

Evaluating Capacity Building in Education: The North Central Comprehensive Center

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform evaluators of a method of evaluating capacity building in educational organizations or programs. Here the method is presented in the context of an evaluation of the U. S. Department of Education's North Central Comprehensive Center (NCCC).

Perspective

One definition of capacity building is helping an organization increase its ability to fulfill its mission (Wing, 2004). In the nonprofit sector, funders (such as foundations) that focus on capacity building aim to increase the capacity of the nonprofit organizations that they support so that these organizations are high-performing and effective (McKinsey and Company, 2001). The same principles apply to programs that aim to increase the capacity of educational organizations, such as state education agencies (SEAs). Evaluators of capacity-building efforts therefore must focus on evidence that the program has helped to build the capacity of the organization it serves.

The 16 regional U. S. Department of Education Comprehensive Centers (CCs) each serve a specific geographic area. The five-year mission of the CCs is to provide technical assistance that builds the capacity of state education agencies to help districts and schools meet their student achievement goals and the requirements of NCLB. The NCCC, serving the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, has adopted the following objectives provided by the U.S. Department of Education:

1. Increase State capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools.
2. Increase State capacity to develop solutions to address improvement needs of districts and schools.
3. Increase State capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes
4. Increase State capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability.

State agency staff work collaboratively with CC staff to identify projects and a plan for collaborative action, under one or more of these objectives.

The performance of the NCCC is measured both by its ability to provide timely, high-quality technical assistance that addresses the needs of the region and by the extent to which that assistance is successful in building the capacity of participating SEAs. While evaluators are usually accustomed to measuring the timeliness and quality of delivered services, some may not have previous experience in evaluating capacity building. Evaluating capacity can be a challenge because of the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of capacity within any organization, and because "capacity" is a difficult construct to measure. In this case, evaluators created a logic model (see Figure 1) in order to better explain the capacity-building approach of

the NCCC. It is guided by previous work in best practices in capacity building evaluation, such as Connolly and York (2002) and Wing (2004). The logic model delineates how the technical assistance efforts of NCCC staff can impact capacity in terms of both the immediate outputs, as well as the short, intermediate, and long term impacts. The overarching concept of the capacity building logic model is that capacity is built in steps: first the attendees participate in activities that they find useful, relevant, and of high quality; then they build new knowledge and gain self-efficacy (perceived confidence) that they can improve services to districts and schools; and finally they apply their knowledge to deliver improved services.

Methods

In this evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative data are used to provide the most complete formative and summative information about the results of capacity building activities. The data sources are described below in terms of the outputs and outcomes in the logic model.

Although each technical assistance activity has its own specific goal(s) and objective(s), the overriding objective of all the technical assistance is to support state education agencies in becoming more capable of assisting districts and schools in need of improvement. While this ultimate question cannot be fully answered until the end of the five-year award period, ongoing data collection, by project, helps illuminate progress towards this objective. To this end, evaluators examined the resources used to enact the program (inputs), such as funding, NCCC staff time and expertise.

To provide formative evaluation on the outputs, evaluators focused on the question: “How is the NCCC technical assistance being provided?” Data sources include artifacts such as participant lists, meeting agendas, and activity reports.

In evaluating capacity building outcomes, evaluators considered the short, intermediate, and long-term impacts of NCCC technical assistance. Data sources included surveys, interviews, and focus groups, as well as any products (e.g., action items, tools) developed by the attendees as a result of the technical assistance.

The first step in the outcomes area of the logic model was to collect data on the short term outcomes and impact of participation in NCCC technical assistance activities. These data answer two primary formative evaluation questions:

1. How do the participants react to the technical assistance activities? (What do they like and dislike about them?)
2. To what extent are the technical assistance activities found to be useful, relevant, and of high quality?

To address these questions, evaluators used surveys to determine participants’ perceptions of the quality, relevance and utility of the technical assistance; if participants did not find the activities to be valuable, it is unlikely that they would go on to achieve the other planned outcomes.

