Speaking of Contextual Fit: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions

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Session Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn what an Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) is and what the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) says about evidence

- Learn about research clearinghouses to identify EBIs

- Understand Contextual Fit and the role it plays in selecting EBIs within your districts/schools

- Evaluate the Contextual Fit of example EBIs

How Comfortable Are You With These Terms?

Evidence-Based Intervention

ESSA Levels of Evidence

Research Clearinghouse

Contextual Fit

Thumbs up - I know this!

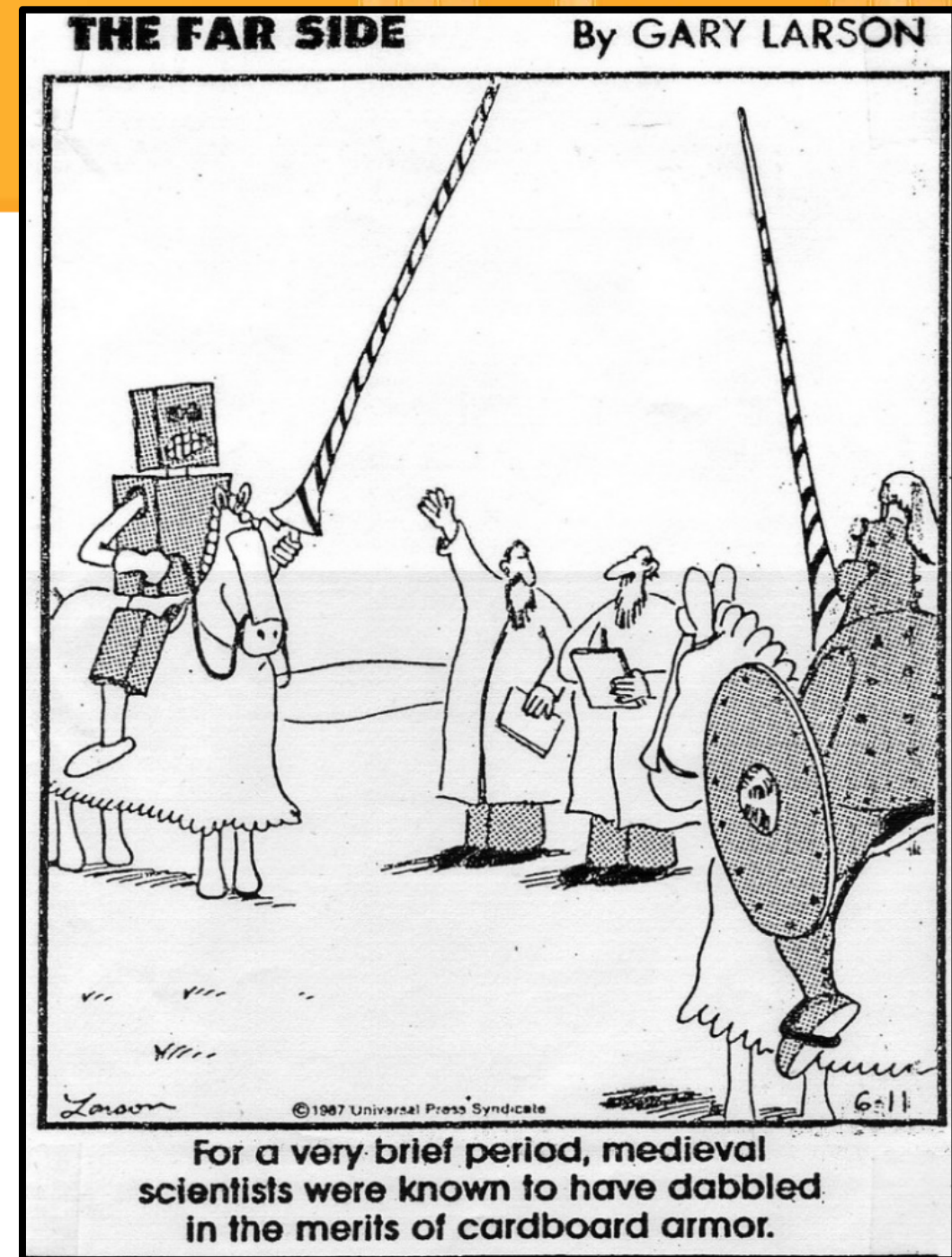**Thumb sideways** – I sort of know this

Thumbs down – What are you talking about?
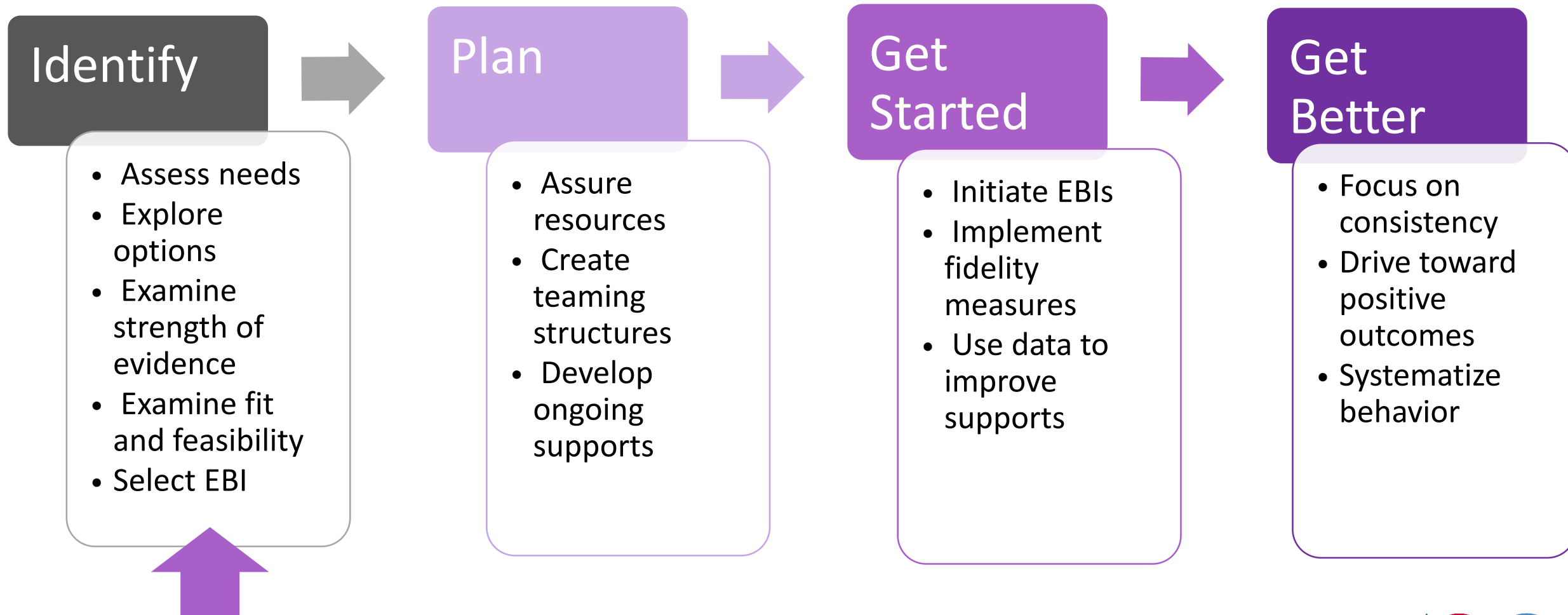
But First –
The Big Picture

Why is evidence important?

There is a rich history of efforts in education to see what works – and what doesn't.

While continuous research is needed, there's a strong foundation of literature about what positively and reliably improves student learning.

THE FAR SIDE   BY GARY LARSON

For a very brief period, medieval scientists were known to have dabbled in the merits of cardboard armor.

EBI exploration and selection is the starting point

Identify
- Assess needs
- Explore options
- Examine strength of evidence
- Examine fit and feasibility
- Select EBI

Plan
- Assure resources
- Create teaming structures
- Develop ongoing supports

Get Started
- Initiate EBIs
- Implement fidelity measures
- Use data to improve supports

Get Better
- Focus on consistency
- Drive toward positive outcomes
- Systematize behavior

EBI exploration and selection is the starting point for improving student learning

Defining "EBI"

