IDEAs that Work
OSEP Symposia Series

OSEP Symposia Series: Displaying Our Data Symposium Live Recording

October 10, 2017

Kristen Kushiyama
"Welcome"

>>Kristen Kushiyama: Good afternoon and welcome to third event in the 2017 OSEP Symposia Series: Convening Our Stories and Displaying Our Data. I'm Kristen Kushiyama with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education and I will be serving as your moderator for this afternoon's event. Participants will be muted throughout the symposium but we invite you to submit questions in the Ask-a-Question box under the Q&A tab near the bottom of your screen. We will try to address as many questions as possible during the Q&A session at the end of the event. Additional questions may be addressed in subsequent discussion opportunities which you will receive information about next week.

In the interest of time, I will provide abbreviated introductions. Brief bios of our participants can be found on the symposia site. It's my pleasure to introduce with Ruth Ryder, Acting Director of the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the Department of Education. Ruth will provide today's opening remarks.

Ruth Ryder
"Opening Remarks"

>>Ruth Ryder: Thank you, Kristen. Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us for the third OSEP virtual symposium. I'm thrilled to kick off today's event on this incredibly relevant topic. Relevant because I and the rest of my colleagues at OSEP know the kind of impact that you're making. You're changing the lives of children who have disabilities and their families. This symposium is meant to help you tell your story and share it in a way that reaches an even broader audience and with more residents. I think today's material will be useful for those of you who hope to improve your digital presence and make your data attention-grabbing and effectual. I'm looking forward to learning more from our presenters on these topics and also hearing from our virtual participants who will be submitting questions and sharing information via the collaboration space.

Here at OSEP, we recognize the importance of data as you may know and we are always striving to improve our communications surrounding these data. Today, we are going to learn more about telling the story behind the data and making the outcomes and efforts that went into achieving those outcomes compelling to stakeholders at all levels. Within the past few years, OSEP has taken a hard look at what and how we are communicating. We have revamped our monthly newsletter, the OSEP Update, and with some fantastic feedback from the field we were able to transform our old static newsletter into something that is easy to read and contains the most relevant updates from both Ed and our grantees. We also collaborate on the department's Early Learning newsletter. We provided expertise and lessons learned from our OSEP redesign to improve Early Learning's digital presence as well.

Earlier this year, we debuted our brand-new IDEA website and continue to make incredible strides in improving the main websites that house resources for our stakeholders. We also rolled out OSEP Ideas

That Work and continued to improve the state-focused grants 360 site. We have forayed into the world of virtual events including these fantastic OSEP symposia. These lives and later archived events allow us to share timely and informative information in ways that is interactive and responsive to our stakeholders' greatest needs. We have a great communications team at OSEP, both OSEP and OSERS who work hard to share information on Twitter, through our blog, via our websites, and in our newsletters and to elevate stories and perspective and successes of those in the communities we serve.

We are able to elevate our communications as well as you are. You can help us ensure your colleagues and other appropriate audiences are receiving our newsletter, accessing our websites and connected with us on social media. If you visit the OSEP website you will find links to all of these on our homepage. You can also help us improve our communications, give us feedback about the OSEP Update and the Early Learning newsletter. Let us know how we can make our websites more responsive to your needs. Tell us your innovative ideas of how we can reach all of our stakeholders including administrators and educators.

One of OSEP's communications goals is to extend our reach. Your assistance with this will make all the difference. One communication strategy which we have implemented to a certain extent but hope to improve upon is to create a social and digital media plan. Kristen, who you met a moment ago and is part of our communications team, shared with me for perspective on the importance of the social media plan. She said that coming up with a plan like this is actually the most neglected communication strategy in almost every organization. Though it can be a lot of work up front, this type of plan can be very helpful down the road no matter if your team is small or very large with many cooks in the internet kitchen. Surprisingly, creating a plan to develop an established organization social media voice actually allows for more agility and flexibility down the road because content or themes are already in the works. It also helps to consider the limitations of your social media strategy so that you can figure out the best way to work within those limits and quickly adapt messages as necessary.

States, districts, personnel preparation programs, and technology and TA providers can develop engaging stories and effectively use data to improve their communication strategies. They can also tailor their communications to the stakeholders, leadership, or decision-makers they are hoping to influence. Today you will be hearing examples of tailoring messages and making them effectual. You will hear a how-to social media presentation and then have the chance to hear from two states, Florida and Wisconsin, about their social media strategies.

You'll learn about how to tell your story through sharing data in a user-friendly way, the infographic. You will hear about several resources that walking through data visualization strategies. You will also learn about the larger communication strategies of several organizations that have broadened their reach over time. So here is what we are hoping you will take away from the day. There are resources that can help you make your data accessible, understandable, and useful for your target audience. There are larger strategies you can use to plan for your communications and extend the reach of your organization. Finally, you can tell your story and help your stakeholders take appropriate action so that you can reach your larger outcomes. Thank you, and I will turn it back to Kristen.

Lisa Shimmel and Cora Goldston
"Planning for Effective Communication and Engagement"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you, Ruth. Next we will show a short video titled Planning for Effective Communication which explains how targeting an audience and deciding which engagement strategies to use can lead to real-world change. This video was created by Lisa Shimmel and Cora Goldston from the American Institutes for Research. [Video Presentation]

Jill Lammert
"Effectively Communicating the Results of Your Project – A New Resource"

>>Kristen Kushiyama: Welcome back to the OSEP Symposium on Conveying Our Stories, Displaying Our Data. Hopefully you've had an opportunity to view the materials posted in the pre-work session of the website. If you did not, they are posted on the symposium site for you to refer to as a resource. All of the speakers' PowerPoint presentations will also be posted on the symposium site following today's event. Next, we have Jill Lammert, PhD, Senior Study Director at the Center to Improve Project Performance. Jill is a research methodologist and Westat Senior Study Director with 18 years of experience designing, conducting, and analyzing research to support education policy and practice. She has participated in the design and implementation of federal, state, and local evaluations of education programs and provided technical assistance in research and evaluation methodology to OSEP grantees, project evaluators, and OSEP staff as well as grantees of the US Department of Education's investing in innovation Program. Jill will provide an overview of a new resource that can help projects communicate effectively about the results of their work.

>>Jill Lammert: Good afternoon. Thanks. Before I get started, I'd like to thank my co-author Sarah Heinemeier from Compass Evaluation & Research and Tom Fiore from Westat. They have both been involved in a lot of the projects the Center to Improve Project Performance has developed and so I just want to acknowledge them.

So OSEP recently published on its website Ideas That Work this new resource that the Center to Improve Project Performance or CIPP has created. It is called Effectively Communicating Evaluation Findings. So you can go down there and download the resource if you'd like. So today, I will walk you through it briefly, highlight some of the key things that we included in it, some strategies for focusing on your audiences building upon the video that you just saw, and some tools and resources that are available for you.

