

Early Career Researcher Writing for Policy Training Series

Session 3

Laura Booker

Nate Schwartz

April 2024



➤ Welcome and Introductions

Rename:

First Name, Last Initial, Organization

Please drop in the chat:

For your current projects, what kinds of reports do you expect to create for specific audiences?

This learning series is supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305X220009 to the American Institutes for Research. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.



➤ About the RESTART Network



The PreK–12 Research on Education Strategies to Advance Recovery and Turnaround (RESTART) Network coordinates research activities across **five** Institute of Education Sciences (IES)-funded research teams to support **learning recovery** for students as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.

The RESTART Network provides national leadership on learning acceleration and recovery from pandemic-induced learning loss, sharing findings from the network with education agencies across the United States to support the use of evidence-based strategies for recovery.

➤ Virtual Meeting/Conference Recording Notice

The American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) allows for the recording of audio, visuals, participants, and other information sent, verbalized, or utilized during business-related meetings. By joining a meeting, you automatically consent to such recordings. Any participant who prefers to participate via audio only should disable their video camera so only their audio will be captured. Video and/or audio recordings of any AIR session shall not be transmitted to an external third party without the permission of AIR.

➤ Agenda

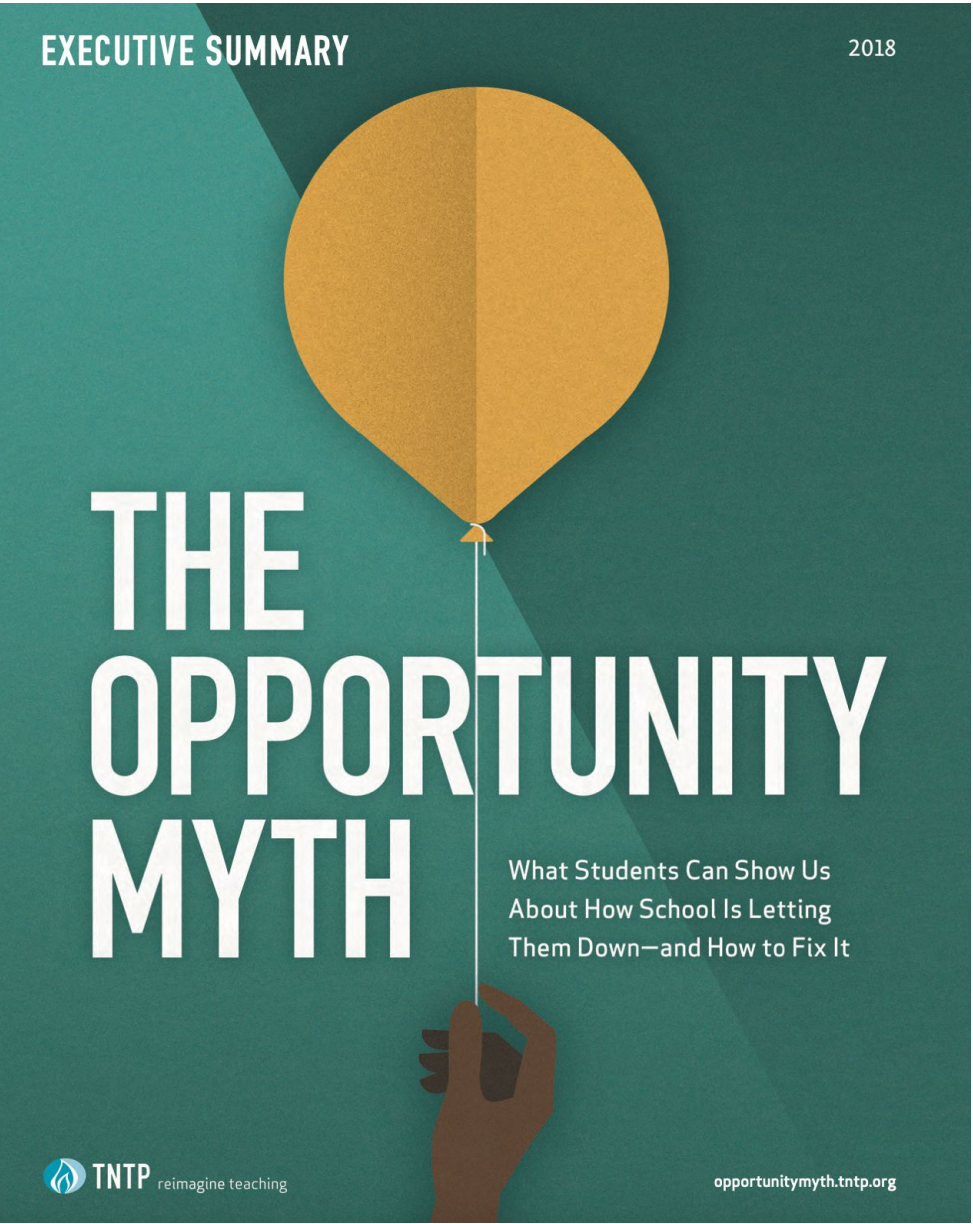
1. Welcome and Icebreaker (5)
2. Reporting and Recommendations Challenges and Best Practices (15)
3. Reporting and Recommendations Best Practices (30)
4. Practice (35)
5. Closing (5)