Turn and Talk

1. Introduce yourself to at least 2 people sitting in the row next to you **[1 min]**

1. Share what "evidence based interventions" means to you **[2 min]**
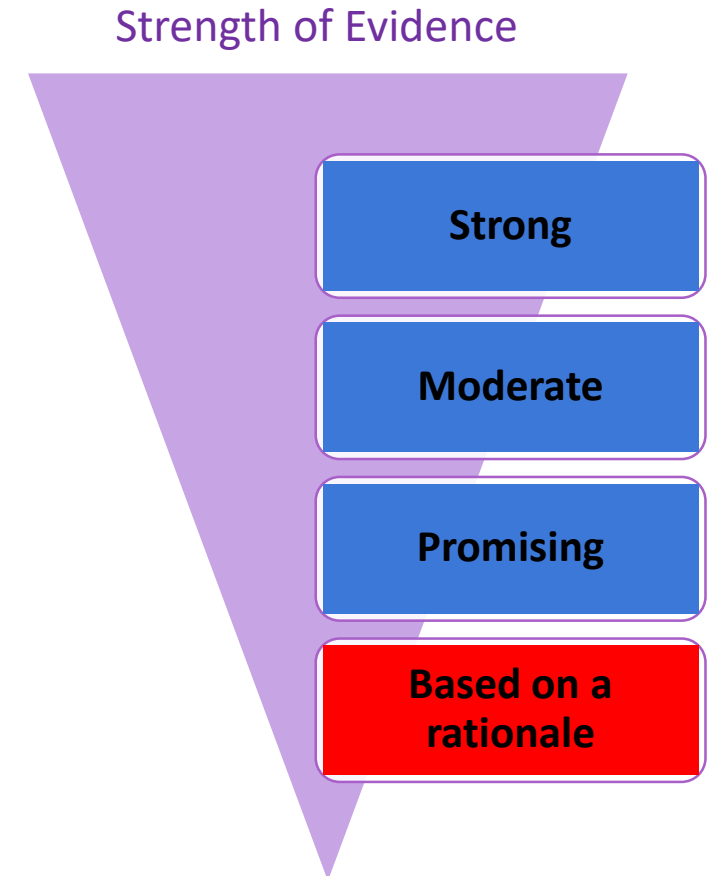
Research-Based Practices

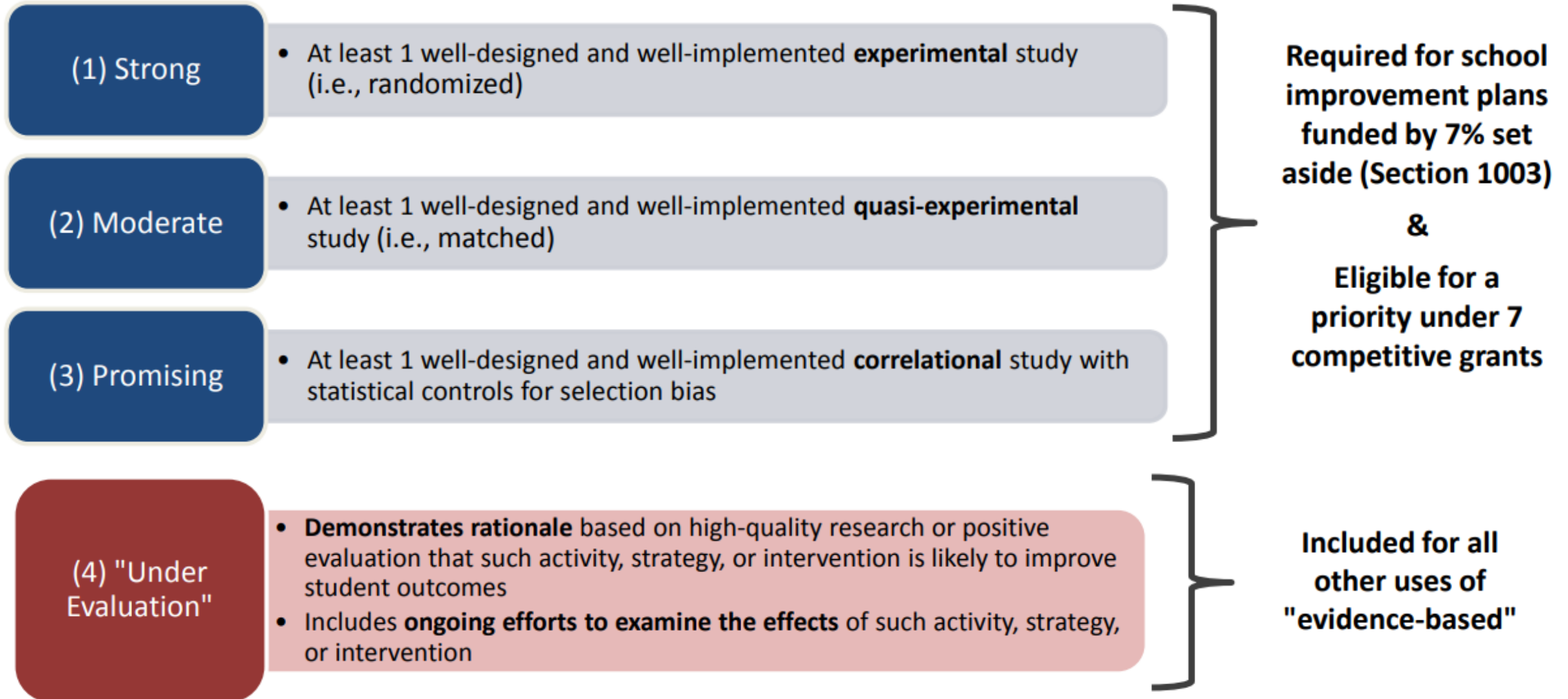High-Leverage Practices (HLP)

