

IES Learning Acceleration Challenges: Andrew McEachin Office Hours Transcript

Eden Baker (00:02):

Anyone that's joined, you're welcome to just chime in if you have a question, as I said, you are free to have your video on if you feel comfortable. You are also absolutely fine to leave that off. If you do have a question just unmute yourself and you're welcome to just chime in at any point.

Nancy Dyson (00:16):

I have a few questions.

Eden Baker (00:22):

Sure.

Nancy Dyson (00:26):

First of all, when we're doing the PowerUp to try and figure out how many participants that we need, they have level two, level three. If we are going to randomly assign classrooms within the school, so we would have an equal number of control and intervention classrooms within a school, do we need to consider this school as a level or no?

Andrew McEachin (00:56):

Yeah, that's a good question. I would probably lean towards the one or treatments at level two, and then you just treat schools as fixed.

Nancy Dyson (01:09):

Okay.

Andrew McEachin (01:09):

Yeah, that's how I would consider it.

Nancy Dyson (01:12):

Okay.

Speaker 4 (01:13):

I'm sorry. You said treat schools as what? I stepped out.

Andrew McEachin (01:17):

Fixed, as a fixed effect. In the PowerUp tool. Let me, I can grab the PowerUp tool and give you the actual... Because they have really goofy acronyms. Let's see, I can give you the actual tab. See. Okay, yeah, just give me a second. I'll pull the PowerUp acronym out. And feel free to ask your followup question.

Nancy Dyson (02:09):

Also, this is on the PowerUp tool also. In the presentation that you did last week or the week before, whatever it was, there was an example on one of the slides of a table, where if you had this many classes, this many schools, whatever, and then it showed how many classes you would need. And they kept changing the number of eligible students within a class and how that affected how many classrooms you needed.

Nancy Dyson (02:43):

And again, on the PowerUp, I didn't see any place to indicate that level one, the number of students. It was just put in the level two number. If you said level two, it came up with 16 classes, but I don't know where the number of students within a class fits into that PowerUp analysis. Or if it matters.

Andrew McEachin (03:09):

Yeah. There should be a cell for you all. I don't know if you're using the Excel tool or the...

Nancy Dyson (03:23):

Yeah.

Andrew McEachin (03:24):

Okay. There should be a place for you to put, they'd call it the level one sample size and that's where we varied the three six.

Nancy Dyson (03:35):

Right, right. I don't know. Maybe I wasn't looking at it correctly. Are you going to pull that up, the PowerUp thing or no?

Andrew McEachin (03:45):

Yeah, I'm just trying to find the right file for you all. Sorry. My computer is a little slow at the moment.

Eden Baker (04:19):

Andrew, is there anything that we can screen share for you?

Andrew McEachin (04:26):

No. I'm just trying to find the document that I needed for reading the calculations. Okay. Let me share my screen. Okay. Do you... Let me see if I can get this larger. Oops. It would be the BCRA3.

Nancy Dyson (05:06):

Oh, okay. Yeah. Okay. I see that.

Andrew McEachin (05:08):

And it would be this row here.

Nancy Dyson (05:10):

Right, I see that. Okay. So that's...

Andrew McEachin (05:21):

Yeah, go ahead.

Nancy Dyson (05:22):

What I was looking at had different things. And in the bottom it told you how many classes you needed. it was a different setup. The table was a different setup. I'm not sure how I got into the wrong place.

Andrew McEachin (05:40):

Yeah, I know. I hear you. It can be a tricky thing, but let me put the acronym into this chat as well. They call it the BCAR3_21. Ancillary schools.

Nancy Dyson (06:17):

The one I was looking at, they had you put in the effect size and then it told you how many classrooms you wanted to obtain that effect size. But I didn't see a place to put it.

Andrew McEachin (06:28):

Yeah, so you can. Essentially, it's two sides of the same coin. You would manipulate these until you got something that was 0.3 or larger in this room. But yeah.

Nancy Dyson (06:39):

Okay. Yeah.

Andrew McEachin (06:40):

Yeah. And strange if you use the R tool instead of the Excel, sometimes it has to solve for a different unit. Anyways, it should all get you to the same place. But sometimes the process is a little bit different if you use the Excel versus the R versus they also have a website that you can click through at the PowerUp. Oh, sorry, you said you had a second question about PowerUp.

Nancy Dyson (07:17):

The second. Well, those were the two questions about the levels and about that. I have several other questions, but I'll let somebody else go for next.