The second step in the outcomes area of the logic model is to determine whether activities helped participants gain useful knowledge and self-efficacy (perception of competence) for assisting districts and schools—important precursors to useful action. The relevant summative evaluation questions are:

1. What did participants learn as a result of the technical assistance activities?
2. To what extent do they perceive themselves as more capable of assisting districts and schools?

To address these questions evaluators use survey items that ask about knowledge and perceived capability, and follow up with interviews and focus groups.

The final step in the outcomes area of the logic model is to collect data on the long term impact of participation in NCCC technical assistance activities, as participants apply the skills developed through technical assistance activities to their areas of need. These data answer two summative evaluation questions:

1. How did the participants apply the knowledge from technical assistance activities in their services to districts and schools? What have they done differently?
2. What evidence is there that services to districts and schools have improved?

Data sources include follow-up surveys and interviews of participants, as well as participant-developed documents and artifacts.

Data Sources

Surveys

Immediate feedback about events is collected from participants via surveys in order to assess the short-term outcomes of perceived quality, relevance, and utility of the training and/or technical assistance provided. To address intermediate outcomes evaluators also use surveys that ask about knowledge and perceived capability for helping districts and schools. Evaluators follow up on the effects of technical assistance projects by surveying participants about progress towards the long-term goals of applying new knowledge and improving services to districts and schools.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups are being conducted with key clients such as state-level contacts, NCCC technical assistance activity participants, and members of the NCCC Advisory Board to determine the continued quality and utility of the NCCC technical assistance. Interviews are also being used to evaluate the intermediate outcomes of increased knowledge and perceived capacity to help districts and schools. Evaluators are using follow-up interviews to determine how SEAs applied their knowledge and how they changed/improved their service to districts and schools (i.e., increased capacity).

Artifacts

Relevant documents are an important source of evaluation data and are collected and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Artifacts documenting program inputs (e.g., activities and meetings) include meeting agendas and handouts. Artifacts supporting long-term outcomes are those that document the services to schools and districts provided by the SEAs and provide evidence of increased SEA capacity; these documents are expected to include legislation, state program plans and progress reports. Additionally, artifacts documenting tools and resources created by participants of technical assistance activities (book reviews, web sites) may also be used as evidence of capacity building.

Analysis

As mentioned above, NCCC technical assistance centers on four capacity building objectives:

1. Increase state capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools.
2. Increase state capacity to develop solutions to address improvement needs of districts and schools.
3. Increase state capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes
4. Increase state capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability.

These objectives were determined by the U.S. Department of Education and are used as the framework under which technical assistance is provided by all CCs. However, within this framework, the NCCC developed a set of indicators to measure progress for each objective (see Appendix A). Indicators were established in collaboration with NCCC state liaisons to reflect the outcomes of work under each project. Although each complete set of indicators reflects the scope of NCCC capacity building work under its corresponding objective, as project activities differ based on target skill development, different projects might encompass different sets of indicators.

The data collection plan generates both qualitative and quantitative data and thus requires that a variety of appropriate analytic techniques be utilized. Data collected during individual and group interviews and document reviews primarily yield qualitative data. In general, qualitative data analyses use an analytic inductive strategy. Notes from interviews and focus groups are read and re-read, sets of tentative assertions are written, and general coding schemes containing preliminary variables are developed. As the analysis proceeds, searches for confirming and disconfirming evidence are undertaken and tentative assertions are revised as appropriate. Strategies such as member checking and triangulation are also undertaken to ensure the validity of the final sets of assertions.

Information about professional development events, activities and participant feedback collected by surveys generate quantitative data. Analyses of these data are largely descriptive, designed to document the nature of the work, the perceptions of stakeholders, and the perceived outcomes. Frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, measures of central tendency and dispersion, correlations and other statistics are used. Qualitative feedback from surveys and interviews are aggregated by content and reported as well. Qualitative feedback providing data on successful approaches and projects as well as suggestions for improvement is shared with NCCC staff to improve the technical assistance provided as appropriate.