Evidence Based Intervention (EBI)

Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)

Evidence Based Interventions (EBIs)

The term 'evidence-based intervention' means an activity, strategy, or intervention that—

demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on

strong, moderate, or promising evidence OR

demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings*

Strength of Evidence

Strong

Moderate

Promising

Based on a rationale

* This definition is largely informed by ESSA.

ESSA Levels of Evidence

(1) Strong	• At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **experimental** study (i.e., randomized)
(2) Moderate	• At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **quasi-experimental** study (i.e., matched)
(3) Promising	• At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **correlational** study with statistical controls for selection bias

Required for school improvement plans funded by 7% set aside (Section 1003)

&

Eligible for a priority under 7 competitive grants

(4) "Under Evaluation"	• **Demonstrates rationale** based on high-quality research or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes • Includes **ongoing efforts to examine the effects** of such activity, strategy, or intervention

Included for all other uses of "evidence-based"

Where Level 1-3 EBIs are Required under ESSA

Comprehensive Support Plan

Accountability

EASI: District Designed and Led

School Improvement Funds

Exploring EBIs: Research Clearinghouses

What is a clearinghouse?

- ✓ A collection of research studies that gauges strength of evidence for a strategy or intervention.

- ✓ Provides practitioners access to research findings in simple language.

- ✓ Most set high standards of rigor for a study to be included.
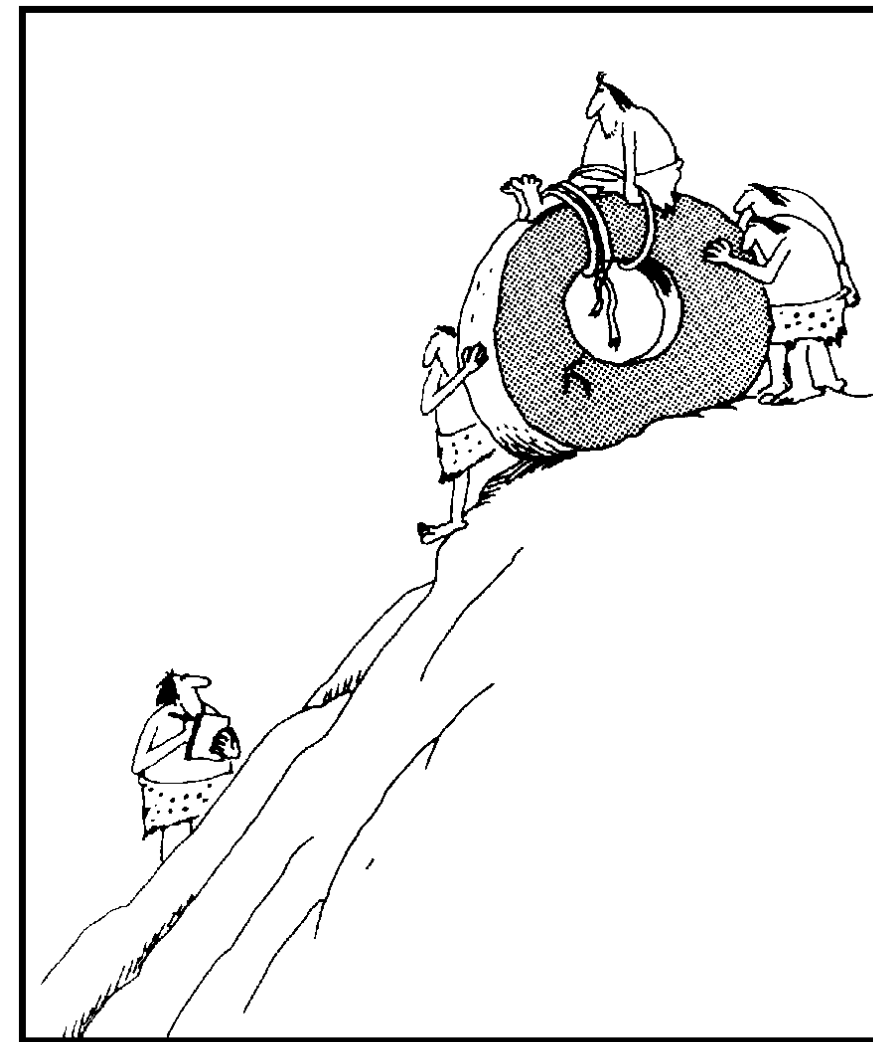
Early experiments in transportation

