



Update on the Early Childhood Innovation Implementation Evaluation

St. Xavier University
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Our Mission

To provide objective and reliable evidence for Illinois P-20 education policy making and program development.

Ensuring Research-Informed Education Policy for Illinois

Evaluation Project Background

1. Systematically reviewed the proposal narratives for each project
2. Conducted background research related to the changing landscape of Early Childhood Education
3. Developed interview protocol
4. Scheduled and conducted the interviews
5. Coded and identified some themes in the early responses

Changing Landscape for Early Childhood Education

1. New standards
2. Gateways Credentials
3. Assessments
4. Programmatic/curricular enhancements

Review of Proposal Narratives

- **Unique contributions of each project**
- **Commonalities / overlap**
 - Improving articulation was mentioned the greatest number of times (partnership development was mentioned 10 times)
 - Gateways Credentials was the second most popular goal and activity
 - Addressing standards
 - Field-based experiences

Developing the Interview Protocol

- **Went through several iterations**

- Used the project narratives to develop a draft version
- Obtained initial feedback internally at the IERC and with a consultant we had hired (Lorrie Beaumont)
- Obtained feedback from the Board of Higher Education and the Governor's Office
 - Joni Scritclow, Christy Chadwick, Stephanie Bernoteit
- Sent out something that was fairly close to the final version and got final feedback from Stephanie Bernoteit.
- Made some slight adaptations after the first couple of interviews.

Questions on the Interview Protocol

- **Focused on major goals and activities associated with each project**
 - Barriers to implementation
 - Catalysts and levers allowing for implementation
 - Innovations and enhancements to articulation
 - Program/curricular enhancements

Questions on the Interview Protocol (cont.)

- Possible impacts
- How far along the partners were in the implementation process
- Ways in which new standards and program requirements were being met
 - Articulation
 - Overall
- Overall thoughts about the grant process

Different Versions of the Interview Protocol

Four different versions:

- a) four-year partners
- b) community college partners
- c) community-based partners
- d) for those associated with more than one site

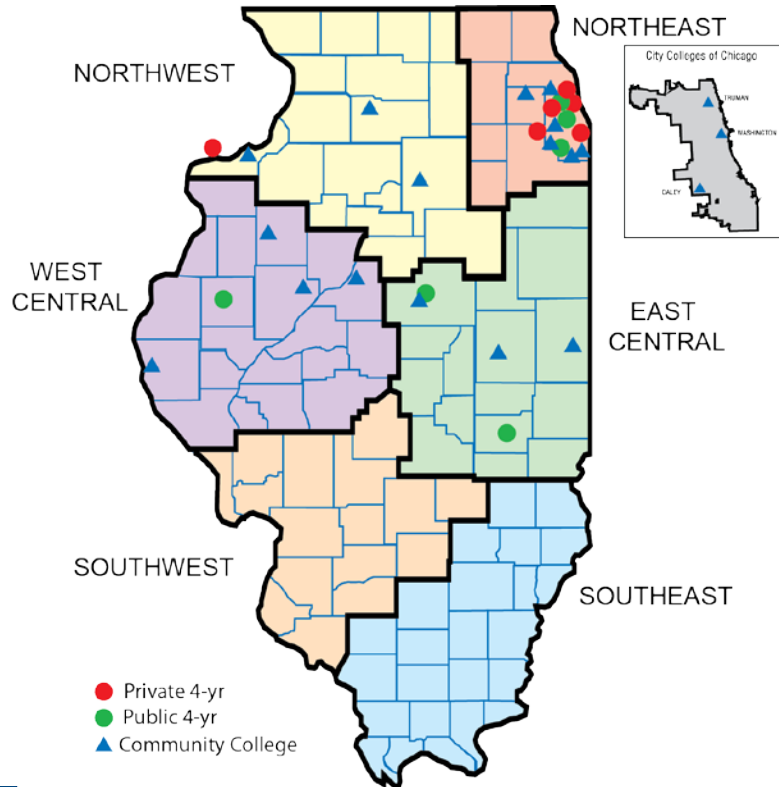
Interview Participants

- Worked with the principal investigators to identify 53 individuals from the 12 project sites; 48 were unique.
 - 21 were from four-year colleges
 - 28 were from community colleges
 - 4 were from community partners
- There was some overlap as five of the individuals were associated with two project sites (community colleges).

