Session 4:
Setting Up a New System: Policy Mandates and Practical Considerations

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Summary of Presentation

1. Moderator: General considerations for setting up or redesigning information systems

2. Panel presenters: Discuss policy mandates and practical/technical challenges

3. Group discussion: Reflections on planning strategies from various political and institutional contexts
General considerations for setting up or redesigning information systems
At minimum, a Longitudinal Data System designed for innovation...

- Must have a unique identifier system (e.g. student ID, teacher ID, etc.)
- Must have relevant data attached to this ID (grades, payroll, etc.)
- Must be accessible but secured for privacy concerns
- Should be capable for linking with other data sets or shared with other programs
However, a Longitudinal Data System designed for innovation...

- **IS NOT** just a data warehouse
- **IS NOT** built for simply storing end of course testing purposes
- **IS NOT** built for administrative functions (e.g. processing payroll or administering end-of-course exams)
- **DOES NOT** come packaged by a vendor (“off the shelf” solution) ready for plug and play
Longitudinal Data System “Honeymoon”
Themes for Redesigning/Setting up a new system
Theme #1 - It’s not just an IT project

• Policy/purpose determine IT, not the other way around

• Come up with **policy questions** you want to answer first, not list of data elements to collect

• Good data quality doesn’t always lead to good decision making, it just leads to good data

**Tangibly, what does this mean?**

✓ List of Policy questions
✓ Purpose and Vision for system written down
Theme #2 - Remember your “customers” (this might not be you)

• Communicate up and out
• Over-communicate, but *underpromise*, to these stakeholders

Tangibly, what does this mean?

- List of stakeholders connected to policy questions
- Communication plan
- Schedule/Calendar for updating users
Theme #3 - Know who is in charge

- Establish **sustainable data governance** policies and groups
- Establish **ownership and accountability** within your data governance, from data elements collected to the overall data system

Tangibly, what does this mean?

- Data Governance charter
- List of members who will be on Data Governance Group
- Policies document detailing how decisions are made
Theme #4 - Write it down

• Develop policies and procedures that document how you do things on the project; personalities will not always be the same

• Protect against the “lottery” problem

Tangibly, what does this mean?

✓ Data dictionary for all data elements
✓ Process for giving users access to data or data system
✓ Process for making changes to system
Contact

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