

Program Evaluation Toolkit

Module 5, Chapter 3: Data and Evaluation Questions

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Central

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Speaker 1:

Welcome to the third chapter of module 5. In this chapter, you will match data sources to your evaluation questions. In doing so, you will understand how completely you will be able to address your questions. Don't worry if you find that you have not identified a data source for a particular question. Module 6 will discuss how to collect additional data to fully address such questions.

To match data sources to your evaluation questions, you can use an evaluation matrix, a helpful tool to ensure that you have all the information you need to address your questions. Start by adding the final evaluation questions that you drafted and refined in module 2 to the first column of the matrix. The AMMP! evaluation team started the evaluation matrix by adding two of the evaluation questions. If you do not have evaluation questions yet, review module 2, which will guide you through the process of drafting evaluation questions. The *Evaluation Matrix* is available on the resources page of the website.

Next add what sampling technique you will use, as well as the sample sizes needed to address the evaluation questions. Here, the evaluation team has added data from all students who are participating and not participating in AMMP! to address the homework question, using convenience sampling. They added this because the team has access to all students within a school district who did and did not participate in AMMP!. The team has also added purposive sampling to collect focus group data on barriers that prevent students from completing their math homework. They planned to hold two focus groups for students, parents, and teachers separately for a total of six with about eight participants in each.

Next, write in the data you will need to address each question. You may find that you need two or more data sources if you are addressing a question with both quantitative and qualitative elements. In the AMMP! example, the evaluation team has added a single data source for each of the evaluation questions. Homework accuracy and completion data are quantitative, and focus group transcripts are qualitative.

Next, consider where you can obtain the data. Consider sources for existing data within your organization as well as external sources, such as those listed in *A Guide to Using State Longitudinal Data for Applied Research*, available on the resources page of the website. In the AMMP! example, the evaluation team may find that teachers have gradebook data related to students' math homework completion for students who did and did not participate in AMMP!. Because the evaluation team will conduct focus groups with teachers, parents, and students, the team may need transcripts to identify themes related to barriers to math homework completion.

If you do not have an interview, focus group, or observation protocol or a survey to collect the data you need, you will learn the steps for developing or identifying data collection instruments in module 6.

Next, add the time frame in which you will collect the data or during which the data will be available. In the AMMP! example, because the evaluation team requires students' rates of homework completion and accuracy, the team needs to collect those data from teachers over the school year. If you plan to collect interview or focus group data, as the AMMP! evaluation team does, consider when you should collect those data to meet the needs of the evaluation. For instance, if you need interview or focus group data to improve program implementation, collect those data during a time frame that will allow you to adjust delivery of the program.

The final two columns of the evaluation matrix relate to your plans for data analysis and interpretation of the findings. In module 3, you identified an evaluation design for each of your evaluation questions. In module 7, you will use those designs to identify an analysis method. You will fill in the final two columns of the evaluation matrix at that time, so be sure to keep your matrix available.

This concludes chapter 3 and module 5. Try to complete the first five columns of the evaluation matrix before starting module 6 so that you identify which data collection instruments you will need to complete your evaluation. If you find that you do not need to identify or develop an interview, focus group, or observation protocol or a survey, you can skip ahead to module 7, which covers data preparation and analysis.