

Module #7. Reporting

In this module, we review the steps involved in reporting your results:

1. Identify your audience and an appropriate report format
2. Craft text that explains process and key findings
3. Incorporate text into a clear, succinct presentation
4. Add accompanying narrative if desired

Having moved the processes of data analysis (Modules #4 and #5) and considered convergence (Module #6), you are now ready to report your results. The process of reporting results is, in some ways, the inverse of the rest of the research and design process. First, you started with broad questions and hypotheses linked to your school design and progressively narrowed them down to a focused set of questions. Now, you must return to a more general stance, explaining what you found and how it relates to your overall school design, giving you the opportunity to digest and reflect upon what you have learned.

Reporting your results prepares you to collect thoughtful feedback from other stakeholders and practitioners. By sharing your key learnings with others, you can also gather new insight into both your results and their implications for your school design. This process of gathering insight is described further in Module #8, Insights.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE AND AN APPROPRIATE REPORT FORMAT

KEY INFORMATION

Reporting for feedback. The purpose of reporting your results is not to produce a static document to be filed away. Rather, reporting is intended to share your findings with key stakeholders for feedback. As such, before reporting, you must first establish who those stakeholders are.

Identifying partners to provide feedback. You may want to share results with the same people to whom you turned for convergence (refer to Module #6 for more detail on this process) or to your group of interest itself. However, unlike in the case of convergence, your goal is not to confirm the accuracy of your findings, but rather to gather new perspectives on and insights into your results. As noted in the introduction, this process is an opportunity to support the Carnegie design principle of positive youth development by engaging student voice, encouraging family participation, and integrating community input by involving youth, families, and community members.

What format is best?

We recommend sharing results with your audience in the context of a facilitated discussion. With this in mind, it is often preferable to share your results in a presentation of some kind.

Think of three possible types of audiences for your report: your school design team, other people connected with your current or future school community, or the world beyond.

Your team: When reporting to yourselves, a process you will want to do frequently and informally, the steps presented here are helpful to ground your thinking. You might spend an hour each week or month preparing a presentation on the progress of your research.

Your community: If you are reporting to community stakeholders, in turn, you will draw on broader insight, but will also want to spend more time on your presentation, ensuring you know what findings are up for discussion and which you do not wish to open up for debate.

Beyond: When reporting to the world beyond, which may include potential funders, supporters, or detractors, it is important to spend significant time on the presentation. This is, of course, necessitated by the desire and need for funding and support for your school; therefore, carefully allocate time for the presentation preparation process. Generally, we would not recommend presenting to this audience without having first presented to the other two audiences.

Consider how to present your results. Once you have established your audience, consider the most appropriate format for reporting your results. As explored in Module #8, Insights, we recommend sharing results with your audience through a facilitated discussion. It is therefore often preferable to share your results in a presentation. You may also want to produce a written report in addition to the presentation—particularly if you want to have a written record of your work on the research and design process. These considerations are explored further in the tools appendix.

APPLICATION TO EXAMPLE

To ensure students benefit from positive relationships with adults throughout their high school experience, the Lucretia Mott design team has explored the elements of positive counseling relationships, with a particular focus on the importance of gender-matching in these relationships. They decide to present their results to two groups: their group of interest, students, and counselors. They think it will be valuable to hear from both parties whether their conclusions align with students' and counselors' perceptions of the making of successful counseling relationships. Because they will be presenting to students, they decide against producing a dense report and instead create a presentation.

2. CRAFT TEXT THAT EXPLAINS PROCESS AND KEY FINDINGS

KEY INFORMATION

Explain your question, methods, results, and conclusions. Whether your research results in the form of a written report or presentation, it will likely be organized around the following four questions, all of which are explored in-depth in the example below and in the tools appendix:

1. What was your research question, and why does it matter?

When reporting, give your audience context by identifying the research questions you investigated. Critically, then explain why this question is important. Bring your audience into the larger issues in which your research questions are couched: How will having the answer to your research questions potentially change your school design for the better?