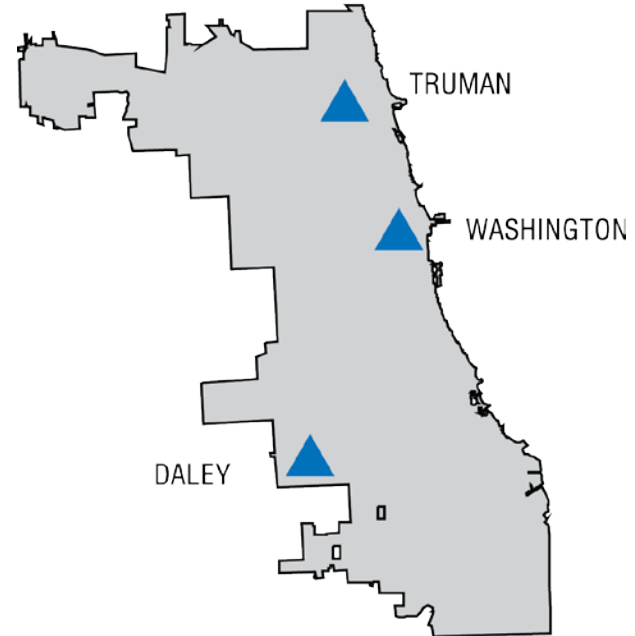
Characteristics of the Grantees

- Six public four-year institutions are involved in partnerships
- Six private four-year institutions*
- *one is located in Iowa, but maintains a special distinction for those emanating from the Quad-Cities.
- 19 individual community colleges from 17 different community college districts.

Geographic Location of Project Sites



City Colleges of Chicago



Update on Interviews

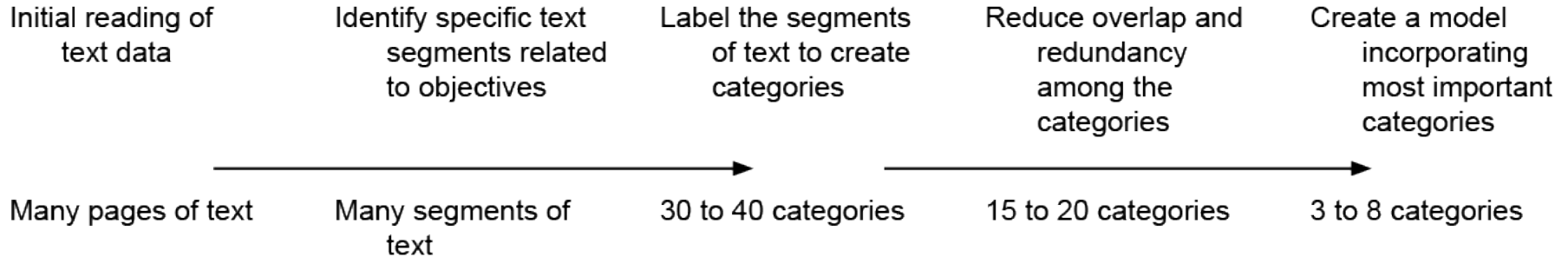
- To date, we've completed 44 interviews (over 80%)
- An initial goal was to interview at least three people associated with each project.
 - We've met that threshold for 10 out of the 12 projects.
 - For the other 2 projects, we only need one more for each to reach that goal.
- We have 9 out of the 12 project sites completed.
- More than half of final interview summaries (28) have been reviewed for accuracy by the interview participants and returned.