The document is divided into six sections: understanding evaluation data and their function in communicating project success, developing an effective communication and evaluation plan, communicating about evaluation data with current project managers and staff, communicating with project funders and benefactors, communicating with current and potential participants and project replicators, and then communication challenges ethics and tools. Projects are often collecting a lot of really valuable data through their evaluations and without a structured plan to communicate this information in a timely manner, you might be missing out on some really good opportunities to share what you are doing. This tool that we developed can help you to take an evaluation findings and think about how they can be shared for the good of your project and for the field.

A first step is to have a high-quality evaluation so that you can have good data and subsequent findings that are of value to those with whom you would like to communicate. A necessary precursor to everything that you do related to communicating what you're doing is to have a comprehensive evaluation that results in high quality data. The tool that we are presenting today presumes that grantees will be working with, are working with, or will be working with an internal or external evaluator, hopefully both, and that you will have an ongoing relationship with this evaluator throughout the life of the project. We encourage you also to work with your project officers and with your evaluator during planning and dissemination of your project evaluation activities.

So we start out by discussing why it is important to communicate about evaluation findings. Some of the reasons to do this is that you can ensure high-quality services are provided, promote demand for project services, ensure accountability for project investments and results, and share important information with stakeholders about what you're doing. A comprehensive evaluation plan is an essential part of this process.

But keeping track of an evaluation and communication plan while you're also implementing the project can be challenging. So we recommend starting out very early with your evaluation and communication planning and doing it simultaneously so that you know what you're wanting to communicate and how you’re going to do it. Some important questions to ask as you plan to communicate are what information from the evaluation do you want to share with your audiences and how will you communicate it, will the evaluation data you are collecting answer the questions your audiences will have, and what are the pros and cons of providing or not providing a specific piece of information to specific audiences. So we have different tools that can help you think through some of these ideas.

This is one of the tools, this is just a portion of it, that is a strategy sheet to help you think through what you want to communicate starting with the idea of an evaluation concept. So some of the topics that you might want to communicate include what the project has produced or is producing, initial reactions to the project, whether or not the project is on track for success, what the project has achieved, the project return on investment, and implications for project sustainability and scale up.

As you look across the columns, you see that you can then start thinking about what approach you want to take to communicate the information. If you want to continue with the example about the project has produced, you might want to describe what the project has created or delivered or how many people have been served. Then you should think about what kind of format you'll use to present the data or information, do you want to use tables or do you want to use narrative summaries of qualitative data, do you want to show demographic characteristics of the people that have been served, then you could think about what kind of communication tool you use such as a presentation, a webinar, or a post maybe on your project website. You also should think about the frequency of communication. This will likely depend on the audience that you’re communicating with. So you will need to think about that as you go forward.

Section 2 talks about developing an effective communication plan. A key part of this is determining who are the project’s audiences and what are their needs for information about the project. To simplify greatly, audiences fall into two basic categories, audiences that are directly connected to the project and audiences who are indirectly connected to the project. Of course, the categories are not mutually exclusive and different audience members can fall into one category at different times in the project.

For this resource, we focus primarily on those audiences who are directly connect to the project but these tools and strategies can also work with other audiences that you're working with.

Once you've identified your audiences, there are a few questions you should ask: what does the audience need to know, how will the audience use the information, and what is the best way to communicate that information. As you think about this, some additional questions you might ask are: what types of data are most convincing to each audience, how much data are needed for each audience, what's the best timing to communicate, what tool might be the best one for communicating with a specific audience, what cost consideration should I keep in mind.
Another way to link your evaluation and communication plans is to start by thinking not about the evaluation concept you want to convey but about which audience that you want to target. This approach might be more appropriate if you have limited resources for communication or not yet sure what you want to communicate. So with this sheet, you can see we start off by thinking about who the audience is and then you walk through what you might want to communicate, what that audience typically wants to know, how they are typically likely to use the information and what they might do about it, what data they might find convincing, the frequency of communication and so on. So this tool, it has a number of different audiences listed and it provides suggestions for this information across these audiences. You can either use this sheet for internal planning with your project team or your evaluator or you can actually use it to ask your audience what they prefer.

Section 3 addresses how to communicate about evaluation data with current project managers and staff. So typically as you think about communications with the internal audiences, you want to ask yourself what project elements are working well, which ones need attention and support, which elements can and should continue, and which should be modified, scaled back, or eliminated.
As you work with your evaluator to plan your evaluation then, you should consider how the data are going to be collected and what data are going to be collected so that you can make sure you can answer these questions. Then using the data that are collected, you can plan how to convey the information about project implementation to your staff so that you can make adjustments accordingly.

This figure here that's maybe a little small and hard to read is part of a figure that shows one way that you can use evaluation data to communicate your findings with your internal staff. So as you can see in the figure, the data collected for different aspects of the project are giving different information about implementation. For example, the fidelity of implementation or FOI data are showing that implementation in project sites is exceeding the FOI threshold, in which case staff should continue with implementation as is. A message to staff about this data might be that the project is actually functioning better than expected or it also might mean that it might be necessary to revise the fidelity thresholds upward if implementation is proceeding higher across all project sites. Combining this information with qualitative observation data or other implementation data you collect through your evaluation can provide helpful information to staff on what they might do next.

On the other hand, you see the benchmark data in the same figure shows that the benchmarks or targets are consistently not being met. This might result from project staff not having sufficient capacity to be able to implement the project as intended or it might be as a result of barriers on the ground. A message to staff based on this data might be that major changes will be needed to address the issue such as providing additional supports to better monitor progress and facilitate implementation or providing additional support to staff to help them implement the project. Usually, if data collection is carefully planned in advance, your evaluation will collect these data that you can use to inform ongoing implementation.

As you think about communicating with project managers and staff, it's important to consider context, namely it's important that project staff understand what happens during implementation and are aware of the external factors and circumstances that may affect how well services are provided and whether and to what degree project participants can engage in and respond to services. Purposeful communication about evaluation data can help inform project staff about these and other contextual factors allowing for adjustments to project activities, approaches, objectives, and communication strategies along the way.

The next section talks about communicating with project funders and benefactors. By benefactors, we mean such as OSEP, other lead agencies, academics, possibly policymakers, policy analysts, that kind of thing. Generally, the question this audience wants or needs to have answered include what does the project do, who does the project serve, is the project successful or can or will it be, what does the project cost, and what are the opportunities to enhance or expand the project success.

We included a table with information about the different types of data that are typically used to answer these types of questions and a number of associated sub-questions and then also considerations about when the data might be available to inform these questions, again to help you think this through. We've also outlined some important things to keep in mind when you are communicating with funders and potential future funders. For example, establishing a plan for regular communications early in a product lifecycle can help project staff create a constructive working relationship with funders. It is difficult to avoid at least some barriers, pitfalls, or challenges during the project lifecycle so don't wait to communicate with funders until after you receive data that are suggesting that things might not be going well. Start out early and work with them. There may be constraints on the types of communications that would be considered lobbying or advocacy so learn about them and respect what they are and then think that funders typically invest in projects to help them accomplish specific goals. So using your evaluation data to show how these goals are being met helps garner support and of course as with other audiences, context is important. We talk more about that in the document.

