



Project Evaluation Executive Summary

This report summarizes the evaluation of *A Pathway to Excellence*, a professional development model implemented by School's Out Washington (SOWA) from 2007 to 2009 for afterschool programs throughout Washington State and Northern Oregon. The *Pathway to Excellence* model is comprised of four components that focus on one content strand area: 1) an initial training opportunity, 2) professional site-based coaching, 3) participation in regional Learning Communities, and 4) use of online discussion boards. In this initial pilot, SOWA used the model to deliver professional development to afterschool programs related to improving practices for English language learners.

This evaluation uses a quasi-experimental design with a comparison group to examine the impact of the model on afterschool program staff's knowledge and skills, program-level changes that support English language learning, and engagement of English language learners (ELLs) served by the participating programs. This is the first evaluation of this model and begins to build a base of evidence for the model's efficacy as well as information for improving the model for future use and replication. A companion evaluation report related to the process of implementing this model is forthcoming.

Result Highlights

1)	Training participants increased their knowledge and use of skills related to English language learning (ELL) regardless of their exposure to other model components, and maintained these changes over the school year.
2)	The model resulted in program-level changes that help to institutionalize supports for English language learners.
3)	In particular, Learning Community participants found the coaching a strong component of the model.
4)	Quality resource materials can support sustained improvements in knowledge and skills from the conference, ultimately supporting program-level changes.
5)	The Learning Community component of the model promoted program networking and sharing of resources and best practices, which also supported program-level changes.
6)	Although there are considerable limitations to the conclusions that can be made about the impact of the model on student engagement outcomes based on this evaluation design, results indicate that students in programs that participated in the "full model" became more engaged in their programs over the course of the year.

In addition to the summary of findings related to outcomes of this model, this report describes lessons learned about the components themselves and makes several recommendations for future evaluations of the model. These recommendations for future evaluations include further examination of the key model components and characteristics, resulting student outcomes, and sustainability of program changes after participating in the model.

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