Results

Most CCs span several states in a region and work on multiple projects in each state. While this CC will ultimately use the analysis strategy described above to evaluate the success of technical assistance activities for all states and projects in its region, we present findings here from Year 4 for the state of Nebraska.

During Year 4, NCCC services in Nebraska centered on the three main projects identified in the state management plan: the Balanced Leadership Professional Development Cadre, the English Language Learner Resources, and the Poverty Plan projects. Table 1 lists these projects, along with project status at the end of Year 4. Project activities are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Table 1
NCCC Year 4 Projects in Nebraska

Nebraska Project	Objective	End of Year 4 Status
Project 1: Balanced Leadership Professional Development Cadre	3	Project work completed
Project 2: English Language Learner Resources	3	Ongoing in Year 5
Project 3: Poverty Plan	4	Project work completed

The Nebraska Balanced Leadership Professional Development Cadre is a continuation of work begun in Year 2. Since that time, NCCC has assisted the state with developing a cadre of professional developers who can provide training for administrators on research-based leadership practices associated with increased student achievement. In Year 4, this project focused on sustaining the ten active cadre members through quality assurance reviews and helping the cadre encourage administrators to participate in the training.

The English Language Learner Resources Project is a continuation of work begun in Year 3. The goal of this project is to assist the SEA in developing resources and tools for educators working with the growing population of English language learners in Nebraska. SEA participants attended three training sessions in Year 3 to learn about effective instructional strategies for

English language learners. A design team was also established to help the SEA develop the resources and tools to disseminate to educators across the state. During Year 4, participants completed all courses in the Nebraska English Language Learner Leadership Institute training series and the design team continued to work on developing tools for teachers and the statewide framework. The Design Team held four working meetings during the reporting year, and continued to develop resources for educators that will be disseminated in Year 5. These resources become part of the state’s online Continuous Improvement Process Toolkit, a process begun through an NCCC year 1 project. This work continues in Year 5. NCCC will continue to collaborate with the SEA to support the Design Team and will support the SEA in developing a training cadre to deliver professional development workshops based on *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners* to ESUs, districts, and schools.

Under the Poverty Plan Project, the NCCC liaison assisted the Nebraska SEA to develop rubrics and tools to support districts in developing LEP and Poverty plans. The project provided a model for districts in developing comprehensive plans that address thirteen areas of best practices in supporting student achievement for LEP and high poverty students. The aim of this plan was to support SEA staff in analyzing the poverty data submitted by districts and interpreting the data relevant to state-level planning, and so the SEA can target technical assistance based on these plans.

Documenting inputs and outputs. To evaluate Year 4 work, evaluators first documented project inputs and outputs, primarily using data from activity reports (Appendix B) and conversations with NCCC staff. While interesting for a comparative analysis of scope across projects, for a single project these data also allow researchers to calculate the cost per project in terms of staff hours, funding, and time.

Documenting project outcomes. In addition, evaluators used multiple sources to document project outcomes. After each session, participants were asked to rate the quality, relevance, and utility of activities, as well as to respond to several open-ended questions. These exit surveys typically contained twelve Likert-type¹ items related to the GPRA Indicators on the specific value of the technical assistance and three open-ended items to allow participants to express additional thoughts about technical assistance activities. The three Likert items on the

Table 1
Aggregated Exit Survey Results

Activity	Date	Participant Hours	Participant N	Survey N	Quality N (%)	Relevance N (%)	Utility N (%)
BALANCED LEADERSHIP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CADRE							
QA and support for <i>Managing Change</i> Session	Oct. 13-14, 2008	12	23	N/A			
Balanced Leadership user’s conference	Dec. 11, 2008	7	12	N/A			

¹ A response scale used as an indicator to differentiate between the most and least favorable items.