Interview Process

- No Transcription
- Digitally recorded the interviews to ensure the accuracy of the notes
- Detailed summaries of the conversation, structured with the interview protocol
- Provided everyone with the opportunity to clarify statements, retract statements entirely, and even provide entirely new ideas
- We had to ask for clarification or expansion of ideas in the text of the summary

Coding Process

The Coding Process in Inductive Analysis



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2002, p. 266, Figure 9.4) by permission of Pearson Education, Inc. (© 2002, Upper Saddle River, NJ).

Initial Analysis of Responses Regarding Views of the Current Grant Process

Almost exclusively positive

- Many respondents mentioned their intentions or hopes of applying again

“Grant opportunities like these push us to do this difficult work that we would not have done otherwise.”

“This current grant provides a wonderful and outstanding model.”

- Initial skeptics were pleasantly surprised at the end

“Often wondered if it would all lead to the end goal of reaching the students. But it did...It was incredibly worthwhile to go through the whole process.”

Initial Analysis of Responses Regarding Views of the Current Grant Process

Catalyst for new dialogue and conversation

“This grant has been a lifesaver to us in ECE teacher preparation at the two- and four-year levels!”

“The grant has allowed for a bigger conversation of the education system as a whole and has allowed for institutions to realize how similar they are.”

“Those people that applied for the grant are not only motivated to help their institutions, but are also motivated to help the profession.”

Additional Views Regarding the Grant Process

Overall the structure and support were beneficial, probably more so than the money

“The grant provided the structure and support necessary to accomplish the goals and move from talk and discussion to action.”

“It allowed us to get our administration on-board which was a big win. Everyone got to see why we have our curriculum in place the way we do and how complicated early childhood can be.”

“The money is the draw for this kind of work, but the money isn’t sustained in terms of following through. But because the grant got us started, it contributed to both the commitment and to the work.”

Additional Views Regarding the Grant Process

- **Practical benefits such as moving forward with program changes and collectively dealing with new requirements and mandates**

“Starting conversations with actual teaching practice of the institutions; if relationship starts here, you can build trust. These conversations often start on the wrong foot and it can be difficult to veer the conversations back. Also focusing on standards or anchoring on anything that is important to all the institutions is productive and constructive and helps ease the more difficult conversations.”

Initial Categories

- **Smoothing the Community College to Four-Year Transition**
 - Articulation
 - Other activities
- **Changing Contexts**
 - Diversity
 - Fluid policy environment
 - Administrative

Use of Technology

- Articulation

- Using LiveText to share portfolio requirements
- edTPA
- Electronic surveys

- Collaboration

- Sharing documents (drop-box, google drive)
- Emailing (strategic carbon-copying)
- Virtual Meetings

Other Thoughts

- Rotating meeting sites and using multiple platforms

“Rotating the locations of meetings allowed for each partner to better understand the institution and context the participants work in.”

“Meeting at each site gave a chance to see the context of the institution and the diversity of the students, but virtual meetings allow for more frequent meetings. This partnership has also helped this partner connect to the bigger field of early childhood education.”

- Meeting in informal settings

Final Thoughts

- Need for Continuity
 - Not only beyond the funding period
 - So the accomplishments outlive the players
- Amicability within the Profession

“There are no mean people in Early Childhood.”

“...same heart....”

“...early childhood educators are not mean and very creative when given the opportunity.”

“Everyone in Early Childhood is nice.”

Next Steps

- Finish conducting the interviews
 - Be looking for messages from FullSlate or Lorrie Beaumont
 - Take about about 30 minutes to an hour
- Send out the remaining summaries for clarification
- Upload summaries into qualitative software package
- Reduce the data further, create codes, themes, etc.

Next Steps

- Develop a draft version of the final report
- Solicit stakeholder feedback on draft
- Release final version in late March

Questions?

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