In Section 5, we talk about communicating with current and potential project participants. There are many reasons why you might want to communicate with these participants such as conveying how important they are to the project, garnering support for the project or advocacy among the community or giving them the information they need to be able to participate successfully. When communicating with project participants, it's best to use their primary language whenever possible. This might require hiring translators, interpreters, or some other sort of related services to help with accessibility but it'll improve your ability to communicate with your audiences effectively and ensure that they truly understand the message you are trying to convey. You should plan to communicate in multiple modes and don't assume that all audiences are going to be able to understand and learn your message from the different modes. Then you should consider what types of communications are appropriate or allowable.

Here we have a table that walks you through some considerations associated with communicating contextual information with this audience. So let's go to the next slide and talk about communicating with potential replicators. Evaluation data can answer questions that are particularly important to those deciding whether to replicate or expand the project. Since expanding a project or demand for expanding it is a marker of success, it's important to think through carefully from the beginning how you might want to communicate with these audiences. They have their own needs and uses for information. For example, they want to know how and when to start, lessons learned, and strategies to improve implementation, general and specific barriers and supports, and estimated costs. Of course for this audience as well, contextual information is also very important to communicate.

The last section briefly discusses some challenges to communication and ethical considerations related to communicating about your project's evaluation. Some common challenges include limitations related to the project and the evaluation itself, contradictory findings or negative findings. The most important thing to keep in mind is that evaluators cannot promise to deliver positive findings so don't ask them to. Here's a table that summarizes some common tools for communicating evaluation findings. This includes information about potential audiences and just different information that they might use. So it is a good resource that you can use. A simple Google search will give you information about how to create these tools and use them effectively or you can consult a communication professional or even your evaluator for ideas.

In closing, please keep in mind that's important to develop your communication plan and evaluation plan together, ideally anyway, so that you can be sure that your evaluation is going to produce and collect the information that you need and want to communicate. Different audiences have different needs for evaluation findings so target your strategies and tools accordingly. Then finally, communicating evaluation findings purposefully and effectively can benefit both your project and the field as a whole. Thank you.

Clement Coulston
"Transforming Information Effectively"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you, Jill, for bringing down the house so early on in our program. They say in the theater, the show must go on. Thank you.

Our next speaker is Clem Coulston who is the Manager of Communications and Public Relations at the National Association of School Psychologists. Clem is a national presenter, curriculum developer, and content organizer. He is consulted for the National Association of State Directors of Special Education to further its lead by convening work through utilizing infographics and social media. Clem will focus on how organizations can take large amounts of information and transform them into usable pieces to communicate for awareness, education, activation, and more.

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today. One of the things I'm really going to be focusing on is how we can take those large pieces of information and make them into digestible pieces so that we can engage our stakeholders and activate them. In the next slide, I think we need to take a little step back and go to the communication.

So communication, it's a core of how we interact with one another, how we learn from one another, and how we can convene folks together. I also think of it as a couple other things as well. Communication can be used to create awareness, to bring light into areas that may have not been shown before. The other thing is communication can be used to enrich the perspectives thinking about what do I know today, how can I synthesize what I want to be able to do today in order to inform my work moving forward and for tomorrow. The third thing is creating connections. So we have all these different pieces of information but it's hard to sometimes piece together the linkages between them and that is our job today especially as we inform and engage our stakeholders. The last thing with communication is opening the opportunities.

I have a picture, icon of a door where it's about us seeing the opportunities to convene together to be able to look at data and say what is the data telling us, what can we now do moving forward together. On the next slide, we are emphasizing the fact that we have these stories but what our job is is how are we going to aggregate them in a way to communicate a comprehensive picture. I love the little visual on the left-hand side of the screen which is a picture of a house along with the sun and a couple trees. Oftentimes, we have different pieces of information but how do we bridge them and put them in one so that it makes sense and then we can then engage moving forward. The second piece is how do we leverage these stories to communicate the systemic impact. Again, this visual that I really like seeing is being able to see, okay, here is the one circle and how what we do now is going to influence the next one, the next one, and the next one. Again, it's that building up effect that we work together.

So the next slide really comes to the core of why we are here today, how do we bring life to these stories that we are sharing, how do we make them in ways that our stakeholders cannot only understand them but also be able to engage in conversations with us so they can improve outcomes for all students. This kind of goes back to my living by convening approach with the IDEA partnership focusing on authentic stakeholder engagement where it's about meeting people where they are on the issue, so translating these complex ideas into ways that folks can resonate as well as interact and move forward. The second part is also bringing together people to identify the support for the issue, identifying the different perspectives that each person brings to the table because each one of us does have a unique perspective and we have to ensure we allow the opportunity for those perspectives to be shared and heard.

These visuals, what we are doing on the next slide is really about how are we ideating these infographics, crafting them, and then disseminating them. Today, I think you're going to hear a lot about how it's not just about pushing out content but it's how are we making the content accessible for folks so that they can understand and then again be able to work on that. So I think of it as a five-step process on the next slide.

First, it's about aggregating your data, pulling everything together to see what do I have to pull from in order to start making my infographic. The second is identifying your expected outcomes and it also has to do with who is your audience and what you want them to know or be able to do. The third is develop a structure for how you want the infographic to be presented to effectively communicate that information to the particular stakeholder group. The next one is how are you going to connect the content to the visuals. This is often the hardest part but can often be the most powerful piece in making the content click and making those connections. The last is dissemination and continuous enhancement, how can we do better, what is working well, what is not, what is our next steps.

So in the next slide, we are going to be focusing on Step 1, aggregating the data. The data can come from multiple sources. Oftentimes, it comes from presentations. It can come from social media outlets. It can come from reports. Yesterday, I brought up my flash drive because I was like, there's a couple of things that I want to talk about today. Then the next thing is different reports and I put them all in one file so that I can then be able to say, okay, what am I working with and what is next. Which goes to the next step.

So the next step is identifying expected outcomes. This is the cloud that I have in my mind about what is the purpose of this infographic. Is it to provide new knowledge so that participants can engage in a dialogue and a conversation? Is it about sparking an urgency with your stakeholders so that they can take action and move forward? Or can it also be about displaying your successes and highlighting the opportunities, bringing the awareness. Sometimes infographics can incorporate all three of these things. Sometimes they incorporate one or the other. Or they can also focus on other outcomes as well. But again, it is about being intentional and identifying what is this purpose, who are the stakeholders that are going to be receiving this, and what do you want them to be able to do with it or to move forward. Then it's about developing the structure of how is it going to be placed, how are we going to put together these pieces of information so that folks are able to understand what is happening. So the first part is identifying the introduction statement. This is the why, why you are you showing this infographic, why are you creating this infographic. Often one sentence is the best way to go because again, it captures the reader's interest and then helps them move on to the next part of the infographic. The middle section I often call it on the infographic is the highlights, what are the pieces of information that you want folks to be able to know or to understand. The third piece is the implications and the actions. So we identify the purpose, we identify the priorities and highlights but the last piece is okay, so what is next, what do you want folks to be able to do with it.

