



Learning Logs

Short-Cycle Feedback and Long-Term
Learning

October 11, 2023



We facilitate meaningful learning and evaluation with and for our partners to advance equity and social justice.

 @Innonet_Eval



Associate
Evaluator on TEEM
Amateur cat wrangler



Senior Associate
Evaluator on AES
Expert dog trainer

Emergent Learning

A very brief and inexperienced overview

Seriously, we are not experts or EL-certified!!

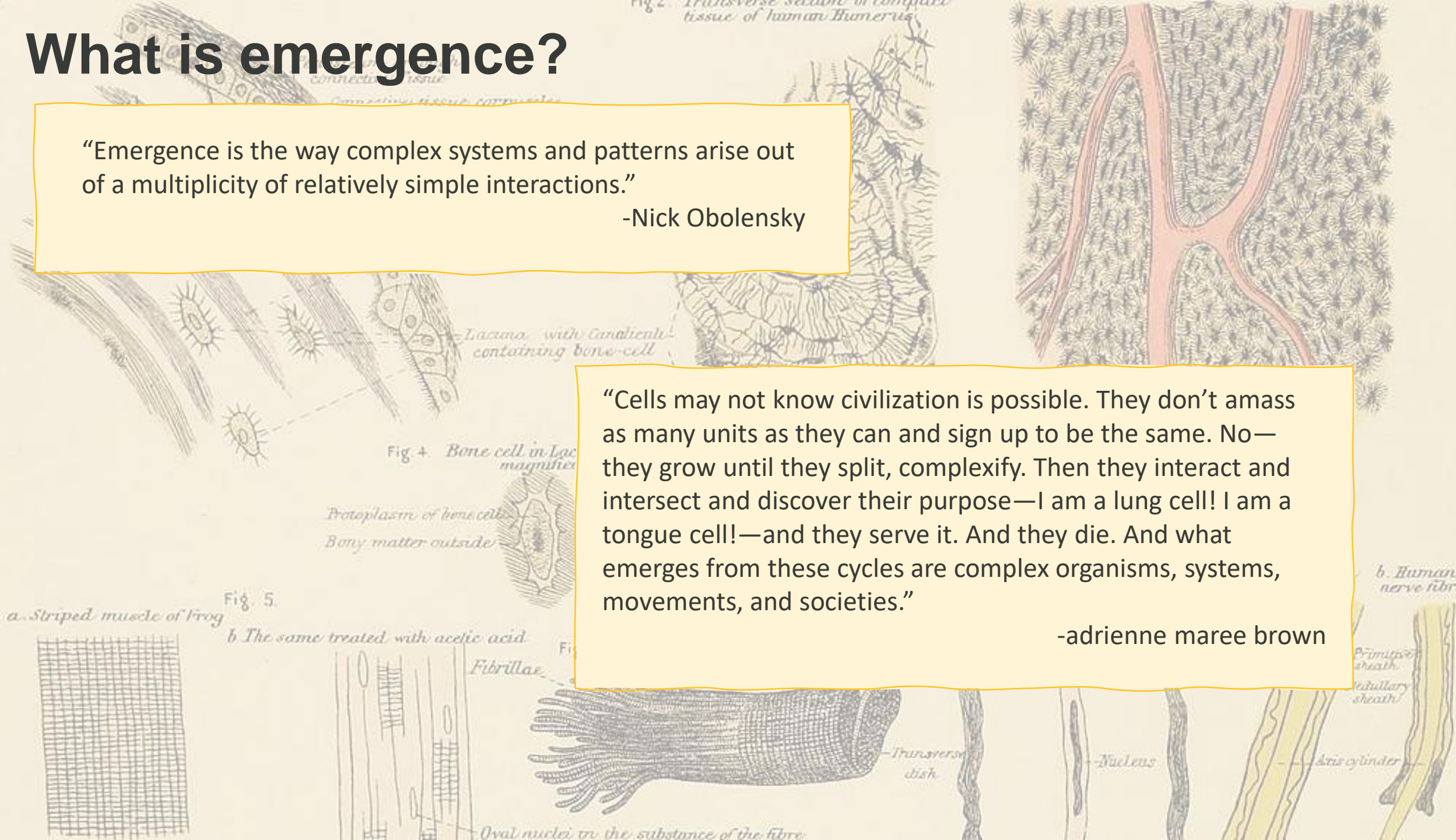
What is emergence?

“Emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions.”

-Nick Obolensky

“Cells may not know civilization is possible. They don't amass as many units as they can and sign up to be the same. No—they grow until they split, complexify. Then they interact and intersect and discover their purpose—I am a lung cell! I am a tongue cell!—and they serve it. And they die. And what emerges from these cycles are complex organisms, systems, movements, and societies.”

-adrienne maree brown



What is Emergent Learning?



Strengthening Line of Sight



Making Thinking Visible



Asking Powerful Questions



Maximizing Freedom to Experiment



Keeping the Work at the Center



Inviting Diverse Voices to the Table



Holding Expertise in Equal Measure



Stewarding Learning through Time



Returning Learning to the System

What are Learning Logs?

Learning Logs are used to capture insights and record events in real time. Typically includes:



Challenges



Experiments



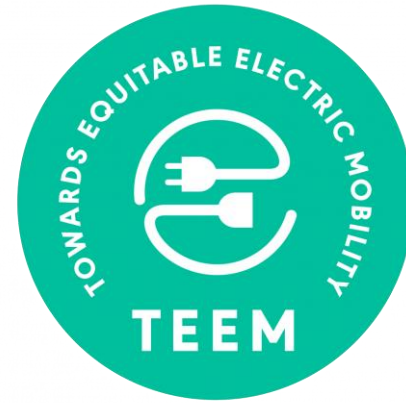
Successes (and factors of success)

This allows teams to:

- Better understand the full picture/trajectory/arc/themes of an initiative/project/portfolio of work.
- Periodically revisit the log for reflection, grounding their conversations in concrete stories and data they have collected.

Topic	Significant achievements	Experiments / New efforts in progress	What needs to be kept the same / successes / factors
<p><i>Relationship-building</i></p> <p><i>Capacity</i></p> <p><i>Facilitation</i></p> <p><i>Event</i></p> <p><i>Ownership</i></p>	<p><i>The org had a successful and energizing Annual Convening.</i></p> <p><i>The convening met all the planning committee's goals including creating an event where participants could connect, build relationships, and strategize. One organizer felt the agenda for the convening embodied everything that the org is.</i></p>	<p><i>The organizers involved experimented with involving community of practice members in the actual facilitation of the convening.</i></p> <p><i>The organizers shared the convening agenda beforehand to the cohort and asked if anyone wanted facilitate any of the items. At least one community of practice member participated and helped facilitate an activity.</i></p>	<p><i>The convening had intentional time built-in for connection among participants.</i> <i>This included a 2-hour reception caucus activity. The FG used icebreakers to help connect cohort. Participants were excited to connect in person.</i></p>

