



Leveraging Multiple Channels to Disseminate Assessment Tools

Background and Context

The [ASAP](#) initiative is focused on identifying and responding to assessment needs in adult education and workforce development through the creation of online banks of literacy and numeracy tasks. Designed to support adult learners, educators, employers, and researchers, ASAP is primarily a product development effort informed by a series of user experience (UX) studies. These studies have involved adult education practitioners and learners across the United States, with needs assessment data collected in Alabama, Arkansas, Massachusetts, and New York. Practitioner advisors and teachers using ASAP for math and reading assessment have played a central role in shaping both the assessment items and the platform itself.



The Challenge: Bridging Academic Dissemination and Practitioner Reach

Academic researchers are trained to share findings through peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations. While these venues are critical for scholarly credibility, they often do not reach the educators and administrators who make day-to-day decisions about assessment use in adult education and workforce settings. For ASAP, this created a persistent challenge: how to communicate effectively with practitioner audiences without the infrastructure typically associated with commercial products.

Unlike education technology companies, research teams do not have marketing departments, sales staff, or dedicated resources for audience development. As a result, even well-designed tools can struggle to reach classrooms at scale. Simply having professional networks or relying on word-of-mouth is rarely sufficient. Without a

deliberate, market-facing strategy, research-based tools may remain confined to pilot sites or research contexts, limiting their potential impact.

This challenge reflects a broader tension between academic incentives and the realities of adoption and sustainability. Activities that help build awareness—such as writing blogs, producing videos, or participating in podcasts—are not always valued within academic reward structures, yet they are essential for reaching practitioners and systems leaders. The ASAP team recognized that dissemination would need to extend beyond traditional academic outputs to support meaningful use of the tool.

The Strategy: Knowledge Translation and Diversified Dissemination

To address this challenge, the ASAP team adopted a **knowledge translation approach** that emphasized diversified dissemination across multiple channels. Rather than relying on a single pathway, the team sought to engage different audiences through formats that aligned with how practitioners access information.

This strategy included sharing work through blogs, videos, and podcasts that explained the purpose of ASAP, its development process, and emerging insights in accessible language. These formats functioned as a form of “currency” for the project—creating visibility, signaling credibility, and inviting engagement from educators and stakeholders who might not read academic journals.

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In parallel, the team recognized the importance of **market research**, distinct from needs assessment. While the initial needs assessment documented gaps in assessment tools and practices, market research focused on understanding what educators, programs, and systems were realistically willing and able to adopt, support, or sustain.

Networking also played a critical role. The team recommends that researchers reach out to state departments of education, labor agencies, and community college systems to build early awareness and informal “feelers” for the tool. In addition, presenting at practitioner-facing conferences, such as the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), allowed the team to connect directly with teachers and administrators who were most likely to use ASAP in practice. These venues provided opportunities for dialogue, feedback, and refinement of dissemination messages.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

By leveraging multiple dissemination channels, the ASAP team expanded the project’s reach beyond traditional research audiences. Knowledge translation activities supported awareness-building, informed ongoing development, and helped position ASAP as a practitioner-relevant resource. The experience underscored that dissemination is not a single event at the end of a project, but a continuous process that supports adoption, relevance, and long-term sustainability.

Key Takeaways

- **Use multiple dissemination channels.** Blogs, videos, podcasts, and conference presentations reach different audiences and complement traditional academic outputs.
- **Network early and intentionally.** Engaging state agencies, workforce systems, and community college networks helps build awareness before a tool is ready for full rollout.
- **Leverage practitioner conferences.** Events like COABE connect researchers directly with educators and administrators who are positioned to adopt new tools.
- **Plan for the end game.** Early consideration of market fit, scalability, and sustainability increases the likelihood that assessment tools move from research into real classrooms.