



- Spelling List #24
1. cash
 2. doctor
 3. nurse
 4. farmer
 5. bio-chemist
 6. teacher
 7. police
 8. painter
 9. hard
 10. price

Quarter Report Year 3 Quarter 1

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The Equity Alliance at ASU

The Equity Alliance at ASU is a regional equity assistance center (EAC) supported by a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, awarded through the Department's initiatives to support Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act through rights training and advisory services for schools and communities to address equity and access issues in public education. Equity Assistance Centers provide technical assistance (TA) and training, at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies for the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans for the desegregation of public schools. As defined by program guidelines, desegregation refers to equity—including desegregation based on race, sex, and national origin and the development of effective methods of coping with special educational problems occasioned by desegregation. In all, there are ten regional equity assistance centers in the U.S. The Equity Alliance at ASU is the EAC for Region IX, the southwestern region comprised of Arizona, California, and Nevada.

Building on the educational theory, cutting-edge research, and the momentum of the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt), the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI), and NIUSI-LeadScape, the mission of the Equity Alliance at ASU is to promote equity, access, and participation in education by supporting the capacity of States and local school systems to provide high-quality, effective opportunities to learn for all students, regardless of race, gender, or national origin, and to reduce disparities in academic achievement.








Our approach is grounded in emphases on civil rights and cultural responsiveness, as well as the belief that all students can excel in academic endeavors if they are provided with access to high-quality teachers, curricula, instruction, programs and resources, and their cultures, languages, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning. Guided by a thematic focus on enhancing both understanding of equity in classrooms, schools, and school systems and the use of scientifically-based solutions, our approach addresses the gaps and priorities identified in recent, major policy and research equity reports (Artiles et al. 2005; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ferguson et al., 2003; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Klingner et

al., 2005; Skiba et al., 2008; Losen & Orfield, 2002).

Rather than view race, class, and gender as isolated factors, the center's perspective suggests that the current inequitable conditions of schooling are connected to historical legacies of exclusion and inclusion based on normative assumptions about race, class, gender, and national origin that define who is considered competent and how difference is constructed (Minow, 1990). Indeed, schools engaged in equity work need to critique and transform such assumptions and focus on belonging, nurturing, and educating all students, regardless of differences in race, gender, culture, language, ability, or class (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). This kind of work must be transformative to change systemic contributors to inequity. Both inclusivity and cultural responsiveness are grounded in transformative equity and social justice. Understanding how this perspective must inform classroom practice, school organization, and district policy is a hallmark of the successful work of the Equity Alliance at ASU. In supporting state, district, and schools' work to create equitable school systems, the Equity Alliance at ASU promotes the development of culturally responsive, inclusive educational systems.

A major purpose of the Equity Alliance at ASU is to assist schools in complying with federal civil rights requirements through the adoption or improvement of policies and practices and to help parents, students, educators, and community members to understand their rights under federal law. The Center is responsive to states and school boards where students are at risk for language, racial, gender, ability, and national origin equity issues that affect student achievement. The Equity Alliance at ASU responds by working with districts, schools, and practitioners who are struggling to serve ALL their students equitably through developing and disseminating research based products, onsite technical assistance and coaching. Our relationships with Regional Resource Centers, Regional Educational Labs, Comprehensive Centers, the New Teachers Center, content centers, and other equity networks and professional organizations make us well poised to provide technical assistance to Region IX because we can create synergies between efforts.

The Equity Alliance at ASU serves as a resource to the Office of Civil Rights and Department of Justice in ensuring equity for all students, regardless of race, gender, or national origin, by pursuing the following outcomes:

-  Reduce the over-representation of minorities in special education;
-  The representation of minorities in gifted and talented and advanced placement programs;
-  Build local coalitions between higher education, preK-12 systems, communities, and families to provide equal access to highly qualified teachers, especially for students who are economically disadvantaged;
-  Increase the use of scientifically-based, culturally responsive curricula and instructional practices in classrooms, schools, and districts including the provision of resource materials, professional development and training on successful strategies for providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with equitable access to a high-quality education;
-  Support, develop, and disseminate effective approaches to school dropout prevention and reentry;
-  Promote equity by addressing the special needs of high-risk students, including students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; and
-  Support districts transitioning to unitary status in desegregation cases.

Introduction

Transformative equity assistance work requires coordinated efforts that build capacity through ongoing professional development, supported by the use of cutting-edge tools, frameworks and ideas. In addition, to be truly transformative, equity work is best institutionalized and scaled up through a distributive model of organizational change in which effective practices are systematically disseminated through school networks. The *Equity Alliance at ASU's* approach thus centers on four key change levers (Figure 1):

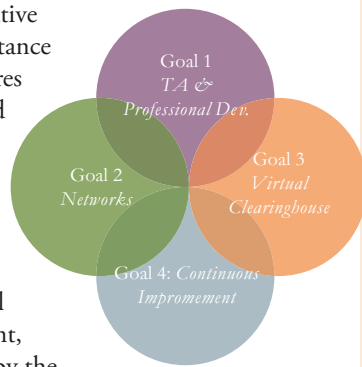


Figure 1. Goals of the Center

GOAL 1: On-Demand Technical Assistance and Professional Development

GOAL 2: Networks of School Systems Engaged in High-Quality Equity Work

GOAL 3: A Virtual Clearinghouse

GOAL 4: Continuous Improvement and Evaluation

This four pronged approach:

- Provides the impetus and skills to make organizational change for social justice and equity outcomes,
- Creates access to tools that will capture progress on critical equity issues and pressuring change for those who lag behind on educational achievement based on gender, national origin, and race,
- Demonstrates how a focus on improving results for *ALL* students improves results for particular groups as well,
- Provides resources and training in the areas of hate crimes, racial prejudice, disproportionality, ELL instruction, school completion, bullying, and sexual harassment, and
- Underscores our commitment to continuing to improve results.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

The Equity Alliance Center is known for its high-quality human, technical and content-rich resources, which it creates in the context of fieldwork at all levels of the complex educational system. The Center also identifies, collects and disseminates high-quality resources from others' research and development on equity matters.

The outcome measures of our goals focus on the assessment of products and services in six domains (Figure 2) through the collection of data embedded within internal operations and through feedback from our clients and expert advisors:

Q: Quality – Are our products and services rigorous and scientifically-based?

A: We measure quality through feedback from our participants on our web-based products, evaluation from meetings, the number of long-term relationships we develop with districts, feedback from experts, by comparing our work to other equity assistance centers, and participating in ongoing conversations with national leaders, including the equity assistance center Technical Assistance & Dissemination Network.

Q: Understanding – Do our products and services produce understanding?

A: We measure understanding by the degree to which our participants indicate they understand and can use information from our print, electronic, and face-to-face delivery of information. The measure of understanding comes primarily from our end user evaluations, which we conduct after conferences, consultations, online webinars and via random surveys of our mailing list.

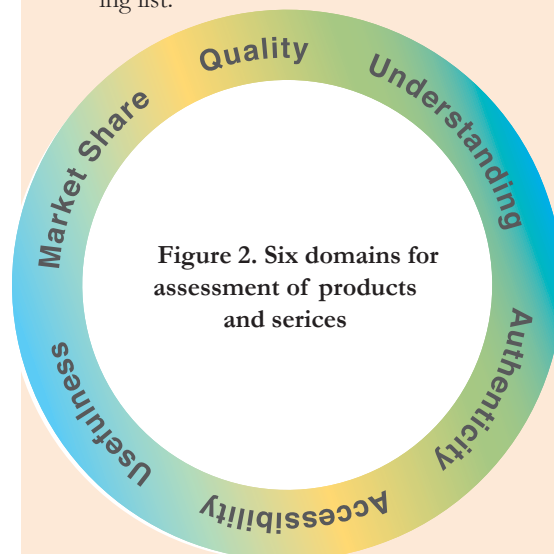


Figure 2. Six domains for assessment of products and services

Q: Authenticity – Do our products and services reflect the current and foreseeable realities of our audiences?