2. How did you answer your research question?

In this section, briefly review the steps you took to investigate your research question. This section does not need to be long, but should be sufficiently detailed to ensure your audience understands where the findings you presented came from.

Make sure to note any steps you took to ensure the reliability and accuracy of your findings, such as “cog-labbing” a survey (as described in Module #3 and triangulating your data. If these steps changed your ideas or approach at all, mention these changes.

Note your methods!

Make sure to note any steps you took to ensure the reliability and accuracy of your findings, such as “cog-labbing” a survey (as described in Module #3) and triangulating your data. If these steps changed your ideas or approach at all, it serves to mention these changes.

3. What results did you find?

This section is the heart of your reporting. When crafting this section:

Identify 3-5 key takeaways. Identify the three to five central themes you want your audience to take away from report, and organize your presentation of results around these key themes.

Synthesis is hard. Oftentimes, writers neglect to connect key ideas because they are organizing writing around previously developed guiding questions. In some cases, the answers that arose in response to those questions may be more digestible and coherent if they are organized differently.

Ask yourself whether the research questions are the themes to use to organize your document. Have these questions yielded intersecting or related results? Can any questions be combined?

As you review themes, ask yourself the next question: Are my themes organized such that they are exhaustive and mutually exclusive? Mutually exclusive themes have as little overlap as possible, while exhaustive themes cover as much ground as possible.

Focus on the most important themes

It can be hard to settle on these central themes, especially after several months of work or research. However, reporting everything you learned will result in little more than an overwhelmed audience. You and your audience will be better-served if you make the difficult decision to cut secondary ideas and retain only the most essential information.

The example below presents two versions of an outline of a report on the characteristics of quality feedback for teachers. The first outline was organized around previously drafted research questions. The second outline combined key themes arising in the responses to the research questions to yield a more coherent and concise document.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| An Un-Synthesized Outline | A Synthesized Outline |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|

Below are two outlines of a report on students' perceptions of positive relationships with their counselors. The first outline was organized around the research questions. The second outline combined key themes arising in the responses to the research questions to yield a more coherent and concise document.

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Introduction II. Analysis of responses by gender III. Analysis of response by previous level of engagement V. Topics discussed with counselor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Career b. College c. Home life d. Peers e. Neighborhood V. Further comments on importance of career VI. Comparison of parent and student responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Introduction II. Hiring and matching counselors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What girls said they wanted to talk about with counselors b. What boys said they wanted to talk about with counselors c. Other factors to consider in making the match, especially prior level of engagement III. Developing curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Importance of focus on career b. Topics designated by parents and students as "not important" |
|--|---|

Carefully select supporting quotes and visuals. In addition to your key themes, consider the quotes and visuals you will offer in relation to these themes. For adult learners, stories—captured through quotes from focus groups, interviews, or open-ended survey questions—are often the most effective tools for illustrating a theme. If possible, pick one example or quote or each major theme, and get rid of any examples or quotes that are not genuinely illustrative of the related theme.

In addition, rely on visuals such as graphs or graphics to demonstrate your findings (see Module #6, Quantitative Data Analysis, for more on this topic). Consider whether the information you are presenting is describing something—a process, a cycle, a sequence, or quantitative data—that would be better captured by visual presentation. If so, consider adding a graphic that will capture this concept.

4. How do your results inform your research question and school design?

In the fourth portion of your report, connect the knowledge you gained to how it informed your understanding of the research questions and your school design. Be careful to acknowledge the limitations of your analysis, questions, and conclusions.

After determining the responses to these questions, you can craft a presentation and accompanying narrative.

APPLICATION TO EXAMPLE

What was the research question, and why does it matter?

The Lucretia Mott design team answers this question as follows, and creates a corresponding set of slides for their presentation:

We examined the importance of different characteristics in student-counselor relationships for both girls and boys, and whether student gender appeared to play a role in the topics students preferred to talk about with their counselors. As we develop the advisory curriculum for our school with the goal of preparing students for college and career, it is critical that we create advisory groups in which students feel comfortable talking about a variety of academic and personal issues.

