

Supporting Decision-Making with the Rapid Cycle Evaluation Coach

Kaitlyn Newell, CAP Tulsa

Kimberly Boller, The Nicholson Foundation

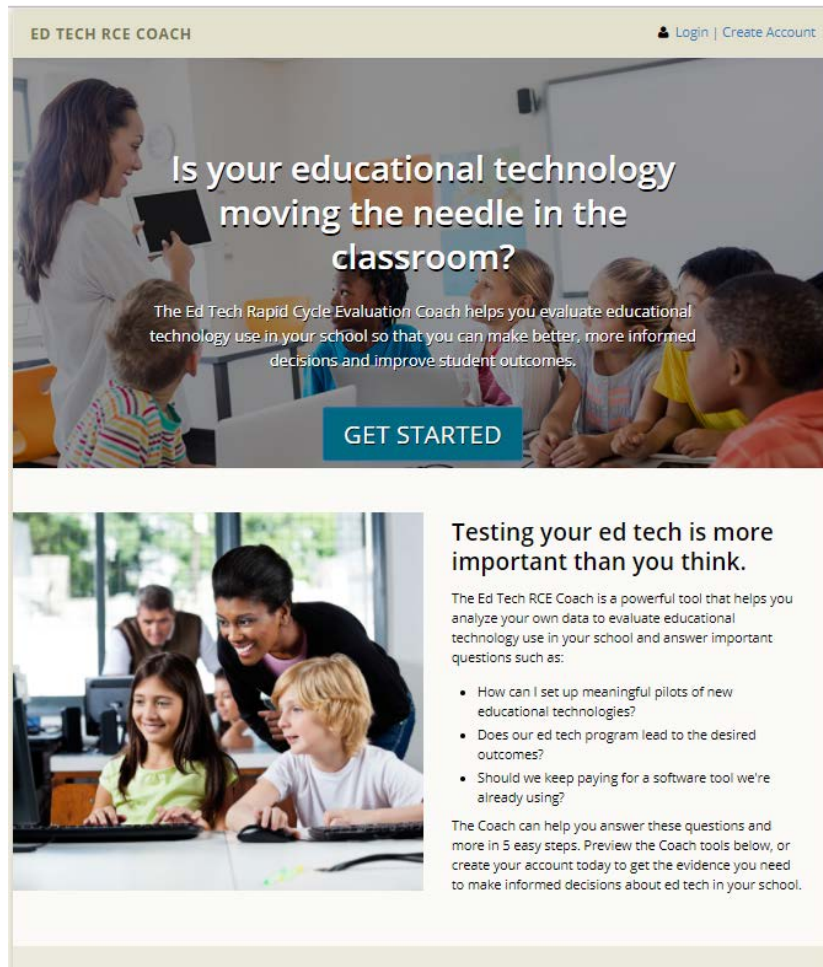
Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium
April 17, 2019



Topics

- Introduce Rapid Cycle Evaluation (RCE) Coach
- Discuss CAP Tulsa's experience using the RCE Coach
- Implications for the field

What is RCE Coach?



ED TECH RCE COACH Login | Create Account

Is your educational technology moving the needle in the classroom?

The Ed Tech Rapid Cycle Evaluation Coach helps you evaluate educational technology use in your school so that you can make better, more informed decisions and improve student outcomes.

GET STARTED

Testing your ed tech is more important than you think.

The Ed Tech RCE Coach is a powerful tool that helps you analyze your own data to evaluate educational technology use in your school and answer important questions such as:

- How can I set up meaningful pilots of new educational technologies?
- Does our ed tech program lead to the desired outcomes?
- Should we keep paying for a software tool we're already using?

The Coach can help you answer these questions and more in 5 easy steps. Preview the Coach tools below, or create your account today to get the evidence you need to make informed decisions about ed tech in your school.

- **Free, easy-to-use online platform**
 - Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology
- **Tools and guidance needed to make evidence-based decisions**
 - Auto-produced findings brief to share your results

<https://edtechrce.org/>

History/Development of the tool

- Launched in 2016 (beta version) for school districts and researchers to conduct RCEs of educational technology.
 - Updated January 2017 to increase functionality.
- Lessons from Ed Tech use include the need to narrow research questions, enhance data capacity and use, and assess and strengthen user readiness for the tool.
 - <https://blog.ed.gov/2017/08/eight-lessons-learned-piloting-rapid-cycle-evaluation-coach/>
- Revision to make the tool work better across sectors (including ECE) underway.