A: We measure authenticity by the degree to which our end users tell us that our products and services have immediate applicability to their contexts. We also ensure that products we create stem from field-based concerns and real experiences, which we garner through deep interactions in our Level IV technical assistance.

Q: Accessibility – Are our products and services accessible to families, students, and school boards in rural and suburban districts, small towns and cities?

A: We measure success in accessibility by the demographics of our end users, information that we collect through surveys conducted at all levels of our technical assistance model. We look for broad audience participation across all of our conferences, consultations, and from those who find, download and use our products.

Q: Usefulness – Are our products and services useful in developing and sustaining changes in student and staff behavior?

A: Products that have been created from authentic contexts may not be a perfect fit for another particular context, but may still be useful in guiding thinking, making connections, and encouraging new problem solving. We survey end users throughout the year to take measures on this criterion and ask experts for their opinions about our products and services.

Q: Market share – Are we expanding our knowledge networks and reaching new audiences?

A: We use online tracking tools to report increases in the number of requests for technical assistance, the number of new visitors to our web site, and which tools, products and pages they are downloading. We compare these results quarter by quarter and benchmark our performance to industry standards. We increase market share by leveraging these sources of information to take advantage of the yearly cycle of communications, conferences and other events that stimulate market response.

We report on these criteria within the following “Accomplishments” section of each of the four goals of the Center.

Goal 1: Technical Assistance & Professional Learning

Leverage continued improvement in research-based practices in schools through regional technical assistance and professional development supporting school, district, and state-wide development of assessment, referral, and instructional practices that address disparities related to race, national origin, and gender, as well as eliminating hate crimes, racial prejudice, and bullying/harassment.

- 1.1. Provide personalized, context-driven, scientifically based technical assistance and professional development at the request of responsible governmental agencies.
- 1.2. Develop a variety of platforms for providing technical assistance.

Evidence:

1.1 Provide Technical Assistance and Professional Development

Goal 1 activities during the fourth quarter of 2010, the 1st quarter of year 3 of the Equity Alliance, strengthened our efforts in responsive, personalized assistance and the innovative uses of a variety of platforms for delivering technical assistance. The strengthening occurred through continued work at all levels of our technical assistance model (Figure 3). Key leadership teams engaged with us in our Systemic Change Partnerships in Nevada and California; and we launched the implementation phase of the online “Culturally Responsive Teaching” professional development program in California.

In addition, we created new professional learning materials and published them for wide-scale use. We made nearly 52,000 contacts with an average of 7800 people each month providing them with information and professional learning materials.

In the section below, we highlight some of the work in Arizona, California and Nevada and provide updates on the uses of the platforms for professional learning.

Arizona

In December, meetings were set up to explore new partnerships with Arizona schools. Arizona State University is running two charter schools as part of its community outreach efforts. The schools are in their second year of operation and plan to add the high school years, starting with 9th grade, in 2011. The opportunity exists to help shape the innovative practices envisioned and enacted in these schools, and to then be part of expansion of the work.

A second outreach of the Center focused on a network of 80 schools in the “Beat the Odds” project, established under a former president of ASU.

Staff met with administrators, teachers and support staff at Valley View Elementary School in Phoenix. The half-day visit consisted of classroom walk-throughs, meetings with school administrators, and meetings with a multi-disciplinary committee. More work is planned with this school for next quarter.

Staff also met with the coordinator of the state’s Immigrant and Refugee program housed within the Arizona Department of Education. Initial contact was made during a presentation made by staff at the International Rescue Committee’s Title VI conference in Phoenix. Several phone conversations and a face-to-face planning meeting was held as a result. The Equity Alliance will be working with AZ schools participating in the program.

Nevada

Staff met with members of the district equity team at Washoe County School District on October 7th to begin planning out the technical assistance that would take place throughout the 2010-2011 school year. Subsequent meetings took place on October 18th-19th and on November 7th. A series of “Dialogue Group” focus groups (see Appendix 1 for questions that guided the dialogues) was included in the scope of work, and took place on November 17th, and 18th, and also on December 7th. The purpose of the “dialogue groups” was to capture the stories of the district as a part of the data collection process regarding the pathways and barriers to success for students of color throughout the district. The Continuous Improvement team organized the comments and looked for themes across the six high school sites that were visited. The makeup of each group reflected on how each school community construed the meaning of the opportunity to explore and share the school’s equity efforts. One school assembled nearly all (and the only) minorities into the meeting; others assembled widely diverse groups. The group

Equity Alliance at ASU Tiered Model of Technical Assistance

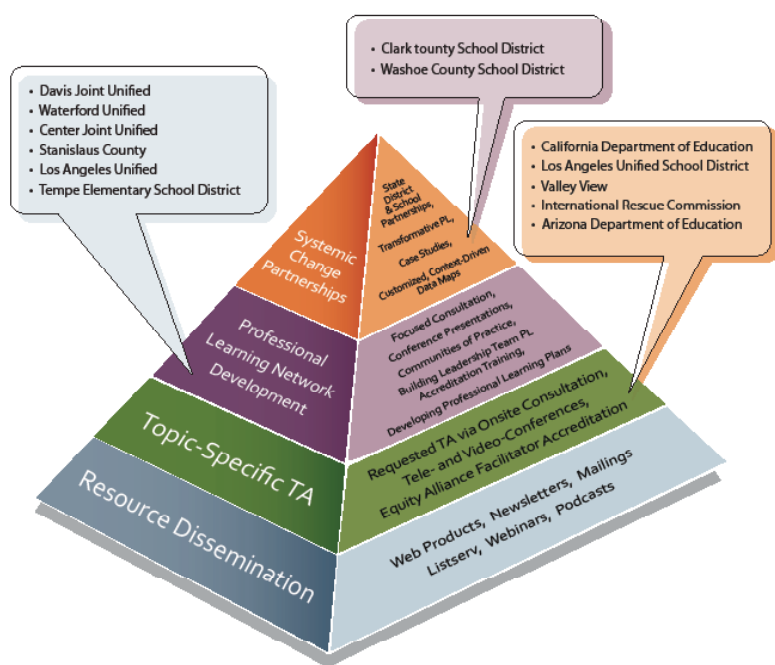


Figure 3. Tiered model of technical assistance, with key partnerships noted



sizes varied from a few to over 30 people, depending on the site. Detailed analysis of each site will form part of the continuing consultative relationship that characterizes Level IV Technical Assistance & Professional Learning, and is held confidential for each school. Here we can share characteristic anecdotal evidence from the several themes that emerged across the district as a whole. Additional information about the Dialogue Group method is provided under objective 1.2.

Staff observed and gathered data for the district at Glenn Singleton's 2-day "Beyond Diversity" training in Reno with over 150 administrators from the Washoe County School District. Primarily, staff was there to observe the process, take in the stories and dialogue shared by WCSD administrators, and subsequently help with the follow-up necessary as administrators grapple with the content shared and the idea of starting the process of using courageous conversations about race in their respective buildings and/or departments. Observational notes were taken and shared with the WCSD district equity team.

Also in Nevada, staff met with Clark County leaders regarding building a system of supports for the Equity and Diversity Department on November 9th. Specifically, as part of our agreement with the district, the Equity Alliance will help facilitate the district's development of a systemic approach to engaging stakeholders in conversations about educational equity and experiences that build awareness and capacities in key strategies that will ensure student success. In this particular meeting, Equity Alliance staff presented a new proposed scope of work, and gathered feedback and input toward determining responsibilities throughout the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year.

California



California Department of Education. The launch of the online course "Culturally Responsive Teaching" for districts participating in the pilot took place in October. See Appendix 2 for a portion of the content outlines of modules that are currently being developed and deployed in that state-level partnership work. The project is known internally as the "eLearning module".

Much of internal focus this quarter centered on ensuring participants were registered with usernames and passwords. Graduate assistants and staff alike worked with the piloting districts to ensure ease of use. In addition, several graduate students and staff members continued to refine content and activities for Course2, sessions 1, 2, and 3, which will be launched next quarter. The process included examining and comparing storyboards developed last quarter to the content that was currently embedded within Moodle, improving transition pieces from slide to slide, and enriching content with activities that would be engaging and meaningful to participants.