QA and support for <i>Choosing the Right Focus</i> session	Jan. 14, 2009	6	22	14	41/42 (98%)	28/28 (100%)	28/28 (100%)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER RESOURCES							
Design Team Meeting #3	Sept. 19, 2008	6	14	N/A			
Nebraska English Language Learner Institute (Omaha), session 4	Oct. 1-2, 2008	15	52	37	111/111 (100%)	74/74 (100%)	73/73 (100%)
Nebraska English Language Learner Institute (Kearney), session 4	Oct. 27-28, 2008	15	42	41	121/125 (97%)	81/84 (96%)	80/84 (95%)
Design Team Meeting #4	Nov. 17-18, 2008	10	12	N/A			
Nebraska English Language Learner Institute (Omaha), session 5	Dec. 2-3, 2008	12	62	37	102/111 (92%)	74/74 (100%)	72/74 (97%)
Nebraska English Language Learner Institute (Kearney), session 4	Dec. 4-5, 2008	12	47	24	66/72 (92%)	46/48 (96%)	47/48 (98%)
Design Team Meeting #6	May 12, 2009	6	13	N/A			
POVERTY PLAN							
LEP focus and input group, meeting 1	Feb. 19, 2009	6	20	N/A			
LEP focus and input group, meeting 2	April 23, 2009	8	29	N/A			
Note: Numerators represent the number of 'excellent' or 'good' responses, denominators represent the total number of responses.					441/46 1 (96%)	303/308 (98%)	300/30 7 (98%)

quality of technical assistance were on a four-point scale, from 'excellent' to 'poor.' The two Likert items on the relevance and the three items on the utility of activities were on a five-point scale, from 'to a great extent' to 'not at all.' NCCC established the target of 85 percent positive responses to survey items (responses of 'excellent' or 'good') to determine if activities were of high quality, relevance, and utility to project participants (see Table 2 for survey results).

Aggregated exit survey results for Nebraska indicate that NCCC met its internal goals for the indicators of technical assistance activities: 96 percent of participants rated the quality of activities at excellent or very good, 98 percent of participants indicated the activities were relevant, and 98 percent of participants indicated activities would be useful in their work. Exit surveys for each project, and for each activity within each project, supported this positive trend. These indicator ratings on the short-term outcomes and impact of participation in NCCC technical assistance activities provided strong evidence that efforts made by the North Central Comprehensive Center team in building state capacity towards the projects identified in the Year 4 Management Plan are considered to be highly successful by project participants.

Documenting participant learning. Although responses on exit surveys indicated participants consistently perceived technical assistance activities to be of high quality, relevance, and utility, in line with the capacity building continuum evaluators next sought to determine more precisely what participants learned from project activities, and how they had applied what they learned. To this end, the year-end/end-of-project online surveys, interviews (Appendix C), and focus groups (Appendix D) captured the feedback of participants. These instruments, developed in collaboration with NCCC liaisons, were used to determine the level of satisfaction with the information and services provided under each project, as each state had a unique agenda that focused on its state’s unique needs. Although input from many of these same participants was gathered via activity exit survey data, this summative measure provided them with the opportunity to reflect on the quality of NCCC assistance throughout the year with regard to a specific project.

For the first Nebraska project, the Balanced Leadership Professional Development Cadre Project, evaluators developed an end of project survey using the indicators under objective 3 related to this project (Appendix E; see results in Table 3).

As the mission of the CCs is to build capacity at the state level, this survey was distributed to State Education Agency (SEA) representatives who were involved in the project rather than to all project participants. Quantitative data on participant application of knowledge gained from technical assistance was positive, indicating that participants had largely begun to apply knowledge gained from NCCC technical assistance, and was supported by the following comment:

I have used the resources to support our principals in their leadership roles. The Balanced Leadership materials and training effectively translate theory into methods of practices – Nebraska Balanced Leadership Project

Documenting self-efficacy and changes in practice. Evaluators invited participants from each site in the English Language Learner Resources project to participate in focus groups after the final training session. Results from these conversations are summarized in the intermediate and long-term outcomes columns of the logic model (see Figure 2). These data indicated that participants perceived an increase in their self-efficacy (intermediate goal) and were implementing changes in practice (long-term goal) in accordance with the goals of the project and the intent of the capacity building continuum. In addition, resources under development by