Toward Equitable Electric Mobility



Bringing grassroots and grasstops organizations together

Project overview

QUICK FACTS



Est. 2021



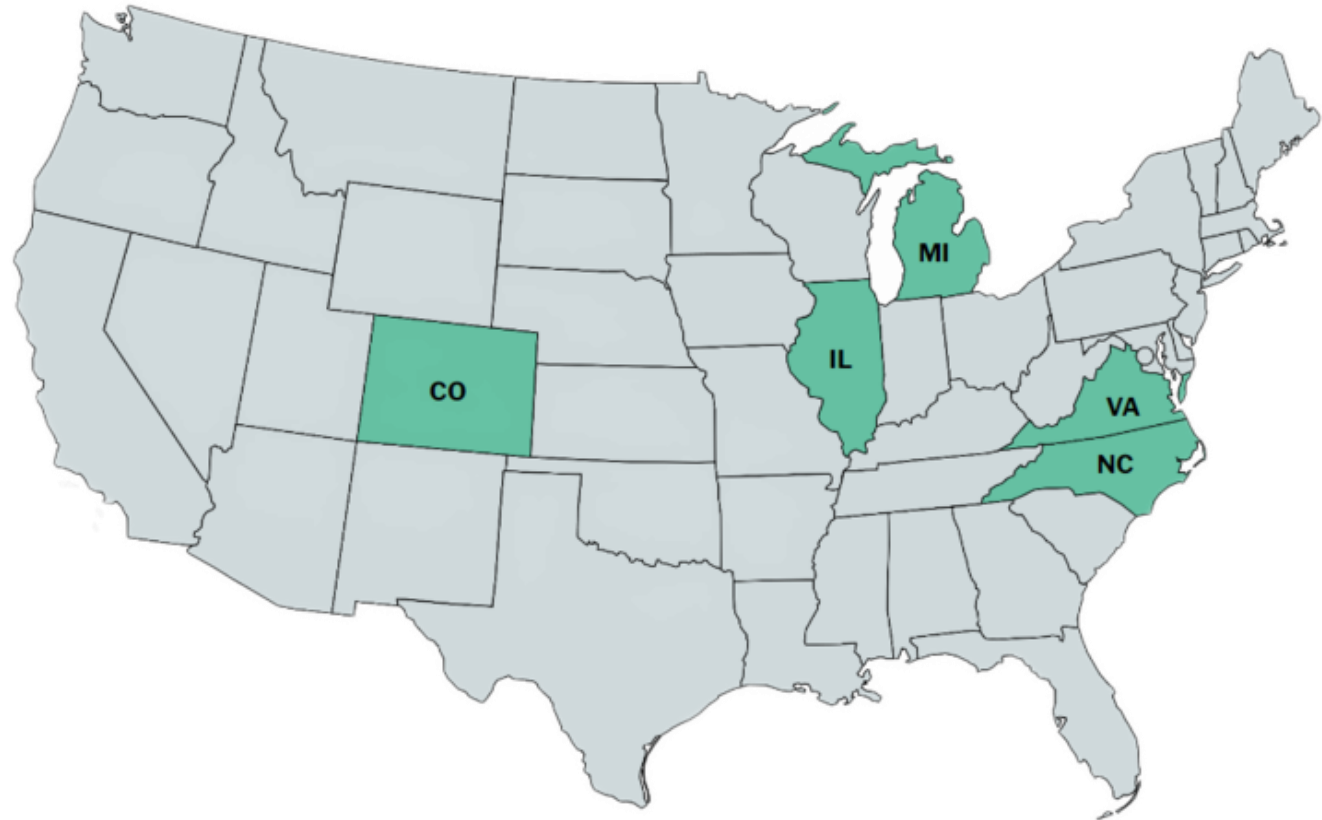
32 organizations in 5 states (and growing!)



Facilitation partners:
Forth Mobility
Greenlining Institute



Anonymous funder



Toward Equitable Electric Mobility (TEEM) is a Community of Practice created in 2021 to improve equitable clean transportation by enabling cohort members to **share policy goals, learn together, build capacity, and develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment** towards advancing racial equity and climate change goals in electric mobility. TEEM brings together grassroots and grasstops organizations.

Evaluation Overview

Year 1 (April 2021-February 2022)

Focused on:

- improving and learning about the facilitation/implementation of the cohort
- building capacity and shared power among orgs
- capture learnings that could apply to other efforts

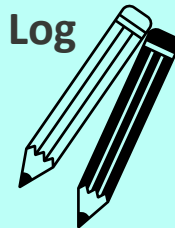
Year 2 (March 2022-March 2023)

Focused on:

- understanding what it would take for TEEM to support proactive work for equitable policies
- TEEM moving towards collective ownership of strategies
- operationalizing equity in the community of practice

Methods in both years:

- after-action reflection meetings with the Facilitation Team and **accompanying Learning Log**
- a reflection session with the cohort
- a survey, and
- sensemaking sessions with facilitators and funder



