


**Writing Better Grant Proposals:
Strengthening Your Proposal through
Research and Evaluation**

Kimberly Good
John Ross
with Deborah Ward


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Webinar Overview

- About the ARCC
- Technology Tips
- Welcome
- The role of research in grant writing
- The role of evaluation in grant writing
- Questions

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2

Welcome



Dr. Sharon Harsh, Director
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3

Grantsmanship Overview




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Research is the Foundation

John Ross

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5

Why Write A Grant Proposal?



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6

Why Write A Grant Proposal?

<p>Funders want</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return on investment • Sustainable change • Something replicable • Recognition 	<p>You want</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuff? • Training? • Improve student achievement
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The trick is finding the match between what both you and the funders want.

7
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The Purpose of Grants

Start with a project idea or concept that is fundable.

- Is it innovative?
- Has it been funded before? If so, how is yours different?
- Does it use best practices?

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The Role of Research

- Research is the foundation of your project.
- Research shapes your project. It helps determine
 - What is probable/possible
 - Realistic expectations (that become goals and objectives)
- Good research can provide evidence to convince the funders you understand how your needs match.


9
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What is Research?

- Systematic, empirical methods
- Rigorous data analyses
- Methods that provide valid data across observers, multiple measures, studies
- Experimental or quasi-experimental designs
- Sufficient detail
- Peer-reviewed

10


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What you really need to do is provide evidence that your project is likely to be successful.

11

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Levels of Evidence

- Meta-analyses of randomized control trials
- Randomized control trials
- Quasi-experimental/regression discontinuity studies
- Multiple-site, longitudinal, correlation, or regression studies
- Case studies or cross-sectional studies
- Expert or practitioner opinion or theory
- No evidence

12

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Where do I find research?

- ARCC Resource Toolkits
- Content Comprehensive Centers
- Regional Educational Laboratories
- What Works Clearinghouse
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Journals from professional organizations


13

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What if you don't have Gold-Standard Research?

- Gather data from your school/district
 - Performance data
 - Usage data
 - Employment/economic data
- Conduct surveys of your potential audience


14

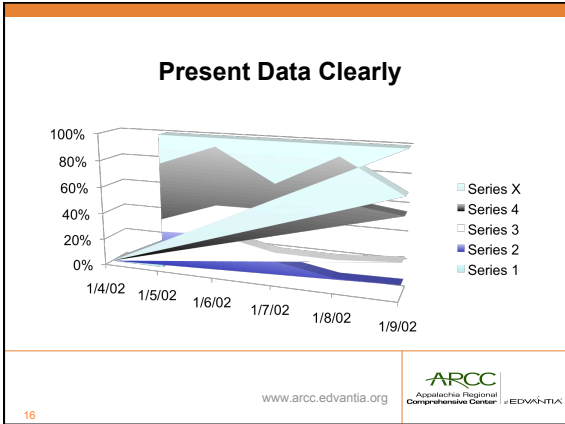
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Helpful School/District Data

- Student performance on state EOC tests in reading have remained level over the past five years. We've collected X data and have determined we need an academic intervention.
- Our state has had a 30% shift in demographics, which has introduced the need for interventions and training to meet the needs of English language learners.

15

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- ### Top 10 Research Problems in Proposals
1. No references used
 2. No research-based references used
 3. References not cited in the project narrative
 4. It's clear the references were just tacked on at the end and not used to guide project development
 5. The wrong research cited, or research attributed inappropriately
 6. References cited are general in nature and have no clear bearing on the project
 7. Educational jargon posing as research
 8. Citations misspelled or incorrect
 9. Incorrect use of research terms
 10. Too many references
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Comments

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Needs Statement

- Be sure to support the need with district data, achievement scores, surveys, teacher input, etc.
- Examples and nonexamples

19

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Goals and Objectives

- Make sure goals and objectives are
 - Realistic
 - Doable within the grant period
 - Measurable
- Examples and nonexamples

20

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Research Supports

- How does your research support the decisions you are making?
 - Do more than just identify research; explain how it influences what you plan to do.
- Examples and nonexamples

21

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Qualifying Stuff

- If you are including technology purchases, make sure to justify them in the narrative rather than creating a “wish list.”
 - Why did you select the specific technology?
- Avoid “We want a computer lab”

22

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Dr. Kimberly Good

The Role of Evaluation

23

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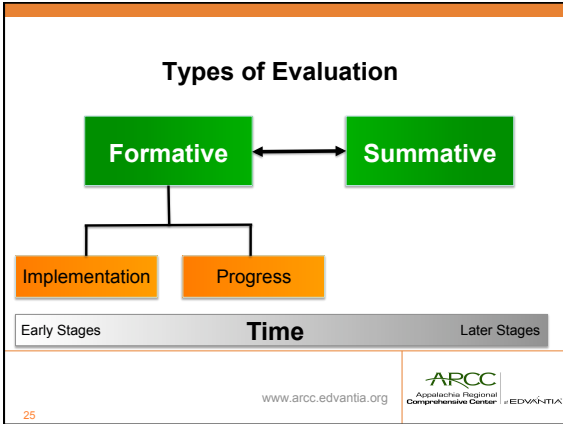
Why evaluate?