Table 3
Balanced Leadership Online Year-End Survey Results

The technical assistance (e.g. information, resources, meeting facilitation...) provided by the NCCC staff related to the _____ Project was:	
<i>Cell numbers represent the fraction and percent of participants who responded ‘excellent’ or ‘good’</i>	
Research-based	3/3 (100%)
Accurate	3/3

	(100%)
Up-to-date	3/3 (100%)
Related to my current needs	3/3 (100%)
Practical	3/3 (100%)
Applicable to my work	3/3 (100%)
As a result of NCCC's technical assistance related to the _____ Project, to what extent do you perceive yourself as more capable of: <i>Cell values represent the fraction and percent of participants who responded 'to a great extent' or 'to some extent'</i>	
Understanding the components of the current support system	3/3 (100%)
Reviewing existing statewide policies and revising procedures and practices	/
Developing measurable goals for implementation of the support system	3/3 (100%)
Using the results of data analysis to guide decision making	/
Developing state capacity to communicate and collaborate, both externally and internally	2/2 (100%)
Leveraging existing resources to meet needs across the state	3/3 (100%)
Providing differentiated support (ELL, PD, formative assessment, standards) to schools/districts	2/2 (100%)
Establishing/maintaining statewide networks to enact improvement efforts	3/3 (100%)

the Design Team presented evidence that participants were applying knowledge from project activities.

Data collected from the Poverty Plan Project, completed in Year 4, also indicated that participants had increased capacity as a result of NCCC technical assistance activities. Evaluators conducted interviews with nine Poverty Plan participants. Participants were more capable and confident of developing a plan to support high poverty students as a result of NCCC technical assistance, as supported by the following responses:

I found it useful in sharing ideas for each of the elements which must be addressed in a poverty plan, and the approaches and successes experienced by other districts.

I am much more capable as the collaboration with other districts enhanced my knowledge of what is going on around the state and what components might be activities to be identified in the Poverty Plan.

I was able to get a clearer vision of the difference between the document and the people part of the plan. The direct activities about which we will report are many

and I hope to build from where we are and expand considerably, while tapping into community resources.

In additions, participants indicated they will use the resources and knowledge they gained through participation in the Poverty Plan session in some of the following ways:

Develop a more detailed plan which will serve as a better guide rather than what we have had in the past and used more as a compliance document and filed away.

Programming and or changes will be based as has been the case on data analysis. The information obtained from the session will be of assistance in looking at other potential interventions.

Lessons Learned About Building Capacity

Previous practice in evaluating the Comprehensive Center was focused primarily on documenting project activities and analyzing survey data on quality, relevance, and utility of project services. In contrast, the current evaluation of capacity building also focused on the cognitive and affective changes in participants (changes in knowledge and self-efficacy) and on behavior, such as changes in services to schools and districts. In considering the four overarching project objectives, evaluation findings showed participants not only reported that activities were useful, relevant, and of high quality – but that they perceived themselves as more knowledgeable and had begun to apply their knowledge towards improving services to schools and districts.

Fully evaluating the capacity building continuum required more data than the more limited evaluations that had been conducted in the past. Therefore, more staff and participant time was needed in order to document the additional objectives.

As part of the capacity-building focus of the evaluation, and in an effort to streamline the evaluation process, in Year 5 of the NCCC evaluation liaisons met with evaluators to identify capacity building indicators for each objective (Appendix E). Each set of indicators reflects the entire scope of NCCC work under the corresponding objective, as identified by NCCC liaisons. Relevant subsets of these indicators, identified by project liaisons, will be included in year-end and end-of project evaluation activities.

