Using Your Evaluation Results: Learning Ovations, Inc.

Dr. Sarah Siegal, Vice President for Research & Practice

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 than originally thought
  - Tool was less effective and less critical than 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!