WIDA™ RESEARCH REPORT

COLLABORATING WITH STATES ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A Report for the WIDA Consortium

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MAY 2013

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WiDA™

World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) advances academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students. WIDA was formed as the result of a federal grant to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. It is a consortium of states and districts working together to promote achievement of English language learners. The organization has created a comprehensive system that includes English Language Development Standards, Spanish Language Development Standards, English language proficiency assessments, professional development for educators of ELLs, and research on all aspects of English language learning.

RESEARCH

WIDA's Reseasrch Department seeks to provide timely, meaningful, and actionable research that promotes educational equity and academic achievement for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Its annual research agenda is developed under the guidance of the WIDA Consortium Board Research Subcommittee and includes topics in the areas of academic language, standards, professional learning, and policy.

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Executive Summary

This study investigated a coaching process in which state educational representatives (SEAs) and WIDA staff engaged during 2012. The purpose was to enhance the quality of the professional development offered by states to their educators. The project was a pilot that included six states, each paired with a WIDA coach. All parties involved in the collaboration process participated in the study.

The research revealed that the coaching process benefited states in a number of ways. The collaboration process:

- Allowed SEAs to clarify their own needs and see how the WIDA professional development offerings fit those needs;
- Contributed to positive shifts in the professional development planned by SEAs by enhancing the cohesion, broadening the reach, deepening the content, and/or increasing the availability of professional development offerings;
- Encouraged states to plan ahead;
- Promoted a collaborative relationship among the members of the SEA team as well as between the SEA team and the WIDA coach;
- Supported SEAs in using data when planning professional development; and
- Increased the awareness of SEAs of professional development options available at WIDA.

At the end of the coaching process, states co-constructed a valued tangible product with their coach: an actionable professional development plan for the following academic year that was anchored in a vision for the professional learning of educators working with English language learners. A number of factors supported the success of this process. These factors include (a) features of the collaborative relationship (clear definition of roles, accountability, flexibility, and evolution over time), (b) features of the coaching process (face-to-face component and WIDA support), and (c) characteristics of the SEA team (history of collaboration and commitment to the process).

The process had different but equally significant benefits for both veteran as well as new WIDA member states. The collaboration was highly valued by the majority of the participants in the pilot. WIDA staff saw the process as important not only because it helped them grow professionally but also because they felt it provided a service that helps WIDA stand out as an organization.

Based on this pilot study, WIDA developed a number of recommendations for how the collaborative process can be strengthened in future years.

Introduction

This is a research report on the coaching process in which state educational representatives (SEAs) and WIDA staff engaged during 2012. The purpose of the process was to enhance the quality (and in some cases the quantity) of the professional development offered by states to their educators. The project was a pilot that involved six states, each paired with a WIDA coach. All parties involved in the collaboration process participated in the study.

This report highlights aspects of the coaching process that are of particular interest to WIDA. The report will focus on the following major topics:

- Benefits of the process to SEAs;
- Factors that supported the success of the process;
- Development of WIDA staff as coaches; and
- Recommendations for WIDA.

Background

Six states were chosen to participate in the pilot. SEAs were selected based on a number of criteria, including geographic region, time in WIDA, and expected willingness to participate in the collaboration project. In terms of the first two criteria, WIDA wanted to engage a diverse group.

The pilot involved a cycle of several coaching sessions. Most WIDA staff participated in 5 or 6 collaborative sessions with their SEA. The sessions were intended to take place once a month although this schedule was often adjusted due to conflicting commitments by the SEAs as well as WIDA staff. All sessions but one were held over the phone. The collaboration process involved one face-to-face meeting, which took place during the third or fourth session of the overall coaching cycle. (All WIDA coaches but one met their SEAs face to face). Most WIDA coaches completed the coaching process between January and July 2012. The relationship between all coaches and their coachees currently continues but involves less frequent sessions and is more on-demand in nature.

WIDA staff members were trained to be coaches by Christy Reveles, one of the co-authors of this report. Christy conducted two professional learning sessions of 3 days each (6 days total) in Madison prior to the beginning of the collaboration process with SEAs. Once the pilot project began, WIDA coaches were supported in a number of ways. All WIDA coaches/collaborators took advantage of the opportunity to participate in practice coaching sessions with a peer. These sessions took place over the phone and were observed by Christy. At the end of each session, Christy provided performance feedback to the WIDA coaches. Christy held five group debriefing calls with WIDA coaches (one of the debriefing sessions took place face-to-face). She also engaged in one-on-one coaching sessions with WIDA staff when requested.

Data on the pilot project were collected from both SEAs and WIDA staff. The data include: reflection logs that staff completed after each coaching session with their SEA, summaries of the information discussed during each session that WIDA staff shared with SEAs, and professional development plans for each state participating in the pilot. In addition, all participants in the coaching project were interviewed by members of the WIDA research team. Some state representatives were interviewed individually while others participated in an interview together with their team-members. WIDA staff members were interviewed individually. SEAs were also asked to complete a survey about the professional development they made available to educators in their state during 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years. The purpose of the survey was to highlight shifts in the professional development provided that may be associated with the coaching process. Four out of

the six participating SEA teams completed the survey. Finally, we collected notes that Christy Reveles took after her one-on-one sessions with WIDA staff as well as notes from the group debriefing sessions.

