



October 5, 2021

Module 8

Dissemination Approaches

Chapter Progression





Chapter 1



Disseminating Your Findings



Dissemination

- Dissemination involves sharing information about an evaluation and its findings with a wide audience.
- Why disseminate?
 - Altruism: To help others with similar challenges.
 - Money and resources: To build credibility with funders.
 - Relationships: To provide transparency in your evaluation.
 - Promotion: To publicize your work and build credibility with stakeholders.
 - Utility: To make your evaluation useful to others.



What Is a Dissemination Plan?

- A strategic plan for sharing the findings of an evaluation to potential users.
- Putting the right information into the right hands, at the right time, and in the right way.



Dissemination Planning: Key Questions

- Audience: Who needs the information?
- Message: What does the audience need to know?
- Approach: How can you best spread the message?
- Timing: When does the audience need to know?
- Responsible party: Who will lead the dissemination efforts?

Dissemination Plan Template

Directions: Use the following guiding questions and table to complete a draft dissemination plan.

- **Audience:** Who are you trying to reach? What groups or organizations can you use to help reach this audience?
- **Message:** What is the purpose for the dissemination? What key findings from the evaluation will be of interest to the audience?
- **Approach:** Which dissemination approach will best meet your needs?
- **Timing:** When will the dissemination begin and end?
- **Responsible party:** Who will lead the dissemination efforts?

Audience	Message	Approach	Timing (Start-Finish)	Responsible Party
Example: <i>Funders</i>	<i>85 percent of AMMP! tutors plan to use effective techniques</i>	<i>Evaluation report</i>	<i>May 19 – June 19</i>	<i>Joe B.</i>

Audience

- What groups need to hear about your findings?
 - Who has been involved in the evaluation?
 - Who might have a stake in the findings?
 - Who might be interested in the findings?
- What specific individuals or subgroups within these groups do you want to target?
- What is the purpose for the dissemination?
 - Why do they need to hear about your findings?
 - What do you hope to gain by sharing your results?
- How might the audience use the findings?

Determining the Audience

Directions: Use the table below to begin determining your audience for dissemination.

- **Audience groups:** What are the large groups of people who need to hear about your findings? (For example, parents, staff, funders, staff from outside organizations, community members, state education agency officials.)
- **Specific individuals or organizations:** Are there specific individuals or subgroups within the larger groups who you want to target? Are there organizations such as intermediaries that may be able to help you access the audience?
- **Purpose:** Why does the audience need to hear about your findings? What do you hope to gain by sharing the findings with them?
- **Use of findings:** How will the audience groups you identify use the findings? What will they learn from the findings?

Audience Group	Specific Individual or Organization	Purpose	Use of Findings
Example: Parents	Jill Ramos (Parent-teacher organization president)	Support for the initiative	To understand how the program improved outcomes for their children
Example: Funder	Lin Yu (Program officer)	Continued funding	To understand if the program achieved its goals and if it should continue to be funded

Message

- Formative aspects: How the data suggested necessary changes to the program and what helped the program to operate efficiently.
 - Barriers to implementation.
 - Areas for program improvement.
- Summative aspects: The accomplishments of the program and the lessons learned.

Message: Questions to Consider

- What do you want to share from your findings?
- How might your findings be useful to your audience?
- What might your audience do with the findings?
- What questions might your audience have in trying to understand or use the findings?
- What do you want the audience to take away from your efforts?

Approach

- How will you share your message with the audience?
- Balancing several factors:
 - **The needs of the audience:** What is the best way for the audience to receive the message?
 - **The needs of the message:** What is the best way to share the message?
 - **The needs of the evaluator:** What is the easiest, most cost-effective way to communicate the message?