This is about connecting the content to the visual. So on the left-hand side, you'll notice that I decided to create a priority, assign team members two different tasks to accomplish the goal. So then I was thinking like what is a way for me to be able to display this information so that folks can be able to remember it then engage with it. So I came with a couple search terms. I typed two people and then I was like, how about nametag? Because when I think of the nametag or a name badge, that's each person has a role, has a title, and responsibility and putting them together on a team.

The next thing is content, so how do I update documents to reflect the new timeline. I was like, this is a really hard one. Then I came to the idea of how about I just look for the terms such as refresh, new, and recycle. Then I saw that little icon that has a paper with the little circle diagram again indicating what the content is about through visual. This goes to our last step which is dissemination and enhancement to determine how to best disseminate the infographic and what to include with it. Oftentimes what we will do is on one side of the paper, we'll have the infographic and on the second, back part of the infographic, we'll have a little bit of the write-up. Again, it's about identifying what the stakeholders can use with the infographic to move forward. Oftentimes the dissemination phase is talking with our stakeholders and saying "Hey, what are different ways that we can work together to share this out?" The last is as stakeholders engage with the material, be mindful to what resonates and surprises and think about how we can continuously enhance this to move forward. Thank you very much.

Kevin Hager
"Three Lessons to Meaningfully Engage Stakeholders"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you, Clem. Now, we will view a video presentation from Kevin Hager, Managing Director of Understood at the National Center for Learning Disabilities, can lead strategy and

operations across the Understood ecosystem to support parents of the one in five kids with learning and attention issues. This video shares lessons learned from the development of Understood, an organization that seeks to engage and support parents of children with learning and attention issues. The video is titled Three Lessons to Meaningfully Engage Stakeholders. [Video Presentation]

Todd Grindal
"Making Data Meaningful through Data Visualization"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Welcome back. As a reminder, the resources for today's event are located on the pre-work session of the website and the resources will be permanently housed on the OSEP Ideas That Work website. Our next speaker is Todd Grindal, EdD, Senior Researcher at the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems SRI international. Todd is a senior researcher and co-director of the Early Learning Group at SRI. Today, Todd works with the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems where he is leading a quasi-experimental study examining the associations between participation in early intervention services and kindergarten outcomes. Todd will share tips and provide an example of how complex data can be shared in efficient and meaningful ways.

>>Todd Grindal: Thank you. Hi everyone. It's a pleasure to be here today. I'm going to echo many of the things that you've heard from the previous presenters but focus really on data visualization. We are going to be sharing work that's been led by my colleague at the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems, DaSy for short, Kerry Belodoff. In this world, we don't lack for information. The challenge increasingly is in making that information, making that data meaningful.

Though challenging, this is really essential because this is what helps the stakeholders we work with to understand that information and to use it to make decisions and help to improve services for children and families.

We can think of this challenge in presenting data or complex information in an efficient and meaningful way that is appropriate for your audience. That's what we're really trying to do here. So what we're going to offer is the way that we think about it at the DaSy Center and point you to some tools you may use in your work.

There's three things that we begin by thinking about when we get some data and we think about how to present it and make it meaningful. So the first is our audience, who is it that we look to share these data with, the purpose of sharing these data, and the message, what do we think these data communicate, understanding the appropriate level of information for your audience and considering the purpose is really key to helping determine what data visualization tools are appropriate in that context.

So in our work, we have many different audiences for our work, for these data. Sometimes these audiences are people working in programs or staff that you're working with. It may be policymakers to whom you are trying to communicate the effectiveness of your work or it may be parents to whom you're trying to help understand what it's involved in the process. In thinking about what data visualizations you're going to create, so begin with asking questions of who is audience, what is their role, what are their most pressing concerns and how does the data speak to those concerns, why does the issue matter to them, what is their perspective on this information, and do they have a particular point of view that you want to speak to with the data visualization.

The second thing we think about as we create data visualizations is the purpose, what is the purpose of sharing this information, why do we think this information is important to the audience, and what is it we think that they might do with the information as a result.

Then the message, what do we see as the folks who've worked with these data and thought about them, what do we see as the key point, what are we trying to communicate, is there a key takeaway that we want the audience to think about from looking at this, is it that we want the audience to be asking additional questions? Again these are going to shift depending on what your context is but thinking about these three things can help lead us to creating the visualization that is most effective and most meaningful for our group.

So I will show you an example of how we thought about this for certain sets of data. So like many of you, so states all report data and outcomes for children from birth until five that they achieve as part of the Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Programs. Data are reported on three functional outcomes: positive social emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and taking actions to meet needs. Outcomes are measured and reported with two broad summary statements, so the percentage of children who make greater than expected growth between entry and exit from the program and the percentage of children who exit functioning at age expectations. So we're going to walk through some different ways that we might use these data that many of you who are participating in this webinar engage with every day.

Often, the first temptation is let's just put it all out there, let's take these data and carefully organize them into a table so that we can see how they all fit together. In this example, we've taken the data with all of the multiple outcomes at three different time points and reported the percentages. Now, for folks who work within data every day, your data analysts or statisticians, this is enormously helpful for trying to begin to see what the story is but if you're trying to communicate this to a non-technical, non-data-analyst audience, it can be challenging to extract meaning from this information.

As I said, this can be good for exploration or working with the data internally but for other audiences may be overwhelming. One of the next steps that people often take is well, let's put the data into Excel or some other data processing format and use the chart function and see what it produces. So here is an example of what would happen if you took all that data, put it into Excel, and made a line graph. So I'm going to pause for a moment and let folks look at this and see can you extract some meaning from these data. I would think about what is the message here. For me, I look at this, I see a bunch of lines, I have trouble telling a story from this visualization of these data. The point here is that it is not just about making a chart. It is making a chart that helps to tell the story that you see in these data.

Let's think about some other options. One is let's reduce to a single outcome and let's clearly describe what we see there. Here, we can think about an audience of a state interagency coordinating council and our purpose here is to share progress and social-emotional outcomes over time. We can describe the changes over time as they relate to activities the state has undertaken. So maybe you're working in a state that's undertaken work to try to improve data quality or maybe states have been focused on improved performance. Here we have done a couple things. We've made them into simple bar graphs and we've put the above them, we've listed what we think the key takeaways are in some example summary statements. This is of a focus data display. It shows that there's been a slight decrease in both the percentage of children that make greater than expected progress and those that function at age expectations at exit. By limiting what we are showing and clearly demonstrating and summarizing that, it is easier for that audience to understand and to do something with it and to take action with it.

Let's say we are taking from that table that we looked at before and we want to communicate something to parents. So here, we want to share progress on children making social-emotional outcomes during their time in preschool. So the message here combined with an infographic is simple and clear and speaks to the types of questions that parents may be asking and the things parents may want to know from these data.

In other cases, we want to provide our audience with the opportunity to interact with that data. Increasingly, there are many tools, some of them free and available to the public that allow us to create interactive data visualizations. So here we give an example of some data that folks might use in this context and I believe the URLs will be placed in the chat window here for you to explore these data yourselves. In this case, the audience may be for the general public that you're looking to engage in your topic but it may also be for people working within programs who you want to allow to explore the data to address their own questions.