RESTART

Network



Presentation Challenges and Best Practices



THE OPPORTUNITY MYTH

What Students Can Show Us
About How School Is Letting
Them Down—and How to Fix It

1. What story are they telling?
2. What evidence do they use to tell this story in the report?
3. To what extent do the recommendations feel actionable?

Utilization and dissemination plans should be part of the research design.

We spent the last 3 months writing the evaluation report. Unfortunately we drained the budget and were unable to share it with anyone.



#eval18

freshspectrum



@clys4

freshspectrum.com

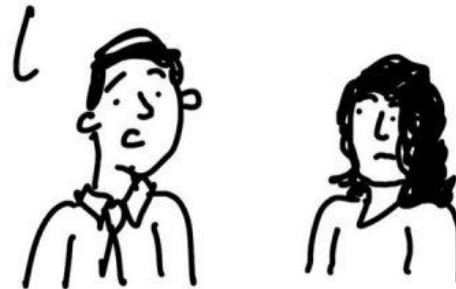
➤ Think about how you will interpret your findings.

- Determine what your results **say about your program**
- **Compare** results obtained with what was expected
- Discuss which objectives were and were not met and give possible reasons **why**
- Determine **whether circumstances or events unrelated to the program** contributed to or limited its success
- Consider **how different stakeholders would interpret the results**
- Discuss whether **different data sources yielded different results**, why this might be the case, and the implications for the evaluation
- Discuss **unexpected findings**, including anything learned in the evaluation that was relevant to the program but not directly related to the objectives
- Compare results with results from **previous evaluations** of your program or similar programs
- Determine whether there is anything you would like to **know about your program that your results do not tell you**. Helps you to understand the limitations to your evaluation, and assist in developing future research questions

- Reflect on your findings to move beyond the data to make connections between the research and the wider context in which it took place.



Uh oh, it looks like
our evaluator is
coming to chat about
our project performance.



