Context Counts: How to Consider Context When Selecting an Evidence-Based Strategy
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Ten RELs work in partnership with LEAs, SEAs, and others to use data and research to improve academic outcomes for students.
Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs): Three Main Activities

✔ Conduct applied research

✔ Facilitate the flow of actionable, credible, up-to-date research evidence

✔ Provide technical support around data collection, evidence use, and research
Session Agenda

• Assessing evidence in context
• Applicability of evidence scenario and tool
• Reflection and wrap-up
Assessing Evidence in Context
Why Context Matters

• Improving outcomes is not as simple as identifying effective interventions and implementing them with fidelity; local context influences implementation and outcomes\(^1\).

• “Understanding how to evaluate this research can empower state and local policymakers to adopt educational interventions that best address the unique context of their local education system”\(^2\).

• To inform the selection of evidence-based practices, practitioners and researchers alike must consider how and why context may influence implementation and outcomes.

\(^1\) Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; McLaughlin, 1987; McLaughlin, 2006; Honig, 2006

\(^2\) Darling-Hammond, Bae, Cook-Harvey, Lam, Mercer, Podolsky, & Leisy Stosich, 2016, p. 36
Why Context Matters to You

Why does context matter to you when choosing an evidence-based practice?

How does it influence your decisions?
Applicability of Evidence-Based Interventions Tool Overview

- Contextual Factors
- Key Considerations
- Guiding Questions
- Additional Resources
Scenario

• Your district team is looking for a K–3 intervention for struggling readers to use alongside your core reading program.

• Your district has identified Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies (PALS) as a possible evidence-based intervention.

• Your team has reviewed the reviews of PALS conducted by the What Works Clearinghouse and Evidence for ESSA and has established it meets one of the top three evidence tiers and would qualify under Arizona requirements.

• Using the applicability tool, assess the intervention to determine if it might be a good fit in your district.

• You will consider the intervention from three different district settings, noting what might change its applicability to the various settings.
Setting 1

District Characteristics

- 2,000 students in 10 schools in a suburban elementary district
- 15% economically disadvantaged, 3% English learners, and 10% eligible for special education services
- 25% Hispanic, 15% African American, and 60% White
- Core program: ARC Core
- Number of teachers: 110
- Excellent access to technology and professional development opportunities
Guiding Questions

Using the Evidence Applicability Tool:

– Which contextual factors might be critical to consider in choosing whether this intervention fits this context? Why?

– What other information would be important to have access to in considering this intervention for this context?
Setting 2

District Characteristics

• 28,000 students in 21 schools in an urban elementary district

• 77% economically disadvantaged, 17% English learners, and 11% eligible for special education services

• 82% Hispanic, 10% African American, 4% Asian, and 4% White

• Core program: EL Education – Open Education Resource

• Number of teachers: 1,650

• Excellent access to technology, very limited funding for professional development
Guiding Questions

Using the Evidence Applicability Tool:

– Which contextual factors might be critical to consider in choosing whether this intervention fits this context? Why?

– What other information would be important to have access to in considering this intervention for this context?
Setting 3

District Characteristics

- 400 students in 3 schools in a rural elementary district
- 5% economically disadvantaged, 1% English learners, and 2% eligible for special education services
- 20% Hispanic, 5% African American, and 75% White
- Core program: Reach for Reading
- Number of teachers: 25
- Very limited access to technology and professional development opportunities
Guiding Questions

Using the Evidence Applicability Tool:

– Which contextual factors might be critical to consider in choosing whether this intervention fits this context? Why?

– What other information would be important to have access to in considering this intervention for this context?

– How did the different contexts influence your considerations about the fit of this intervention?
Tool 6: Comparing Evidence-Based Interventions found in Evidence-Based Improvement

Core Intervention Components: Identifying and Operationalizing What Makes Programs Work

Hexagon Tool
Reflection

Type in the chat one highlight or key takeaway for you from this session.
Feedback Survey
References


Thank you!

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