Andrew McEachin (07:31):

Yeah, and I should say too, if anybody has a question that they don't want to forget, feel free to drop them in the chat. And we can also use that as a running queue as well. You also probably have the questions written down, but we can do that as well. I don't know who was next after Nancy, but if nobody else wants to chime in, feel free to go to a third question, Nancy.

Nancy Dyson (08:01):

Okay. It's on the different documents we've had, They said that NWEA would help you with the randomization. If we're randomizing by class, not by student. You would do that, you would choose which teachers, which classrooms would get the intervention and which classrooms would not?

Andrew McEachin (08:24):

Yeah, so essentially we would get a roster that would just have all of the eligible classes that are part of it. And then use essentially a random number generator, a random process to assign the two and then just kick it back to you all as here are the conditions.

Nancy Dyson (08:41):

Okay. Okay. And it said we're supposed to track student participation. Suppose we're using, let's say an iPad and can record on the iPad by student how much time they spent on the intervention. Where should we be storing that data? Does that matter to you where we store that?

Andrew McEachin (09:09):

Yeah, it's a good question. The where is not as important as being able to share it at the end. I realize that there are probably certain types of click data and other things, that if you're really tracking that over a year, it's going to be a huge amount of data. On the where side, I defer to whatever's going to be easier for you all. If it's already stored in a certain way and at the end you can share it securely with us in an Excel document or some other file format, that's fine. Yeah. The where part is not as important as being able to track it.

Nancy Dyson (09:51):

Okay. We can just choose any secure situation to store the data?

Andrew McEachin (10:00):

Yeah. And we can work with you all. If it's something it's easier for you to upload it monthly, so then you can get it off your books, either because it's large or you don't want to be storing it for that long. Essentially what would happen is all phase two finalists would have a specific SFTP for them that only your side and two people on our side would have access to.

Andrew McEachin (10:22):

And you could drop it in there, we could upload it to our secure server, let you know that we did that. And then you could delete it from the SFTP on your side. And then if you don't want to store it on your side, you could also then get rid of it.

Nancy Dyson (10:35):

Okay. The procedure for storing data, is that something that we should put on our application? Or is that something you just figure, well, we'll figure that out if you're a finalist?

Andrew McEachin (10:50):

Yeah, I don't if Eden, if that's technically a row in the rubric. I would say there's probably a couple pieces of that. One, you'll want to be able to speak to how the data will be able to get transferred from you all to NWEA, and storage is potentially part of that. But I also imagine that when you're working with a school site, they're going to want to know how data on their students are being stored too.

Nancy Dyson (11:17):

Sure.

Andrew McEachin (11:19):

The answer's probably also important for that aspect of it and the partnership side is part of the application.

Nancy Dyson (11:27):

Right. Okay. Okay. And so along that, do we need to obtain parental permission for this study? Is that part of the [inaudible 00:11:40]?

Andrew McEachin (11:40):

Yeah, so from our side, our being NWEA, we don't need it. I think it often depends on school districts. Sometimes school districts have people who are defaulted into things and then you have to opt out. And then some school districts operate on the other way, where it's you're defaulted to opt out and then you have to get parental consent to be opted in.

Andrew McEachin (12:07):

The assessment data that is the main outcome. The MAP, math and science scores, those typically can be shared from a school system to NWEA for research purposes with an agreement just between the system and NWEA. We don't have to go and get every parent's permission.

Andrew McEachin (12:27):

Now, how that pertains to intervention data is probably going to vary between the setup that the intervention provider has with the school district. It's really between you and the schools as to what kind of permissioning you'll need.

Nancy Dyson (12:40):

Okay. Okay.

Eden Baker (12:41):

And just one quick extra thing to add there. Nancy, I'm not sure if you've had a chance to look at the letter of commitment template that is on challenged.gov yet.

Nancy Dyson (12:51):

Yes.

Eden Baker (12:51):

But that does include a specific question about whether the district or network automatically opts students in or out of interventions and whether they require parental or guardian approval. As Andrew said, that's really something that you'll need to work out with your partner districts or networks.

Nancy Dyson (13:12):

Okay. And just to confirm, we do not need to collect any data for the control group, other than their MAP scores? Which we don't do anyway, so we don't have to [inaudible 00:13:25]. Yeah.

Andrew McEachin (13:25):

Yeah. And what the control kids are going to do is going to vary obviously across context.

Nancy Dyson (13:31):

Sure.

