Team Read Case Part 2—Data Collection

You receive a call from Trish McKay, Team Read Program Manager. Her organization is seeking help evaluating the Team Read program, and she request to meet with you to discuss contracting you to conduct the evaluation. The contract involves two tasks. First, she would like you to examine their current data collection practices and make recommendations to ensure the organization will have appropriate data in the future to conduct a formal evaluation. The second task involves reviewing existing data the organization has collected to understand if the program is working. A few excerpts from your conversation with Trish McKay and your notes from the meeting are below.

In your meeting, Trish McKay admits that she did not do the best job collecting information needed to evaluate the Team Read program. She stated,

> At the start, I was so focused on getting the program off the ground that I didn't think much about collecting data. After all, most of the schools were so reluctant to let the Team Read program in that I spent nearly all of my time building rapport and convincing school administration and teachers that we are here for the long -haul. There was no point in thinking about collecting data if there was no program to evaluate!

> I lucked out to some extent. An AmeriCorps volunteer with the Team Read program, who was finishing her Masters degree, requested to evaluate our program as part of a class project. I was excited because I knew we needed to collect information to evaluate if the Team Read Program was working, and this AmeriCorps volunteer shows up and takes this task off my already over-filled plate. The very first action she took was to update our reading logs. She included additional information that could be used to assess the progress of our program. Before she updated our reading logs, they were simply attendance sheets. (See Exhibit 4 to view the updated reading log).

> The AmeriCorps Volunteer selected a few sites to collect data from. There wasn't anything special about these sites. They were selected because the site was either convenient for her or she was friendly with the Site Coordinator.

> Watching her collect and enter all of that information really got me thinking about how we need to improve our data collection processes. It took her hours just to enter a small amount of information. We are already strapped for time. There are several hundred kids in this program, and we are growing by leaps and bounds. I'm worried that our current pen-and-paper methods will be a nightmare when it comes time to formally evaluate the program. We have to figure out a better way to know if we are meeting our goals. To be honest, I haven't even looked at the data she gave me. She did say that she made notes in the dataset on how she calculated everything. I hope it is enough for us to do something with, at least for now. I had a conversation

with my Board last month, and we all agree that is imperative that we, as a group, decide how best to evaluate our programs.

As you spend more time talking to Tricia McKay you pick up some additional details. Below are excerpts from your notes.

1) There are data on only 2 of the 4 initial schools that started the program in March 2018. There are also data on 1 school that started the program in October 2018 and 1 school that started the program in February 2019. The data includes every child at the school that participated in the program, even if the student dropped out or entered the program late.

2) Upon entering the program, students take a short reading test to determine the most appropriate reading level of each student. Ms. McKay really likes this instrument because it's computer based and only takes about 20 minutes to administer. This assessment was developed in collaboration with several reading specialist in the school district. As a side note, it has gained a lot of popularity, and several school reading specialists in the school district asked Ms. McKay if they could use the instrument for their own purposes.

3) All other reading progress data is collected by the Reading Coaches. See Exhibit 4. Reading Coaches receive training on how to identify reading growth at the beginning of the school year, but do not receive any follow up training. The Site Coordinators do not provide oversite of the information entered into reading logs, but are available if a Reading Coach need assistance. Reading logs are turned into the Site Coordinators at the end of each month, and then submit the logs to Tricia McKay.

4) The data set constructed by the AmeriCorps Volunteer includes the following information:
   a. Color coded reading level. There are two data points—1) beginning reading level. This measure is taken at the beginning of the year OR when the student joins the program and 2) the reading level at the end of the academic year.
   b. Reading Accuracy. Measured as the modal score.
   c. Reading Fluency. Measured as the modal score.
   d. Reading Understanding. Measured as the modal score.
   e. Reading Vocabulary. Measured as the modal score.
   f. Overall reading score. Measured as the sum of items b-e
   g. Focus on task. Measured as the average focus score throughout the academic year
   h. Attendance. Measured as the number of tutoring sessions attended.
   i. Student demographic data

****Notes for the analyzing the data. 1) you can proceed as if the data meets necessary assumptions. 2) Much of the data is ordinal. If you choose to treat the data as continuous, you should include a justification for your decision.