Can you design for Fidelity? How your intervention framework describes intended actions, participation and behavior

In recent years the term fidelity has been introduced within the field of organizational level interventions. Fidelity describes the extent to which the intervention has been implemented as it was originally intended, and is regarded critical for determining the validity of the research results. The reason for introducing this term has been for researchers to be able to conclude whether an intervention has worked as intended. In this paper we discuss the term fidelity in relation to the concept of script analysis (Akrich 1994). We do this to question whether it is even relevant to discuss fidelity in organizational level interventions. The concept of fidelity stems from clinical interventions although the concept has developed over time (Bellg et al. 2004). Organizational level interventions differ from clinical interventions, as they are more complex regarding both the “dose” given and the number and levels of participants involved at the same time. Steering organizational level interventions in every detail and secure full fidelity or treatment integrity can thus seem difficult. Organizational level intervention frameworks are often built on the designer’s experiences with previous interventions as well as what have been reported as best practice. The designer thus has a large role in making the intervention work – he or she can design intended actions, participation and behavior into the framework. The notion script can help explain the designer’s role. A script is the designer’s presumptions, visions and predictions about how the framework will interact with the intervention participants. As derived concepts Akrich (1994) introduces ‘in-scription’ and ‘de-scription’. Where ‘in-scription’ is the limitations and constraint that the intervention designer in-scribe in the framework, and ‘de-scription’ is how the intervention participants interpret the framework and adjust the framework to the organization.