Session Title:
Rethinking The MSP Innovation and Its Influence on Fair Evaluation of Implementation

MSP Project Name:
NY ED MSPs

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Feedback Session

Strand 3

Summary:
Conventional professional development is used to prepare teachers to use a specified innovation, in the form of a program, approach or strategy. Most established models of the implementation of innovations also assume a specific program, approach or strategy. ESEA Title II, Part B MSP program participants in NY receive instruction in discipline content and supporting pedagogic practices and are expected to incorporate this information into their professional practice. In this session an evaluator and a project director present their experience in facing the challenges associated with evaluating a program where the teachers themselves are the innovation. And to discuss some of the evaluator’s measurement solutions based on the data of nine years of MSP evaluation experience involving eleven programs.

Section 1: Description of product, tool, process, curriculum, or instrument:
Research Works, Inc. has been evaluating Title IIB MSP programs as a local evaluator in New York State for nearly nine years. To date we have evaluated eleven three year programs over that period (three in upstate NY and eight in NY City). Our design includes as one of the measures of implementation the use of information on content and supporting pedagogy gleaned from professional development by participating teachers in their professional practice. As part of that measurement we have used a modified version of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model’s Stages of Concern Questionnaire1 in all of the programs.

All participants were given a modified version of the Stages of Concern Survey in each year of the three year program. This instrument tracks teacher comfort with their own use of the information and practices they are being exposed to in the MSP program and rates their levels of openness to the use of the new information and practices.

We have noticed that the pattern of response on these questionnaires is quite different from the pattern noted by the developers of the instrument and any published research we have found that has used it. Specifically, our participants do not move from stage to stage as its name suggests and as expected, but cluster at Stage 0 and Stage 1 at the same time as they cluster at Stage 5 and/or Stage 6. In general, participants’ concerns jump the personal concerns portion of the instrument’s assumed series (Stages 3 and 4).

This finding (along with some qualitative triangulation data) led us to rethink our Logic Model of this programs, which has influenced a major change in how we calibrate implementation milestones and consider timely measurement of overall effect (improved student performance). In making those modifications to the evaluation we had to rethink the trajectory from implementation to outcome and the fairest way to measure it.

Section 2: Question, issue, or challenge that is the primary focus of the session:

There are many different models and explanations available to measure implementation of an innovation. The developers of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model see that implementation as a journey across a chasm on what they call an ‘implementation bridge’. As their materials state: “If ‘implementation as a journey’ is a metaphor, the notion of taking measures of aspects of that journey is an extension of that conceptual metaphor … it provides the framework in which to consider some of the tools we might take to make that journey more memorable and productive.”(Ibid. p. vii)

Conventional professional development is used to prepare teachers to use a specified innovation, in the form of a program, approach or strategy. Most established models and explanations of the implementation of an innovation also assume a specific program, approach or strategy. In New York State the ESEA Title II, Part B MSP program has no official program, approach or strategy. Participants receive instruction in discipline content and supporting pedagogic practices and are expected to operationalize this information in their professional practice. In our offices we talk about the issues we face and the challenges associated with evaluating a program where the teachers themselves are the innovation, each somewhat unique.

In our opinion, we have identified two important concepts that may be operating in the MSP Program and have influenced the measures within the RWI evaluation design for these programs. They are: teacher quality and teaching quality. While often used interchangeably, in our evaluations RWI uses the definition of these terms used in a report for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) by Darling Hammond and Prince (2007). In that report they present several differences between the two which the evaluators at RWI have found useful in clarifying, for measurement purposes, the construction of the mediator in this program. Darling-Hammond and Prince define teacher quality as a bundle of skills, personal traits and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways. They define teaching quality as strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn and

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2 Strengthening Teacher Quality in High Need Schools – Policy and Practice, 2007, Linda Darling Hammond and Cynthia Prince for the CCSSO.
3 They give a list of these qualities, among them strong content knowledge and knowledge of how to teach others in that content area, in particular how to use hands-on learning techniques and how to develop higher order thinking skills.
also meets the demands of the content’s discipline, the goals of instruction and the needs of students in a particular context. They go on to note that teacher quality is often a part of teaching quality, but urge studies (and evaluations) to measure them separately.

