

# Achieving Excellence and Innovation in Family, School, and Community Engagement

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WEBINAR SERIES  
Achieving Excellence and Innovation in  
Family, School, and Community Engagement

## Webinar 8: Evaluating Family Engagement Strategies: Addressing Measurement Challenges

### Panelists:

- **Moderator: Heather Weiss**, *Founder and Director*, Harvard Family Research Project
- **Rebecca Maynard**, *Commissioner*, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), U.S. Department of Education
- **Kate Gill Kressley**, *Senior Research Associate*, RMC Research Corporation
- **Eric Dearing**, *Associate Professor of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Lynch School of Education, Boston College
- **Amy Aparicio Clark**, *Project Director*, Education Development Center, Inc.
- **Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey**, *Associate Professor of Psychology and Education*, Vanderbilt University

August 18, 2011

# Today's Moderator



Harvard Family  
Research Project

**Heather Weiss**

*Founder and Director*

*Harvard Family Research Project*

## Guiding Questions for Webinar:

- Why evaluate?
- What are some promising ways to approach evaluation?
- How can evaluation data be put to good use?
- What are important evaluation resources, and how can I access them?

## Why Evaluate?

- What are some of the goals of evaluation?
- What are some of the myths surrounding evaluation?
- How do you make evaluation a win-win situation?

## What Are Some Promising Ways to Approach Evaluation?

- Use a logic model to guide evaluation strategy
- Develop indicators that measure progress towards short- and long-term outcomes

## Using a Logic Model to Guide Evaluation Strategy

- **What is a logic model?**
  - A graphic that represents what your program hopes to accomplish, what it is doing, and what its impacts are on target participants and the community
- **How can a logic model guide program planning?**
  - Aids strategic program planning and the development of effective communications



## Logic Models (*cont'd.*)

- **How can a logic model guide evaluation planning?**
  - Promotes a process of continuous learning and improvement
    - Helps you identify whether there are logical linkages between inputs and desired outcomes
    - Helps you identify indicators of progress towards outcomes
    - Helps you distinguish between measures of effort and measures of effect



## **Audience Question:**

Programs are sometimes confused between assessing the number of people they reach and evaluating the actual impact of the program's services. How can they shift to measuring the latter?

## Develop Short- and Long-term Outcomes and Identify Indicators of Progress

- Good evaluation designs measure both short-term (e.g., increased attendance) and long-term (e.g., on-time graduation) student outcomes
- Evaluations should also assess family-level outcomes that represent changes in families' knowledge and/or actions that impact students' ability to achieve their outcomes
- Indicators are specific behaviors or milestones which can be measured to show how fully an outcome is being achieved

## **Audience Question:**

What are some short-term indicators of family engagement that can lead to the long-term goal of student achievement? How do we design an evaluation system that looks at both sets of goals?

## Short-term Student Outcomes: Student Learning Attributes

- Students **believe** they can learn
- Students want to learn **because it's important to them** and not driven by external rewards
- Students know how to **manage** their own learning
- Students know how to **ask for help**, especially from teachers