Dissemination Approaches: Pros and Cons

Approach	Pros	Cons	Audience
Blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can share the progress of the project. • Accessible language. • Opportunity to include voice/perspective. • Helps to build relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of depth. • Lack of access to feedback. • Electronic dissemination platform needed. • Self-selecting audience. • Potential for technical issues. • Credibility may be questioned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any audience
Data dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes key information while providing access to details. • Makes information available and accessible. • Interaction with data. • Opportunity to customize one-stop shopping. • Sharing multimedia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to create. • Expertise needed to develop. • Required maintenance. • Potential for overwhelming audience. • Potential for technical issues. • Need for data protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, district, or state personnel • Researchers
Evaluation brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can focus on implications. • Can share quickly. • Accessible length for multiple audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of details. • Electronic dissemination platform needed. • Lack of access to feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, district, or state personnel • Researchers • Funders
Evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can share in-depth information. • Creates a lasting resource. • Focuses audience attention. • Provides organization and interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to store report. • Costly to produce high-quality report. • Difficult to update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, district, or state personnel • Researchers

Blog

- Used for:
 - Sharing progress.
 - Including your voice and perspective.
 - Building relationships.
- Examples:
 - Education Week



Data Dashboard

- Used for:
 - Summarizing key information while providing access to details.
 - Making information available and accessible.
 - Interacting with data.
 - Customizing visualization.
- Example:
 - The Common Core of Data



In-Person Meeting

- Used for:
 - Explaining findings and interpretation.
 - Responding to comments in real time.
 - Seeing nonverbal reactions.
 - Sharing multimedia.
 - Building relationships.



Media Release

- Used for:
 - Reaching a broad audience.
 - Controlling the message.
 - Focusing on implications.
 - Sharing quickly and at no cost.

Media Release Template

Place logo here

Media Release:

For immediate release
Or for release on date:

Contact name
Email
Phone number

Headline

(City, State, Month Date) – Lead paragraph: The first paragraph of the release generally answers the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “why” questions. It should be roughly two sentences. The first sentence or lead is where you put the newsy or most important piece of information. (For example: “Findings from a REL Central study released today suggest that nearly half of school and district leaders in Colorado, Missouri, and South Dakota leave their schools or districts within three years—a phenomenon that is associated with poor outcomes for students and can create significant costs for districts.”) The second sentence describes what the next steps are or sets the timeliness of the story. Consider this paragraph a summary of the rest of the article.

The second paragraph provides more detailed information about the topic of the release.

Quote: Provide a quotation from someone directly associated with the topic of the release.

Additional paragraphs provide supporting material and further details (additional quotations, background information, statistics, and so on)

For more information, please contact:

Communications professional name
Title
Organization name
Email
Phone number

Content expert name
Title
Organization name
Email
Phone number

###

For the footer:

Company boilerplate language
Company address

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REL Central at Marzano Research

COLORADO KANSAS MISSOURI NEBRASKA NORTH DAKOTA SOUTH DAKOTA WYOMING

Additional
Resources

- [Media Release Template](#)



Evaluation Report and Brief

- Used for:
 - Sharing in-depth information.
 - Creating a lasting resource.
 - Providing organization and interpretation.
- Evaluation brief:
 - A condensed version of a report. May also provide an overview of research on a topic.
- Example:
 - [Teachers' Responses to Feedback from Evaluators: What Feedback Characteristics Matter?](#)

Summary of Findings

- Used for:
 - As part of dissemination approaches such as blog posts, emails, newsletters.
 - Any time you need a short summary of findings.

Summary Template

What are the three most important findings from your evaluation? Example: <i>Ninety percent of math tutors who received training from AMMP! indicated that they felt ready to use the effective techniques.</i>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Explain the topic in plain language. (How would you explain it in basic terms to your next-door neighbor?) Example: <i>The middle school implemented AMMP! after the district received a grant to improve middle school math instruction. AMMP! is an after-school program that provides tutoring, math extension activities, field trips, and other social activities. Training for tutors is critical to making sure that students receive high-quality math tutoring.</i>	
Which of the following will be affected by the findings? Example: <i>With 90 percent of the tutors ready to provide tutoring services for AMMP!, we anticipate changes in student outcomes.</i>	
• Instructional practice	• Student outcomes
• Policy	• Other _____
Where can the reader find more information? Example: <i>You can find our full report and a link to details about AMMP! on the district website.</i>	

Example summary: *Ninety percent of math tutors who received training from AMMP! indicated that they felt ready to use the effective techniques. The middle school implemented AMMP! after the district received a grant to improve middle school math instruction. AMMP! is an after-school program that provides tutoring, math extension activities, field trips, and other social activities. Training for tutors is critical to making sure that students receive high-quality math tutoring. With 90 percent of the tutors ready to provide tutoring services for AMMP!, we anticipate positive changes in student outcomes. You can find our full report and a link to details about AMMP! on the district website.*

Note. Adapted from *Beyond Scientific Publication: Strategies for Disseminating Research Findings*, by Community Alliance for Research and Engagement, n.d., Yale Center for Clinical Investigation (<https://dluqitzuwlnsf.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/163/2016/10/CAREStrategiesForDisseminating.pdf>).