References

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Figure 1. CC Logic Model—Evaluating Building SEA Capacity

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES – IMPACT		
	Activities	Participation	Short term	Intermediate	Long term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • CC staff • Technology (web site, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist SEAs through state-specific projects • Annual Advisory Board meeting • Identify, broker, leverage, and disseminate information from Content Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in each project activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will report that the project activities are useful, relevant, and of high quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will learn how to assist districts and schools, in relation to the targeted program objective, as a result of the project activities • Participants will perceive themselves to be more capable of assisting districts and schools, as a result of the project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will apply the knowledge from the program activities to assist districts and schools according to the targeted program objective • Participants will improve services in one or more of the areas targeted by program objectives
Evaluation Type and Questions Addressed	Formative: How is the CC technical assistance being provided? (Further detail on what is collected from activity logs)	Formative: How is the CC technical assistance being provided? (Who participates in CC activities? What are their roles?)	Formative: How do the participants react to the technical assistance activities? What do they like and dislike about them? To what extent are the technical assistance activities found to be useful, relevant, and of high quality?	Summative: What did participants learn as a result of the technical assistance activities, relative to the targeted objectives? To what extent do they perceive themselves as capable of assisting districts and schools, relative to the targeted objectives?	Summative: How did the participants apply the knowledge from technical assistance activities in their services to districts and schools? What have they done differently? What evidence is there that services to districts and schools have improved?
Data Sources	Activity logs, activity reports, evaluation logs, artifacts	Activity logs, activity reports, evaluation logs, artifacts	Participant surveys	Participant surveys, interviews	Follow-up surveys and interviews, documents and artifacts

ASSUMPTION:

CC staff and SEA personnel will be able to work together to choose and implement program activities that address the four objectives

Figure 2. Results of English Language Learners (ELL) project aligned with logic model

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES – IMPACT		
	Activities	Participation	Short term	Intermediate	Long term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education, divided amongst projects in five states over five years Planning and facilitation from one CC liaison; content delivery from three CC trainers Approximately 184 CC staff hours for Year 4 work on this project Balanced Leadership and Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners, books and resources 	<p>English Language Learner Leadership Institute The goal of this activity was to help leadership teams develop capacity to improve instructional practices for English language learner students (ELLs) in the school setting. Activities centered on improving leadership and understanding research-based instructional strategies for effective instruction of ELLs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct session #4 Conduct session #5 <p>Design Team The goal of this activity was to develop a statewide framework and online resources for educators working with ELLs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate design team meeting #3 Facilitate design team meeting #4 Facilitate design team meeting #6 	<p>English Language Learner Leadership Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 participants at session #4 50 participants at session #4 45 participants at session #5 60 participants at session #5 <p>Design Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 participants at third design team meeting 12 participants at fourth design team meeting 11 participants at the sixth design team meeting 	<p>English Language Learner Leadership Institute (includes Design Team Participants) Averaged percent of participants who indicated project activities were of high quality, relevance, and utility in Kearney: Quality: 187/197 = 95% Relevance: 127/132 = 96% Utility: 127/132=96%</p> <p>Averaged responses on quality, relevance, and utility of project activities in Omaha: Quality: 213/222 = 96% Relevance: 148/148= 100% Utility: 145/147=99%</p> <p>Design Team Data on quality, relevance, and utility will be collected for these sessions once work towards the framework and online resources has been completed.</p>	<p>English Language Learner Leadership Institute (includes Design Team) The Design Team is a subset of ELLLI participants. Responses from both groups suggested participants perceived an increase in self-efficacy, as indicated by the comments below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BL helped me view my position to help others better and the security to say, I'll work with you on that. I feel more effective as evaluator of ESL teachers. Original action plan seems naïve; we know so much more now. I learned a lot not included in my ELL endorsement classes. <p>In addition, participants reported feeling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More confident as a result of increased knowledge, confidence, and ability Less burdened More confident in using strategies for ELLS More capable of supporting staff in understanding how ELLs learn and how to advance their achievement. 	<p>English Language Learner Leadership Institute (includes Design Team) ELLI participants reported changes in teacher practice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the resources and strategies in every lesson plan, lesson, lab and class Working more with vocabulary The feeling among staff that ELLs are part of our student population, not just the ELL teacher's problem. <p>They also reported changes in their students including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased vocabulary skills, reading skills, and test scores A noticeable increase in self-confidence in ELL students. ELL students are more empowered to speak in regular classes. <p>Design Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CITW for ELL book study will be published online. The Toolkit resources were revised and will be published A video is under production

Appendix A

Indicators of Capacity Building

Objective 1: Increase state capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools.