The question

Will gender-matched counseling relationships benefit X High School?

- What **characteristics** do students value in **counseling relationships**?
- Does the value students place on a gender match **vary by gender**?
- Does student gender play a role in the **topics** students like to talk about with their counselors?

The importance

Planning for an advisory program aligned with students' needs and preferences.

As we prepare to launch our school, we must ensure that, in **advisory** and **one-on-one counseling**, students feel **comfortable** talking with their counselor about a **variety of topics**.

How did you answer the research question?
The Lucretia Mott design team answers this question by saying:

To answer

these questions, we began by conducting a series of focus groups with 16 students about the characteristics of positive student relationships with counselors and other adults. We then conducted a series of five interviews that prompted us to explore the importance of gender-matching in counselor relationships in particular. We crafted a survey exploring these questions. We received 68 response responses from ninth-graders at three high schools with demographics similar to ours. We triangulated our findings through a series of interviews with five counselors and nine parents.

The path

We used a variety of methods to focus our research questions and gather data.

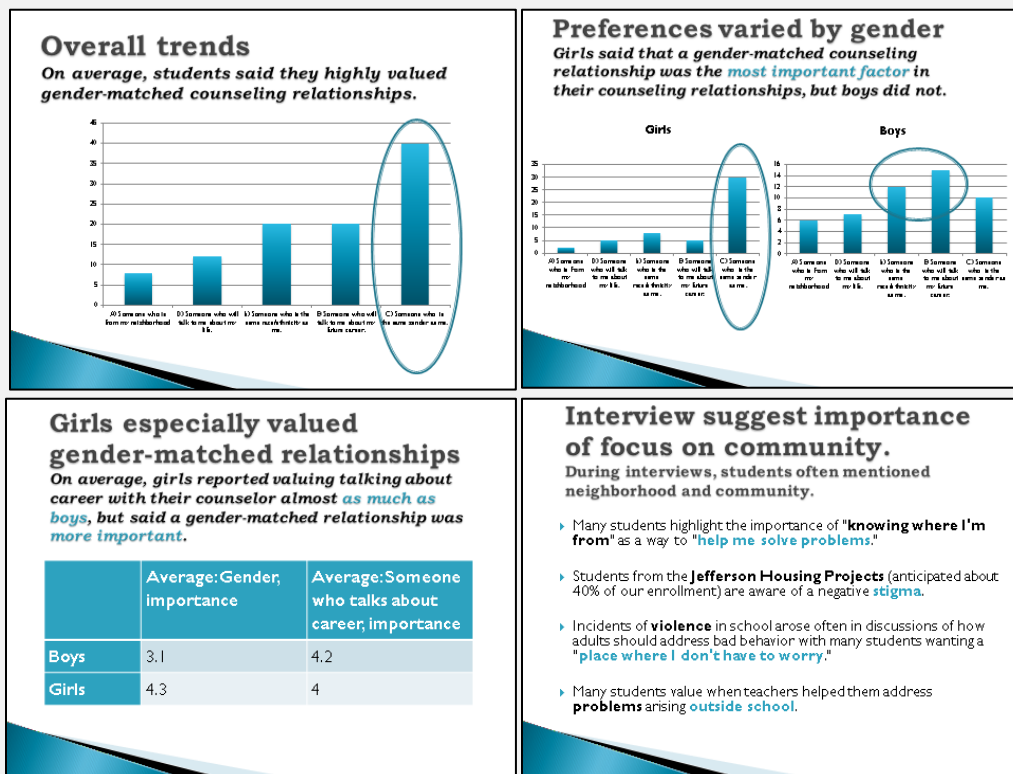


What results did you find?

