Fidelity Data			
	SF		EV	
	M (%)	SD	M	SD
Introductions, Structure & Choreography	98.31%	.13	4.62	.31
Assessment	96.25%	.19	4.74	.27
Planning/Intervention	100%	0	4.81	.33
Academic	100%	0	4.75	.29
Social Skills	95.95%	.20	4.92	.25
Average	98.13%	.14	4.77	.31

The HANDS (Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists) in Autism program was developed in 2004 to provide intensive training to personnel working in educational settings. HANDS in Autism provides information on ABA and empirically-based practices over a week long intensive summer training session through didactic instruction, observation, modeling, hands-on practice, and coaching. Each day of the five day long training session focuses on a different area including structure/choreography, assessment, planning/intervention, academic, and social skills. Summer training participants in 2010 and 2011 provided daily feedback on program activities specifically regarding goals and objectives, content of information, and experience with hands on practice and coaching. In addition, HANDS staff was rated daily on fidelity in implementing training curriculum. Results of evaluations completed by 96 training participants and fidelity of training staff from 2010 and 2011 will be presented. Conclusions regarding follow-up evaluation, study implications and future directions will be discussed.

Program Evaluation Data
The program evaluation asked participants to rate their satisfaction with topics presented each day and for the overall training on a five-point scale (1 = Not at all satisfied; 5 = Very much satisfied). Factors evaluated for each training module include:

- Outlining goals and objectives
- Facilities
- Didactics/Lectures
- Level of knowledge
- Quality of the speaker
- Observing HANDS Staff
- Hands-on classroom activities
- Feedback/coaching provided
- Hands-on group activities
- Knowledge of staff
- Materials provided
- Working with students

Program Fidelity Data
Each day, the HANDS lead trainers assessed the staff's fidelity to the training program. The staff as a whole was rated on a 5-point scale (0 = Not Complete; 5 = Completed). Factors evaluated for each training day include:

- Use of daily morning meeting
- Explained daily roles/goals
- Review of schedules/assignments
- Maintained structured environment
- Presenting full lectures
- Modeled skills correctly
- Use of multi-media
- Adherence to training schedule

Ratings for staff were then summed across items and divided by the total number of points possible to get a percent fidelity score.

Background

The HANDS in Autism program has developed a unique training model for school-based professionals that is founded upon evidence-based practices. The HANDS training model incorporates didactic instruction with observation and modeling. Additionally, participants are afforded hands-on opportunities to work with school-aged individuals affected by autism spectrum disorders within the HANDS structured classroom. Such opportunities are then enriched with HANDS trainers providing immediate feedback and coaching to summer training participants.

The HANDS in Autism summer training incorporates the HANDS training model and is offered in one-week sessions three times each summer. Training focuses on ABA principals, best practices, and the use of both in classroom settings.

Summer training participants were asked to complete an evaluation measure daily to establish participant satisfaction with training and to determine if training was meeting participant needs. In addition, a measure was completed daily to verify the ability of training staff to follow guidelines outlined in the HANDS training curriculum.

Hypotheses

Participant ratings of the training program across several variables will demonstrate overall satisfaction with the training and provide feedback for improving subsequent training sessions.

Training staff will be able to demonstrate high fidelity to the training program.

Methods and Participants

Ninety-six (N=96) professionals from school based settings attended one of six week-long summer training sessions offered by the HANDS in Autism program between 2010 and 2011. Participants consisted of teachers (both general education and special education), therapists (e.g., school psychologist, SLP, or OT), instructional aides/paraprofessionals, and school administrators.

Each week-long summer training session consisted of five days each lasting eight hours. At the conclusion of each training day participants were asked to complete an evaluation regarding their experience for the day and the information that had been covered. In addition, two lead HANDS trainers assessed staff fidelity to the training program curriculum on each specific day.

The following subjects were taught throughout each training session:

- Day 1: Introduction, Structure, and Choreography – Visual and physical structure, role distribution and collaboration with classroom staff and other entities in the educational system. Introduction to the HANDS Model and Philosophy
- Day 2 Assessment - Informal, curriculum-based, and standardized assessment, data collection and analysis
- Day 3: Planning/Intervention: Development of IEP and BIP goals and objectives, behavior reduction
- Day 4: Academic - 1:1 teaching, independent work systems, development and adaptation of teaching materials
- Day 5: Social Skills – Social development, assessment of individual strengths and needs, developing and implementing social skills goals

Results

Findings support that on average summer training participants were highly satisfied (M=4.77, SD=.31). While participants rated being highly satisfied on Day 1, Introduction, Structure, and Choreography, (M= 4.62, SD=.31) it was generally rated lower by participants compared to other days and results were statistically significant (p<.001). This day involves intense didactic material to provide a base of knowledge for participants to draw from as the week progresses. Therefore, participants may have rated days two through four higher as there are more opportunities for observation, hands-on learning, and coaching.