A clearinghouse may have been helpful here...

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS	EVIDENCE for ESSA	ies WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE
[Results First Clearinghouse](#)	[Evidence for ESSA](#)	[What Works Clearinghouse](#)
National Center on INTENSIVE INTERVENTION at American Institutes for Research	DOINGWHATWORKS	Campbell Collaboration Better evidence for a better world
[National Center on Intensive Intervention](#)	[Doing What Works](#)	[Campbell Collaboration](#)
Blueprints FOR HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE The Meadows Center FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK	ERIC
[Blueprints for Healthy Youth](#)	[Middle School Matters](#)	[Education Resources Information Center](#)
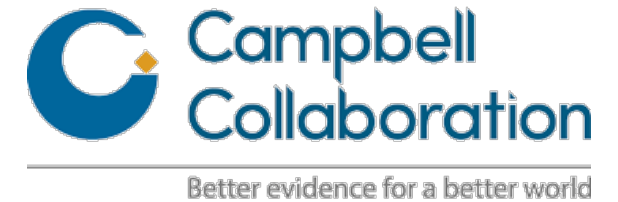
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_SF_qfPJoo

Before You Explore: Assessing Contextual Fit

What is Contextual Fit?

The **match between** the strategies, procedures, or elements of an **intervention** and the values, needs, skills, and resources of **those who implement and experience the intervention**.

Purpose
- Selecting
- Initial implementation
- Ongoing adaptations and scaling

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Investing in What Works
Issue Brief