The design team identifies the following conclusions, and creates corresponding slides to illustrate them:

Our analysis yielded four key findings:

- 1) Overall, students appeared to highly value a counseling relationship with someone who is the same gender as they are.
- 2) Girls said that a gender-matched counseling relationship was the most important factor in their counseling relationships. Boys did not express such strong preferences, and tended to rank having a counselor of the same race and who would talk about career more highly.
- 3) On average, girls reported valuing talking about career with their counselor almost as much as boys, but said a gender-matched relationship was more important.
- 4) Interviews indicated that students were concerned about the safety of their community and wanted support from school staff in navigating those concerns.



How do your results inform your question and research design?

The Lucretia Mott design team concludes:

We found gender-matching to be valued by students overall, and especially by girls. With this in mind, we will have single-sex advisory groups at our school. However, we will make sure that each advisory group covers similar topics, as girls and boys both expressed a strong interest in discussing college and career during advisory. We will carefully match students after the first three weeks of school, and will expect advisors to reach out to parents early in the process. Advisors will be trained in a community safety curriculum and students will conduct an oral history project with the local community.

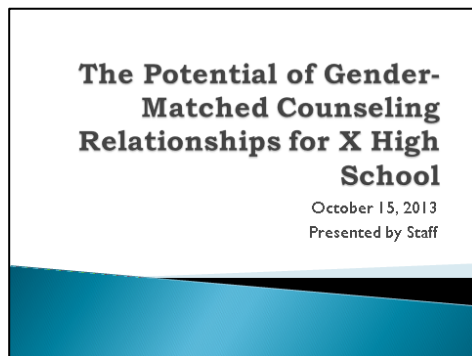
| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Why does this matter? <i>Advisory groups will be gender-matched.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Advisory groups will be gender-matched, requiring a balance of male and female staff in advisory role▶ Matches will be made after third week of school year for teachers to suggest possible strong matches, especially for boys.▶ Advisors will be expected to reach out to parents early in process to navigate relationship, especially for girls. | <p>Why does this matter? <i>Advisory curriculum will focus on career and community.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Curriculum will be designed around career exploration, with discussions of relationships with peers embedded in career exploration and self-reflection activities.▶ All advisors will get PD on "Safe Circle" approach with routine practice for discussing concerns over safety in and out of the building.▶ Curriculum will include oral history of residents of Jefferson Housing Projects to replace stigma with pride. |
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3. INCORPORATE TEXT INTO CLEAR, SUCCINCT PRESENTATION

KEY INFORMATION

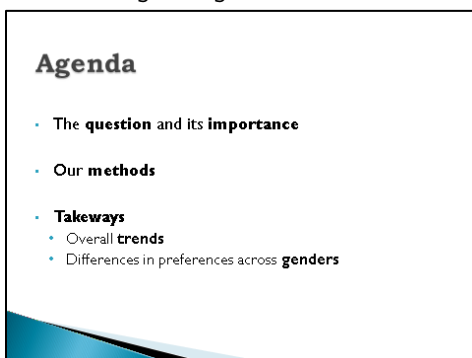
This section presents a series of design tips for crafting an effective presentation, for use if you will be presenting your results through a presentation.

Create a title page linked to the research and design questions.



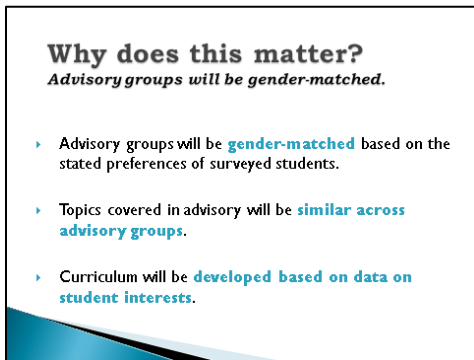
Every presentation should begin with a title slide that includes the title of the presentation, the name of the presenter, and the date of the presentation. The title of the document should connect explicitly to the research questions you explored (for example, "The Potential of Gender-Matched Counseling Relationships for X High School").

Create an agenda grounded in the 3-5 takeaway messages.