Andrew McEachin (13:31):

And so, if they're not at all involved with you as an intervention provider, then you don't have to worry about tracking what they're doing. It's just important to make sure that the school site or whoever you're partnering with is having those students take the MAP assessment so that we can get that and include it in efficacy study. But no, you don't have to track how they're spending their time.

Nancy Dyson (13:51):

Okay, great. That's it. That's all my questions.

Marjorie Briley (13:59):

I have a question about the A school B school scenario. And in your model that was all A schools, the third grade and the fourth grade would be treatment. And the fifth grade would be control group. And then the B schools, the fifth grade would be control group. The fifth grade would be treatment and the third and fourth would be control group. Is that the model that you would want consistently? One school would have third grade, fourth grade, and one school would have fifth grade always?

Andrew McEachin (14:35):

Yeah, so that's a really good question. It doesn't have to be that specific ordering. It's more that the A's have to be the opposite of the B's. You could flip that. It just has to be whatever the order of A schools are between treatment and control across those three grades, the B has to be the opposite for a given grade. Yeah, I should be able to do it in my head, but that gives you a limited number of combinations you can do.

Marjorie Briley (15:03):

Right. Okay.

Andrew McEachin (15:03):

And I should say that the other thing just to keep in mind is that the reason why we provided that as an example is that sometimes there is very close collaboration across teachers with any given grade level. The third grade teachers work with the same instructional coach, et cetera.

Andrew McEachin (15:20):

What it does assume for the AB is that they're not working with the teachers across grades. The third grade is not working very closely with fourth grade, is not working very closely with fifth grade. And the reason why I say that is say that the treatment schools are grades three and four and then controls grade five. But all of those teachers are working very closely together. And there's something about the treatment that changes the teacher's behavior for the better.

Andrew McEachin (15:47):

And then they're also, because they're working closely with the fifth grade who are the control group, are then going to influence the fifth grade teachers. That's what we were calling a

spillover in that webinar. That's the thing to keep in mind with the A and B. But it really, as long as the A's and B's are opposites for a given grade, it doesn't matter how they're allocated.

Andrew McEachin (16:09):

It could be third and four are control fifth is treatment for A. And then you would just do the opposite for B.

Marjorie Briley (16:16):

That brings up a followup question. In some elementary schools in smaller districts, the students that are considered... And this is where we get back to the definition of what students will be in the study. If they are truly identified as a special ed student, then they would be pulled out as a resource teacher. Whereas students with a math IEP would probably be more in type of an inclusion class type setting.

Marjorie Briley (16:53):

When looking for participating schools, I think and asking your opinion, wouldn't it make more sense to look for classrooms that would have all students working on the program? And I know that, and it said data would only be collected for the students that have been identified as the math IEPs. But to limit that spillover effect, you don't want to work with a school that has just a resource teacher. You want to work with a school where all the students are working within the program at a grade level.

Andrew McEachin (17:27):

Yeah. It does get more complicated to think about the randomization, et cetera, when you are doing the pullout model. I wouldn't say you should avoid it, but I think your intuition is correct. That if the students are staying within a given classroom or grade level in a contained inclusive environment, it's a little bit easier from the research side of it, the evaluation side of it.

Andrew McEachin (17:53):

And then, correct that for the math one. However, the school systems you're working with are identifying students who are at risk for special ed, that's your eligible pool of kids. And those are the only kids that are part of the efficacy study. Half of those students would get the treatment, The other half would be what you'd call the control group. And it is of those control groups of eligible students, you don't have to track how they're otherwise spending their time. We just have to make sure again, that they're taking the assessment in the fall and in the spring.

Andrew McEachin (18:29):

I should say the only thing, where you would need to track them and is if all of a sudden they start getting access. Say you're a digital provider of something and all of a sudden you start to see logins and accounts being generated for kids from the control group. Those are things that we would need to know about. But again, that's when they would be crossing over from control to treatment, which you wouldn't want, but we would need to know if that happens.

Marjorie Briley (18:58):

That shouldn't necessarily happen if you're just looking at [inaudible 00:19:03].

Andrew McEachin (19:02):

Right. If they're maintaining the random assignment conditions, that shouldn't happen. And then if it doesn't happen, you don't need to track what they're doing in the control group.

Marjorie Briley (19:11):

Right. As far as we talked about, Nancy had a question about usage data. And if you were using all students in a grade or a class. And we would give you the usage data for all students, you would just pull out the usage data for the students that you wanted to be as part of the study. Right?