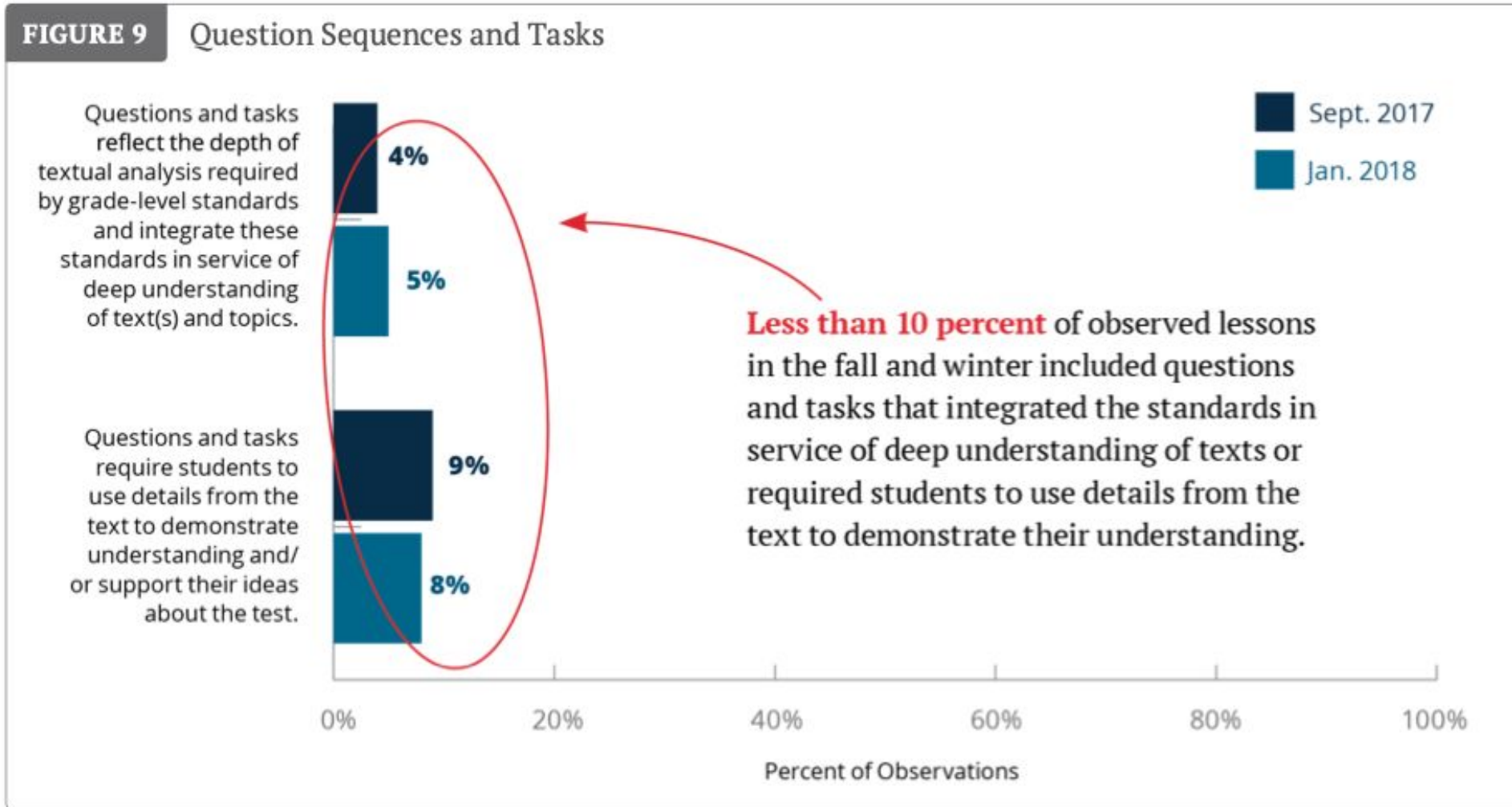
freshspectrum

➤ Make it E-A-S-T!

- Easy – simplify the message
- Attractive – use images
- Social – use anecdotes and real people
- Timely – tie to immediate costs and benefits

https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Using_Research_Evidence_for_Success_-_A_Practice_Guide.pdf

➤ Read to be Ready Coaching Evaluation



Correct responses in bold. Percentages indicate percentage of student responses.

FIGURE 4

1. Where does Bear find the mouse?
 - a. in the cupboard (20%)
 - b. in the teakettle (43%)**
 - c. in the bread drawer (11%)
 - d. in the fridge (26%)
2. How does Bear feel when the mouse asks for a bit of cheese?
 - a. hungry (35%)
 - b. lonely (13%)
 - c. bothered (35%)**
 - d. foolish (17%)
3. Read this sentence from the passage. "You have my word," said the mouse. What does this sentence help the reader understand about the mouse?
 - a. The mouse talks a lot. (14%)
 - b. The mouse gives Bear a nice gift. (10%)
 - c. The mouse thinks Bear took something. (7%)
 - d. The mouse keeps promises. (69%)**
4. What do Bear and the mouse feel differently about at the beginning of the passage?
 - a. whether the mouse should be in the house (42%)**
 - b. where the mouse should hide in the house (12%)
 - c. what Bear should serve to eat and drink (17%)
 - d. whether Bear should put up his sign (29%)
5. Which lesson does Bear learn in the passage?

