

TIPS

Thinking about submitting a peer-to-peer practice to AdvancED's Resource Network? Here are some tips to ensure that yours will be among the strongest practices posted.

1. Select a practice with care.

Do not write up an innovation that is in the planning or initial launch stages; instead select one for which you have data-based evidence of success. Pick one you're genuinely excited about—one that got you further than you thought you could go, or one that answered a persistent question you have had.

2. Indicate the specific context where your practice has been field-tested.

While others may want to adapt it more generally, they will want to know what demographics, grade-levels, teacher-experience-levels, and district-support mechanisms were in place for the experience you're describing. It will help them make their own judgments about whether it's transferable to their situations. Even if you believe it to be broadly applicable, it's much less helpful to say "applies everywhere." Use sections 7-11 to define the parameters where you've seen it in action.

3. Be clear about what motivated your efforts.

Use section 6 ("Rationale") to describe the problem you were wrestling with that led to your work. Be concrete and personal enough that your peers will recognize the frustrations and dissatisfactions with previous efforts that drove you to try this new thing. What else HADN'T worked? What were some persistent disappointments that came to seem unacceptable? This section will help "hook" fellow-travelers into reading further.

4. Describe steps you went through—not just the end-state success.

Think back to when you were in the situation your prospective readers will be in. What did you do first? When that was finished, what happened next? And then what? Section 5 ("The Practice") gives you leeway about how you structure this description, but the helpful practices place emphasis on "how it was implemented."

5. Imagine a competent, willing improvement team ready to adapt/adopt your practice.

What advice would you give them? Use section 14 ("Conclusion") to summarize your lessons learned. What three things would you say to a colleague about to follow you down this road? ("Don't fall into this pot-hole?" "First read these three things?" "Be sure to line this up before you start?")

What surprised you along the way—what couldn't you have anticipated? Even if you think these lessons are specific to your situation, these details are what bring a practice to three-dimensional life and add real-life credibility. Here's where to let show the genuine excitement that led you to post this practice. Why could this be of interest to your peers elsewhere?

6. Use sample data and research to back up your experience/observation.

Perhaps you did a thorough literature search before you began; if so, save your peers the time/effort by including a summary and bibliography. If not, take the time now for some web-browsing to locate corroborating or challenging documentation. Think of it as an investment in upgrading the quality of conversations you'll have

about your experience. Remember that "data" can mean experiential as well as quantitative information. If you have outcome data, take time to organize and display it so it can contribute to the "research" available on the topic. Readers whose situation matches your own will be much more interested in your data than in general literature. Be honest about where there are holes in the data, or where you wonder about additional things you haven't yet collected data on. This is an on-line learning community, and specifying our further questions is a first step toward collaborating to answer them. Section 13 ("Research") is probably the best place to locate this material.

7. Check your work.

The rubric that AdvancED peer reviewers will use to see if your submission is "ready for prime time" is available online at: www.advanc-ed.org. Have a colleague read your submission and see if objective eyes think you've hit your target. Reviewers will ask for revisions till it's complete, but you might as well get it right the first time!