- a. Assess performance and practice in districts and schools to further improve performance
- b. Use a variety of data and systematic data collection methods to inform decisions
- c. Analyze and interpret data (e.g., student data, monitoring visits)

Objective 2: Increase state capacity to develop solutions to address the improvement needs of schools and districts.

- a. Increased knowledge of the body of research
- b. Increased knowledge of effective research-based strategies
- c. Increased knowledge of the role of data to inform school improvement
- d. Increased knowledge of the role of stakeholders
- e. More capable of locating and using relevant resources
- f. More capable of providing expertise to your and/or other schools/districts
- g. More capable of identifying appropriate solutions (collaboratively, with schools/districts)
- h. More capable of providing support to schools/districts in implementing solutions

Objective 3: Increase State capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes

- a. Understand the components of the current system
- b. Review existing policies and/or revising procedures and practices
- c. Define a system that is comprehensive and coherent, and integrates federal programs and/or state initiatives
- d. Use the research base to inform decision making
- e. Use the results of data analysis to guide decision making
- f. Develop measurable goals for implementation
- g. Use networks for internal and external communication
- h. Leverage existing resources
- i. Deliver high quality technical assistance, services and resources
- j. Provide differentiated support (e.g., ELL, SPED, Title 1, Indian students) to schools/districts
- k. Encourage leadership and collaboration
- l. Encourage the use of technology (e.g., professional development, data analysis, communication, monitoring)
- m. Scale up from implementation at pilot sites

Objective 4: Increase State capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability

- a. Build awareness of existing tools/systems

- b. Gather feedback/data on the usefulness of existing tools/systems
- c. Use feedback/data to determine what tools/systems are necessary
- d. Develop new tools/systems
- e. Disseminate new tools/systems
- f. Train schools and/or districts to use new tools/systems
- g. Monitor and evaluate implementation and/or impact of new tools/systems
- h. Implement a continuous improvement approach

Appendix B

ACTIVITY REPORT

Date of Request:

Activity Number:

Date of Activity (Date of Response):

Location:

Total Hours:

Level: State _____ Regional _____

Affiliation of Requester: _____

Name of Activity:

Nature of Activity (Please check one):

- Increase State capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools
- Increase State capacity to develop solutions to address improvement needs of districts and schools
- Increase State capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes
- Increase State capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability

Purpose/Objectives of the Activity:

Total Number of Participants with Names (NCCC staff and Key State Staff):

Summary of the Activity (Response to Request):

Details of the Activity (Things that happened during meeting):

Follow Up/Next Steps:

Lessons Learned about Increasing State Capacity:

Did participants complete evaluations for this event? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please specify which organization evaluated the activity and where the evaluation data can be found:

Form Completed by:

Appendix C

Nebraska Project 3: Poverty Plan Participant Interview Questions

Objectives of NCCC:

1. Increase State capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools.
2. Increase State capacity to develop solutions to address improvement needs of districts and schools.
3. Increase State capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes
4. Increase State capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability.

Intermediate objectives from evaluation plan:

1. What did participants learn as a result of the technical assistance activities, relative to the targeted objectives?
2. To what extent do they perceive themselves as capable of assisting districts and schools, relative to the targeted objectives?

Long term objectives from evaluation plan:

1. How did the participants apply the knowledge from technical assistance activities in their services to districts and schools?
2. What have they done differently?
3. What evidence is there that services to districts and schools have improved?

I'd like to explain the purpose of this interview. One objective of the NCCC is to increase state capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability. This evaluation component is to help determine whether and the degree to which this has been accomplished.