Reading Literacy Standard 1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Reading Literacy Standard 3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Reading Literacy Standard 4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

Reading Literacy Standard 6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

Contrasting Practices

The examples below show a question sequence observed in a grade 3 Tennessee classroom last fall, compared to an ideal question sequence for the same text, *Eggs* by Marilyn Singer. The

first question sequence represents isolated instruction targeting a single reading standard. The second sequence supports multiple reading standards and builds toward a conceptual understanding drawn from the grade 3 science standards.

WEAK PRACTICE

Observed Question Sequence Focused on a Single Standard

- What is our book about?
- What else did it say [an egg] could be used as?
- Can you find the main idea?
- Where do we look for the main idea?
- Which one is the main idea in this paragraph?

“Look Fors” for Coaches and Leaders

- ✓ Do questions and tasks integrate multiple standards in service of building conceptual understanding?
- ✓ Do questions and tasks attend to specific vocabulary and structure, ideas, or details from the text?
- ✓ Do questions and tasks require students to use textual evidence to demonstrate their understandings or ideas?
- ✓ Are questions and tasks sequenced in a way that

STRONG PRACTICE

Question Sequence that Integrates the Standards to Build Knowledge

- In the beginning of our book, the author said that eggs can be, “breakfast, lunch, and dinner.” Given what you know about how embryos survive in an egg, how can an egg provide “breakfast, lunch, and dinner?” Use specific vocabulary from our text.
- Why is the type, or texture, of the shell on an egg important? Give a specific example that explains your reasoning for the importance.
- Why do animals lay eggs that have different shapes? Give a specific example, and explain how the shape of that animal’s egg is important.
- Why does the egg’s color matter?
- According to our text, why do animals like fish and dragonflies lay thousands or even millions of eggs?
- Our text said: “Eggs have a long list of enemies...” Who are the enemies and how have animals and their eggs protected themselves from those enemies? Cite some specific ways based on our text. Use precise vocabulary we have learned in our unit.
- The caption here says: “The female red-legged partridge builds two nests and lays eggs in each. She incubates one clutch. The male incubates the other.” Using the information we just read and the illustrations on these pages, what does “incubate” mean? How does the male emperor penguin incubate his egg? Why is it important for birds to incubate their eggs?
- Why is it important for eggs to remain intact? Summarize some of the ways the eggs are designed to improve the chances of survival.
- How do animals’ reproductive behaviors and their eggs support their survival?

deepens students’ understanding of the text, the author’s craft, or the concepts?

- ✓ Do questions and tasks elicit responses in age-appropriate interactive ways?
- ✓ Do questions address the varying needs of students?



“Look Fors” for Effective RTI² Data Team Meetings

*The following case study illustrates an essential component of RTI²—a data team meeting where staff gather to discuss student progress. Structured processes and invested staff members lead to productive conversations that drive student learning. **Look for the following features—based on prior research—of an effective RTI² data team meeting:***

- 1 The meeting includes the right stakeholders and begins with everyone on the same page about the **goals** of the meeting.
- 2 Clear **targets** are agreed on for student growth.
- 3 Each **individual student’s data is examined** in turn and the team discusses students’ areas of strength and weakness related to the identified skill deficit.
- 4 The team considers the possibility that the intervention is **not a good match** for a student’s particular needs.
- 5 The team takes a problem-solving approach to discussions of individual students and concludes each conversation with **concrete action steps**.

- Recommendations need to be tied explicitly to the findings and be doable.