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Additional Resources

- [Summary Template](#)



Social Media

- Used for:
 - Sharing quickly and at little to no cost.
 - Reaching a broader demographic.
 - Gathering potential feedback.
- Examples:
 - Microblogging sites: Twitter
 - Social networks: Facebook, LinkedIn
 - Media sharing: YouTube, Pinterest, Vimeo
 - Social news: Reddit



Webinar

- Used for:
 - Reaching a larger audience.
 - Sharing graphics and multimedia.
 - Archiving for later viewing.
 - Receiving comments in real time.
- Examples:
 - Regional Educational Laboratory webinars

Infographic

- Used for:
 - Summarizing findings in a user-friendly way.
 - Sharing findings through images and graphs.
 - Telling the story of your evaluation.

Infographic Considerations

Text

- Include a short descriptive title (6–12 words) in the upper left corner.
- Use text sparingly to provide additional information.
- Text should be readable and horizontal.

Color

- Use colors that would be readable if printed in black and white. Use high contrast.
- Consider readers with color blindness. Distinctions should never rely solely on color.
- Color should be used to create a feeling or highlight important elements.

Arrangement

- Visuals are more appealing if sections are similar sizes or are sized in relation to their importance.
- Think “must see” (central focus), “should see,” and “can see” when deciding on placement.
- Consider the rule of thirds. Divide the page into three rows, top to bottom, and three columns, left to right. Use the diagonal boxes from upper left to lower right for the “must see” and “should see” information, with the “must see” placed in the center. The other areas are for “can see” information.

Other Considerations

- Size: 600 pixels wide by 1800 pixels high (and no more than 800 by 2000). This size is shareable and easy to view on most devices.
- Save your image in PNG (rather than JPG) format for best quality.

Online Tools

- Online infographic design tools:
 - Piktochart: <https://piktochart.com/>
 - Venngage: <https://venngage.com/>
 - Visme: <https://www.visme.co/>
- Data Visualization Toolkit: <https://dasycenter.org/data-visualization-toolkit-2/>
- Video describing how to make infographics in Microsoft Excel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82Nbj9C3azU>



Video

- Used for:
 - Discussing the findings in a brief, engaging visual format.
 - Sharing information quickly and at little to no cost.
 - Increasing access to different audiences.
 - Telling the story of your evaluation.
- Examples:
 - Institute of Education Sciences YouTube Channel

Podcast

- Used for:
 - Discussing the findings in a brief audio recording.
 - Sharing information quickly and at little to no cost.
 - Increasing access to a broader audience.
 - Telling the story of your evaluation.
- Examples:
 - #EdChat Radio

Timing of Dissemination

- The timing of dissemination can affect the way the audience perceives, understands, and uses the findings.
- The more often you share the findings from your evaluation, the more likely the audience will use the findings.

Planning the Timing of Dissemination

- Timing will vary:
 - While the evaluation is in progress.
 - Before the program ends, for formative purposes.
 - Immediately following the evaluation, if a finding is time sensitive.
 - Before next implementation of same program, if there are to be changes.

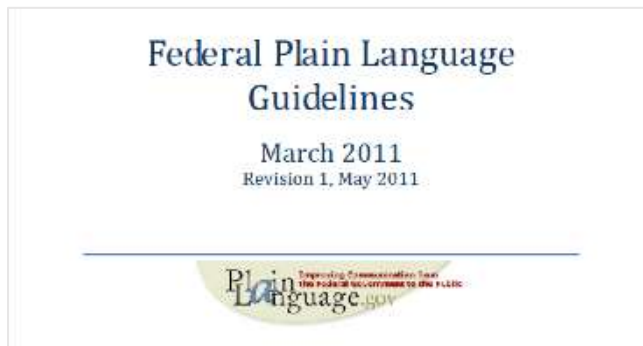
Responsible Party

- Who will lead dissemination efforts?



