2020 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Project Directors and Evaluators Technical Assistance Meeting

Virtual Meeting | October 21–23, 2020

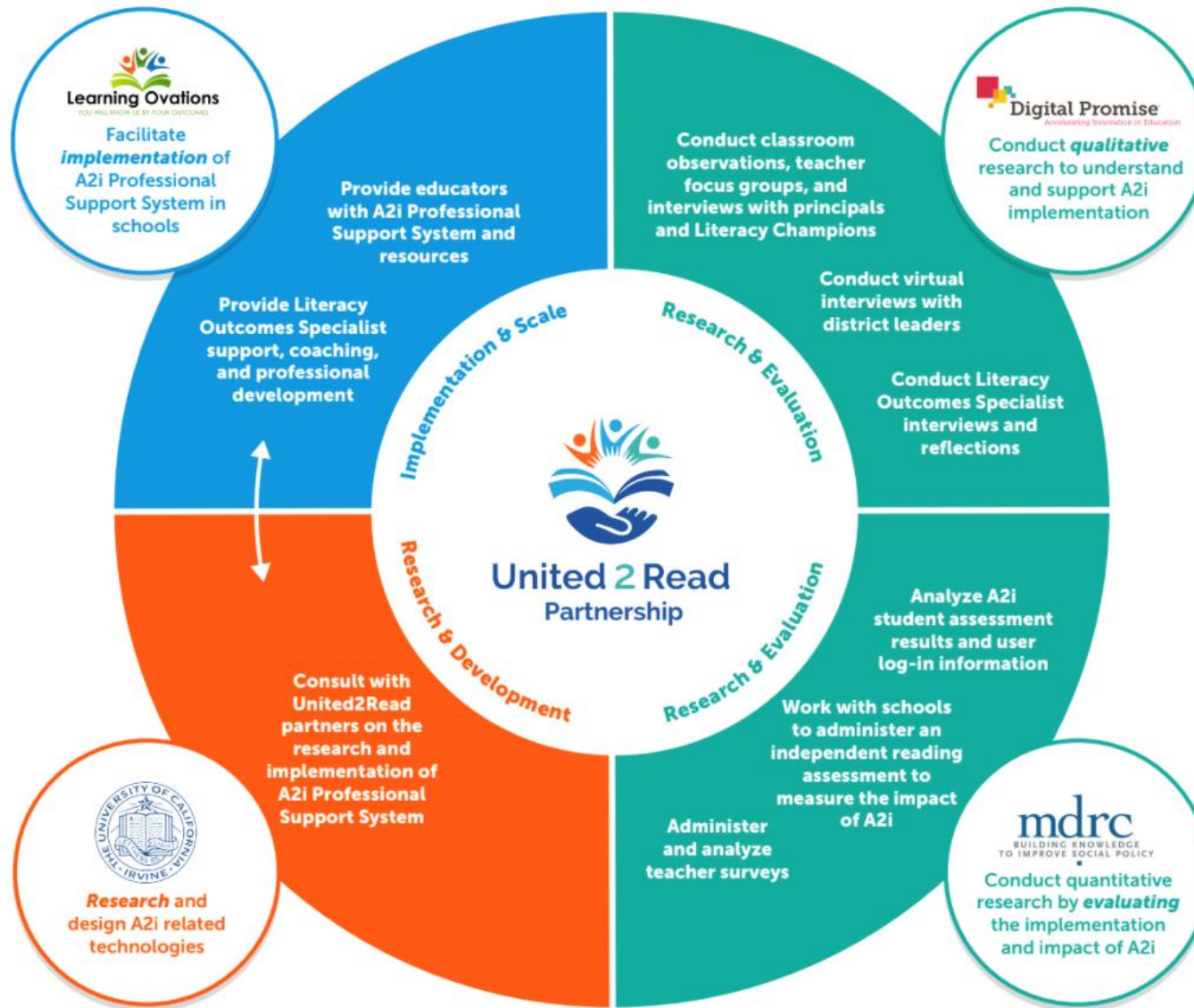# Using Your Evaluation Results: Learning Ovations, Inc.

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Learning Ovations

Funding Opportunities Philosophy

- **Start with the big picture: a mission or goal**

  - Aligned funding to a portion of the overall mission & theory of impact

    - Think about why a specific proposal and funding source fit your current priorities, timing, and impact goals

  - Build an overarching narrative around the mission

  - Connect individual projects to the bigger picture

  - Remain flexible within projects and proposals but retain focus on the main mission or goal

The United2Read EIR Expansion Grant

Learning Ovations Story, Part 1

- **Start with the big picture: All students reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade**
  - Aligned funding to a portion of the overall mission
    - IES & NSF funding in academic settings
    - SBIR & EIR funding for implementation and scale-up
  - Build an overarching narrative around the mission
    - Confirm effectiveness through rigorous research & RCTs
    - Ensure implementation reflects best-practice and support mission
  - Connect individual projects to the bigger picture
    - Current EIR: Virtual vs In-person PD support for teachers
    - Current SBIR: Customized dashboards and resources

Learning Ovations Story, Part 2

- **Start with the big picture: All students reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade**

  - Remain flexible within projects and proposals but retain focus on the main mission or goal

    - Learning Ovations' goal: 3rd grade reading

    - Funding goal: Expansion, scale-up, innovation, effectiveness

    - Evaluation goal: Measures established in proposal to determine success AND support the primary goals above

      - Pivot from machine learning
      - Pivot for COVID-19
      - Pivot implementation offerings

Pivot from Machine Learning

- Goal: All students reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade

  - Original perceived need to catalog curriculum and activities for teacher and students

  - Collaboration with IBM Watson & machine learning firm

  - Evaluated after one year:

    - Actual need was lower than originally thought

    - Process was more complex then originally thought

    - Tool was less effective and less critical then originally thought

  - Revisit goal & pivot!

Pivot for COVID-19

- Goal: All students reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade

  - Original proposal prioritized support for teachers and students in a traditional school setting

  - Parents and community stakeholders as year 5+

  - Current status:

    - New parent-facing platform

    - Increased community involvement

    - Additional funding sources (NSF COVID response grant)

  - Revisit goal and update timeline

Pivot Implementation Offerings

- Goal: All students reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade
  - Original proposal compared virtual vs in-person support based on previous research
  - Assume a cycle of constant improvement:
    - Use ALL data (qualitative, quantitative, and direct feedback/experience)
    - Adjust in real-time (addition of flex days, pivot in understanding our value & purpose of support)
    - Adjust to real life (COVID-19 response, increased teacher/tech familiarity and long-term impact)
    - Continuously evaluation and react, don't wait for a single "final result"
    - Use real-time data to pursue funding sources (SBIR Phase I grant for school admin dashboards)
  - Revisit goal & determine progress

Value and Purpose of Data

- Funding goal
  - Scale-up vs scientific research
  - Benefit lies in increased speed/scope of impact
  - Aligned to main goal or mission
  - Determine the best method for implementing the active ingredients from the research

- Evaluation goal
  - Creates a avenue for consistent 3rd party feedback
  - Benefit lies in credibility and rigor
  - Ensures foundational research remains central
  - Informs main goal or mission

Final Takeaways

- Define the goal or mission

- Reduce fragmentation to create the "big picture" and connected through line

- Connect funding to specific needs or projects that ultimately connect to the "big picture" and goal

- Use ALL data and respond in real-time

- Retain the flexibility to pivot, but keep the main goal central

- Use evaluation and 3rd party feedback to further establish and inform the "big picture"

- Stay true to the research results

Thank you!