As part of the work of DaSy, we've created a Data Visualization Toolkit. Again, the URL is displayed here on the bottom and will be placed in the chat window. In this tool kit, we walk through examples and principles of creating effective data visualizations using each of these various techniques. So we show resources for creating maps, map is often an excellent way to communicate information, interactive data displays like the one I showed you, dashboards infographics, animation, charts, color presentations, and data tables. I encourage you to take a look at the material on the website and explore that and find the data that helps you tell your story. Thank you.

Jane West
"Communicating with Legislators"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you, Todd. As another reminder, we invite you to submit your questions in the Ask-a-Question box under the Q&A tab near the bottom of your screen. Next up, we have Jane West, PhD. Jane is a visiting professor at the University of Maryland and a policy advisor to several international education organizations including the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the National Network of State Teachers of the Year, the Higher Education Consortium for Special Education, and the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Jane will share ideas on how to effectively communicate with legislators to achieve a broader purpose.

>>Jane West: Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. Thanks for being here with us. Can we get my slides up there? Maybe. There we go. Make your voice heard. That's what this is about. So let's go to the next one.

So you have heard a lot about making sure you know your audience and targeting your message to your audience. So this is one of the audiences that is really important in terms of magnifying the impact of your work and that is policymakers and more specifically, legislators. I like to think about the main goal as you go and meet with the policymaker is to build a relationship. I think of that first meeting as a first date. You want to have a good time because you want a second date and a third date and who knows where that would go. So you think of it not so much as a meeting, it is a meeting, but it is also the beginning of something wonderful you help. So you approach it as a beginning.

What you want to do is make a connection with the legislator immediately in terms of why they should care about what you do. Other than the fact that you are a constituent, why does it matter? For example, what is their role that connects them to you? For example, you might say “You chair the Appropriations Committee here in the state and I want to let you know the impact of some of the funding you are distributing on your constituents.” In other words, you want them to know that the money is being responsibly and well spent. That’s just an example. You also want to provide answers to questions. Now, many times legislators will ask you questions that you do not know the answer to and that is quite all right, you want to get back to them. What you are also providing them is not only your own expertise but your network of other experts. If you say you’re going to get back to them, be sure you do.

So what is it that legislators would want to know anyway? First of all, they want to know how they're connected to you. They want to know the difference that they and the body in which they serve, if it is the state legislature, they want to know the difference that they are making. So you want to let them know what that is in a very explicit kind of a way. Legislators also, they are there to solve problems of public significance. So what is the problem of public significance that you are working on? Now, this may be a very big picture thing. We are working, for example, we have a critical shortage of special ed teachers in our state and without the teachers who really know what they're doing, we are not going to get good outcomes for the kids who will then be able to get jobs and be productive citizens. We are working to address that shortage and this is what we are doing. You are part of the solution. That's what you want them to see.

What is the impact, what difference has it made? Let’s go back to the teacher shortage example. Well, last year, we prepared 43 teachers and we’ve done that every year for the last three years and we have followed up, we know they’re staying in the highest need classrooms, and these are the outcomes they're getting for kids. Now, we should all wish we have exactly that kind of data but you do the best you can to tell the story of the difference that your work makes. The other thing, if you're in a situation where your project funding or support might be threatened, you want to address what would happen if it was not there. The shortage would be so much worse in the Richmond Public School Districts and we would anticipate lower performance for students. So it is critical if it is a federal situation, you might want to say this is a unique federal role in the state just is not in a position to pick this up, particularly with something like research.

Know who you are meeting with. Don't go in randomly and wonder whether the person's a Republican or a Democrat and wonder if they sit on the right committee. You need to do your homework. The two people on the slide there, I hope you all know who they are. That’s Sen. Lamar Alexander from Tennessee and Sen. Patty Murray from Washington State. Sen. Alexander chairs the senate committee that is responsible for IDEA and all other major federal education legislation called the HELP committee. Sen. Murray is the lead Democrat on that committee. The two of them work together to create or to take the lead and I think they are mostly responsible for creating the Every Student Succeeds Act. That was a bipartisan effort sort of unique in this day and age. They are both very seasoned legislators. If you do your homework, you may find out for example that Sen. Alexander was the former Secretary of Education, that he was the former president of the University of Tennessee, that he was the former governor of Tennessee. So you are talking about a very experienced person here with a lot of opinions and information and knowledge. You might find out that Patty Murray used to be an Early Childhood teacher and that some of her priorities include foster children. She's been a longtime champion for IDEA as well.

What is their track record? You might find out that Sen. Alexander is a proponent of school vouchers and reducing the federal role in education, particularly in terms of regulations. You might find out that Patty Murray is really interested in building the profession of teachers and in professionalizing our teaching skills and capacity. It's important to know these things when you begin to interact with people. You don't have to agree with them. We are not talking about agreeing. We are talking about walking in with a fund of information that will help you put your message together in a way that it can be heard. Check their websites. They all have websites. Follow them on Twitter. If you are not on Twitter, I'm a big Twitter fan, I really recommend that you should be tweeting about your projects every day. A hundred and forty characters, that's a great way to tailor your message. As our current president has clearly taught us, Twitter is very important in the political sphere and has never been more so. So follow the members and the policymakers you are interested in.

Remember, you're a constituent. As a constituent, you employ elected officials because you vote for them. So you vote them in, you vote them out. However, if you are meeting with the legislator on behalf of your project, you are not representing yourself, you are representing the project which does have an impact on their district. So that is very important.

Your role, you're a constituent, an expert, you want to be that resource for them, you want to educate them, and you are an advocate for students with disability. So in the end, it is all about the students. I really urge you whatever you are doing to make sure you tie it back to improving outcomes for students. 1, we've had a lot of great information about infographs and that was really terrific. I always say two pages, no more. Do not bring a journal article, do not bring a bibliography of references, two pages. You can always get back to them. If you bring a big fat report, it will sit on a shelf and never get looked at.

Do not go on and on about your methodology. If they want to know, let them ask that. Highlight the impact, always include your contact information. We have a couple of examples here. This is a template that [Hexy] put together to use with members of Congress, just highlighting the program, this is what we do, this is who we educated this year, this is the difference we have made. It really brings it back home. That is one example. Here is another one. This is up on the CEC website – I'm having trouble saying this. Will they have the slides and the links? I think I'm going to leave it at that and let you go to this link and explore. They have some wonderful materials that are very effective with legislators and that are statewide and show some of the challenges in the state and how some of the grants that you have are addressing them.

Advocates. That was on two slides, that's why. Okay. What is a good meeting? Number one is short. I plan on 15 minutes. So you want to get through all of that in 15 minutes. You want to have a very clear purpose, I am here to X. You want to combine data and a powerful story. That is a great combination. Just the data and just the story are not as powerful as the two together. You want to listen. You want to ask them, "What are your priorities? What is it you're working on? How can I be a resource?" Be ready to answer the question "What do you want?" Legislators are there to take action so keep in mind and ask. It could be as simple as "Will you come and visit my program?" So keep in mind to ask.