- Assess whether you’ve met the stated objectives
- Accountability
- Inform progress
- Most cases, it’s a requirement

24

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- ### Designing an Evaluation
- Review application guidelines
 - Identify evaluation purposes
 - Align to objectives
 - Consider using logic model
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- ### Example: RFP Evaluation Requirements
1. Plan to conduct internal evaluation to determine effects of program on teachers and other participants.
 2. Plan to conduct systematic observations on sample of participating teachers.
 3. Plan to gather data on effects of project on students.
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Evaluation Design Types

- Experimental
- Quasi-experimental
- Pre/post assessment

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Example: Align to Objectives

- **Project objective:** Increase teacher content knowledge of traditional American history.
- **Evaluation question:** To what extent did teachers increase their content knowledge of traditional American History?

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Example: Align to Objectives (cont'd)

Evaluation Question	Evaluation Measures
To what extent did teachers increase their content knowledge of traditional American history?	Teacher pre/post knowledge test
	Event evaluation surveys
	Teacher interviews

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Example: Using Logic Model

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Selecting Evaluation Methods

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observations
- Documents and records
- Student data (e.g., test scores, performance tasks, artifacts)

32

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Evaluating the GEAR UP Program

(Adapted from Building Evaluation Capacity: 72 Activities for Teaching and Training by Hallie Preskill and Darlene Russ-Eft. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications)

- Federally funded early intervention program
- Ultimate goal—increase number of high school graduates enrolling in college and succeeding
- Provides targeted services


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Description of Proposed Project

- Services to students in 15 rural schools
 - Year 1 start-up with schools from 2 towns
 - Year 2 add schools from 7 more towns
 - Year 3 add schools from 6 more towns
- Partner with 6 community colleges to provide tutoring and other educational assistance.

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Activity: Poll 1

- Purpose: Identify the extent to which project is successful
- In what ways and why are the various GEAR UP activities successful?

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Selecting Evaluation Methods

- Surveys with students
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observations
- Documents and records
- Student data (e.g., test scores, performance tasks, artifacts)


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Activity: Poll 2

- Purpose: Identify the extent to which project is successful
- To what extent and in what ways has GEAR UP affected students' interest in and willingness to finish high school?

37

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Selecting Evaluation Methods

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observations
- Documents and records
- Student data (e.g., test scores, performance tasks, artifacts)

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Activity: Poll 3

- Purpose: Identify the extent to which project is successful
- To what extent and in what ways has GEAR UP influenced students' interest in pursuing higher education

39

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Selecting Evaluation Methods

- **Surveys**
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observations
- **Documents and records**
- Student data (e.g., test scores, performance tasks, artifacts)

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Working With an Evaluator

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41

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Deliverables & Reports

- Formal evaluation reports
- Program required reports
- Informal reports
- Dissemination


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Budgeting for Evaluation

- General rule of thumb: 5-10%
- Realistically estimate based on methods selected and time
- Supplies and Equipment
- Travel

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Selecting an Evaluator

- Expertise and experience
- Content or program knowledge
- Interpersonal skills
- Communicative and responsive

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Evaluation Do's and Don'ts
from the Department of Labor


<p style="text-align: center;">Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify evaluator/selection process. • Include an evaluation procedure to address each objective. • Describe data-gathering methods and timelines. • Describe instruments/tools. • Describe data analysis. • Explain how findings will be used to modify the project during the grant period and afterwards. • Describe planned evaluation reports. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omit criteria for success. • Say the evaluation plan will be developed after the grant is awarded. • Propose an evaluation plan that doesn't relate to your objectives. • Merely state that an evaluator will be hired to take care of the evaluation. • Assume you must do the evaluation yourself— independent evaluators are often preferred.
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Resources

- NSF's *The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* www.nsf.gov (search by publication name)
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation's *Evaluation Handbook* www.wkkf.org (search by publication name)
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation's *Logic Model Development Guide* www.wkkf.org (search by publication name)
- American Evaluation Association website www.eval.org


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46

Questions

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47

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