Performance Measurement for Programmatic Monitoring and to Inform Local Decision Making

Lauren Supplee
Jim Manzi in his book *Uncontrolled* discusses how Subway used administrative data on sales and mini randomized trials to come up with the $5 foot long.

Hertz Rent A Car uses administrative data to improve customer experiences such as predicting when locations need managers on site to handle heavy customer volume.
The private sector has this down pat right?

- Steven Levitt gave the keynote at a National Academies meeting on big data and causality.
- Part of the talk focused on his experiences using big data (i.e. administrative data) in the private sector.
  - If it’s not meaningful to someone’s job, it won’t be used.
  - If you don’t know why you are collecting it, it won’t be used.
  - If it’s no one’s job to use data and ask questions, it doesn’t happen.
  - If the questions being asked aren’t aligned with priorities, no one will care about the answers.
  - If the culture of the organization does not support asking a question and seeking an answer driven by data, it won’t happen.
My takeaway? We are all in the same boat.

- I believe we need to build a culture of curiosity and quality

What is a culture of curiosity and quality?

- Culture is the beliefs or customs of a group or a way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place
- Curiosity is the desire to learn or know more about something or someone or becoming interested in something because it is unusual
- Quality is a high level of value or excellence
Culture of Curiosity

It’s a culture of asking questions and seeking answers.

- Encourage inquiry
- Framing conversations around questions
- Avoid blame
- Assume all learning is good
- Eliminate fear, encourage failure

Millway & Goldmark, 2013
It’s a culture of valuing quality that is pervasive throughout. It is part of the fabric of every interaction.

- Leadership (& no mixed messages)
- Employee ownership and empowerment
- Peer involvement
What do you need to support it?

- Useful measures, quality data
- Leadership
- A team (or at least one person) whose job it is to seek answers to questions through data
- Data system
- Stakeholder input
Useful measures, quality data

- What does it mean to have useful measures?
  - Are they aligned with the logic model/theory of change? Is there a shared understanding of the purpose of the measures?

- What does it mean to have quality data?
  - Is there a plan for how the data are collected? Does everyone understand how to collect the data? Is there a shared value for the data collection?
Choosing measures

- Not all measures work for all purposes – e.g. measures for research likely don’t work for performance measurement, a risk screener does not work to track individual change over time
- Continuum between standardized measures and unstandardized measures

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<th>Total uniformity</th>
<th>Mix of individually defined and uniform</th>
<th>Total flexibility</th>
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OPRE
Leadership

- Set the tone of asking questions
- Expect some failure and learning from it
- Insist on using data to inform administration
- Make it someone’s job to look at data
- Provide the space to look at data and use it
Team (or at least a person)

- All initiatives need a champion – we all get busy and things slip.
- Need someone whose job it is to focus on the data and engage everyone in asking questions, sharing data and discussing the data.
Does the system created support quality data entry? This includes training, shared understanding of the elements, accurate data entry, etc.

Once the data are stored, can they be easily retrieved (and in the way you want/need)?

Does the data system support all levels of staff accessing and looking at the data?
Shared interpretation

- Without context, data is meaningless.
- Engage multiple stakeholders – leadership, supervisors/management, front-line staff, clients, funders
- Shared goal setting
CQI or Continuous Quality Improvement is the idea of continuously improving performance of systems through a series of metrics to enable the delivery of reliable, consistent results.

- Began in the health care sector but is quickly spreading in human services.
- It seems like a variant of how performance measurement was conceptualized.
Why is CQI appealing?

- Empowers programs and communities to own their data and use their data to monitor and improve services
- Generates new learning over a shorter period of time than traditional evaluation
- Uses data to guide decisions
- Guides informed adaptation of program services
What do we need to do?

- Develop shared ownership of data
- Support programs in developing the culture of curiosity and quality
- Develop stronger logic models and tie measurement to the logic model
- Ensure measurement is meaningful
- Provide TA around data and how to use data in program administration
WE’D LOVE TO CONNECT

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