➤ Levels of Recommendations

1. Just report on findings
2. Recommending action and/or strategic options
3. Recommending one option over others
4. Recommending an option and how to implement it

➤ Think about recommendation buckets and level of detail.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Easing the burden of RTI² guidelines:

- A simplified RTI² framework that aims to clarify the set of RTI² requirements and flexibilities at all grade bands.
- Proposed modifications to the framework itself that aim to reduce implementation challenges across Tennessee schools.

2 Enhancing support and resources for district RTI² implementation:

- A legislative funding request to better support RTI² staffing in all Tennessee districts.
- Additional resources, trainings, and feedback tools for districts and schools to assess the strength of their own RTI² practices.

3 Differentiating RTI² for high schools:

- A listening tour to define new guidance and resources for high school implementation.
- Communities of practice that support high school RTI² design.

Teachers are already engaging with their instructional leaders to improve their practices and to select high-quality materials, and many teachers are also involved in Read to be Ready summer camps.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Use high-quality materials that are worthy of attention and engage students in building knowledge.
2. Increase time students spend on reading and writing throughout the school day.
3. Assign tasks and ask questions that align to expectations in the standards.

District leaders, school leaders, and instructional coaches are already supporting this work by attending Read to be Ready convenings and supporting organization of summer camps.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Lead efforts to ensure teachers have high-quality reading materials and consider using the unit starters as “bridge” to selecting new materials aligned to standards.
2. Ensure teacher feedback, support, and evaluation focuses on increased reading and writing in the classroom.
3. Ensure teacher feedback, support, and evaluation focus on improving questioning and creating more standards-aligned tasks.

Educator preparation providers are already working to align programs to new literacy standards, participating in a new literacy faculty network, and using new annual report data for program improvement.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Rethink course requirements, course sequencing, and clinical preparation while aligning programs to new literacy standards and expectations of teachers in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.
2. Ensure candidates have access to and use high-quality materials and curriculum in literacy courses and clinical experiences, and integrate Read to be Ready resources, such as unit starters, to support candidate learning.
3. Actively participate in literacy networks.

Recommendations by Stakeholder Group



RECOMMENDATION ONE



Foster collective responsibility among middle and high school faculty and staff for the postsecondary preparedness of their students

Given the current student-to-counselor ratios in Tennessee, school counselors cannot serve as the sole source of information for students about course pathways and how they tie to postsecondary and career options. New school counseling standards seek to improve opportunities for school counselors by updating, clarifying, and narrowing counselors' work so that they can focus on the areas of greatest need in their schools. In order to reach all students with necessary guidance, **school leaders must find ways to broaden the pool of school personnel with the information and training to help students along the secondary-to-postsecondary pathway.** This means allowing counselors to serve as coordinators of school-wide efforts involving the entire staff—teachers, aides, principals, assistant principals—in creating a comprehensive culture of support surrounding students.

On the 2016 Tennessee Educator Survey, 95 percent of high school teachers reported that they see it as part of their jobs to prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education and training programs. However, beyond their own personal participation in a postsecondary institution and career selection, these educators have rarely received training on how to provide this type of support. Therefore, they may lack crucial knowledge about career exploration surveys, local community or technical colleges, the FAFSA, and other pertinent application deadlines. Finding ways to bridge these knowledge gaps while capitalizing on staff knowledge and translating this all into student support represents the primary challenge facing many of our schools and districts.

Provide
evidence
for the
recommendation



THE OPPORTUNITY MYTH

Action Guide: Parents and Families

Share your child's academic or career goals with their teachers, both for the school year and for the long-term.

Share feedback about your child's school experiences, both positive and negative, with your child's teachers and school leaders. Work with your child's school to ensure they act on the feedback you and your child have shared.

Ask your child about what they're learning in school and check out the assignments they bring home.

Familiarize yourself with the kinds of assignments you should expect at your child's grade level, and check to see if they seem to be experiencing grade-level content. Learning Heroes' [Readiness Roadmap](#) is a good resource, as is our [student work library](#). For parents who speak Spanish, Univision's [Clave al Éxito](#) will be a useful resource as well.

