Collecting Qualitative Insights on Quantitative Data

Playlist | Dabbling in the Data

[public profit]

WELCOME TO THE *DABBLING IN THE DATA* PLAYLIST!
One of the best ways to use the Dabbling methods is to mix them together, creating a hands-on, interactive experience for your interest holders.

Just like a good playlist of your favorite songs, putting together a mix of *Dabbling* activities can make data more memorable and meaningful. The advanced options offer a chance to take a deeper dive into a particular approach that piques your interest.

The team at Public Profit put together the Collecting Qualitative Insights on Quantitative Data Playlist to give you a jumpstart for your own work. Have fun!

COLLECTING QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS ON QUANTITATIVE DATA

In the real world, where most of us live and work, no one number can explain everything we need to know about a program or project. When we better understand what is contributing to the outcomes we observe, we're better able to respond effectively.

The approaches in this playlist help teams to identify the factors that are contributing to observed patterns in the data, a key step in data-informed continuous quality improvement. In analysis terms, this is a mixed-method process, in which the team is collecting qualitative data (stories and examples) to better explain the quantitative data (numbers).

Plan to use one to two hours for this, depending on the group size (larger groups = more time), the number of activities the group does, and the complexity of the program/initiative you are discussing. Detailed instructions for each activity are in *Dabbling in the Data*.

YARN SLOPE GRAPH

IUse this approach to gather more contextual information about what contributed to the metric you are tracking over time. In this activity, group members share additional information about factors that affected the metric, which helps to create a common understanding of what happened.

For example, a team that is monitoring enrollment rates in their workshop over time can identify contextual factors that likely influenced enrollment, like marketing campaigns, discount offers, and seasonal changes.

ICEBERG ANALYSIS

If the group is exploring a point-in-time metric or a single event, Iceberg Analysis is a good option. This activity uses an iceberg as a metaphor, with the observable metric or event placed "above the water line" and the contributing factors placed below. Group members each contribute information about the contributing factors in a root cause style analysis.

Tip: participants will often likely share contributing factors that are outside the control of the program or initiative. Designate these "out of our reach" factors with an asterisk or similar symbol.

Advanced option: FORCE FIELD DIAGRAM

To better understand the root causes, organize them into a force field diagram. This graphic method groups factors that are supportive of the outcome on one side, and factors that inhibit the outcome on the other.

Once the factors are sorted, the group can reflect on both the number of factors on either side of the diagram, and their relative strength. This can help inform the team's next steps, whether to minimize the negative factors or enhance the positive ones.