Follow-up. Always get emails and contact information for whoever you meet with so you can follow up. Let them know the good news. Let them know what is happening. Follow up and just send them a little press release or something so that they stay in contact with you.

Advocates, not lobbyists. So again, these are different roles, check the guidelines in your situation and make sure you are following them. My last slide is about Twitter. [Laughter] As I said, I cannot emphasize that enough. I got on Twitter about two years ago and it really has changed a lot for me. So it is a great way to stay in touch and communicate with a lot of people. Thank you.

Joseph LaBelle, Eliana Tardio, and Monica Verra-Tirado
"Social Media: New Low-Cost Tools for Effective Outreach"

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you very much, Jane. Now we will show one less video this afternoon. This video is from Joseph LaBelle and Eliana Tardio from the Family Network on Disabilities and Monica Verra-Tirado from the Florida Department of Education. This video presentation describes how new social media tools can be used to create greater engagement with families of children with disabilities. [Video Presentation]

Clement Coulston
Conveying Our Stories – Displaying Our Data: Reflections

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Welcome back live. We are joined once again by Clem Coulston. He will present a summarizing reflection on today's speakers and videos. Clem.

>>Clement Coulston: So today, we really had an informative conversation and we learned and gained some new knowledge. We were also able to see some examples of what it looks like in the field and practice but what also I will bring today is talking about – okay, so we talked about infographics, we talked about ways to visually display data, ways to be able to take big pieces of information and display them in ways that folks can interact and engage with. So now I'm putting it into practice and I'm going to show you a couple of examples of the things that I created just now.

So the first thing is talking about questions, actions, and resources. Again, I think about ways that - what do we need the user to know to be able to think about and be able to do. So questions to ask: how are you learning about your audience and why are you sharing this information with them. The next one, how do you translate complex information in ways that resonate and what are the leave behinds, some actions to take, developing an effective and comprehensive communication plan. That was a general theme throughout today's presentation that I hope you'll also do.

The other thing is not never stop engaging your stakeholders, learn from and with them. For those on Twitter, you may notice that I used a little retweet icon because again, it's a learning and sharing network of us together. The last one is utilizing social media as a way to see how are you reaching your stakeholders and as someone said earlier, was this page helpful. The last is resources to review. All of today's PowerPoint presentations as well as resources that were listed and referenced during these presentation on the OSEP Ideas That Work website which I highly encourage you to check out today.

On the next slide, I brought about key themes from today. Setting the priority. A key message that we've shared is that being able to visually display information is not just a nice thing to do or it's a thing that we need to do. It is a high priority that we can do and that's what we're going to do moving forward. Next is know your audience, again who are they, identifying the purpose, what is the goal of the communication, what is the goal of the information that you're trying to present and engage others with. The next thing is how are we maximizing, utilizing the talent. Oftentimes, it's within your team but you have to be able to allow the opportunity for that to come out. Review the lessons learned, another key aspect that someone mentioned today, reflecting about what is working well, what is challenging, and what can we do moving forward. Lastly, continuing to enhance and evaluate.

The last one, it's another way of displaying the information. I kind of came up with some notables. So the first, communicating evaluation findings that can benefit the project and also the field. We also want to develop key relationships with stakeholders so you could be that go-to person as we just heard a couple months ago. There's different ways to present your information. You can use maps. You can use interactive displays. You can use infographics, all different ways to present the data that we can engage with it. Another one is to convene stakeholders, continuously check for assumptions, identify what was missed but also identify the opportunities for collaboration. The last one which really resonated with me and I hope it does with you as well is before change can happen, people need to understand the key issues, become motivated to take action, and recognize how they can make a difference.

So on the next slide is pulling it all together, the reflections, what are my takeaways, what are those aha moments that happened during the presentation today, thinking about what are some of the ideas that maybe challenged what we already knew or gave us some insight of "That's a different way to think about X, Y or Z," what are the surprises. As I was listening to today's speakers, I had a lot of interesting surprises that I'm like "I didn't think about it that way. Now when I move forward in my work, I can apply what I just learned today and use that moving forward. The last thing is making connections and that is the common premise of what today was about is it's not just about disseminating and giving information to others. It's about building relationships with them and how can we do that in a way that benefits both parties as well as helps us work together to grow together to improve outcomes for all students. Thank you so much.

Questions and Answers

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you, Clem, for that great demonstration. Next, I've asked our speakers to come back out to form a panel for our Q&A. We have received numerous questions throughout today and we will try to answer as many as we can. If you still have questions, please submit your questions to the Ask-a-Question box under the Q&A tab near the bottom of your screen. Thank you, for joining me. The first question is for Jane. Are there other methods or communication tools you recommend to reach legislators besides meetings and Twitter?

>>Jane West: Those are two of my favorites but there certainly are. Pretty much every legislator has a regular way of being in touch with their constituents through town halls or even newsletters with Q&A, websites, you can submit questions on their website or comments. So that is one way. Legislators who work in Washington are always home in the District 2 so if you're interested in making contact with one of your national senators or representatives, like this week they call it district work period, we call it

recess but they like district work period. So they are at home in the districts and they are available for meetings so you don't feel like you have to come to Washington.

Another great thing to do is to invite them to visit your program. They love to have photo ops especially with kids. So take them to a classroom, have them meet the parents you're working with, get the press there, they really, really like that. Another one that I knew one group that used to give them awards [Laughter] and invite them to accept the award. Now, the award should be legitimate in my opinion. So you can be creative with strategies. Just assume that they want to know what is happening in their district. That's their job to represent - whether they agree with you or not, they need that information because they can do their job better when they know what is happening.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you. Jill, this question is for you. What do you mean when you say that some types of data are more convincing than others to certain audiences?

>>Jill Lammert: Yes. So when you are working for example with funders, you might want to present more quantitative findings related to a rigorous evaluation that you've conducted. So it might be an infographic that displays quantitative results or it might be tables or some other thing or a GIS map like what Todd talked about with DaSy that shows how your project is reaching people across the country or across different regions of the country. If you're working with, for example, academics who are working interested in learning about specific benefits to a particular population group, they might want some more qualitative data related to narrative stories about people, how they're being affected, or they also might want quantitative data but they might want something more, either video clips or anecdotes or that kind of thing. So you got to think about who you are communicating with and what kinds of things that they're going to want to be interested in for the purpose that they're going to use the information for.

>>Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you. Clem, do you have recommendations for best practices when deciding how long or dense to make infographics?

>> Clement Coulston: That's a great question. One of the things I again help people to do is think about what is the expected outcome and being able to pull the information together and then you visually piece the information together. Then you'll be able to see "This is way too much." Or oftentimes, what I do is I reach out to a colleague who has not even seen the infographic before and I would be like "What is this infographic telling you or what does it need, what is it asking you to do?" That's a great indicator to be able to say, okay, is it too much, is it too little, am I getting to the point where I want to get to as well. But I often say that it is not just a one-shot deal where people sit down in five minutes to find out the infographic. It will take some time but the impact is immense. So this definitely – it's continuous enhancement with it.

>>Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you. Jane, another question for you. What if you asked to meet with a legislator and get bumped to the staff? Should you say okay or speak up?