The Role of Contextual Fit
When Implementing
Evidence-Based Interventions

Robert H. Horner, Caryn Blitz, and Scott W. Ross

JUNE 2014
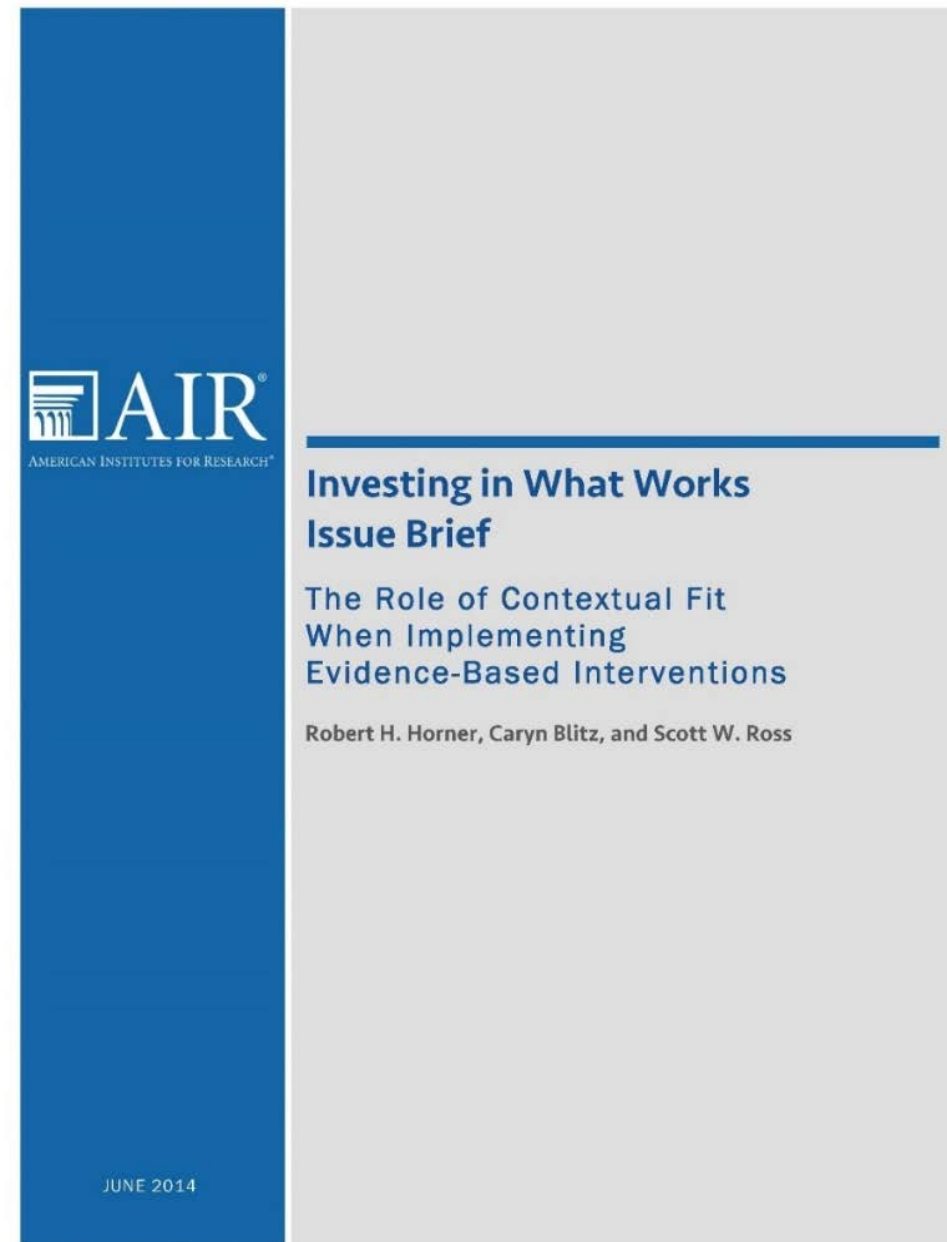
Turn and Talk

How are effective strategies or interventions selected in your school or district?
[3 min]

Contextual Fit – At a Glance

Strength
Is the intervention **clearly defined** and supported by **high-quality** research?

Fit
Does the intervention **address needs** and **align** to staff skills and competencies?

Capacity
Is there leadership **support, resources,** and necessary **time** for implementation?

Strength: Explore Research

Strength

Is the intervention *clearly defined* and supported by *high-quality* research?

Clarity
- Are core features of the intervention clearly defined?

Quality
- Was there a comparison group?
- Were experiment and control groups randomly selected?
- Is the study a summary of other findings, i.e., a metastudy?

Findings
- Was there a positive impact?
- Was the impact significant?
- Which students benefited most?

Fit: Compare to Local Context

Fit

Does the strategy **_address needs_** and **_align_** to staff skills and competencies?

Target Population

- Does the research population reflect your local student population?
- Consider demographics, identified student needs, grade band, urban/rural location.

Current Initiatives

- Does the intervention complement the strategic goals of your school or district?
- Does the intervention resonate with stakeholders, e.g., school leaders, teachers, parents?
- How does the intervention fit with existing initiatives?

Capacity: Determine Readiness

Capacity

Is there leadership ***support, resources,*** and necessary ***time*** for implementation?

Capacity

- Do staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work?
- Does the district/school have adequate funding to support the intervention sustainably?