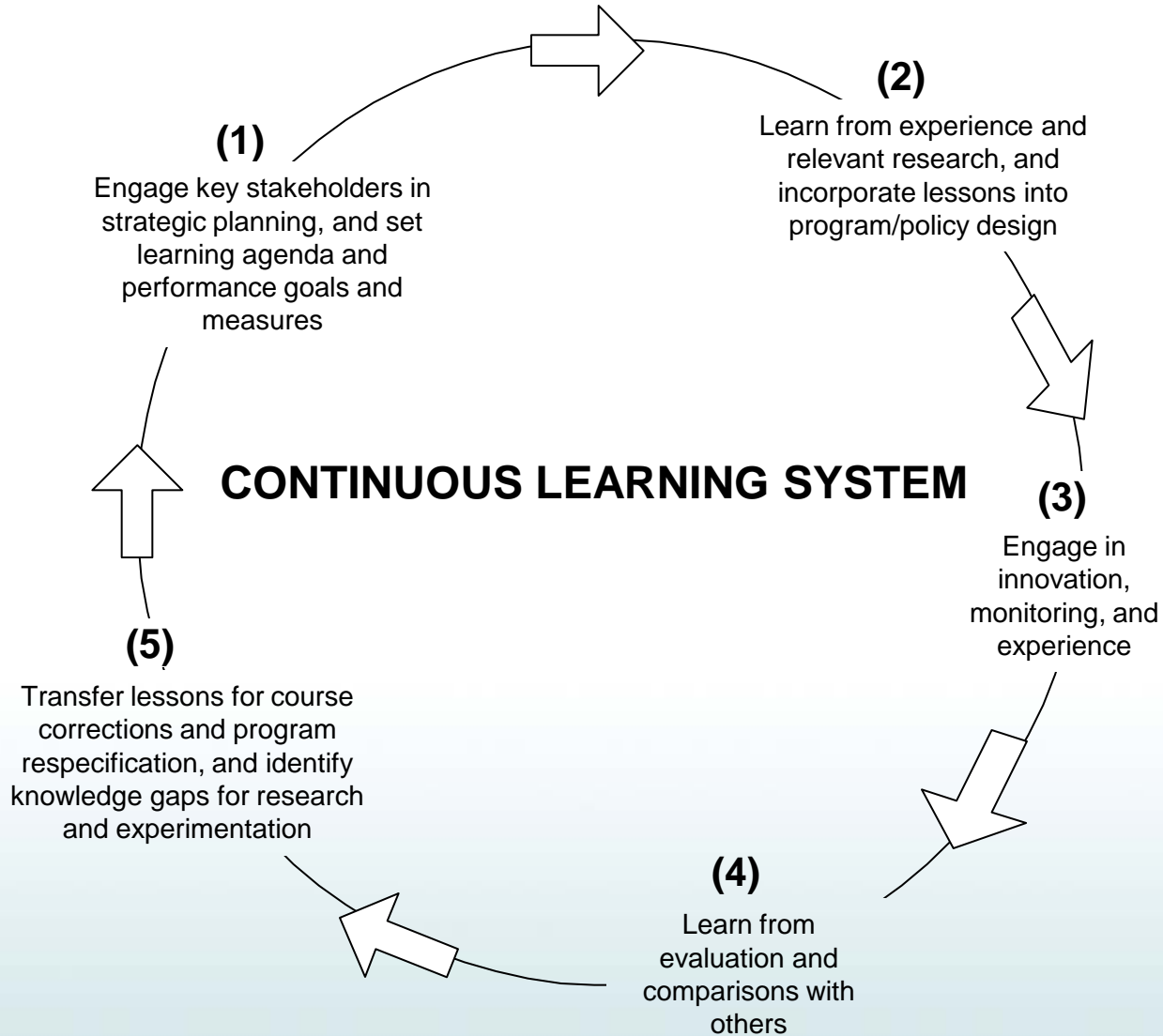
Presentation by Ron Mirr of RM Consulting and Zena Rudo of SEDL at 2011 Annual PIRC Directors' Conference, drawing on the work of Kathy Hoover-Dempsey at Vanderbilt University.

## **Audience Question:**

How can evaluations be designed to come close to the “gold standard,” and what information is lost – or gained – when that does not happen?

# How Do We Put Evaluation Data to Good Use?

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## Other Uses for Evaluation Data:

- Raise awareness of promising practices
- Support programs' improvement efforts
- Enhance programs' sustainability

## Value of Combining Data with Stories to Communicate Your Work

Stories can help bring data to life and illustrate *how* and *why* a program achieved its outcomes. Stories can also make a more compelling case for action than data alone.

Goodman, A. (2007, March). Telling Tales to the Data-Driven. *free-range thinking*.

[http://www.agoodmanonline.com/pdf/free\\_range\\_2007\\_03.pdf](http://www.agoodmanonline.com/pdf/free_range_2007_03.pdf)

## **Audience Question:**

How can schools and districts use evaluation data to raise awareness of effective family engagement practices with families and site/district leadership?

## What are Important Evaluation Resources, and How Can I Access Them?

- Funding
- Expertise
- Existing data
- Partners for evaluation  
networks/communities of practice

## Resources to Help Guide Your Work:

For more information on how to use evaluation to strengthen your work, including evaluation tools and logic model guides, please visit:

[http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement\\_webinars/](http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement_webinars/)

[www.hfrp.org/AchievingExcellence-Webinar8](http://www.hfrp.org/AchievingExcellence-Webinar8)

# Questions and Answers