Ask your child's teachers and school leaders about how their current schoolwork will prepare them to reach their academic and career goals. Does your child have a chance to think deeply in their classes? To solve problems creatively? To read high-quality texts (or listen to them before they are able to read independently), and analyze them in conversation and writing? Talk to their

teachers if you think your child should be doing more of the thinking in their classroom.

Ask your child's teachers and school leaders directly whether your child will be college and career ready when they graduate, based on their performance in class today.

Is your child on grade level? Request that your child's school answers that question directly and provides accessible information about whether your child is meeting grade-level standards for college readiness. If report cards don't directly answer that question, ask that they be redesigned to include information about college readiness. [This guide](#) can help you prepare for a meeting with your child's teachers.

Share your concerns with the principal of your child's school or your local school board if your child isn't receiving high-quality schoolwork or you aren't able to access clear information about whether your child is on grade level. Organize with your local Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) or other parent forums to demand high-quality experiences for your students. This [form language](#) can provide a starting point for addressing concerns with your child's principal or school board.

➤ In the recommendation and discussion sections, you can give new life to the problem!

- A strong personal voice
- Use personal experience
- Use the literature for contrast
- Road maps
- Use theory to frame recommendations

RESTART

Network



Comparing Products: Research to Action

➤ Group work

Spend 5-10 minutes comparing the [policy brief](#) version of the Grissom et al. “Race and Gender Gap” piece to the [academic version](#) of the same study, and then discuss the following questions in your group.

1. What are key differences in the writing style across these pieces?
2. How do you see the findings tailored for particular audiences?
3. What do you think the policy brief gets right and wrong in terms of actionability?
4. To what extent are the recommendations meaningful? What would it take to make them more meaningful?

RESTART

Network



Closing

Please give us feedback!

➤ Upcoming Session

May 8

➤ Discussion Questions

What kinds of products do you produce? How are these products meant to be used?
How are you determining what products you create?

Is there a communication product (not necessarily from your work) that you have encountered and been particularly excited about? Why?

Study Types

Landscape or Diagnostic Study

Bright Spot Analysis

Take-Up Study

Implementation Study

Impact Evaluation

Product Type

Research presentations

Research briefs, reports, and frameworks

Contrasting case studies

Synthesis and recommendations

Explainers, op-eds, podcasts, etc.

➤ Definitions, Part One: Study Types

Study Type	Key Questions
Landscape or Diagnostic Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the problem vary across students, schools, geographies, etc.? • Where is it most and least concentrated? • What does this imply for policy levers and stakeholder involvement?
Bright Spot Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are the places seeing the best results or unexpected successes? • How do the people in those places explain their success and how does this differ from similar but less successful places?
Take-Up Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the program aim and intended reach? • Who is taking part in a program? • Are these the intended participants? • What factors contribute to program reach and potential missed opportunities?
Implementation Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is actually taking place across students or schools? • How are participants experiencing the program or issue? • Are expected things changing in expected ways?
Impact Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a particular intervention make a causal difference to short- or long-term outcomes?

➤ Considerations for Good Facilitation Practice

How can you use these tips and other facilitation techniques when sharing your findings and recommendations with your partner organization?

➤ Build in collaborative time to figure out your story

1. Start with your research questions and knowledge of the context.
2. Look at the data (usually via a presentation of figures, quotes, etc.).
3. Decide on the story (core message) and the audience.
4. Revise the visuals to ensure that they successfully tell the story.

➤ Practice writing a good abstract.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571818.pdf>

Although researchers have explored the impact of instructional coaching and named possible elements believed essential to effective coaching, there has yet to emerge from the literature a coherent model of those essential elements (“active ingredients”). This qualitative study sought to identify those elements through a systematic process beginning with a synthesis of current coaching literature to compile a list of ingredients. Using a modified grounded theory approach, this list was then validated through semi-structured focus group data of teachers and triangulated with focus group data provided by instructional coaches to create a conceptual framework of coaching. Future coaching research can build upon this framework through empirically testing those key components that are necessary for effective coaching.