Staff facilitated two meetings with the administration of piloting districts and the California Department of Education this quarter. A phone conference meant to occur about halfway through pilot implementation occurred in November for the purpose of participating districts sharing successes and troubleshooting challenges. A full-day meeting in December also occurred. In this meeting staff elicited input from administrators of piloting districts, provided professional learning regarding the facilitation (both in person and technically using Moodle) of the online activities, and helped facilitators learn the key elements of course 2 in order to be prepared for the upcoming launch.

On November 30th, staff traveled to Sacramento to participate with several other professionals throughout the state of California along with representatives from Education Northwest to explore possible revisions to the "Larry P. ruling." Staff provided research articles and broad thinking direction to the group, and will continue to work with the group throughout the process. This work will continue into the next couple of quarters, with final decisions about revisions expected by the end of the school year.

The American Institutes for Research is conducting a formative evaluation for the California Department of Education, while our own Continuous Improvement team is conducting both a formative and summative evaluation of this project. The two evaluation teams are in touch with each other to ensure strong coverage of the project, including implementation and facilitation, nature of the online delivery system, and impacts on participants.

Our Continuous Improvement team built and deployed assessment and evaluation instruments for the "Moodle course" during this quarter with two purposes: collecting improvement information and gauging the impact of the course on knowledge, skills and dispositions of participants. A pre-post design for assessing impact of the course led to the creation of pre and post assessments and module-level assessments, which were placed as links in the online course.

Efforts are also underway to collect feedback from users regarding the content and usability aspect of the modules. Post assessments were created for the first three modules in December.

Initial analysis of the pre-assessment shows promise for showing changes over time, since responses tended to cluster near the ends of scales. We expect to see movement in the clusters as people engage with the course materials. For example, we asked participants to state their level of confidence in agreeing with a set of statements about some of the core content of the modules (Table 1 and Figure 3). In questions where participants now say they have a high degree of confidence (e.g. questions 1, 2, 7, 8, 9) we expect to see a softening of confidence as people learn more about the subtleties and complexities of culturally responsive teaching. In questions where there is now low confidence (e.g. questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10) we expect to see growth in confidence as people gain experience and comfort with those complexities.

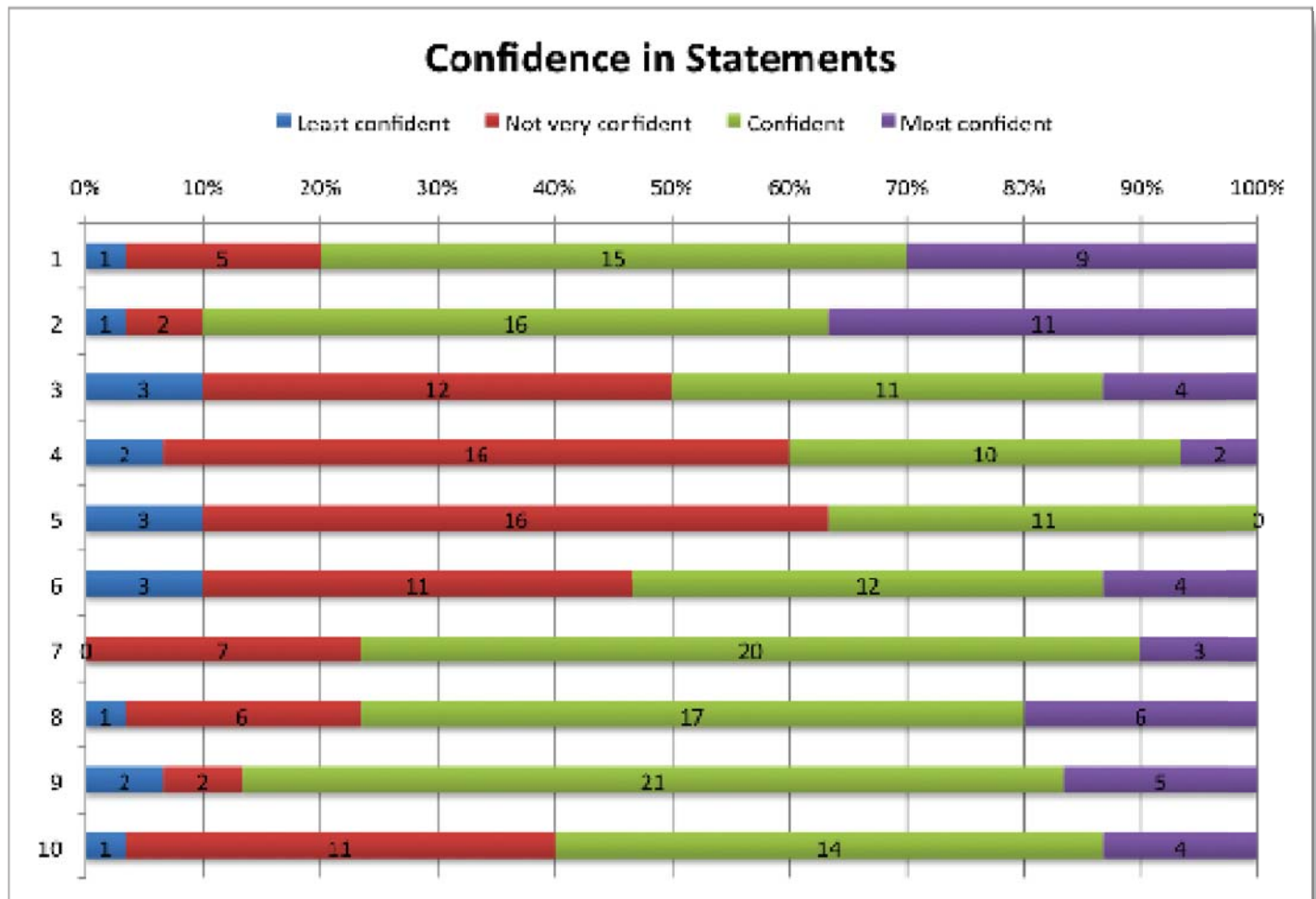
The responses are analyzed further in "Continuous Improvement."



Table 1. Confidence Statements

1.	I know how my learning preferences influence my teaching.
2.	I know how my own identity impacts the cultural relevance of my teaching.
3.	I know how to create a culturally responsive classroom environment.
4.	I know the key features of a culturally responsive school context.
5.	I know where and how to influence positive change in my school based on my understanding of intersectionality.
6.	I teach with an understanding of local historical contexts.
7.	I understand how learning preferences, cultural identity, and relationships to power and privilege intersect with each other.
8.	I understand how policies and practices influence the culture of a school.
9.	I understand the impact of cultural identities on classroom success.
10.	I understand the impact of the intersectionality of learning preferences, cultural identity, and relationships to power and privilege.

Figure 3. Distribution of confidence statements





1.2 Developing a variety of platforms for dissemination and TA

Engaging staff in continuous improvement of platforms

As part of the continuous improvement of our platforms, internal team meetings provide a place for the Equity Alliance staff to evaluate professional learning methods, and reflect on individual contributions to the goal of providing professional learning platforms. For example, at November’s all-team meeting, the staff examined, reflected on and discussed the role of each project in creating and upholding the four arenas and six principles of professional learning (Figure 4).