Andrew McEachin (19:36):

Yeah. If it's easier for you to just send it all, we should be able to link that to the original file where we randomly assign kids and there would be a flag for which kids were eligible and which weren't. And then, yeah, the second we are able to hone in on just the eligible kids, we would destroy the data that we don't need.

Marjorie Briley (19:53):

Right. And as far as the requirements on the school side, if we're providing the usage data and you're pulling the NWEA data, there's really not a burden of data requirements for the school is what I'm hearing.

Andrew McEachin (20:09):

Yeah. Yeah. The only thing that I think sometimes you have to think about during the... You can think about as a triad. You there's the school and then there's us. Is what we need on our side is the NWEA creates essentially an ID for students that's separate from the district created one.

Andrew McEachin (20:30):

And so at some point that linkage needs to happen. And sometimes schools don't want that data transfer to come. Or their students' data can come from you to us. As long as all three of us sign a data sharing agreement that just outlines why you're sharing the data. There's that little bit of work when we say burden, but the actual transferring of the data, it can come from you all once that agreement is signed.

Andrew McEachin (21:07):

And we do that often. It is a common practice to create that kind of an arrangement. But that's right though. We would get the assessment data from NWEA, we could get the intervention data from you all. And then we would link the two together from this roster. They call it an NWEA roster ID. And so we would just work with you in the school system to make sure that those two can speak to each other.

Marjorie Briley (21:33):

And match those. Okay. Okay. And then the usage requirements. And I've... Is 60 minutes per week. That's correct. Right? An average to be able to use the material.

Andrew McEachin (21:50):

I'm going to look to my luminary labs colleagues for that requirement question.

Eden Baker (21:56):

You are asking about usage requirements of the actual intervention?

Marjorie Briley (22:00):

Yes.

Eden Baker (22:01):

We have not specified any particular usage or dosage requirements. I think that's really intervention dependent. Okay. Was there something that you read that was unclear?

Marjorie Briley (22:15):

I might have. I was looking at my document that I was writing to share with schools. I'm going to put that in there just because that's where we feel like a good fidelity of usage was.

Eden Baker (22:23):

Got it. Okay. Yeah.

Marjorie Briley (22:25):

Sorry. Okay.

Eden Baker (22:26):

Yeah.

Andrew McEachin (22:26):

No. It... Oh, go ahead.

Eden Baker (22:28):

No [inaudible 00:22:28] specific requirements in terms of dosage, usage. The only requirement is that it's implemented between November this year and April next year. But exactly what that looks like is really up to the intervention provider. We would just expect that information on that is included in your phase one submission.

Marjorie Briley (22:48):

Great. Okay.

Andrew McEachin (22:53):

Yeah, and I think where intensity of treatment would come in is part of the phase one application talking about what the intervention looks like. There's more of, not a requirement, but an argument to be made about the ability to actually transform students math or science outcomes, depending which challenge you're in.

Andrew McEachin (23:12):

And that's where you would describe it. But to Eden's point, and I just wanted to clarify because I was 99% sure there's no minimum threshold. It's really just a show that there is a logical argument or a logical justification that you are likely to transform kids' outcomes at the end of the challenge.

Marjorie Briley (23:38):

Okay. Then when we're setting up the schools, I saw that NWEA will assist at making sure that we have enough schools and all the setup to make the requirements for the study. Is that correct?

Andrew McEachin (23:49):

Yeah, this is where I should say our agreements with the school districts that use MAP assessment don't allow us to reveal who these districts are, et cetera, without their permission. And so, this is where, if you reach out to the IES challenge email for NWEA with a list of 10 potential sites, we can go through our system, make sure that they would meet the requirements for the challenge. And then we reach out to them to see if they would like to be connected to you all.

Andrew McEachin (24:23):

And so, we can do that. We can't guarantee how fast that's going to be. In part, because it's such a busy time of year that, as we're reaching out to schools, to be honest, we can't control whether and how they're going to respond back to us. There's that process that we can control. And then, yeah, we just can't guarantee how fast it's going to be.

Marjorie Briley (24:49):

Yeah, it is a funny time of year because schools are so busy getting started. And the schools that we know that use NWEA, you don't want to use them because they've already had the program, so they couldn't be starting fresh, I guess is the point. The students may have been using the program for a number of years. That's working through those challenges right now.

Andrew McEachin (25:23):

Yeah. No, yeah, we fully appreciate that it's a difficult period for any number of reasons. Yeah, I definitely hear what you're saying.

