

OELA 2017 Project Directors Meeting
In Pursuit of Higher Education for All

NPD Project Evaluations:
Questions and Considerations to Support
Strong Designs

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Presenters

- **Molly Faulkner-Bond**, English Learners Program Officer, National Center for Education Research (NCER)
- **Jonathan Jacobson**, Senior Research Scientist, National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE)
- **Scott Snyder**, Director, Center for Educational Accountability, University of Alabama at Birmingham
- **Bruce Yelton**, Owner, BYC Consulting



Session Overview

- Individual reflection, group discussion, Q&A on important considerations for evaluation design.
- FY2016 Evaluators → Opportunity to check on status, progress
- FY2017 Evaluators → Opportunity to reflect on plan and adjust as needed



Session Overview

- Measurement and Contextual Considerations (Molly)
- What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Considerations (Jonathan)
- Lessons Learned from Implementation (Scott)
- The Reviewer's Perspective (Bruce)

Measurement Considerations

- What are the **outcomes** of interest? How will these be measured?
 - Reliability
 - Validity evidence for the intended purpose
 - Sensitivity
 - DIY vs. extant measures

Contextual Considerations

- What are the **contextual characteristics** of the setting where you are conducting research?
 - Policies for identifying, serving, reclassifying ELs;
 - Program options for ELs and mechanisms for placement and service;
 - Linguistic diversity within the EL population;
 - Presence of newcomers, long-term ELs, migrants.

WWC Considerations

- What is the **intervention** of interest for your impact study?
- Is the intervention received by *all* or only *some* of the individuals served by the project?
- How will a **comparison group** not receiving the intervention be formed?
 - Lottery
 - Measure of need
 - Matched comparison group

WWC Considerations

- Are the relevant **outcomes** you expect to measure eligible for review under a WWC protocol, such as the
 - Review of Individual Studies Protocol
 - English Language Learners Evidence Review Protocol
 - Teacher Training, Evaluation, and Compensation Evidence Review Protocol
- Do you expect to collect the **pre-intervention data** required by a WWC protocol to establish baseline equivalence?

Lessons Learned

- Mixing WWC with program evaluation is challenging (but a “balance” can be found)
 - Answers versus inferences (confounding the role of evaluator? fidelity and consistency of treatment?)
 - Common ground (samples and measurement)
 - Units of analysis?
 - Restriction of IV, sample, outcomes?
 - Evidence-based practice
 - Validity, reliability, fairness, and utility are important

Lessons Learned

- Budgeting for program evaluation...Good luck.
- Good logic models promote fidelity, communication and accountability.
- “It” will probably take longer than you expect.
- Sensitivity to unintended outcomes.
- OELA evaluators need a structure to facilitate exchange of resources and lessons learned.

Reviewer’s Perspective

Evaluation is integral and not auxiliary-

- Involvement of evaluation partners from the proposal stage onward.
- Evidence in the program theory model of the utilization of process evaluation data in project decision making.
- Provision of resources adequate to assure both GPRA and project objectives are evaluated.

Reviewer’s Perspective

The evaluator is suited to the project-

- The evaluator brings to the project skills and experience in investigating the specific types of activities being implemented as well as the project context.
- The evaluator’s contacts with the project are sufficient to assure the collection of unbiased data.

Resources and Support

- WWC Group Design Standards Online Training:
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/OnlineTraining>
- Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations:
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>

Thank you!