Equity Alliance Professional Learning Principals

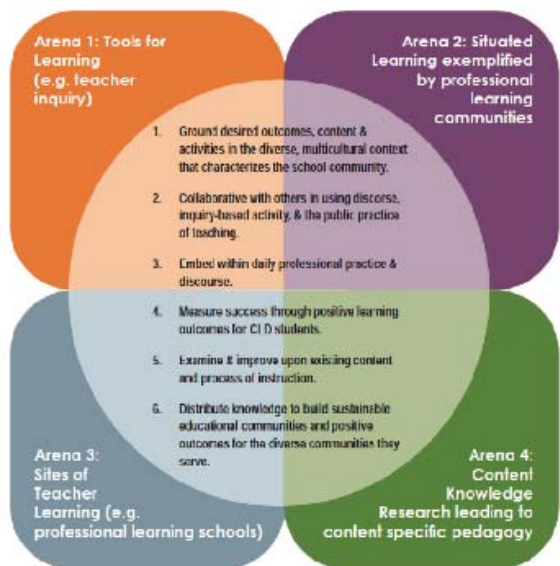


Figure 4. Four arenas and six principles of professional learning

Discussion also centered on the way that aspects of projects interact with each other in order to carry out the four goals, Continuous Improvement, Professional Learning and Technical Assistance, Networking and Dissemination, and Research and Development. Meeting notes record the gist of the conversations (Table 2) and provide evidence that the leadership views staff meetings as embedded professional learning experiences.

Table 2. Notes from an all-staff meeting

Topic		Notes
Project Information	Professional Learning for Equity – what is it and how do the principles fit within our everyday work, and the work we do with others?	Exciting to see the “embeddedness” of the principles into our projects. It appears that we embed the principles unconsciously at times.
	PowerPoint and partner discussions with whole group sharing	Tension between translational and conceptual aspects of the piece. Arenas – what are they? (sites, activities, concepts) We might need to spend some time refining our language Discussion around revising and adding new exemplars as we go forward with our work. We do a nice job of considering each and all of the principles throughout our projects.

It is evident that *Center leaders engage in a meta-cognitive approach to professional learning* within the staff that builds and sustains a shared vision concerning the principles and practices critical to the work, and such activity is viewed by the leaders as an important part of regular staff work including reflection on their work. Reflective work is viewed as critical to the continued success of the Center.

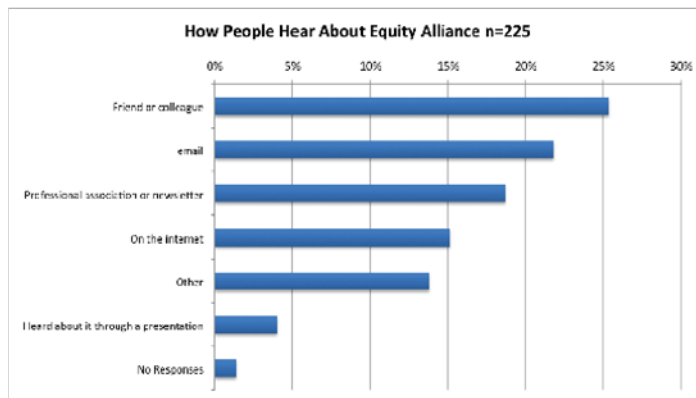
As a result of this staff meeting, the meaning and interpretation of the “Arenas” was questioned and an impetus was created to revisit how those areas of professional learning activity relate to each other, how audiences understand and relate to the areas, and how people understand and respond to the principles. This is evidence of *embedded continuous improvement that mirrors the kinds of practices that the Center promotes with clients.*



Using Feedback to Improve Platforms

Also during this quarter, we surveyed 1440 people who had recently accessed our online newsletter – Equity Matters. Based on their responses and comparing with responses from earlier surveys, we further validated our knowledge concerning how people hear about the Equity Alliance; 80% hear about the center from friends and colleagues, through email, via contact from other professional associations and newsletters, and via the Internet. About half of those who choose “other” tell us that the historical connection to NCCREST, NIUSI and LEADSCAPE were where they first learned of our work (Figure 5).

Figure 5. How people hear about the Equity Alliance



Dialogue Group Method

Of additional note in this section on the development of platforms and tools, we want to share information about the creation of “Dialogue Group” process and modeling that process for school leaders. One method for helping school districts understand their equity needs and related issues is to facilitate dialogue groups with members of the school community. The direct quotes of students, parents and staff help to tell the equity stories throughout the district and provide another set of data for administrators to consider when making decisions regarding policy and practice.

As a part of our work with districts, Dialogue Groups are facilitated in various schools throughout different regions of a district. The questions, which correspond to research-based practices, were collaboratively developed and considered prior to facilitating the groups. Equity Alliance staff traveled to a district to conduct the groups, and several administrators observe the interactions in order to replicate the process with other schools. The responses of participants are transcribed and each script is provided to the Alliance’s Continuous Improvement team, who code the transcripts using NVivo, a software program meant for qualitative data. Equity Alliance staff then work with the district equity lead-

ership team to help make meaning of the data in ways that lead to changes necessary to remove and reduce barriers that stand in the way of equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Our key questions are displayed in the appendix and what follows are examples drawn from typical Dialogue Group interactions; the quotes come from students, parents, teachers and administrators from a variety of settings.

EQUITY THEMES FROM DIALOGUE GROUPS

Learning Expectations

People in some districts view its learning opportunities as demanding, a situation that is lauded by some and is a cause for concerns for others. Opportunities are numerous, with a high degree of expectation and focus on college preparation.

I think here we have a lot of opportunities for students... At the district, so much focus is placed on academics.

However, the level of expectations also can cause a variety of concerns.

We’re always told to talk to all students as if they’re going to college, but [we] believe not all students are going – and that’s okay...

Maybe a weakness of [the district] (and probably not unique...) is that students get passed on to the next grade even when they’re not prepared. It’s like you’re ratifying their failure. The whole thing starts to snowball and before you know it they’re a 9th grader... (and that’s when they give up). And you look at them, and they stop coming to school. Why would they come to school when it’s humiliating because they feel like they might not get caught up.

The school district needs to accept that my daughter is not college material. I understand that, my husband understands that. She will be a good cook, but will not go to college.

I think some of the demands we’re putting on kids is really tough. Juniors are struggling with Algebra 2. Some kids aren’t ready. I know they need it. But we need to do something to help those students out.

..we alienate students who want to go to culinary school or something else that may not be a 4 year university. I understand that more students need to take ACT or SAT, but we don’t need every student taking that.

You don’t have to go to college to be successful, and we lost some of that when our district’s focus is solely on college and university.



Concerns about community and communication

A number of concerns can surface concerning the status of schools and how structural issues such as transportation factor into access and feelings of affiliation

Wish we could do a better job with the alignment of schools. We have 5 elementary schools that feed into our high school. But some of the middle schools feed into 3 different high schools.

There is no public transit for kids who live in this area to go to other schools. There is a bus to x, but not to y. Because of that, there is a limitation of other programs our kids can access. We don't want them going away... but we always have to take that into consideration – for our kids to go to football games, stay for afterschool programs, etc., it's hard because there is no transportation.

In this particular valley, the way it's set up, it's all about [one particular high school over the others] all the way down. Wish we could line it up a little better.

Maybe some kids that are bused here feel alienated. Nobody in this room decided to build the high school in this location... Maybe some of the kids feel that their neighborhood wasn't worthy of a new school. Maybe the district could get the word out that if families think a school isn't a good fit for them, there are other options. The district could help them understand that other programs could be of benefit.

You're also dealing with families that have different socio-economic realities. Some students may feel like they don't fit, or that they don't belong because they have to find transportation here, etc., but they could be feeling out of place because they can't participate as readily. May feel disconnected.

Have a daughter that is learning disabled. The district wanted to mainstream her, which was not going to work – and it didn't. For lack of a better word, that experience retarded her. She was in classes she didn't belong in. She passed all these classes without the skills. We had to push to get her in special education classes.

Something or Someone Else's Responsibility

Some comments can reveal the belief that there are many external causes seemingly unconnected to things the staff can do, or which prompt the need for additional resources to help. These include issues such as cultural differences, work pressures on families that cause frequent moves, lack of resources, bad decision making by higher authorities, and personal responsibility by students themselves.

Improving graduation to 100% - that's awesome. Great. But is it doable? You've got diversity. There's some cultures that might not think of education the same as others. Some kids might need to stay home and look after younger siblings so their parents can work.

Transiency is a big issue here because kids are moving around all the time. I see kids coming in from Mexico that can't speak a word of English. That's a big challenge – and my question is do we have the resources to educate them or not. Really, the only opportunity we have to help them is to educate them well.