Nancy Dyson (25:38):

On that note, if we have schools that we know use NWEA MAP, and they are willing, they're showing interest in participating, can you tell us if they meet the requirements? Whatever those requirements are in terms of, I guess something on your end that I might not be able to determine whether or not they meet? What sort of requirements do you need?

Andrew McEachin (26:04):

Oh yeah. Right. It is just making, when I say requirements is that they're using the right assessments and stuff like that. Sometimes you won't know whether say a school district is using the science assessment. And so, any of the NWEA requirements that would be part of this challenge are available on the resource section of Challenge.gov.

Nancy Dyson (26:23):

Right. I would just ask them if they're using one of those on the list.

Andrew McEachin (26:26):

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry. Yeah, beyond that, there's no hidden things. It's more that you can't, from the challenge.gov website, go type in a school district and figure out whether or not

they meet these assessments. But if you're already talking to them, then you'll freely able to ask them that. Yeah. Yeah, if you're already talking to school districts, you don't need to involve us right now.

Nancy Dyson (26:51):

Okay. And then also, I had asked this question, I don't know if it was in the chat or what. But I got this answer and I just want to double confirm it. It is possible that we can focus on just one grade, if it's in that third, fourth, fifth grade ban. We don't have to do all three grades. Yes, I see Eden saying, "Yes."

Andrew McEachin (27:17):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Eden Baker (27:18):

That's correct.

Andrew McEachin (27:19):

Yeah. And I'm only pausing because, so there is still the sample size consideration, so sometimes it's a little bit harder. You need maybe more buildings to be able to hit the same sample size if you're only doing a single grade.

Nancy Dyson (27:30):

But if you're...

Andrew McEachin (27:32):

But rule-wise and also statistical-wise, there's no reason why you couldn't do that.

Nancy Dyson (27:36):

Okay. Because if your intervention is specifically focus on helping kids at a specific point in learning fractions, then you might get better results if you're just focusing on one grade, then. Okay. Just wanted-

Andrew McEachin (27:54):

Yeah. Well, and also, we wanted to honor the fact that not every school system has the same grade structure. And so sometimes, what we would call a... K5 is the modal elementary school, but it's not the only way that people structure grades. And so sometimes, you can't get access to fifth grade.

Nancy Dyson (28:10):

Right. Okay.

Andrew McEachin (28:15):

I should say happy to have you all stay on too. We don't know if more people are coming to ask questions. But as Eden said at the beginning, this will be recorded too. If there's something that was said that you didn't take down, or if you have to jump off and there was questions that were asked in the next 30 minutes that you wanted to see, you'll be able to see those. But you're

more than welcome to stay. And if nobody's asking questions, feel free to hang out with your camera off until maybe there's more activity.

Nancy Dyson (29:09):

If we do get agreements from a school, schools, then should we contact you ahead of time or just put that on our application? Do you want to know that, Andrew?

Andrew McEachin (29:25):

On our end, the logistics-wise, I don't think so because we're really not going to be doing anything until we know who the phase two finalists are. Because at that point then there's the random assignment. And not everybody. If there's lots of people applying, there's slots for finals than there would be people who are applying. But I would say yes, you would very clearly want to put that as part of the application. But for the NWEA side, for the logistics of the phase two evaluation, we don't need to know that now.

Nancy Dyson (29:57):

Well, I just mean I've been getting emails from you guys about how you're trying to match me with people and all that.

Andrew McEachin (30:05):

Yep. I take that back. Yeah, if you have asked for matching help, yeah, thanks for that reminder. You could send us a note and say, "Actually, I think we've hit our quota."

Nancy Dyson (30:15):

Okay.

Eden Baker (30:19):

And then Nancy, just building on that in terms of the actual submission, there's no need to get in touch with the challenge team in regards to school acknowledgements and confirmations. Just as long as you include all of the necessary files as part of the upload on challenge.gov. Just making sure that you've got both the letter of commitment or letters of commitments if necessary. And then also the school acknowledgement from participating schools.

Eden Baker (30:48):

The challenge team does not need to see any of that in advance, just as I said, as long as it's included in your final submission. And then if you do have any issues accessing those templates or any questions about those, feel free to reach out to the challenge team. Just a reminder, you have a couple of weeks left. The sooner that you can let us know of any issues or questions, the better.

Nancy Dyson (31:09):

Okay. Thank you.