The Coach approach to generating evidence of effectiveness



The Coach approach

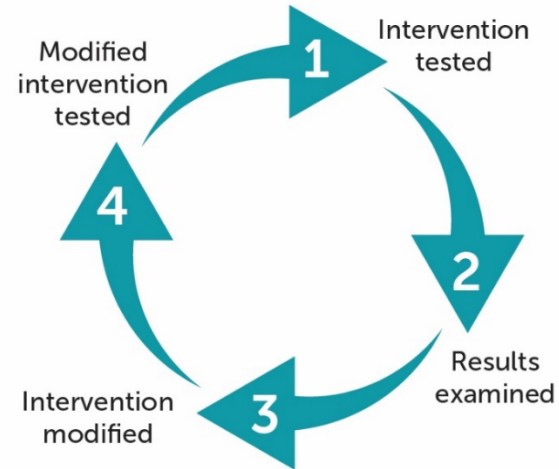
Rapid

Rapid identification
of results



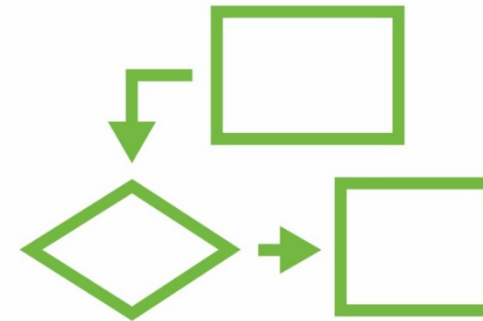
Cycle

Continuous
improvement model



Evaluation

Rigorous experimental
techniques

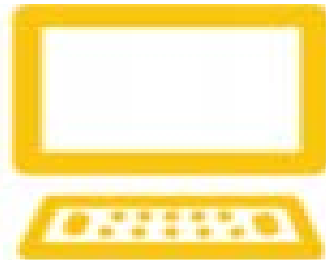


When is a good time to use the Coach?

- You have an important decision to make about a program.
 - Is it worth continuing a program?
 - Should a pilot program be expanded?
 - What is the best way to implement a program?
- You have or can create the key ingredients for an RCE.
 - Outcome measure
 - Baseline measure
 - Comparison group (random assignment or matched design)
 - Indicator of who got the program

RCE Coach workflow

The Coach guides you through five steps:



Applications of the Coach in ECE contexts

“The blue print: Does **A** do **B** among **C** compared to **D**?”

A new math curriculum

Improve math scores on Woodcock Johnson-Applied Problems

4-year-olds at School C

4-year-olds with similar characteristics at School D

Series of parenting classes for Head Start families

Increase parents' confidence soothing children who are upset

Parents who participate in the program (randomized)

Parents interested in parenting classes (but not participants)

A pull-out language and literacy intervention

Increase expressive language

Children receiving pull-out intervention with low language scores

Matched sample of children receiving in-class support

CAP Tulsa's experience exploring RCE Coach: Reflections for CAP Tulsa and the field



Quality improvement at CAP Tulsa



- Improvement Science
- Human-Centered Design
- Focus on Improving Implementation

Research-Practitioner Partnerships



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



Northwestern University



Helping Families Succeed

- Experimental, Quasi-Experimental Designs
- Longitudinal Studies
- Ongoing Program Evaluation

CAP Tulsa's experience exploring RCE Coach

Exploration was guided by three inquiry questions:

1. Could this tool help CAP Tulsa make decisions about pilots or strategic initiatives quickly and/or help us be more nimble?
2. Does this tool provide a perspective on the data that we don't currently have?
3. If this is a useful tool, when would be the most appropriate time to use it?

Reflections for CAP Tulsa

- The disciplined research planning process seems valuable.
 - Pre-specifying the threshold for adoption or expansion of the pilot might add some agility to the decision-making process.
- RCE Coach provides a different perspective that the agency might find valuable.
 - However, we want to make sure we are selecting the appropriate tool for each project.
- RCE Coach might be most useful to CAP in the following circumstances:
 - For a well-defined pilot (with a treatment and control group)
 - Clear theory of change
 - 1-2 primary outcomes of interest
 - The parameters for success are relatively clear

Reflections for CAP Tulsa

- CAP Tulsa's Research & Innovation team has experience implementing and evaluating pilot programs.
 - Already have in-house capacity, processes, and tools to support this kind of work.
- RCE Coach may be useful for organizations without experienced research and innovation staff.
- The planning tools included in the RCE Coach and the disciplined approach to research and inquiry might be especially effective in helping organizations make data-informed decisions quickly.

Possible future directions at CAP Tulsa

- Evaluating the effects of a social-emotional supplementary curriculum on children's protective factors and behavior concerns.
 - Using rapid cycle approach to make informed decisions about how and when to scale promising pilots.



Next steps for the Coach

- Plans for RCE Coach enhancements:
 - Developing a more generic front end
 - Incorporating continuous improvement modules
 - Determining whether specific customization is needed (for ECE)
- Customizing levels of support:
 - Consulting model (conduct the work)
 - Technical assistance model (train/support the evaluator)
 - Capacity building model (train-the-trainer)

Discussion

- What initiatives would benefit from this approach?
 - At what point in the decision-making and implementation process?
- How can RCE Coach be useful in different communities and contexts?
 - For agencies
 - Funders
 - Researchers

Acknowledgements

- **Sources for this presentation include materials created by Mathematica Policy Research and SRI International, as part of the Rapid Cycle Tech Evaluations project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology, contract no. ED-005-15-C-0053.**

Contact Information

- Kaitlyn Newell: newell.kaitlyn@captulsa.org
- Kimberly Boller: kboller@thenicholsonfoundation.org