To some extent, students who are failing when they get to high school – they've been failing all along. They don't just show up at our high school, but if they do, we should try to figure out what's going on to cause them to fail.

But for those who have struggled all along, it's a lot of work to get them caught up. We need intervention programs throughout the system to catch them when they're young. What we can improve here is have the resources to do something – to help these kids. I'd like to see us have the money that if we see kids who are failing, we should put on the "full court press".

I went to the [x] program, and it really helped me with my math scores. They helped me get on the right track for my algebra classes. But at the same time, it got cut. When things are going well, it gets cut. When it's working, and you can see it working, you shouldn't cut the programs.

There are teachers that offer the help right away, but some students don't want to take it. Teachers give up time before and after school, during lunch and breaks, but some students don't want to take advantage of it. Some responsibility lies on the students as well.

Goal 1 Accomplishments

The following list summarizes the evidence of accomplishment during this quarter, organized by the performance criteria outlined in the introduction.

Quality

Met with district facilitators in California pilot of the “Culturally Responsive Teaching in California” online professional learning module. A teleconference took place in November to discuss implementation status and gather information about district progress, challenges, etc. A full day meeting took place on December 8th to provide professional learning around content for the next course that will be launched in January and to gather feedback regarding experiences with the tool in order to improve the quality of interactions in subsequent courses.

Piloting the course “Culturally Responsive Teaching in California” in 4 settings. School Districts participating in the pilot include (1) Los Angeles Unified, (2) Davis Joint Unified, (3) Center Joint Unified, and (4) Waterford Unified, with approximately 40 participants in various roles throughout their respective districts.

5 Pre-assessments were created, deployed and analyzed to determine the impact of the online learning modules

Understanding

Focused professional learning at November’s team meeting on the professional learning principles and work arenas that are outlined in our “Professional Learning for Culturally Responsive Teaching” brief, and made connections between goals and project work conducted by each staff member.

Evidence from a December survey that 98% of participants in events and services believe their understanding of equity has been improved through contact with Alliance offerings.

Authenticity & Usefulness

Explored two connections to existing networks of schools that are undertaking innovation work: the Arizona “Beat the Odds” schools and a new network being organized by the founder of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Modeled the use of “Dialogue Group” focus group interviews for school leaders, as an example of a tool and method to uncover and reflect on equity stories in authentic settings.

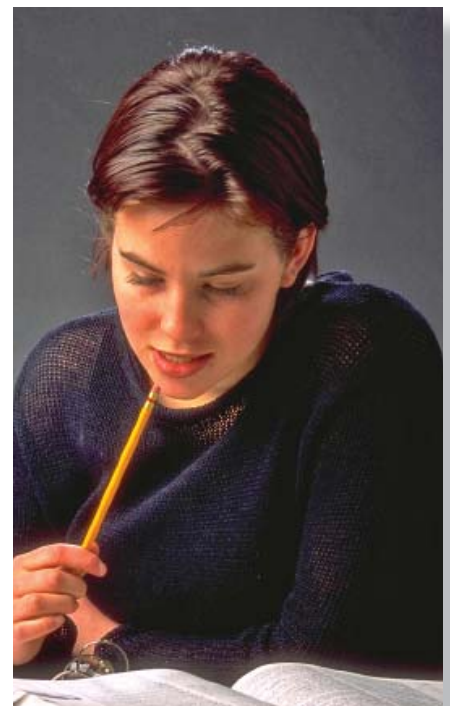
Accessibility

The December survey validated that people access the Equity Alliance in several ways: 80% (n = 225) hear about the center from friends and colleagues, through email, via contact from other professional associations and newsletters, and via the Internet. About half of those who choose “other” (7%) say that they access us via historical connections to NCCREST, NIUSI and LEAD-SCAPE .

Market Share

6 site visits in Nevada expanded by 100 the number of people directly impacted by the EquityAlliance’s services. Full statistics on market share are provided in Networking & Dissemination.

Presentations to groups at conferences such as the International Rescue Committee’s Title VI meeting and the Magnet Schools of America’s new award directors’ meeting also provided an opportunity to get the word out about the services, tools, and resources our center provides.



Goal 2: Networking & Dissemination

Engage regional clients, networks, and providers in peer-to-peer learning and inquiry to improve practice and results for social justice and equitable outcomes for all students.

- 2.1. Design, develop, and maintain a communications and technology infrastructure for the Center.
- 2.2. Develop and maintain a strong network of other technical assistance providers, educators, community and professional organizations, and families.
- 2.3. Develop, implement, and monitor a strategic, proactive dissemination plan for the Center's products and services.

Evidence:

2.2 Design and Maintain Communications Infrastructure

The communications infrastructure of the Center includes regular newsletters (Figure 5), online posting of commissioned articles, and special emails targeted at the full range of the tiered technical assistance model. An online emailing service, Constant Contact, keeps a running record of the communications and provides measures of their effectiveness in reaching the audiences.

Three newsletters were disseminated during the quarter, with the themes of “Serving Homeless Students,” “Religious Tolerance,” and “Bullying and Harassment.” In each newsletter, links to additional resources and links to the Center’s web sites are included, and often, attempts are made to engage readers in voting and commenting on issues. The themes from the newsletters are coordinated with other publications of the quarter and are often prepared in response to issues raised by people in the field. Performance data on the number of “opens” (i.e. how many people open the email) and the number and distribution of “clicks or click-throughs” (i.e. how many and which links within the email are used to navigate to an offered resource) are documented and compared with past quarters to gauge the extent of outreach. Benchmark data is used to compare the newsletter outreach with objective standards of the industry.

The average outreach of the newsletter during the quarter was to 7858 people in each newsletter mailing. Open rates trail the industry benchmark for educational web sites, which we believe may be driven in the rest of the industry by online course-taking sites that would entail more loyalty since grades and payments are involved. However, the Center is close to the industry standard in click-throughs and beats the industry in “bounces” (i.e. the number of emails that do not go to a working email address, indicating mailing list age and maintenance) and, indicating that our lists are maintained well, kept up-to-date with active users, and that our users read and pay attention to what we send them. The nearly 10% open rate indicates that we have a dedicated readership of the newsletters of about 780 people, who we stay in touch with monthly (Figure 6).



Figure 5. Equity Matters Newsletter

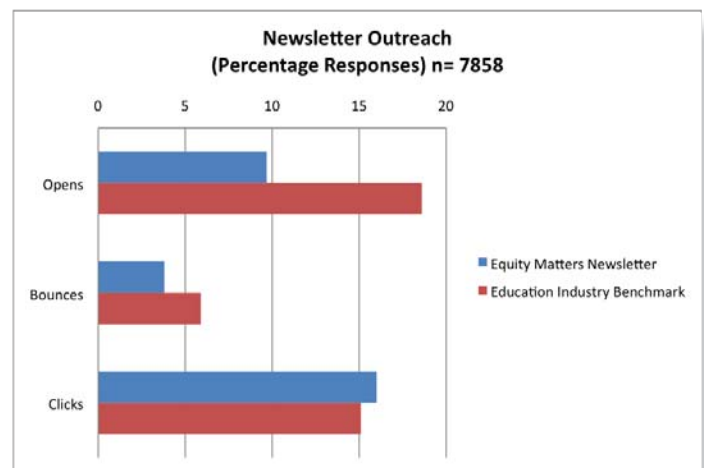


Figure 6. Newsletter Outreach and Effectiveness



Other outreach during the quarter includes blog articles, special invitations to attend the upcoming Equity Leadership Forum and a related 2-day certification training opportunity.

The infrastructure also provides detailed analyses of each mailing, which facilitates the networking team's work by comparing results across the types, sizes and timing of communications. This data underscores the logic of the tiered technical assistance model; for example a pre-assessment given to a small group at Level III outperforms much larger communications at Level I in terms of opens and clicks (Figure 7); note the sharp spike for the November 12 pre-assessment to a small, responsive group, compared to other larger mailings.