Supports

- Does the school/district need to seek expert assistance to implement the intervention? Consider training, coaching, and supervision.
- Does the district/school need data system enhancements to thoughtfully implement the intervention?
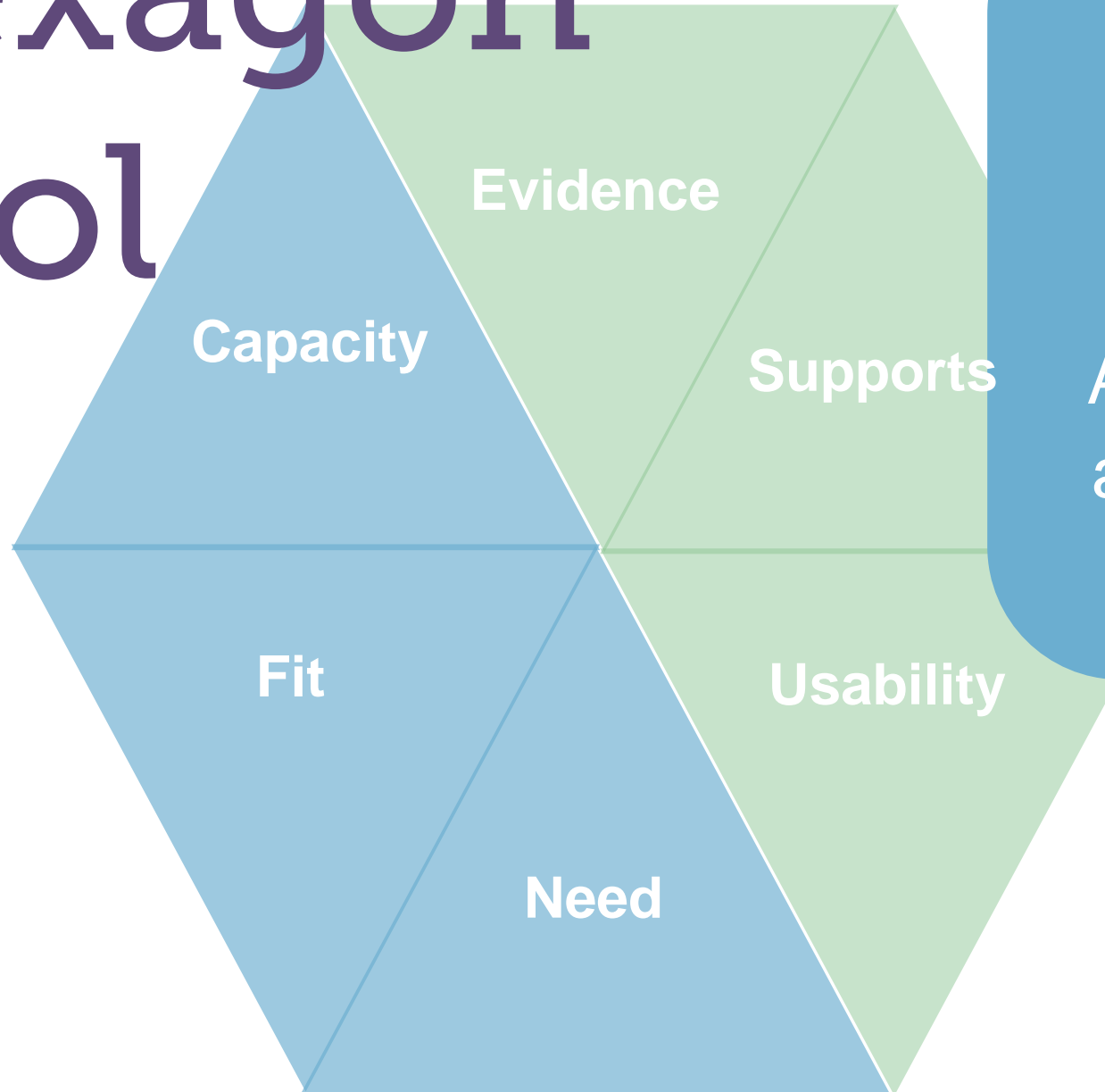
C-FET Tool

- Need
- Precision
- Evidence-Base
- Efficiency
- Skills/Competencies
- Cultural Relevance
- Resources
- Administrative and Organizational Support

Practicing Contextual Fit: Group Activity

Example: Mountain Top 300

Geography: Rural, mountainous northern CO

Size: 1,150 students

Schools: 2 Elementary, 2 Middle, 1 High School

Demographics:

- Majority White, Hispanic

- 20% students w IEPs, 25% English Learners

- 64% Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)

School Quality:

- 1 Comprehensive Support school, 2 Priority Improvement Schools

- Academic challenges in elementary grades literacy, esp. among ELs.

Mountain Top 300: Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Priority Performance Challenge	Root Causes	Possible Solutions	EBIs
Low rate of English Learner growth (as measured by ACCESS)	• Lack of strategies to incorporate EL learning into general lessons (inclusion) • Lack of tiered instructional support to scaffold literacy learning for ELs	• Tools/strategies to leverage student interaction for EL learning • Reading curriculum intervention to support ELs	**Peer Tutoring and Response Groups** **Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs**
Academically disengaged students and classroom disruptions	• Many students in community have high rates of ACEs • Lack of consistent, research-based behavioral management system	• A coherent framework to promote school and home-based positive behaviors • A means of proactively monitoring student behavior trends and getting in front of incidents	**Caring School Community (CSC)** **Check and Connect**

Quick Modeling

What is the need? Revisit PPCs.

