Ed Tech Rapid Cycle Evaluation Coach

Guide: Work with your Ed Tech Provider

Working with your educational technology provider can be crucial for getting the information you need for a successful evaluation. Providers can be useful at multiple stages throughout the process, from helping you understand best practices for implementation to getting you the usage data you need to understand who is using your technology, and how. This tool will help you start a productive conversation with your provider.

WHY WORK WITH PROVIDERS

Setting up an initial call with the education technology provider is a good way to accomplish the following:

- Learn about the educational technology product
- Learn how the school or district is using the product
- Learn about embedded assessments within the educational technology product
- Determine what data reports are available
- Identify appropriate external outcomes to measure for your evaluation

Consider inviting the following staff members to participate in this conversation:

- Curriculum coordinator
- Data analyst
- Procurement staff member
- Information technology staff member
- Instructional staff member

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CONVERSATION

The following steps are a good starting point for planning and beginning your conversation with your provider.

1. **Review the Guide to Usage Data.** Reviewing this guide will help you know what data you need to get from the provider.

2. **Use our sample email message.** You can use this as a template for contacting providers via email to set up a meeting. Change the appropriate fields before sending. You might also want to add any specific or unique questions you have for your provider.

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Dear [Ed tech provider contact],

[Name of school/district] plans to conduct an evaluation of [name of product's] use in our schools. As part of the planning for this evaluation, we would like to set up an introductory phone call between your company and district staff who are participating in the evaluation. The purpose of this call is to [discuss how we can obtain system data needed for the evaluation]. It would be ideal to include people at [name of company] who are familiar with the implementation in our district and with the product's data reporting capabilities.

If you are not the right person at [name of company], please forward this message to whomever you think would be best placed to speak with us about these topics. Also, kindly suggest some times that would work on your end for a phone call. We expect this will take about 60 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Regards,

[name, title and contact info]

3. **Use our sample discussion guide.** This guide can help to organize your initial conversation with developers. Edit it to fit your needs, or tick off the topics you want to be sure to cover.

WHAT DATA TO REQUEST

Our usage data guide (Who used your technology—and how) provides a more comprehensive overview of the data you might want to discuss with your provider. However, a brief summary of this information follows.

- When requesting a system data file, consider the following:
  - Do you want data for individual students?
  - Do you want to group data by teacher, class, grade, or school?

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Here are examples of questions you can address with different levels of data:

If you have …	You can address these types of questions …
Student-level data	• What is the association between use of the technology and student outcomes? • Do students with different background characteristics (for example, prior knowledge or socioeconomic status) have different outcomes associated with the technology? • Do usage behaviors vary among students with different characteristics?
Classroom-level data	• Which classes actively used the technology? • How often and for how long was the technology used across classes? • Was class growth on particular topics associated with use of corresponding modules in the technology?
School- or district-level data	• How many teachers used the technology? • Over what time period was the technology used? • What was the average session duration across the school or district? • What features or types of content were used most frequently?

Tip: Getting student-level data with class and school IDs provides you the flexibility to aggregate at different levels to address different questions. If you get data that are already aggregated by class or school, you will have less flexibility to analyze it in different ways.

Additional considerations

- **How will you match system data from the technology with district data on student outcomes and backgrounds?** Try to obtain data files with student identifiers that match with other data sets, such as district IDs.
- **What type of file do you want?** To analyze usage data, you will need reports in formats that allow data to be manipulated, such as Microsoft Excel or CSV files.
- **Do you want long- or wide-format data?** Long-format data have multiple rows per student, whereas wide-format data have one row per student. Having multiple rows per student can be more manageable if, for example, you want data on students' progress and performance for lots of time periods or topic areas.

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SOME COMMON DATA TERMS

This short glossary is designed to clarify the various types of data terminologies and associated definitions.

Attempts A record of how many times a student tried to complete a particular assessment or assignment

Clickstream data A record of the sequential order of users' events and mouse clicks in a system, often used to analyze usability of a technology interface

Duration The amount of time elapsed during a session; cumulative duration for a term or academic year can be a useful variable for understanding the overall level of exposure with a technology

Event Any discrete action a user takes within a system, such as submitting responses to an assessment or viewing an instructional video

Learning data Information related to users' interactions with the technology indicating student achievement on formative and summative assessments and/or capturing student behaviors related to learning

Metadata Information related to the content or topic addressed by a particular unit within a program; for example, metadata could be a goal such as "adding fractions"

Performance metrics Information related to users' achievement or progress during system use; for example, a metric could be how many assignments or tasks a student has completed

Reporting function Many systems provide reports summarizing usage, progress, and performance data for a particular group of students (such as a class or school); these reports involve processing raw system log data and are typically downloadable as Microsoft Excel, CSV, or portable document format (PDF) files

Session The user's interactions with a technology during one sitting, often between logging in and logging out

System log data Information related to users' interactions with the technology recorded over time

Time stamps Information about when an event took place (for example, time and date for completing an action)