NPD Project Evaluations: Questions and Considerations to Support Strong Designs

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Presenters

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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

• 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
• 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

Thank you!