Collective Thinking on the Evaluation of ITEST Projects

David Reider, Education Design, INC

Karen Peterman, Independent Evaluation Consultant

Working with Teachers

- how to recruit
- their responsibility toward responding to evaluators
- how to bring them closer to the evaluation process
- best practices in communicating with teachers around evaluation
- teachers' misconceptions about project accountability and the evaluator

PI/Project Team Relationship with Evaluators

- new roles for evaluators and evaluation

- frequency of communication between project and evaluation teams

- drawing the line between an evaluator being both part of the "team" and external

Job of an Evaluator

- what goes on behind the scenes: IRB, proposals, evaluation design, contacting teachers, collecting data, analyzing, reporting

- what roles are assumed to be those of the evaluator

- ways to present a united front to participants, as relevant to evaluation activities

Evaluation Reports

- audience: who reads them? who should they be written for? should we share with teachers?
- what is the ideal format
- best practices in communicating with a client about a report
- ideal time frame for reporting to client
- the difference between a project's annual report and the evaluation report

Research vs. Evaluation

- often projects contain both "research" and program evaluation components. where are the boundaries between the two? what should be considered appropriate overlap?

- can the external evaluator participate in the research as well?

Embedded Assessments

- what are they?
- what types of programs/activities are best-suited to this type of assessment?
- what are the benefits and challenges of this methodology?
- are embedded assessments alone enough to demonstrate outcomes or should they always be paired with other methods?
- can an evaluator create embedded assessments without compromising his/her role as "external" evaluator

Test Scores as Indicators of Project Success

- schools often perceive evidence of success of educational innovations as solely based on improved test scores

- to what extent should test scores (state, district, standardized, classroom assignment specific) be included as a measurement of project success or traction?