*Chart 1: Relationship Between Program Activities and Development of Teacher and Teaching Quality*

**First Level of Change in Professional Practice Mediator Construction**

- Heightened Understanding of Pedagogic Content
- Increased Awareness of Sophisticated Pedagogic Practices

**Second Level of Change in Professional Practice Mediator Construction**

- Higher Levels of Teacher Quality
- Supported Practice

**Mediator to Program Effect as Improved Teaching Quality → Improved Student Learning Outcomes.**

As shown in Chart 1, using the two has led us to a two-stage implementation process in this program, measured as such. The first is capacity building in that it increases teacher quality and the second draws on that improved teacher quality to build teaching quality. Increased teacher quality is clearly the legislative intent for this program, with the cause of high quality discipline content focused professional development, teamed with professional development targeted on supportive and facilitative instruction, as the ‘cause’ in the cause → effect of this program. Teaching quality seems to be a sub-plot of the legislation, but finding ways to measure that has proven difficult. Our strategy has been to use a capacity building program theory, and its related two-stroke logic model.
While using this two stage framework, we have come across things about the instructional practices of participants that have come to light from within our implementation evaluation measures that may be measureable constructs of teaching quality. For example, responses on the Stages of Concern Questionnaire at Level 5 or 6 (regarding concerns about how to share what they are learning with colleagues and concerns on how to fully embed what they are learning into their practice).

So, we have indications from within our own data that this is not your typical professional development intervention. Over the years our team has wrestled with a number of aspects of the program: its logic model, how participants react to its content and their responsibility to implement what they have learned in the program in their classrooms. We think some of the data we have collected could be used to measure teaching quality, and would like to discuss this. Our primary focus is a discussion of how to measure this program’s implementation fairly. This session would give us the opportunity to bring our questions, thoughts, and concerns to the MSP community for discussion.
Section 3: Types of people who you think might be most interested in discussing this and offering feedback:
We believe this is interesting to all the stakeholders in the MSP community, but we could be wrong. We would like feedback from all levels of the system by people who have different functions regarding the program. Perhaps aim it to other evaluators.

Section 4: How will you structure this session? What is your plan for participant interaction?
We would like to briefly state the challenge and our response to it. We have the C-BAM Stages of Concern data and can show that pattern (briefly). We have the Darling-Hammond and Price discussion of Teacher Quality leading to Teaching Quality, and the new Logic Model that models that transition as one depiction of the program theory for MSP. Participants will be provided with print copies of the program logic model; sample summaries of the data we are referring to and the questions from the survey that elicit information in these conceptual areas; graphics of the traditional professional development program footprint and the chart of our version of it included in this proposal. We will also provide electronic copies of all materials as well as a summary brief on the evaluation design and its supporting literature review and a copy of the day’s PowerPoint with Notes electronically to all attendees.
The purpose of the session is expert review and collegial discussion. There are a number of points from which to launch review and discussion:
- The Logic Model and what it assumes about the program’s theory of change.
- Our assumptions regarding teacher quality and teaching quality and how they fit into the logic model and any issues with it.
- The fair measurement of each of these underlying assumptions.
- Possible different interpretations of the data we have.
Size of audience will define how the session attendees are organized. A few will mean individual review of each set of materials and their framing questions, and then whole group discussion. More than a dozen participants will be grouped and managed as a small group report back. The sequence we will bring with us (subject to change in response to the group’s response to each set of framing questions) is:
1. Present the information in this proposal. Present and review the Logic Model and the Program Theory of Change.
2. Framing questions and review by attendees. Report back and discussion.
3. Present teacher quality and teaching quality details. Ensure the definitions and overlap are clear.
4. Framing questions and review by attendees. Report back, link to program logic model and theory of change, agree.
5. Seek consensus – as we have never presented this, I don’t know if we will be able to.
6. Recommended next steps for us.
7. Present our argument, with handouts on the Logic Model and summary of Teacher Quality attributes and Teaching Quality attributes.
8. Facilitate discussion, answer questions, seek guidance from attendees.
9. Summarize and close.