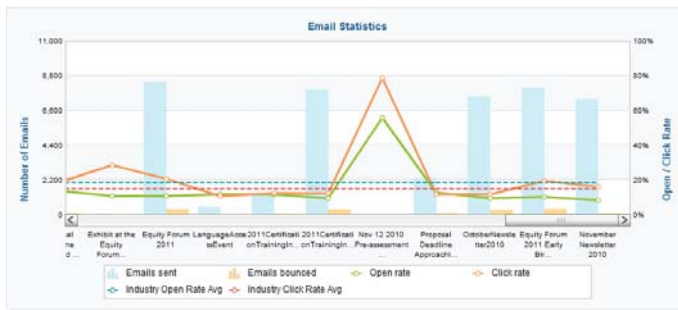


Figure 7. Email statistics and benchmarks

2.2 Develop and Maintain Networks

Presentations and participation in conferences is an essential part of developing and maintaining professional networks. On November 5, staff presented information about our equity assistance center and the equity assistance center network in general to the directors of the newly funded magnet school programs. This conference was held in Washington, DC, and was attended by directors throughout the country. Several magnet schools were funded this year in Region IX, and this invitation provided an opportunity to provide specific information to a group of directors with a desire to learn more, and offered the resources of our center to 150+ new directors and program officers.

Another strategy used to develop and maintain networks includes an annual "Leadership Forum on Equity and Excellence," now in its second year. This quarter included early stages of preparation for the Forum, including outreach emails to announce the event, emails to invite session presentations and outreach to identify and invite keynote speakers (Figure 8).



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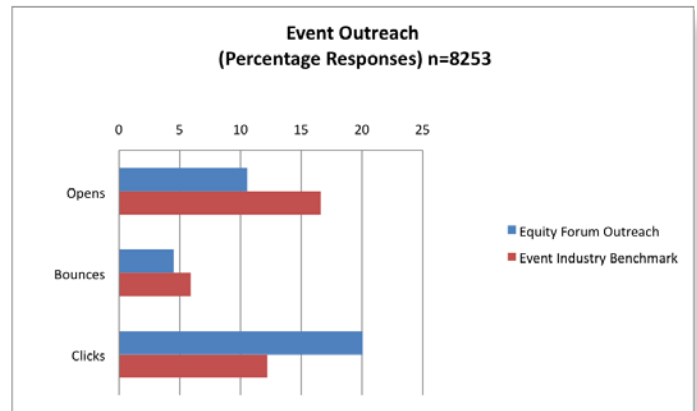


Figure 8. Event Outreach for the Forum

2.3 Proactive Dissemination Plan

Finally, we report on networking and dissemination using reports and analytics from Constant Contact, Facebook and Google Analytics for the quarter. This analysis measures overall usage of the web site resources (e.g. homepages, Facebook, Twitter, and associated applications within the web pages), provides us with information about most used pages and other information about our audiences.

First, the total number of email communications for the last three months was 81,915, which is documented in the emailing tracking report as of Dec 16. A few terms to keep in mind concerning the metrics for network effectiveness include "opens," which are the number of people who read an email and "click throughs," which is the number of people using a link embedded in the email showing that they have responded to what they read.

A comparison of industry benchmarks for the education and service sector shows that we lead the industry standard in having a smaller number of bounces (4.5%) to the industry's 5.9% and a larger number of opens (17.9%) to the industry's 15.1%. We trail the industry benchmark in number of opens (11%) to the industry's 18.6. We believe that this might be due to the preponderance of "course delivery web sites" where there is a higher requirement to open and pay attention to emails in the rest of the industry compared to our sites. Other industries to note have open rates such as 8.5% for communications, and 13.5% for marketing and public relations.





Table 2. Email communications for different levels of technical assistance

Level of Technical Assistance	Number of Emails & Audience Size	How many people opened?	How many people clicked through?
Level I: Resource Dissemination	8 to 63119 people	5623 9%	827 15%
Levels II & III: Targeted TA and Networking & PL	13 to 18562 people	2943 16%	682 23%
Level IV: Ongoing Partnership	6 to 234 people	63 27%	33 52%

The different levels in the tiered technical assistance efforts produce strikingly different responses in the networking and dissemination profile (Table 2). Broader dissemination to 63,119 people at Level I leads to industry comparable performance in terms of opens and clicks (responses) to mailings and surveys. The total number of emails sent is not a unique count, but important for the next metrics. Opens and click-responses climb strikingly ahead of industry standards as the depth of tiered services and degree of products use increases.

In the three months October-December of 2010, there were 3,321 unique visitors from the U.S. and over 70 other territories and countries; those people used over 20,000 pages of resources. 54% of the visitors were new to the site.



Repeat visits are a sign of “visitor loyalty” (in the language of web-outreach) and show affiliation to the site; 79% of all visitors return multiple times and spend significant amounts of time reading the materials provided. There were 1,293 people who visited the site between 9 and over 200 times during the quarter (Table 3), providing evidence that many people are more than casual users of the resources.



Table 3. Visitor loyalty from October to December 2010

Times visited during quarter	Number of people	Percentage of total audience
9-14	210	3.7
15-25	217	3.9
26-50	172	3.1
51-100	100	1.8
101-200	240	4.3
201+	354	6.3

Facebook interactions are another way the Equity Alliance disseminates information and helps followers understand issues related to educational equity that occur throughout the country. Our center has had a goal each quarter of increasing the number of Facebook users who “like” our Facebook page. This quarter, we increased Facebook participants by 27%. Staff receives weekly updates from Facebook regarding participation. The example below was for the week ending December 12th:

Here is this week's summary for your Facebook Pages:



The Equity Alliance at ASU

497 monthly active users ▲29 since last week

448 people like this ▲2 since last week

21 wall posts and comments this week ▼7 since last week

67 visits this week ▼19 since last week

GOAL 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following list summarizes the evidence of accomplishment during this quarter, organized by the performance criteria outlined in the introduction.

Quality & Usefulness

- Collaborated with USDOE in planning the EAC Directors meeting held in early December.

Accessibility

- Developed a new relationship with the director of the Magnet School Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center, to increase accessibility of Alliance work within that network.

Authenticity & Understanding

- Attended a meeting sponsored by the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Justice in DC, which led to increased communications with Department of Education officials directly responsible for ensuring civil rights.

Market Share

- Presented on equity matters at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as part of an ASU Title 6 Forum held at the Phoenix campus. This led to a contact with the AZ DOE contact who manages the state's grant program for 11 schools who are working with refugee populations; and a plan now in place to present Alliance work in February.
- Conducted an intake interview for Level IV work with the Valley View school (AZ) and now awaiting their baseline information.



Goal 3: Research & Development

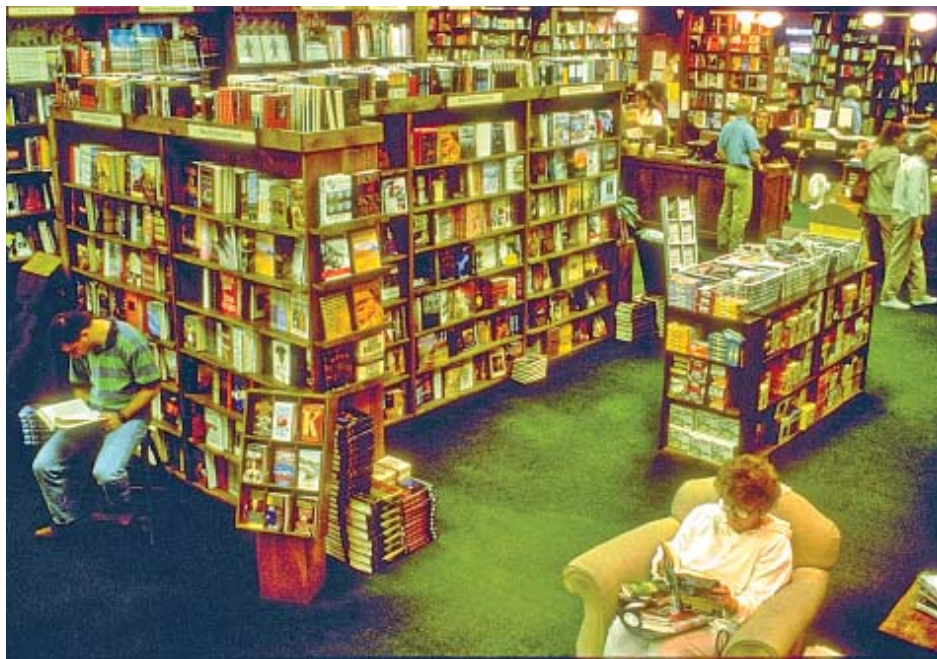
Create, validate, and produce content-rich, cutting-edge scientifically-based resources that translate educational research for diverse learners into practice for practitioners, administrators, families, and policy makers intended to assist schools in providing effective learning environments for all students.