>>Jane West: No. You should say "Great, sounds good." I used to work in the Senate so see, I can say that as a former staff person. Oftentimes, legislators depend on their staff for information and advice and sometimes legislators are so busy. I mean you think about if you're a senator, you got to be concerned about foreign relations, agriculture, you name it. So the time and the knowledge base you

bring to a discussion about special ed is not likely to be particularly broad. However, your staff person whose job is to cover education and maybe some other things as well is going to have a bigger knowledge base, a broader set of information to talk with you about. So sometimes I'd even say it is better to meet with the staff. So I would just go with the flow.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Jill, back to you. What are some considerations when creating a communication around a contradictory finding from your evaluation?

>>Jill Lammert: That's a great question. That is something that's likely to happen or at least not unusual. You might find some contradictory information that comes from your evaluation. So what we always do is try to collect as much data as possible about information, related to fidelity, related to social validity, these kinds of things so that when you are getting these contradictory findings, you can actually have a little bit more information to inform what you're finding. Also an important part of it is maybe having a plan in advance to what you're going to do if you have contradictory findings or if you have negative findings. Really, you should not consider contradictory or negative findings to be bad per se because there's more information. You are gleaning some information from it no matter what. So if you plan in advance for how you're going to communicate it, you make sure you develop a design and implement as rigorous an evaluation as possible and collect the data that you need to answer these questions, I think you can effectively address that.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Jane, a question for you which you touched on during your presentation. Is it worth it to meet with a policymaker who you know will disagree with you? How would one handle that information?

>>Jane West: Absolutely. Yes. [Laughter] I think the key thing to remember is that you are a constituent. Even when you haven't voted for someone or you think "This is a waste of my time," they don't think the federal government for example should have any role in education or whatever, you are still a constituent. The other thing is you never know what sort of personal connection might unfold. I've had people meet with members of Congress and learned that the person went to school with their mother or - and that is helpful, those personal connections. You are also an expert. So you're a constituent but you're also an expert. So you, by bringing information not only from your expertise but from what's happening in the district of the person, you are really helping the legislator and their staff to look good. When they go to a meeting and some other staffer says to them, "Well, what is happening your district with this?" They will know. Part of it is just a knowledge base. So if that person was elected to represent you, then meet with them. That doesn't mean you'll meet with them forever but you certainly should do it.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Clem, how can you help your stakeholders to show your infographic beyond their organization?

>> Clement Coulston: That is an excellent question. The power of the hashtag is one of the things that I'd really like to emphasize on and I loved how you were talking what about Twitter. So for those who do not know, hashtag, also known as the pound sign, is I call it to be the glue of Twitter. It's able to bring together streams of information of the same ideas. So if I'm interested in school climate, I can simply search the #schoolclimate to see what are people talking about, what are folks sharing, and are conversations happening that I may want to be a part of. So the first thing is identifying, okay, so what

are some relevant hashtags that anyone can create that pertain to what I'm trying to reach out? Just yesterday, the place I work with, recently disseminated an infographic on helping kids after natural disasters. So we used the recent events such as Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma as a way to see that folks were looking at these hashtags, they're able to say "Wait, here's a nice infographic." So that's one way. Another way is to also join Twitter chats. They happen all the time. You can just simply google Twitter chats and see what are some relevant ones that may be pertaining to this topic that I would want to collaborate and join on as well. Thank you.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Todd, are there specific online platforms you recommend we use to create the data visualizations you've shared today?

>>Todd Grindal: So I think as the amount of data available both in the private and public sector has grown, so do the tools that are available to work with that data. There are now dozens out there and they range from tools that are often built on to your computers when you get them to really advanced systems that you have to purchase and get some training to work with. I think what I would encourage people to do is to take a look and to see what tools match up with their technical skills, the technical skills required range from basic understanding of Excel to complex programming, and how that fits with the message you are trying to convey. On the website that we shared earlier on the DaSy Data Visualization Toolkit, we list some of the more common tools and provide links to them. Many of them have free trials that allow people to try out and see if this works for me, see if it helps to tell the story that I'm looking for.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Jill, what do you do to ensure accuracy of the data being presented?

>>Jill Lammert: That's a complex answer. [Laughter] Obviously, the first point is to ensure that the evaluation is collecting good data to begin with. Actually, on the OSEP Ideas That Work website, CIPP has developed a number of TA products. One of them is a toolkit related to evaluating your special education project. There's a lot of information in there about things like data cleaning and collecting data and getting that kind of information. So that might be a good resource that people can go to look at but essentially it's basically ensuring that you have well-trained data collectors, going out, and checks in place to validate the data that are coming in and ensuring that they're high quality. Once you get them, you have a database set up that can work and then you clean it and make sure there's a series of steps related to gleaning all that are outlined in that toolkit.

Then often you'll have checks that you have people going back and maybe going back to original data set and checking to see the original data, then the second data, and kind of verify it. So it's a little bit more complex to summarize in a few minutes but I would definitely suggest going on to the OSEP Ideas That Work website and looking under evaluation resources and section of resources for grantees and seeing some of the tools that are available to help you learn about how best to ensure that you are collecting and using high-quality data.

>>Todd Grindal: I think for researchers and a problem that some researchers have is failing to understand, particularly for administrative data, the process by which the data was collected. I think it can be really useful to take that step and to understand where did that student information come from, who reports that, was it a reported at a school or a program level, and who is that person so you can get a sense of how concerned might I be about the accuracy of these data or what might've gone wrong and

led us to kind of get the wrong information there. So taking a step back and really understanding the process by which those numbers arrived on your computer screen can be really helpful for heading off problems.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: I guess a quasi-follow-on to once you have the data, how do you focus that data for different audiences, so the different audiences such as parents or teachers, educators, administrators and know how to use or understand that data?

>>Todd Grindal: I think it is again taking a moment to understand, to think about what their perspective would be on that. That's information that you don't have already. It's always useful to ask. I think you never want to attempt to kind of bring down the data or to say something that is not accurate but to try to be as clear as possible for what your audience may be interested in. I think some of your points about policymakers, they don't want a long paper with tables but your more technical audience will. If you're trying to communicate to other researchers out in the field, they are going to let us see those things and make sure that the information that you provided is accurate. So I think in some cases, one of the things that we try to do is to make multiple versions of it. So we will often try to make a single-page version of what we're saying, a two-page, and then the full report that has all of the information so people may engage in it at whatever level that is to the right level of detail for them.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: So I guess once people have that information and that data, oftentimes we'll use infographics. So going to what Clem was discussing, we have a question about how do you ensure that the infographics are 508 compliant? Especially for this audience, that's really important.