The second slide in a presentation should be a simple anchoring agenda, which you can reference throughout the presentation. The points on the agenda should relate to the 3-5 themes you hope to convey in your presentation.

On every content slide, include an explanatory title and a brief summary of the contents.



To provide context, on each content slide include a title that sets forth the slide's topic, and a brief (no more than two-line) summary of the information covered by the slide. This brief summary should be enough information that, if someone were to look at your slides on their own, the summary would provide sufficient context for them to understand the bulk of the remaining information presented.

Be concise.

First drafts of presentations often resemble a script—a word-for-word account of what you plan to say during the presentation. This can be helpful for organizing your ideas, but it is not a useful approach to presenting information to others. Pare down each slide to its most essential words and phrases—no more than 50 words or so, not counting the title and sub-title.

Leave plenty of white space.

In keeping with the importance of paring ideas down to their most essential content, leave plenty of white space on the slide. Dense blocks of text on a slide are visually overwhelming. Leave space between bullet points and ensure there is space between lines of text.

Use bold text and colors to highlight key words and ideas.

Bold text and colors can be used to highlight key ideas and words on a slide. They may be used to emphasize the topic of each bullet point on a slide, as well as key ideas within each bullet point.

Use a readable font size.

For the body of a slide, strive to use a font size of 22-24 point. Anything smaller than 18 point is likely too small to be readable. Only titles should be larger than 24 point.

4. ADD ACCOMPANYING NARRATIVE IF DESIRED

A brief written report can help add detail to a PowerPoint presentation.

Link the narrative to your presentation.

Be redundant with the titles you use in a narrative, repeating titles with the exact same language that appears in the titles in your presentation. This approach will make it easier for your audience or readers to immediately connect the presentation to the more detailed narrative.

Lead with the "Why."

When writing informational documents, it is easy to begin by expounding on the "what:" what the data showed, what the students did. A better approach, however, is to lead with the "why." When you start by explaining why the information you present matters, you anchor the reader's attention in the piece's purpose.

An example of leading with the "why" appears below in this excerpt from a guide on providing teachers with feedback and support. By moving the bolded text to the beginning of the section, readers understand the purpose of the recommended actions as soon as they begin reading.

| Burying the “Why” | Leading with the “Why” |
|---|---|
| Before an observation, revisit the teacher’s self-assessment and professional growth plan. Then, reference these plans throughout conversations and written feedback. This continuity will help teachers reflect on their growth. It will also ensure that support feels grounded in common expectations. | Our findings suggest that it is important to create continuity across reflection conferences and ensure that support is grounded in common expectation. To do this, revisit the teacher’s self-assessment and professional growth plan before each observation. In addition, reference these plans throughout conversations and written feedback. |

Use clear lists to detail information.

Lists are another tool for presenting a great deal of information in a visually digestible manner. When writing lists, bear in mind these four guidelines:

- Introduce lists with a brief paragraph that, when it makes sense, states the number of items in the list. This suggests that the list has been thoughtfully put together. (i.e., “When writing lists bear in mind these four guidelines.”)
- Write lists of 3-7 items. Fewer items do not warrant a list. More items are too overwhelming to be useful to the reader, and should be combined into fewer items or broken out into separate lists.
- Write items that are exhaustive and mutually exclusive to the greatest extent possible. There should be little to no overlap between items in the list, and when you take all of the items in the list together, you have conveyed a full concept without leaving anything out.
- Begin each item with a summarizing subhead in bold text to indicate to the reader the topic of the list item. These subheads should use parallel structure: if one item starts with an active verb, all items should start with active verbs. Furthermore, after you have written up your notes, your subheads should have enough detail that you could read only the subheads and understand what the document is about.

Explain the numbers.

When writing narrative to accompany graphs, explain exactly what the one, two, or three items are that stand out to you in the graph. There are some readers who will only look at the graph and ignore the text, while others will only read the text and ignore the graph. Put your narrative together such that either of these readers will be aware of the key information.