Learning Log Use in Data Collection



What worked well:

1. Regularity of check-ins allowed for rich data and relationship-building

Questions used in AAR

1. *What were the most significant achievements for the Facilitation Group this month relating to operationalizing equity or creating collective ownership? What contributed to these achievements?*
2. *What are you experimenting with right now in terms of operationalizing equity or building collective ownership? What led to these changes/experimentation?*
3. *Given your learnings, what are you planning on keeping the same/changing next month?*
4. *How are members of TEEM thinking about proactive strategies in the community of practice?*
5. *What else is rising to the top right now, or something interesting that is emerging for you at this time?*



Challenges:

1. Lag with the data we collected
2. Still one step removed from community of practice participants
3. Time intensive

Learning Log Use in Rapid Reflection

Summarized learnings after each session

- Summarized and distilled the LL entries after each session and shared them back with the Facilitation Team
- Facilitation Team would revisit the summary before the next session

Learning Log Use in Rapid Reflection



What worked well:

1. Dedicated opportunity for Facilitation Team to take a step back and reflect on their work and the bigger picture
2. Allowed us to revisit the same event at regular intervals and note changes and developments as they arose



Challenges:

1. Time! For both evaluators and the Facilitation Team
2. Requires clear vision and strong facilitation

Learning Log for Analysis and Learning



Learning Log for Analysis and Learning



What worked well:

1. Sharing the analysis between two evaluators
2. Provided rich narrative data for the overall evaluation that led to insights



Challenges:

