Using GEAR UP Data Effectively and in a Meaningful Way: Telling Your Story of Change

Presented At:
GEAR UP West conference

Presented By:
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Goals for this session

• Understand how GEAR UP stakeholders can use data to tell their story and improve results for students and their families

• Get ideas for tools, processes, and practical strategies around data collection, analysis and reporting
Overview of Oregon GEAR UP

- 21 Oregon communities funded through a state grant (and 10 additional communities funded through the Ford Family Foundation)
- Most of the 53 participating schools are located in high poverty, rural areas
- Flexible school models that follow a common research-based framework: the 5 Rs
Why use data?

- Facilitate grant management
- Assess overall program fidelity to figure out what works, for whom, when and how
- Identify promising practices and challenges
- Inform programmatic decisions
- Engage key stakeholders
- Demonstrate program impact and tell your story
- Fulfill federal reporting requirements
Topics covered in this session

• Using data to design your GEAR UP program (developing and communicating your theory of change)

• Using data to assess implementation and impact, and inform programmatic decisions (which data, types of analyses)

• Sharing data to engage key stakeholders (different audiences and formats)
Definition:
“A Theory of Change (TOC) is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.” (Center for Theory of Change)

Why Use A Theory of Change?
• Provides a visual representation of the change you want to see in your community and how you expect it to come about
• Promotes a shared understanding about what is success and what it takes to get there
• Allows stakeholders to test hypothesis, track progress, and measure success

Backwards mapping:
OREGON GEAR UP – College. It’s not a dream, it’s a plan.

**CONTEXT/NEED**
By 2020, 70% of all jobs in Oregon will require some type of education or training after high school. Yet, only 37% of adults in Oregon hold a postsecondary degree. Among GU3 communities, only 54% of adults have attended college and only 26% have a two-year degree or higher.

Rural communities face a number of challenges, including:
- Local economic decline and high poverty
- Under-resourced schools with low graduation rates and limited availability of rigorous courses
- Geographic isolation which results in difficulties:
  - attracting and retaining high quality/specialized teachers
  - bringing in resources to schools (e.g., speakers, PD)
  - exposing students to out-of-school experiences (e.g., college trips)
  - maintaining high attendance for school and school-related events among students and families
- Local culture that has historically undervalued postsecondary education and/or is unfamiliar with college selection, application, and financing.

**GOAL**
To increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs.

**TARGET POPULATION**
Low-income and underserved students and their families in 54 middle and high schools in 31 school districts.

**EVIDENCE-BASED FRAMEWORK**
- **College and Career Readiness**
- **Raising Awareness** and financial aid
- **Relationships** supportive peers and adults
- **Rigor** academic preparation and support
- **Relevance** career exploration and connection
- **Flexible Resources**

**INPUTS**
- Funding from USDOE and The Ford Family Foundation
- District support (dollar and in-kind match)
- Oregon GU staff's technical assistance, professional development, networking, and administrative support
- OSU resources (e.g., summer camps, Beaver Hangouts)
- Participating schools and communities
- Incentives (food and swag)

**ACTIVITIES**
**For schools:**
- Professional development, ongoing support from GU school liaisons and other staff, data reports and site visit support, and GU resources (e.g., toolkits, newsletters, website, research briefs)
- Curriculum development and alignment
- Infusion of technology
- Development of local partnerships

**For students:**
- Rigorous coursework
- Academic supports (e.g., advisement, tutoring, enrichment, and summer programs)
- Mentoring and social-emotional learning supports
- Career/college readiness support classes, advisement, workshops, panels, job shadowing, internships, fairs, college visits, Photo Booths

**For families:**
- School events, trips, workshops, panels, communications and individualized assistance

**OUTCOMES**

**SCHOOL OUTCOMES**
- **Short and mid-term**
  - School leadership and quality teaching
  - Greater involvement of school staff in college access work
  - Curriculum vertically aligned
  - Increased number of accelerated learning and rigorous courses
  - Development of partnerships

- **Long-term**
  - Sustained college-going culture
  - Systems of college and career readiness supports
  - College prep curriculum
  - Sustained partnerships

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**
- **Short and mid-term**
  - Stronger cognitive and social-emotional skills
  - Increased sense of agency and self-advocacy skills
  - Improved academic behaviors and performance
  - Completion of advanced courses
  - Higher postsecondary education expectations and career/college awareness
  - Completion of college entrance activities (ACT/SAT, applications, scholarships)

- **Long-term**
  - Increased high school graduation rates
  - Increased postsecondary education enrollment, persistence and completion

**FAMILY OUTCOMES**
- **Short and mid-term**
  - Increased postsecondary education expectations and opportunities
  - Knowledge of college selection, application, and financial aid process

- **Long-term**
  - FAFSA completion
  - Local culture of continued and lifelong learning

**Partners:**
- Local school partners
- Higher ed institutions
- Metis (evaluator)
Communicating Your Vision/Model

Program staff, partners, funders
- Share vision (TOC) at the onset of the program
- Share TOC when onboarding new staff or partners
- Revisit TOC at staff, partner, funder meetings
- Align reporting to TOC

Schools
- Involve educators and leadership in developing the TOC
- Introduce TOC at GEAR UP kick-off events for students and/or staff
- Review TOC at staff meetings and/or PDs to generate awareness

Families and Communities
- Seek input from families/community members to shape the vision
- Discuss the vision and model at GEAR UP community/family events
- Share/reinforce vision through other communications: parent newsletters, mailings, website
- Assess the extent to which your program has a clear vision/model and how it is being communicated

  - Fully accomplished
  - Partially in place
  - Not in place/Beginning stage

- Write down one or two things you may want to do differently
What data should we collect?

- Depends on the target audience and how you plan to use it
- Quantitative AND qualitative
- Multiple data sources and respondent groups
- Purposes:
  - To help schools:
    - Plan for activities
    - Assess effectiveness of school-based interventions
    - Learn about promising practices
  - To assess overall implementation, progress towards performance measures, and impact (across schools)
# Quantitative data

## Data elements

- **Implementation/service data**
  - # activities, sessions, participants, hours per participant, activity attendance rates
  - Feedback on activities (relevance, quality, usefulness)

- **Outcome data:**
  - Academic achievement (e.g., state assessments, course enrollment and completion, GPA, credits earned, grade promotion)
  - School attendance
  - School behaviors (e.g., suspensions)
  - High school graduation
  - PSAT and SAT completion/scores
  - FAFSA completion
  - Scholarship applications
  - College applications
  - College enrollment, retention, and graduation data
  - Expectations/knowledge/attitudes for postsecondary education
  - Educator and school practices

- **Student demographic data** (e.g., grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, disability status, free and reduced-price lunch, first-generation status)

- **School data** (e.g., school size, number of staff, qualifications, turnover, # advanced courses, community statistics)

## Types of data sources

- Web-enabled participation database
- PD and activity feedback forms
- Student/school data from schools and/or state education department
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Student, parent, and educator surveys

## Types of analyses

- Descriptive analyses
- Longitudinal analyses
- Dosage analyses linking services and outcomes
- Impact analyses through comparison group design (RCT, QED, etc.)
## Qualitative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus/topics</th>
<th>Types of data sources</th>
<th>Types of analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> understanding the why, and the how; putting a face to the data</td>
<td><strong>Respondent Groups:</strong></td>
<td>• Content analyses identifying common themes, patterns and unique contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics assessed:</strong></td>
<td>• program staff,</td>
<td>• Vignettes, case studies and success stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Context/needs</td>
<td>• partner organizations/vendors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promising practices</td>
<td>• school leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Challenges</td>
<td>• educators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perceived impact (and examples depicting impact)</td>
<td>• students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suggestions for improvement</td>
<td>• parents/families</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Methods:**
- Interviews
- focus groups
- observations of activities
- site visits
- feedback forms
Activity 2 (10 minutes)

- Assess your program’s data collection practices
  - Fully in place
  - Partially in place
  - Not in place/beginner stage

- Write down one or two ideas for new data elements, respondent groups, or data sources you could use to inform your work
### How do we share/use data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key audience</th>
<th>Strategies/Formats for Sharing Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Program staff                                          | - Ongoing GEAR UP participation reports  
- School planning tool and school-specific reports  
- Annual comprehensive evaluation report  
- Ongoing meetings with evaluator  
- Dashboard                                                   |
| School staff (leadership, educators)                   | - School-specific reports (e.g., survey and outcome findings)  
- Sharing of best practices and success stories through educator newsletters, website, and presentations/meetings  
- GEAR UP factsheets/briefs  
- Dashboard                                                   |
| Students                                               | - School-specific findings through interactive activities  
- Success stories                                              |
| Families/community                                     | - GEAR UP newsletter  
- Website (e.g., feature stories)  
- Presentations and handouts (e.g., factsheets) at family/community events |
| External stakeholders such as elected officials, policy makers, research field, USDOE | - Short policy briefs or factsheets  
- Presentations/meetings with elected officials, policy makers, and community stakeholders  
- Articles in peer-reviewed journals  
- APR, biennial and final reports to USDOE                   |
- Assess your program’s practices around using/sharing data
  
  - Fully in place
  - Partially in place
  - Not in place/beginning stage

- Write down one or two ideas for how you could share your data/story with key stakeholders
Questions?
Contact information

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### Activity #1: Shaping and Communicating Your Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Possible Strategies</th>
<th>Rate Your Progress</th>
<th>Identify Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Develop a theory of change/vision with explicit goals, outcomes, activities/strategies, and assumptions | • Seek input from key stakeholders to inform vision  
• Develop a visual tool (theory of change or logic model) to communicate vision                                                                                                                                 |                    | *Please write down one or two things you could do to develop and/or communicate your vision/TOC with stakeholders*                                                                                                     |
| Communicate theory of change/vision with program staff and partners | • Staff/partner onboarding  
• Staff meetings  
• Align reporting to theory of change to reinforce understanding of vision/model                                                                                                                                 |                    |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Communicate theory of change/vision with students                     | • GEAR UP kickoff meetings or events                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Communicate theory of change/vision with school leaders and educators | • GEAR UP kickoff meetings  
• Staff meetings  
• Staff training                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Communicate theory of change/vision with families and community members | • GEAR UP events  
• Website  
• Newsletters  
• Handouts                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Revisit your theory of change on an annual basis to identify new needs, goals, and activities | • Use stakeholder meetings so input from various groups is represented                                                                                                                                              |                    |                                                                                                                                                    |

### Resources:
### Activity #2: Collecting/Analyzing Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key topic</th>
<th>Rate Your Progress</th>
<th>Identify Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Topics assessed:**  
- Context/needs  
- Promising practices  
- Implementation challenges  
- Perceived impact (and examples of impact)  
- Suggestions for improvement |  
| **Respondent Groups:** program staff, partner organizations/vendors, school leadership, educators, students, parents/families |  
| **Methods:** interviews, focus groups, observations of activities, site visits |  
| **Types of Analyses:**  
- Content analyses identifying common themes, patterns and contexts  
- Vignettes, case studies and success stories |  

#### What types of qualitative data are you collecting?  
From whom?  
What analyses are you conducting?  

**Please write down one or two ideas of new/enhanced qualitative data practices (topics of interest, new method, seeking input from a specific respondent group)**

#### What types of quantitative data are you collecting?  
From whom?  
What analyses are you conducting?  

**Please write down one or two ideas of new/enhanced qualitative data practices (e.g., additional types of data to collect, untapped data sources, types of analyses)**

**Types of data:**  
- Implementation/service data (e.g., #s and feedback)  
- Student demographics, academic achievement (e.g., course grades, test scores, grade promotion, credits earned, GPA), school attendance, school behaviors, high school graduation  
- College enrollment, retention and graduation  
- Students and parents’ college and career readiness measures  
- Teacher/school practices  

**Data sources:**  
- Program participation database  
- Student data from schools or state ed dept.  
- Student, educator, and parent surveys  
- National Student Clearinghouse data  

**Types of Analyses:**  
- Descriptive analyses  
- Longitudinal analyses  
- Dosage analyses (linking participation or services to outcomes)  
- Comparison group design
### Activity #3: Reporting and Sharing Data with Key Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Audience</th>
<th>Examples of Strategies/Formats</th>
<th>Rate Your Progress</th>
<th>Identify Action Steps</th>
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| **Program staff** | Ongoing GEAR UP participation reports  
School planning tool and school-specific reports  
Annual comprehensive evaluation report  
Ongoing meetings with evaluator  
Dashboard | | |
| **School staff** (leadership, educators) | School-specific reports (e.g., survey and outcome findings)  
Sharing of best practices and success stories through educator newsletters, website, and presentations/meetings  
GEAR UP factsheets/briefs  
Dashboard | | |
| **Students** | School-specific findings through interactive activities  
Success stories | | |
| **Families/community** | GEAR UP newsletter  
Website (e.g., feature stories)  
Presentations and handouts (e.g., factsheets) at family/community events | | |
| **External stakeholders such as college and university personnel, elected officials, policy makers, research field, USDOE** | Short policy briefs or factsheets  
Presentations/meetings with elected officials, policy makers, and community stakeholders (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Rotary, Elks)  
Articles in peer-reviewed journals  
APR, biennial and final reports to USDOE | | |

**Examples from Oregon GEAR UP:**
- Annual reports (briefs/factsheets): [http://oregongearup.org/about/results](http://oregongearup.org/about/results)
- Feature stories (e.g., best practices, success stories): [http://oregongearup.org/feature-story](http://oregongearup.org/feature-story)