Reporting: Using Plain Language^{1,2}

- Plain language means writing so that your audience can find, understand, and use the information they need.



Checking Recommendations for Plain Language

Directions: Using the *Federal Plain Language Guidelines*, check your evaluation reports or other dissemination products resulting from your evaluation for plain language.

Be Concise	Use Action Verbs	Use Active Voice	Tell, Don't Suggest	Match the Audience	Avoid Jargon	Notes
<i>Each sentence should have only one idea.</i>	<i>Use present tense action verbs.</i>	<i>Clarify who is supposed to do what.</i>	<i>Clearly state what needs to be done.</i>	<i>Tell the audience what they need to hear.</i>	<i>Avoid abbreviations and unnecessary technical language.</i>	

Note. Adapted from *Federal Plain Language Guidelines*, by the Plain Language Action and Information Network, 2011 (<https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/>).

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Accessibility

- Documents and digital resources such as websites should be accessible to all individuals. The Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws require compliance with standards for accessibility.
- The handout *Key Considerations for Accessibility* includes general guidelines on making documents and digital products more accessible.

Key Considerations for Accessibility

Documents and digital resources such as websites should be accessible to all individuals. The Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws require compliance with standards for accessibility.

Document Format

- Use the template styles to create headings and subheadings. Screen readers and other assistive technologies rely on the hierarchy of headings to navigate a document.
- Make sure that headings accurately describe content.
- Use automatic list tools to create lists rather than manually inserting bullets, numbers, or asterisks.
- Do not wrap text around an image.
- Avoid text boxes because a screen reader may not read them at the appropriate time.

Language

- Consider the language needs of your audience.
- Set the language of a document so that assistive technologies know what language the document was created in.

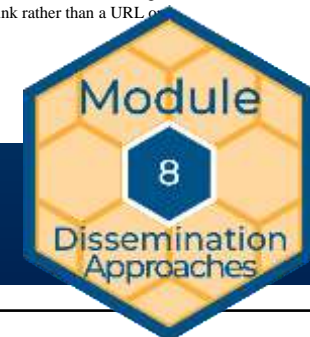
Font

- Sans serif fonts (such as Arial and Verdana) are the most readable on screens. Serif fonts (such as Times New Roman) are most readable in print.
- Use 12-point fonts when possible.

Color

- Color should not be the only way to discriminate between items in a figure or illustration.
 - Convey information by context, markup, graphic coding, or other means in addition to color.
- Contrast: Foreground text must be easily readable against the background color. In technical terms, the contrast ratio between the color of foreground text and the color of the background must at least be 4.5 to 1 (or 3 to 1 for 18-point font or larger).
- Do not use red because some individuals may have difficulty seeing that color.
- Identify links in a document by a method other than color, such as underlining. When creating links in a digital document, use a descriptive link rather than a URL or embedded hyperlink.

Images



Dissemination Plan Draft

- Using what you learned in this chapter and the *Dissemination Plan Template*, draft a dissemination plan.

Dissemination Plan Template

Directions: Use the following guiding questions and table to complete a draft dissemination plan.

- Audience:** Who are you trying to reach? What groups or organizations can you use to help reach this audience?
- Message:** What is the purpose for the dissemination? What key findings from the evaluation will be of interest to the audience?
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Additional Resources

- Dissemination Plan Template*





Chapter 1 Complete



Recommended next: Chapter 2 – Visualizing Your Data



Thank You

Please visit our website and follow us on Twitter
for information about our events, priorities, and research alliances,
and for access to our many free resources.

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/index.asp

[@RELCentral](https://twitter.com/RELCentral)

or contact us at

RELCentral@marzanoresearch.com

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References

1. Plain Language Action and Information Network. (2011). *Federal plain language guidelines* (Rev. 1). <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/>
2. Dynarski, M., & Kisker, E. (2014). *Going public: Writing about research in everyday language* (REL 2014–051). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Analytic Technical Assistance and Development. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/REL2014051/>