1. What is your role in developing a poverty plan for your district?
2. What do you see as the key activities in preparing the Poverty Plan?
3. What was your reaction to the activities at the 23 April meeting? What did you like and dislike about them?
4. What did you learn as a result of the Poverty Plan activities?
5. Do you plan on using the rubric you developed in the near future?
6. As a result of the 23 April meeting, to what extent do you perceive yourself as more capable of developing a plan to provide support to high poverty students?
7. In what ways do you plan on providing this type of support to students in the near future?
8. What will you do differently as a result of this activity?
9. What additional activities, if any, would help develop your capacity to provide support to high poverty students?

Appendix D

Nebraska Project: English Language Learner Leadership Institute Focus Group Questions

Objectives of NCCC:

5. Increase State capacity to assess the improvement needs of districts and schools.
6. Increase State capacity to develop solutions to address improvement needs of districts and schools.
7. Increase State capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts related to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes
8. Increase State capacity to improve the tools and systems for school improvement and accountability.

Intermediate objectives from evaluation plan:

3. What did participants learn as a result of the technical assistance activities, relative to the targeted objectives?
4. To what extent do they perceive themselves as capable of assisting districts and schools, relative to the targeted objectives?

Long term objectives from evaluation plan:

4. How did the participants apply the knowledge from technical assistance activities in their services to districts and schools?
5. What have they done differently?
6. What evidence is there that services to districts and schools have improved?

I'd like to explain the purpose for this focus group. One component of the evaluation of the NCCC technical assistance is to determine whether and the degree to which the technical assistance provided has 'built the capacity' of state education agencies.

1. What are your names and roles?
2. What do you see as the key activities in the Nebraska English Language Learner Leadership Institute?
3. What was your reaction to the activities? What do you like and dislike about them?
4. What did you learn as a result of the NELLLI activities?
5. How have you used the resources and information you have received through this project? (used by you alone, shared with others) In what ways do you plan on using these resources in the near (i.e., this school year) future? Design team: How has your work had an impact at the state level?
6. In what ways does your use of the information differ from others'? (urban, rural, etc.)
7. To what extent do you perceive yourself as more capable of assisting districts and schools with ELLs? (For school level: assisting ELLs)
8. In what ways do you plan on providing this type of support in the near (i.e., this school year) future?
9. What have you done differently as a result of this activity?
10. Describe for me the degree to which you believe teachers are making changes in their classroom practice. What evidence is there that services to districts and schools have improved? What evidence is there that relationships with students, parents, and communities have changed?

Appendix E

NCCC Participant Evaluation Form

NE Project 1: Balanced Leadership

NE Project 1: Balanced Leadership
 Year Four Survey: July, 2008 - June, 2009

1. I participated in the Balanced Leadership Project primarily in my role as a(n): (Required)

- State Agency Staff
- Intermediate Service Agency Staff
- Regional Professional Development Provider
- School Support Team Staff
- School-Level Administrator
- District-Level Administrator
- Policy Maker
- Other

2. The technical assistance (e.g. information, resources, meeting facilitation...) provided by the NCCC staff related to the Balanced Leadership Project was: (Required)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
a. research-based	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. accurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. up-to-date	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. related to my current needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. practical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. applicable to my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. The objective of NCCC work under the Balanced Leadership Project was to increase state capacity to build and sustain systemic support for district and school improvement efforts relating to closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes. As a result of NCCC's technical assistance related to the Balanced Leadership Project, to what extent do you perceive yourself as more capable of: (Required)

	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	To a Small Extent	To No Extent	N/A
a. understanding the components of the current support system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. developing measurable goals for implementation of the support system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. developing state capacity to communicate and collaborate, both externally and internally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. leveraging existing resources to meet needs across the state	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. providing differentiated support (ELL, PD, formative assessment, standards) to schools/districts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. establishing/maintaining statewide networks to enact improvement efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Please explain if/how NCCC technical assistance has increased your understanding of research-based leadership practices associated with increased student achievement.

5. How have you used/do you plan to use the resources and information you have received through NCCC in the Balanced Leadership Project?

6. As a result of NCCC technical assistance in the Balanced Leadership Project, what evidence is there that schools/districts have improved?

7. What additional activities, if any, would help improve NCCC technical assistance in the Balanced Leadership Project to meet the needs of your schools/districts?