- 3.1. Develop and apply a conceptual framework for the analysis and synthesis of best practices in supporting outcomes for ALL students.
- 3.2. Develop a clearinghouse of resources, partnering with centers and organizations throughout Region IX and the nation, to provide access to products that meet the needs of our clients.
- 3.3. Develop and produce an accessible series of high-quality products that synthesize the existing research-base and practice-base.
- 3.4. Develop and produce new tools for assessing and addressing equity needs and leveraging school improvement.

Evidence:

3.1 Conceptual Framework for Synthesis of Best Practices

The conceptual framework that is used to guide all publications was examined during the quarter, and a draft document is in process that adds new detail to the Systemic Change Framework. The draft integrates existing technical assistance tools and practices, adds details about the student learning level, updates several of the concepts in the framework, and begins to elucidate how complex educational systems can be transformed through a process identified as “Complex Assessment of Systems in Education: The CASE Process.”



3.2 Resource Clearinghouse

Each quarter, a number of new publications, including partners from other centers, are reviewed and added to the online Clearinghouse – the Learning Carousel (Table 4). In order to be included, the document must be openly accessible and immediately useable by people who may find it during their searches on the clearinghouse, and must help advance the mission and vision of the Center through alignment with the conceptual framework. This quarter 17 documents were added.



Table 4. Open access documents added to the Learning Carousel

Barton, P. & Coley, R.	The Family: America's Smallest School (2007)
Pugach, M. C., Blanton, L. P., Correa, V. I., McLeskey, J., & Langley, L. K. (2009). NCIPP	Professional Learning Communities: A Promising Practice for Integrating Novice Special Education Teachers into the School Culture
Pugach, M. C., Blanton, L. P., Correa, V. I., McLeskey, J., & Langley, L. K. (2009). NCIPP	Co-Teaching and Team Teaching: Promising Opportunities for Supporting Novice Special Education Teachers Within the School Culture
NCIPP	How Administrators Can Help Novice Special Education Teachers Thrive: Induction Practices That Make a Difference
Kandace Wernsing (2010)	Back to School: Tips for Parents of Children with Special Needs
Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness	The Impact of School Closures on Homeless Students in New York City
Pugach, M. C., Blanton, L. P., Correa, V. I., McLeskey, J., & Langley, L. K. (2009). NCIPP	Professional Learning Communities: A Practice to Support the Induction and Retention of Novice Special Education Teachers
Diane Pedrotty Bryant	Instructional Decision-Making Procedures: Ensuring Appropriate Instruction for Struggling Students
Billingsley, B. S., Griffin, C. C., Smith, S. J., Kamman, M., & Israel, M. (2009). NCIPP	Emerging Areas of Inquiry: Special Education Teacher Induction
Fergus, Edward	Distinguishing Difference from Disability: The Common Causes of Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education
Arzubiaga, Angela E. & Mulligan, Elaine M	Considering Inclusion and the Preschool Education of Immigrant Children in the United States
NCIPP	Your Child Has a First-Year Teacher—How Will the School Provide Support?
NCIPP	Induction: A Brief Introduction for Beginning Special Education Teachers
Rosenberg, M. S., Brownell, M., McCray, E. D., deBettencourt, L. U., Leko, M., & Long, S. (2009). NCIPP	Strengthening Partnerships Between Special Education Teacher Educators and Schools
Therriault, S.B., Heppen, J., O'Cummings, M., Fryer, L., and Johnson, A.	Early Warning System Implementation Guide
Therriault, S.B., Heppen, J., O'Cummings, M., Fryer, L., and Johnson, A.	Early Warning System Tool
Therriault, S.B., Heppen, J., O'Cummings, M., Fryer, L., and Johnson, A.	National High School Center Early Warning System Tool v2.0: Technical Manual



3.3 High quality products

New work was initiated to update the Center’s video clearinghouse on English Language Learners: the Language Differences Media Lab (Figure 9). The project is developing four dialogue guides to accompany the video collection that will assist people in using the videos for professional learning. One guide was nearly completed in December; two others are expected to be completed by the end of January. In addition to the dialogue guides, a new look is planned for this portion of our website, with one significant change being made during this quarter. Several more changes are planned for the next quarter.

The project is also an example of how the Center integrates doctoral leadership development into its work, since the lead author of the guides is a resident doctoral student, and will be working with the publications team to complete the project.



Figure 9. Language Media Lab

3.4 Tools for Assessing Equity and Leveraging School Improvement

Publication of special documents adds to the quarterly development and dissemination of high quality materials. This quarter saw the completion of a new “Equity Matters” publication: “Language (Policy) Matters,” by Equity Alliance staff, supported by the publications team and project directors. The content of publications is shaped by field-based requests for assistance and by comments and interactions with the field. Those ideas are then vetted by the Networking and Dissemination team and publications subgroup; an author is identified and a cyclic process of drafting and editing begins.

One publication per quarter is the target, since there are simultaneous productions of blogs, articles, conference presentations and field notes from technical assistance visits also being produced during the quarter. This publication will be published the first part of January. What follows is a highlight from the publication

Content from “Language (Policy) Matters”

As the U.S. population becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, schools in both urban and rural areas are experiencing changes in student demographics at a remarkable rate. For instance, there is no “majority” demographic group of students in California. Hispanic students comprise just under 50% of California’s student population and although they are the majority nationally, White students comprise only 28% of California’s students. This trend in California is emerging across the U.S. not only in border states in the Southwest but in also in states that have historically had a predominately White and African/American population such as North Carolina and Tennessee. How well we educate these multilingual students will depend on our capacity to improve the language knowledge and skills of all classroom teachers. Increasing our collective capacity to think and act in multilingual ways will expand the opportunities for all learners to become multilingual.



Figure 10. Brief publication

GOAL 3 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following list summarizes the evidence of accomplishment during this quarter, organized by the performance criteria outlined in the introduction.

Quality

“Language Policy Matters” – Brief publication completed

“Collaboration for Culturally Responsiveness” – Brief publication drafted

“School Choice” – Brief publication drafted

Understanding & Authenticity

The December survey of products and services show that of those who access our products (n=178 when those who “Don’t know” are dropped) 95% state that the products promote educational equity.

Accessibility & Usefulness

Re-design and update of the Web site, including all new navigation and updates to the English Language Learners section.



Goal 4: Continuous Improvement

Engage in ongoing inquiry and program evaluation in order to continually improve efforts to support Region IX in providing high-quality opportunities to learn for all students.

- 4.1. Engage in ongoing assessment to ensure that our efforts assist states in providing effective instruction to all students in Region IX meeting their needs and producing results.
- 4.2. Assess the quality and impact of the Equity Alliance at ASU’s services and products.
- 4.3. Engage in continuous refinement of existing products and services.

Evidence:

4.1 Engage in ongoing assessment

The continuous improvement team is engaged in tracking and monitoring all other teams; its members sit in on meetings and hold interviews and periodic update conversations with team leaders. Information from ongoing activities surfaces in a variety of places, including meeting agendas and calendars, team leaders who utilize NVivo as part of their documentation, and by placing files into a shared hard drive. Quarterly evaluation meetings set the larger agenda, and weekly meetings with the project investigator and directors help feed the ongoing assessment processes.