1. Analysis by “external” evaluators
2. A lot of data

Alliance for Early Success

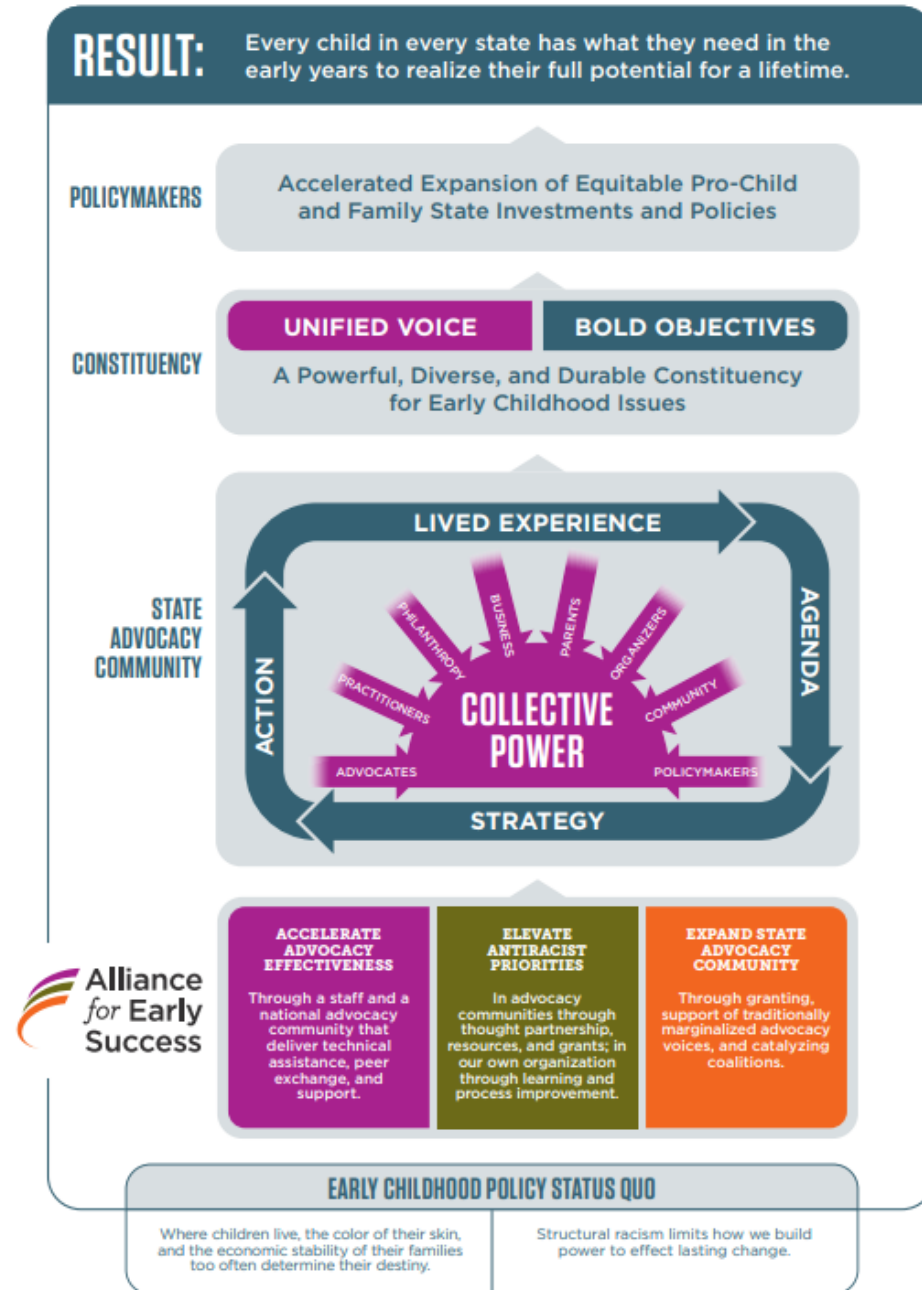
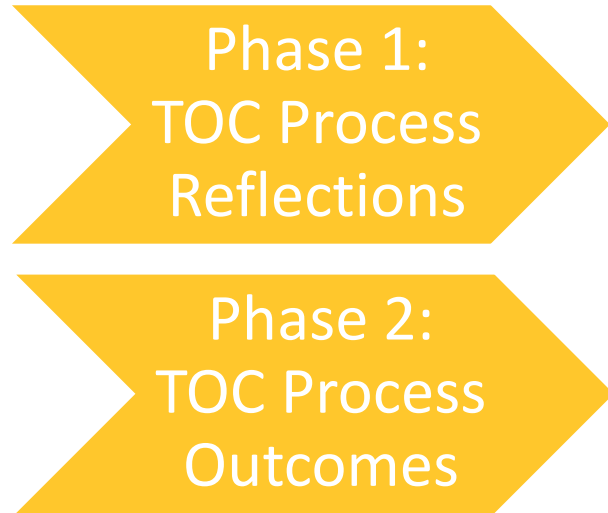


Alliance *for*
Early Success

Every Child. Every State.

Working with allies across the country to achieve equitable state early childhood policy that supports young children and their families.

Project Overview



Phase 1 of Evaluation

Phase 1:
TOC Process
Reflections

18

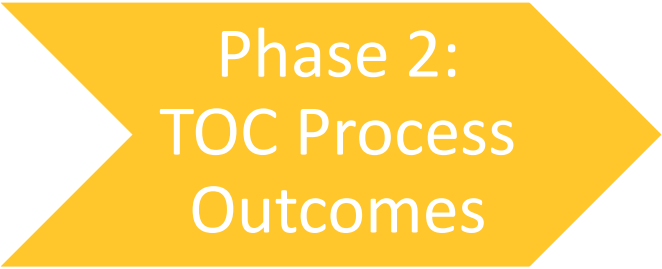
Learning: Regular Reflection Moments

1. Conversations to discuss emerging insights and assumptions about aligning to the TOC and to capture learnings emerging from specific topics/workstreams. The Alliance (and some external facilitators) reflected on how they are adapting, what they hope to achieve, and what is working or not.
2. Insights and assumptions captured in a Learning Log which we updated after each session and shared a summarized version with Alliance staff.

Analysis: Summary Reports + Sensemaking

1. Thematic analysis of reflection moments and summary reports
2. Sensemaking conversations to share and discuss key themes emerging across similar topics, reflect on findings, and brainstorm learnings and new ideas moving forward.