Across all five days training staff were able to maintain high rates of fidelity to the training curriculum (M=98.10%, SD=.02). Although staff fidelity on Day 4, Social Skills, slightly lower compared to other days it was not significant (p<.05).

Conclusions and Future Directions

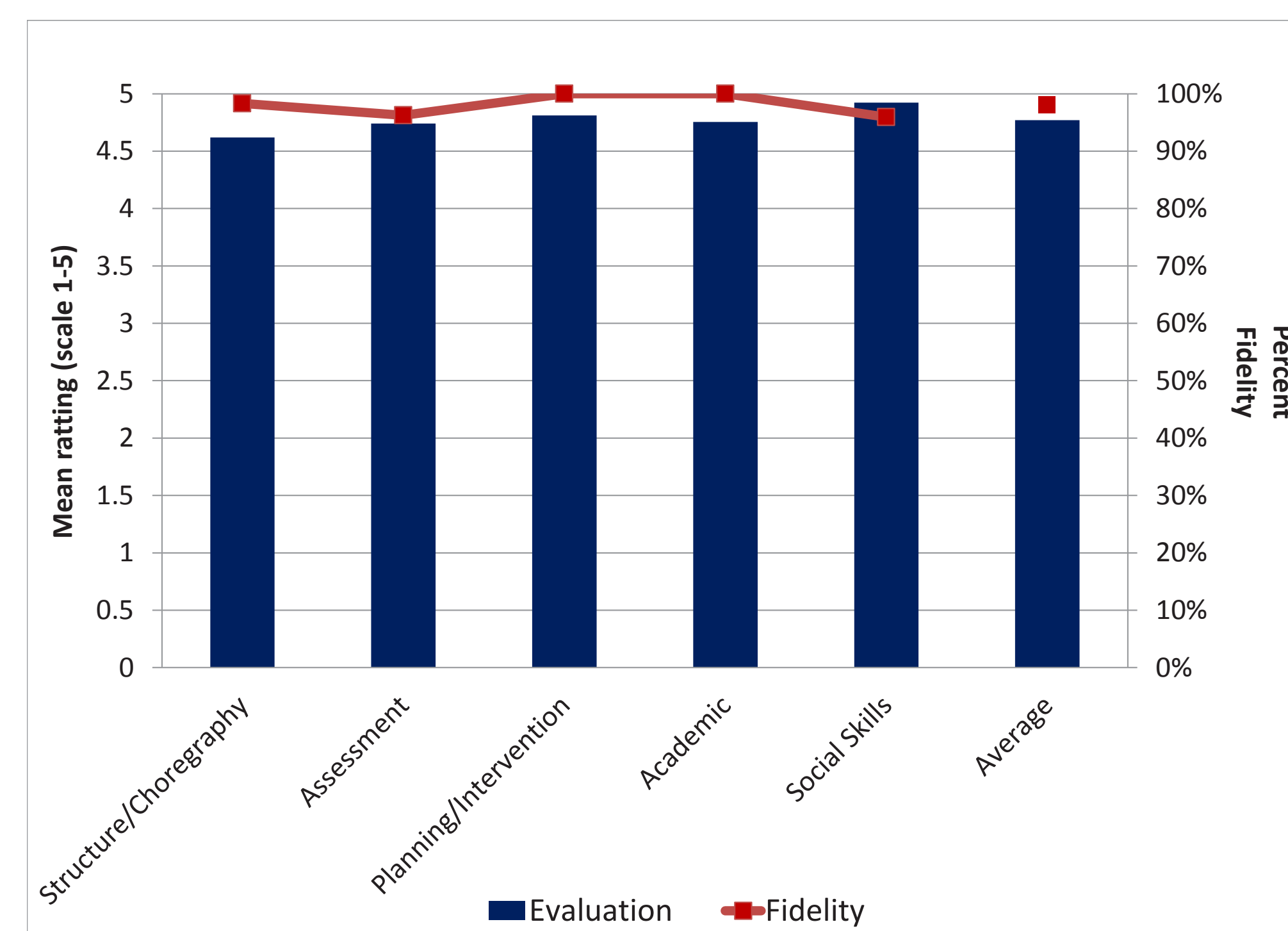
Overall findings support that participants in 2010 and 2011 were highly satisfied with the HANDS in Autism training model. Additionally, staff demonstrated high fidelity to the training curriculum, such results indicate a potential for training to be replicable by others given fidelity. Using these results, the HANDS in Autism team will continue to revise and improve training for school personnel.

Results presented above suggest the HANDS in Autism model of professional training is highly satisfactory to participants, easy for participants to follow, and easy for staff to implement based upon received training.

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Fig. 1. Summer Training 2010 and 2011 Training Evaluation and Fidelity



For more information about the program, visit our website www.HANDSinAutism.org