4.2 Assess quality of products and services

In this quarter, a pre-assessment of the online California “Moodle course” – Culturally Responsive Teaching – was analyzed and shared with the Professional Learning team in early December. A total of 30 responses were gathered as of December 15; more are expected during January. In one set of questions, we asked for participants’ level of confidence on a range of issues (Table 1 and Figure 3). The preliminary analysis suggests that the instrument may be sensitive to expected changes from pre-to-post, including:

- Expected **decreases** in the 90% of participants (27) who are CONFIDENT “how my identity impacts the cultural relevance of my teaching” (question 2) and the 87% (26) who are CONFIDENT about understanding “the impact of cultural identities on classroom success” (question 9) We expect those percentages to decrease as people gain more nuanced, reflective levels of detail about those issues.
- Expect **increases toward confidence** (lowering the following percentages) in the NOT CONFIDENT questions:
 - 63% (19) - where and how to influence positive change in my school (question 5)
 - 60% (18) - knowing the key features of a culturally responsive school context (question 4)
 - 50% (15) - knowing how to create a culturally responsive classroom (question 3)
 - 47% (14) - teaching with an understanding of local historical contexts (question 6)
 - 40% (12) – understanding the impact of the intersectionality of learning references, cultural identity, and relationships to power and privilege (question 10)

4.3 Engage in continuous refinement

A refinement project concerning the *Systemic Change Framework* was initiated this quarter. The areas of the existing framework that are currently under discussion and refinement will be discussed as part of the production of a new chapter concerning the use of complex systems analyses with the framework.

GOAL 4 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following list summarizes the evidence of accomplishment during this quarter, organized by the performance criteria outlined in the introduction.

Quality

- A pre-assessment survey for the online course was launched in order to gain insight into the participants' level of confidence over a broad range of issues related to culturally responsive educational practices.

Understanding & Usefulness

- The Continuous Improvement team collected and evaluated both internal and external feedback for the work conducted by the center, in the form of meetings, surveys, interviews and periodic updates.

Authenticity

- The Systemic Change Framework is undergoing a refinement process that was initiated during this quarter, demonstrating our ongoing efforts to ensure that the theoretical underpinnings of the work conducted by the center is entirely relevant to the broader realities of our audience.

Accessibility & Market Share

- The pre-assessment survey created for the online course released in California includes a collection of demographic information, particularly asking the participant to identify his or her profession and affiliated level of education.



CONCLUSION

First quarter of year 3 activities continued to build on past efforts to provide responsive personalized assistance, applicable professional learning materials and research-based products to the audiences of the Equity Assistance Center. The Center expanded and sustained outreach to its audiences, and constantly improved and evaluated the impact of its practices. Furthermore, this quarter reflected a marked attempt at providing new and innovative strategies for professional learning and technical assistance, such as the online Culturally Responsive Teaching Academy for California and focus groups held in Nevada. The center also engaged in a macro-system



approach to constructively evaluating its tools and practices. For example, staff scrutinized the four arenas and six principles of professional learning and began making new and detailed changes to the Systemic Change Framework. These processes allow the Center to build and strengthen its theoretical foundation, as well as carry out a flexible approach to achieving its goals.



Appendix 1: Questions for Dialogue Groups

QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
1. What is your role in the WCSD?	How did you come to work/attend/bring your child to school in the WCSD? What brought you here?
2. What do you like about WCSD? What are the strengths – and what areas do you believe need attention/improvements?	What is different about working here/attending school here with the students and families you described versus working in/attending school in another district?
3. Who are the students that have the most power in WCSD?	How do you know?
4. Please talk about the efforts that the WCSD has taken on in addressing issues of equity and inequity. Of making sure that all students are treated fairly and experience positive outcomes?	How do you feel about the quality and intensity of these efforts?
5. What kinds of conversation related to equity and achievement have you been involved in at your school?	What actions, if any, were taken as a result of various conversations?
6. Please tell me about how WCSD and/or this school comes to know students and families and how administrators' and teachers' understanding of students impacts the way they teach and interact with students and families.	What is communicated verbally and nonverbally regarding student expectations? Are all students expected to achieve the same outcomes?
7. Who are the families that have the most power in WCSD?	How do you know?
8. What are your thoughts about how WCSD addresses the needs of culturally/linguistically diverse learners?	What role do you believe your attitudes and beliefs about students have in determining student success?
9. How do you feel about special programs that pull students away from the general education classroom?	
10. What role do you believe cultural influences have in student learning and/or teaching at WCSD?	What role does culture have in teacher planning, instruction, and assessment?
11. Who are the staff that have the most influence in WCSD?	How do you know?
12. What are some examples of inclusion and exclusion of students from general education that you've encountered while teaching/attending/sending your child to school here?	What are the ways in which you go about equalizing resources, breaking-down barriers, combating segregation, and guaranteeing children an opportunity to learn?
13. What would you like WCSD to know?	How does it feel to go to school here? Be a teacher? Send your children to school?

Appendix 2: Course Content for “Culturally Responsive Teaching in California”

Course Modules for Culturally Responsive Teaching

SESSION 1.1 - REFLECTING ON PERSONAL AND GROUP IDENTITIES, AND CULTURES

- Define cultural responsiveness in a classroom in terms of the kinds of interactions that occur between and among educators and the students in the classroom.
- Explore how do teachers’ cultural identities and related school experiences affect their definition of themselves as teachers.
- Create a personal understanding of how your identity affects your teaching.

SESSION 1.2 - CULTURES IN MY CLASSROOM

- Develop personal responses to the following common beliefs:
 - I don’t think of my students in terms of their race or ethnicity; I am color blind when it comes to my teaching.
 - The gap in the achievement among students of different races is about poverty, not race.
 - Teachers should adapt their instructional practice to the distinctive cultures of African American, Latino, Asian and Native American students.
 - When students come from homes where educational achievement is not a high priority, they often don’t do their homework and their parents don’t come to school events. This lack of parental support undermines my efforts to teach these students.
 - It is not fair to ask students who are struggling with English to take on challenging academic assignments.
 - I try to keep in mind the limits of my students’ abilities and give them assignments that I know they can do so that they do not become discouraged.
 - Students of different races and ethnicities often have different learning styles, and good teachers will match their instruction to these learning styles.
 - Grouping students of different levels of achievement for instruction may benefit some students, but it can undermine the progress that could otherwise be made by higher-achieving students.

SESSION 1.3 - DIMENSIONS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

- Be introduced to the major dimensions of culturally responsive teaching: Personal, Institutional, and Instructional
- Understand the ways in which teacher demographics mirror and diverge from student demographics in

California.

- Explore the demographics of students in their own district.
- Learn examples of teachers, from similar and divergent cultures as their students learn about students and utilize strengths in teaching.

SESSION 2.1 – COMPONENTS OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

- Define the components of a culturally responsive system
- Review the historical contexts of US schooling practices
- Explore the ways in which some groups have been historically excluded and how change happened
- Compare historical and contemporary contexts across states
- Examine the emergence and implementation of federally mandated programs: Elementary and Secondary Act, Special Education, ELL
- Identify the troubling aspects of disproportionality in education

SESSION 2.2 - SCHOOL CONTEXTS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

- Develop an understanding of the features of culturally responsive school contexts.
- Assess the culture and contexts of their own school in relation to these features.
- Identify the 5 key shifts in the way schools are organized for culturally responsive practice, and reflect on their own school’s resources for and progress in making these shifts.

SESSION 2.3 - CLASSROOM CONTEXTS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

- Explore the ways in which culture is created in classrooms
- Explore different ways in which “diversity” is constructed and viewed in schools
- Explore the elements of People that provide the context for the creation of culturally responsive classrooms, both in common assumption patterns and in assigning “at risk” labels to students
- Explore the elements of Policies that provide the context for the creation of culturally responsive classrooms
- Explore the elements of Practice that provide the context for the creation of culturally responsive classrooms
- Identify ways in which teachers have the power to shape each of these elements in their own classrooms.



Quarter Report Year 3 Quarter 1

October 1 - December 31, 2010

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