Phase 2 of Evaluation



Phase 2:
TOC Process
Outcomes

19

Co-creating a Learning Agenda

1. Development of learning and evaluation questions led by Alliance staff
2. To explore the impact of the TOC, building on the assumptions and desired outcomes identified in the reflection moments

Other components

1. We are currently planning the rest of the evaluation

Learning Log Use in Data Collection

Reflection Moments

1. 10 monthly meetings on varied topics.
2. Prior to each meeting, participants populated a virtual whiteboard with their responses to reflection questions. These were discussed in further detail during each meeting and used for data collection.

Learning Log

1. The evaluation team captured insights and assumptions from each reflection moment in the Learning Log, which were updated to capture learnings after each session.
2. Data was pre-coded with themes.

How is the Alliance shifting its efforts to align with the new Theory of Change?

What do you hope these changes will achieve?

How are these changes going so far?

What are the most significant achievements in the CoP linked to the three pillars of the TOC?

What adaptations have been made to align the CoP to the TOC?

What are you learning about how the design of the CoP contributes to the TOC?



Learning Log Use in Data Collection



What worked well:

1. Alliance staff liked having these conversations as they were a way for them to take a step back and reflect on their work.
2. Entering a mix of conversation summaries and direct quotes was helpful.



Challenges:

1. It is time intensive.
2. The person entering the data decides what is “important” to include.

Learning Log Use in Rapid Reflection

Summarized learnings after each session

1. Sent summaries to those participating in a second reflection session on the same topic, to be reviewed prior to the reflection session to inform the second conversation (which had different discussion questions).
2. Only summarized topics with multiple sessions. Didn't summarize those that had just one session (because it was time consuming, and our assumption was the Alliance wouldn't need to read those).

Learning Log Use in Rapid Reflection



What worked well:

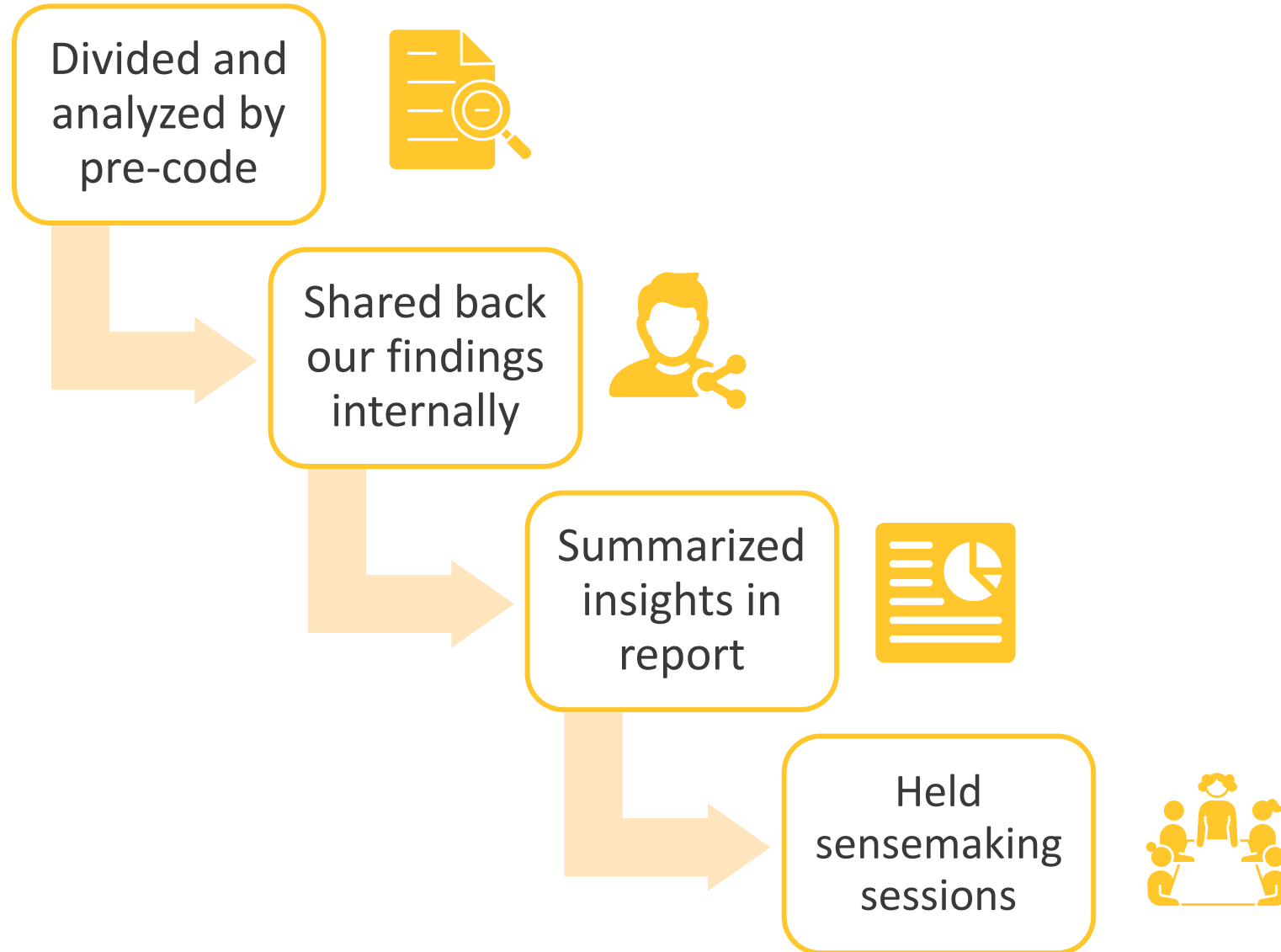
1. Phase 1 initial purpose was to plan for the Phase 2 evaluation and help us more fully understand the work. The Alliance learned from the conversations and utilized the learning in the work they were doing. Conversations were more valuable for immediate application than the Learning Log and summaries.



Challenges:

1. Time! Took time to synthesize the full Learning Log content into summaries.
2. Staff didn't always have time to review the summarized versions before the second conversation.

Learning Log for Analysis



Learning Log for Analysis



What worked well:

1. Including quotes from staff was helpful for providing context and specific examples for the report.



Challenges:

1. Pre-codes were based on our ideas about what would rise to the top, and when we started the analysis, we realized a lot of the codes weren't relevant or accurate, so we had to redo a lot of the codes. Different members of the team did data entry/coding and did not cross-check until after.
2. It was not the same grouping of staff across all sessions, nor were the same topics discussed.
3. There were a lot of entries that had overlapping codes, which meant overlapping analysis.

Learning Log for Evaluation Planning

Learning Logs documented areas of interest and hypotheses to test in Phase 2

1. We used the Learning Log to summarize areas the Alliance expressed interest in learning about in Phase 2, and hypotheses about expected outcomes from the changes they are making with the new TOC.
2. We identified 7 different learning areas from the Learning Log analysis and sensemaking and mapped assumptions and desired outcomes to those learning areas.

Learning Log informed Learning Agenda in Phase 2

1. Learning areas helped shape the focus of learning questions.
2. Relevant assumptions and desired outcomes will be tested in the evaluation.

Is a Learning Log Right for You?



Time investment vs. payoff



Consistent person across all sessions and analysis



Value of reflection conversation



A lot of rich data but can be overwhelming



Consistency of staff/topics across the sessions



Nature of reflection conversation vs. more structured interview



External vs. internal interpretation



Same questions across sessions for consistency vs. being more flexible



Pre-coding

Contact Us

Rebecca Perlmutter, MA

Senior Associate

rperlmutter@innonet.org



Cory Georgopoulos, MPP

Associate

cgeorgopoulos@innonet.org

Q&A



Any questions?

Thank You

innonet.org