>>Clement Coulston: Using alternate text is a really key aspect in being able to describe – so a lot of times, some of the infographics that I created are the ones that I showed you today, that was created with Microsoft PowerPoint which a lot of people have already. There's some unique features within PowerPoint that you're able to create alternate text so you're able to describe what is actually in that visual or in the picture that you are trying to share so that people who use screen readers are able to still access information. Twitter, which is a great venue that people use to share tweets as well as pictures, allows folks to use alternate text for attaching images. So that's another thing to consider as well when you're attaching infographics to your tweets or visuals, how are you ensuring that folks are able to interact with that maybe using different ways to interact with that information itself. I also highly encourage my colleagues today going onto OSEP Ideas That Work website, there's a tab that is 508 compliance talks about using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel. It has a lot of different resources as well. I highly urge folks to check that out.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you. So for all of you or anyone who wants to answer, do you have any suggestions for updating data in real time or regularly? Everybody's busy. What are your suggestions or best practices for people?

>>Todd Grindal: I think like with a lot of things, it depends on the type of data and how frequently you're looking to do that. Some of the tools that we mentioned provide some simple, straightforward ways for that to happen automatically. When you're looking at static indicators, things that are just going to be on paper or an image on the screen, I think to have those updated on a schedule that's relevant for your audience and that is relevant for the story you are trying to tell. Are you trying to talk about change over time? Then think about what are the appropriate time points along the way for doing that.

>>Jill Lammert: I would add also that it also depends on your audience's needs are. So if it's a one-time presentation that you're making to show where you are midterm of your project, well, you don't need to update it. But if you need to keep updating them quarterly for example, if you're talking with a group of project participants and they are the ones who are implementing your project in the classroom and you have maybe quarterly meetings with them, then you will just set up a process to have a quarterly update with them. So it requires a little work on the backend but you might have some templates that are set up already that then you can just feed the data into when you run it again. So I think it depends on like Todd said what you're doing and what you’re using it for but then who your audience is and what are their needs for data that are updated and with the frequency of that.

>>Todd Grindal: The point about having templates is really great and having them clearly labeled, knowing where they are. So you do the hard work the first time in making your data utilization and then the second time, in many cases, it can be just adding a column or changing the numbers that are in those cells so that you can continue to do that but having that clearly organize, knowing where to go back can save quite a bit of time.

>>Jill Lammert: One more thing, sorry. If you have a need for frequent updates of data, if there's a reason for that, it might be worth making initial investment in putting together a data dashboard that is actually fed from real-time data that are entered you’re your database so that the particular user of that dashboard can go in and they click on what they need to click and automatically those data are feeding in from the database that they have. So if that’s something that you need for your project, it really might be worth making that initial investment to create that right up front.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: That’s a really great suggestion. For anyone, how do you ensure your audiences are actually being reached?

>>Jill Lammert: I’ll start. One thing that I think is important to do is before even getting to the point of reaching them is doing a test drive with your potential audiences to see if they can even understand the message that you are trying to convey. So you reach out to representatives of your audience and you do a test drive so you ask them, how do you understand the message, what do you get from it, does it contain the information that you need, and then is it accessible to use. So that’s an initial point to it. You could survey them. You could reach out to them. There's different ways that you could find out but it’s going to require a little bit of effort on your part to get in contact with them to follow up. Twitter could be a way because if you are doing that and you’re getting people responding, all of a sudden you're getting followers, you’re getting people interested in your message and then retweeting and sharing, then you know that they're getting the message and they’re reaching the message.

>>Clement Coulston: Using different tools for social media, so Instagram, they recently had this new initiative where you can use stories to be able to show people what's happening. Recently, they also included a polling feature so you can post something up on the screen and then say, ask them a question with yes or no. Then you get feedback so that folks can see what others are sharing but then also provide you feedback. That's helpful. I love what Understood was sharing earlier that was this page helpful. Again, I think that’s a great way to – in conjunction with Google Analytics to see what are people clicking on, how long people are staying on the page, what page are they visiting next but also gain an anecdotal, okay, is this page helpful. Then as a team, you can come together and say, “Okay, so this is

what folks are sharing. What can we do from here on this?" You can get it using the social media outlets but seeing what people are using and meeting them where they are just like we talked about earlier, keeping with the stakeholders and meeting where they are.

>>Todd Grindal: I understood your question a little bit differently and that was that is this message that I think I'm communicating, is that actually what they are hearing. People often can take a look at the same information, I'm sure this is true with policymakers and it comes through their filter and that may be ideology or experience or a whole bunch of other things that we can look at the same image, the same data visualization and make very different conclusions from it. What we try to do is create some scaffolds for people when we're providing graphs or other visualizations. So often what we'll do is we'll put a note on the bottom of that that says "Read this." So we'll take a bar and say "This bar says that 25% of participants in this program achieved meaningful growth" just to make sure that they're reading it the same way, they're understanding that information, and it is not being kind of taken over by some prior experience or perspective on the issue.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: So a little bit of a follow-on sort of to this question. Have you worked with teachers on communicating data? Also, what are tips for teachers to portray data to parents? How do they help explain the message that you are trying to get out there?

>>Todd Grindal: I had some limited experience doing this and I think it is to give them the same principles that we think about when communicating to different audiences, what is it they want to learn from this, what's the story you are trying to tell, and then I think to keep it simple and straightforward.

>>Clement Coulston: I think another aspect to that too is meeting them where they are. One of the things that tends to get me a little upset is when people talk about dumbing down information. I really don't believe it's about that. It's about identifying where stakeholders are and meeting them so that we can go and group together. Oftentimes, it's about let's look at this, what is the data telling us, and how is it going to be influencing what we're going to be doing moving forward. Especially in IP meetings, it can often feel for the child that they're just identifying all the stuff that I can't do or it's challenging and stuff but rather than saying starting the conversation with "These are the strengths." Then even if the child is in the IP meeting which hopefully here she is, what are some of your strengths, what are some of your talents, and starting the conversation off in a positive part but then moving towards area of like I shared before with the flashlight shining on areas that you need to focus on moving forward as well. So using data not as a recommended piece but really as a way to shine light on what's moving forward.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Great. That's a great way of looking at it and explaining it. Anybody else have anything to add to that question? Jill, this is for you. How applicable do you feel your tools are across levels in the field? Local education agencies, state agencies…

>>Jill Lammert: I think they are quite applicable. Obviously what we presented today is targeted more grantees of specific program areas but really the ideas are the same across because the idea is to know who your audiences are, know what they want to know, know what they need to know, how to communicate it to them, and what tools you might use. So I think it really doesn't matter that the tool is written for this. The principles can be applied across. I would say that's the same for other resources that we have on OSEP Ideas That Work website. One thing that's kind of related that is also around applicable is another tool that we developed called Demonstrating Evidence across the Project Cycle. So

what this does is it kind of walks people through the idea of what does it mean to demonstrate evidence of your project's progress and your results over time. So we walk through the planning, the implementation, and then the results, phases, and kind of think through some resources and checklists and strategy, things that you can look through about that and that's really applicable across all levels as well.

>> Kristen Kushiyama: Thank you. So I got my notification that unfortunately, we have to come to an end today. The questions that were not answered will be posted on to the post-work website. I'd like to thank Clem, Jill, Todd, Jane for coming today and presenting to all of us at the third event of the 2017 Symposium Series. Late next week, we will be sending you all additional information on how you can participate in the post-event discussion opportunities for all three of our symposia Thank you for joining us and have a great afternoon.