

Research & Choosing an Evaluator

Welcome!

Thank you for joining.
We will begin promptly at 3:00pm CT.

Please keep your Zoom on mute.



Please sign in on chat.



Literacy
Network of
Kansas

Introductions



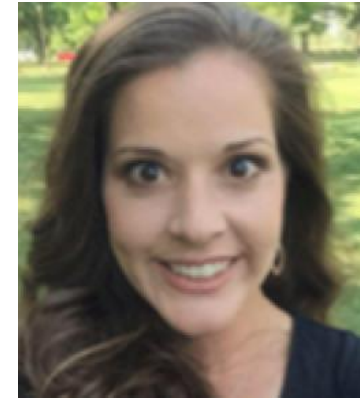
**Jennifer Kotler, LiNK Advisory
Facilitator**



**Jayne James, LiNK Partner
Moderator**



**Suzanne E. Myers, LiNK Director
Moderator**



**Amber Rowland, LiNK Partner
Moderator**

Outcomes

- Understand the various roles of an evaluator
- Assess the evaluation needs of your project
- Know how to find eligible evaluators
- Know what types of qualities to look for in an evaluator
- Understand the kinds of questions to ask of an evaluator

Agenda

2:00-2:07 | Opening

2:07-2:10 | Role of Evaluator

2:10-2:20 | Considerations influencing evaluation

2:20-2:30 | Chat Q&A

2:30-2:45 | Finding an Evaluator

2:45-2:57 | Chat Q&A

2:57-3:00 | Closing

Who I am / What I do/ Why relevant

- **Vice President of Research & Evaluation at Sesame Workshop**
- **A KU Grad!**
- **Oversee research on all Sesame Workshop content (e.g. mass media, targeted interventions) in a variety of domains (e.g. literacy, math, SEL) across the globe!**
- **Often looking for evaluators in locations with little connections and for topics where I may not know the “go to” people in the field.**



Role of an Evaluator

- To provide insights at critical moments about what is working and not working within the initiative and provide recommendations for course correction if/when needed
- To assess use, value, appeal of the content and delivery of the initiative
- To test different models of content & delivery of the initiative to ensure maximum use, appeal & learning
- To provide recommendations to ensure strong content and consistent delivery
- To evaluate whether the initiative has impact on attitudes, knowledge & behavior
- To work with other evaluators on this project
- To help disseminate knowledge about the project to the field at large

Role of an Evaluator

The Evaluator should be:

- A partner
- A helper
- An insight provider

The Evaluator should NOT be:

- Judgmental
- Authoritarian

Considerations regarding evaluation

Although large scale Randomized Control Trials are not required for this grant, perhaps you want to test variations of implementation in some sort of experimental design.

You might want to make tweaks as the program goes along and will need to do some interviews and assessments along the way.

You might really want to get a sense of the importance of fidelity of implementation, and would want have a way to measure that over time.

Considerations regarding evaluation (continued)

Do you have existing research/evaluation people within the district who are responsible for running data analysis and with expertise in assessments that could take on more work within their existing jobs?

Do you have existing educators/assessors who could collect data directly from students should the evaluation committee decide on new assessment tools that require extra training and certification?

Have you collected enough data (both quantitative and qualitative) already that will inform the scope and sequence of the project so that you feel you don't need to know a lot more before launching into this project?

Is your setting/context/population similar to the schools that have shown positive effects in What Works Clearinghouse or other reputable sources?

Considerations regarding evaluation

(continued)

BUDGET

Research usually costs between 5% to 20% of a project's overall budget

If you said YES to all of the questions on the prior page, you may be able to plan for a smaller evaluation budget.

If you said NO to all of the questions you should probably plan for a larger evaluation budget.

And if some yes and some no, then plan for somewhere in between.

CHAT

Use the chat feature to ask any questions you have about selecting evidence based practices.

What to look for in an evaluator for your project?

- Has experience with literacy interventions in pre-K through 12
- Has published in reputable literacy/education journals (google scholar citations)
- Has qualitative and quantitative experience
- Has received grants for other literacy interventions
- Has time and resources and enthusiasm to dedicate to this project
- Writes in a way that you understand it
- Articulates a policy or understanding of IRB/Ethnical considerations of data collection
- Is a nice collaborative person

Red Flags for Me

- Very vague descriptions of prior work
- Publications that tell a story without data to back it up
- Someone who can't explain themselves in layperson's language
- Someone who is unfamiliar with instrumentation and measures that are frequently used in the field
- People who don't ask a lot of questions
- Rigidity

How to find an evaluator

- Google/Google Scholar/Google Scholar citations
- Check out the evaluators in What Works Clearinghouse or other evaluation websites
- Conference schedules/ keynotes/ websites of literacy experts
- Interested Evaluators for LiNK are putting their information here: **<https://tinyurl.com/InterestedLiNKEvaluators>**

AND THEN

- Issue your own RFP to create your own competition and send to a handful of researchers you find from above or organizations you find from above
- Or contact different ones you find and have conversations with them

Example of what I ask for in a research proposal (continued)

Proposal Components

Proposals shall include a provision for delivery of the following elements:

1. **Research Design:** Proposals shall outline the design of a potential study or set of studies including:
 - Sampling strategy, including sample size justification, and a description of how comparison/control groups will be determined and how the sampling will account for any attrition that may occur
 - Research measures
 - Data collection plan, including a description of monitoring and quality control measures for data collection; a description of how researchers are trained and ways in which researchers will ensure that they adhere to the ethical standards of research set forth by the Society for Research on Child Development (<http://www.srcd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>)
 - Data analysis plan that outlines how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact

Example of what I ask for in a research proposal

2. **Timeline**

3. **Budget:** A detailed budget for the project shall be submitted with the research proposal. The budget shall include separate sections outlining costs associated with each data collection wave.

4. **Key personnel:** CVs or biographic summaries of key personnel.

4. **Past evaluations and references:**

- A 1-2-page description of similar or comparable studies in which the agency has engaged in the past, or similar work sample
- Contact information for at least 2 previous clients for references

Once you have your evaluator...here are other things to consider

- The evaluator will read the original RFP (the one that you are responding to) and suggest ways of measuring impact
- They will learn about the data you have collected already and data systems
- They will likely want to interview stakeholders (high level staff, teachers, students, parents) to assess baseline knowledge, attitudes, etc
- They will likely want direct access (through interviews and/or assessments) to children/staff etc perhaps 2-3 times a year. I'd question if they ask for more.
- They may want to do some observations and spot checks (passively) as long as you're okay with this.
- If activities of a research will interfere greatly with the work of the school, it's probably not a great design.
- At the beginning you might want to have conversations more frequently (like once a week) but after that—a check in once a month or every other month

CHAT

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Evaluation

Thank you!

Look for a recorded version of this webinar and a copy of the slides will be made available on the LiNK website: