

# Mixed Methods: What's Needed to Benefit More

Federal Perspective on Current Uses, Ongoing Challenges

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# Overview

- ▶ Context setting:
  - Imperative
  - Common and uncommon uses
- ▶ Challenges in doing more
- ▶ Next steps



# From IES Director Mark Schneider

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*IES hasn't done nearly enough to translate (our work) into actionable information that can transform behavior and outcomes.*

Mixed methods  
are essential

# “Mixed Methods (MM)”



# MM prevalent in federal evaluation now

Deep interviews  
Focus groups  
Observations  
Document analysis

**BEFORE** impact  
study



Assess feasibility  
Create study design  
Develop instruments

# MM prevalent in federal evaluation now

Observations with  
protocols/rubrics

Surveys of program  
implementers and  
participants

**AS PART OF** impact  
study



Determine contrast

Assess intervention  
experience

Rate implementation  
fidelity

# MM not common or comprehensive

Data collection

**BEFORE, PART OF,  
or AFTER** impact  
study



Essential components

Implementation challenges

Implementation variation  
factors/role of context

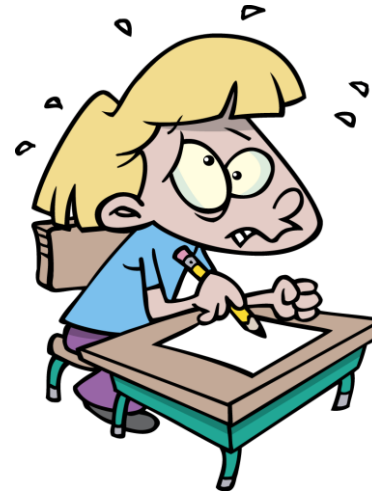
Hypotheses for subgroup  
differences

Sustainability

Examples of good practice

“How to” replicate

# Challenges



## ► Measurement

- Emphasis on prioritizing
- Development: common items, validation, open-ended coding

## ► Sampling

- Explicit, dependent on purpose

## ► Reporting

- Alternatives to long descriptions - tabulations, visualization
- Development of templates or models for tool kits




# Next Steps



## ► Evaluation community

- Convergence on measurement and validation approaches
- Improvement in integration into report writing

## ► At IES:

- Implementation study work group  guidance
- Methods and TA task order contract

**STAY TUNED**

# Caution: Let's be methodical

*For every problem, there is a solution that is simple, obvious, and wrong.*

--Mark Twain

THANK YOU