What is the target population (student demographic, grades)?

What is the strength of evidence for the intervention?

Contextual Fit Group Activity

Mountain Top 300 - Synopsis

Overview: The district is rural, small, has a handful of schools, demographically white and Hispanic mainly, low income, and is struggling academically, especially in K-5 among ELs. Several of its schools have been identified under federal and state accountability frameworks for low EL student growth and literacy.

CNA Findings: This district has conducted a Comprehensive Needs Assessment using the UIP, and identified student disengagement and behavioral issues in late elementary, middle, and high school to be a top challenge, as well as English Learner development in elementary and middle grades.

Potential EBI solutions: EL student development and growth

Peer Tutoring and Response Groups

Goal: To improve the language and achievement of English language learners by pairing or grouping students to work on a task. The students may be grouped by age or ability (English-only, bilingual, or limited English proficient) or the groups may be mixed.

Core Features: Peer tutoring consists of two students assuming the roles of tutor and tutee, or "coach and player" roles. Peer response groups give four or five students shared responsibility for a task, such as editing a passage or reading and answering comprehension questions. When working in a small group to edit a writing assignment, one student edits punctuation, another edits spelling, and another provides overall feedback on writing focus and clarity. Both peer tutoring pairs and peer response groups emphasize peer interaction and discussion to complete a task.

Evidence: Three studies across three states met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. WWC rates Peer Tutoring and Response Groups with ++ rating, meeting the highest level of evidence for significant and positive outcomes on student English Language Development.

> **Peer Tutoring and Response Groups – At a Glance**
>
> **Evidence Strength:** Strong (ESSA Level 1)
>
> **Applicable Grades of program:** 1-6
>
> **Students participating in studies:** Hispanic, Asian
>
> **Research Location(s):** Urban

Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs

Summary: To help English language learners develop reading comprehension ability along with English language proficiency. Instructional Conversations are small-group discussions. Acting as facilitators, teachers engage English language learners

Core Features: Acting as facilitators, teachers engage students in discussions about stories, key concepts, and related personal experiences, allowing students to appreciate and build on each others' experiences, knowledge, and understanding. *Literature Logs* require students to respond in writing to prompts or questions related to sections of stories. These responses are then shared in small groups or with a partner.

> **Instructional Conversations and Lit Logs – At a Glance**
>
> **Evidence Strength:** Moderate (ESSA Level 2)
>
> **Applicable Grades of program:** 2-5
>
> **Students participating in studies:** Hispanic, Non-Hispanic
>
> **Research Location(s):** Urban

Group Contextual Fit Activity

- Team up (Group of ~3)

- Select one priority (EL/behavior), and choose the best EBI solution out of the 2 options

- Use contextual fit questions

- Select one person in the group to share out

Contextual Fit - Sample Questions

Fit
- What is the targeted population and identified needs?
- Does the proposed intervention fit those needs?

Capacity
- Are leadership/staff equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement? Is expert assistance needed?
- Is there buy in for the intervention?

Note: Use the Hexagon Tool to ask more questions!

Debrief

- What worked well and where did you experience challenges?
- What is the value of exploring contextual fit?
- How might you start to use contextual fix in your district/school?

Opportunities to use Contextual Fit

- Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) process
- District strategic planning
- Grant applications (ESSA Consolidated Application, EASI School Improvement funds)
- MTSS (District and building teams)
- Revisiting existing strategies (pressure check)

Closing

Extended Learning

1. The AIR Issues Brief

2. The Hexagon Tool https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-lessons-and-short-courses

3. The Contextual Fit Evaluation Tool (C-FET)

https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/contextual_fit_evaluation_tool

1. Implementation Science – Formula for Success

https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-hub

5. EBI Resources on CDE Website

https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essaplanningrequirements

https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/majorimprovementstrategies_actionsteps

Reflection

Assessment of understanding contextual fit
One to three, 1 = *I need help!* and 3 = *I got this!*

Reflection

- One thing I learned in this session
- One questions I still have
- One next step

Questions?

Thank You!

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