Findings

The two authors of the report jointly analyzed the data for themes. We reviewed the data individually and then discussed emerging common threads as well as differences between the cases. We focused on topics that we knew would be important for WIDA as well as on themes that seemed relevant to more than one case. The data analysis was iterative as we systematically coded the data only after first reviewing it and discussing it with each other.

Our most immediate major finding was that the SEAs' reactions to the coaching process were overwhelmingly positive. Although several SEAs had suggestions on ways in which the process can be improved, only one SEA team felt that the pilot was of limited value to them. Our analysis suggests, however, that the collaboration process seems to have had more benefits to that particular SEA team than the members may have realized.

Below, we will discuss some of the main ways in which SEAs benefitted from the collaboration process.

Benefits

Shifts in professional development

Our data analysis points to ways in which the coaching process contributed to a positive shift in the professional development that states provide to their educators. In all states we documented significant changes in the topic, format, audience, and/or duration of the professional development offered. The types of shifts for each state are summarized in Table 1 and details for each state are provided in the Appendix.

Still, the major shift that we saw in terms of professional development was a shift in the way in which both SEAs and WIDA staff approached the topic. In the past, SEAs had turned to WIDA for guidance and received recommendations based on what tends to work well for other states. The coaching process, however, turned this relationship on its head. **It allowed SEAs to clarify their own needs and see how the WIDA professional development offerings fit those needs.** The coaching process changed the focus from the WIDA menu to the state's needs. When this shift was explicitly mentioned, state representatives as well as WIDA staff viewed this in a positive light. We see at least two important implications of this shift for WIDA:

- It will push WIDA to create new professional development offerings in response to states' needs; and
- It may encourage a different relationship with WIDA professional development staff. As one of the WIDA coaches put it:

> I really feel very strongly about this that sometimes we err too much on the side of the boiler plate even though we each have our own styles of delivering. But I think if we communicated more, and we can do so through this collaboration, coaching, that we can really convey the message that it doesn't have to be what is on, you know, on paper as you see the data and you can't do anything, and boy, I just see it big time with states that have been with WIDA a longer time… In this instance, [the SEA's PD plan] was around formative- it is around formative assessment from different perspectives. Well, there is absolutely nothing in the list of [WIDA] offerings that is even remotely similar to that. Well, this is where that particular state is at.

… I think we need to be better at just acknowledging our individual talents and just understanding that we can really do different presentations as long as it brings in the WIDA standards. As long as that is an important piece of what we do, I think we can do all kinds of things independently.

TABLE 1. Shifts in professional development across states

	Topic	Format	Audience	Duration
State A	X	X	X	X
State B	X	X		
State C	X		X	
State D	X*	X	X*	
State E	X		X	
State F			X	

*Shift not mentioned by the SEA team members but described by the WIDA coach and evident in the PD plan.

The differences illustrated in the table above are mostly due to dissimilar needs and priorities of the SEA teams rather than to divergences in the coaching styles of WIDA staff.

Long-term planning

The second major benefit of the collaboration process was that it provided the participating SEAs with an opportunity to think about professional development in the long term, and to situate that long-term plan within a vision for the professional learning of educators in their state. Only two of the participating SEA teams had an existing professional development plan or framework (States C and D). The state representatives from State D attributed the least value to the collaboration process. By contrast, State C found the process constructive and made significant changes to its plan during the coaching process. We thus conclude that states can benefit from the coaching process regardless of whether they have an existing professional development plan or not. The collaboration with states that have a plan, however, unfolds differently than the collaboration with states that do not have a plan. The existence of a plan is an important factor that shapes the coaching process and impacts the components of the coaching cycle.

For the four SEA teams that did not have a plan, the coaching process provided a longed-for opportunity to focus on something that they believed was important (and were even passionate about) but never had time to accomplish. One sentiment shared by many other SEAs was, "we were forced to think though all the things we were doing and figure out what our goals were. And part of it was just having the time to focus and just the process alone was so valuable to have that time to focus." The coaching process created the space in which states could put together a professional development plan a year in advance, and anchor that plan in a concrete vision for professional learning: "It helps us also to think about the big picture. We try to think about the big picture but you know it's easier for [the coach] to be a couple of steps removed to help us think about the big picture and also about how, how WIDA training might contribute to our bigger picture."

By the end of the coaching cycle, all SEAs (except State D, whose collaborative sessions focused on finalizing important details related to the remaining WIDA professional development days from the 2011-12 academic year) had put together a coherent, actionable, and detailed professional development plan for the 2012-13 academic year. Some states had ideas for the following years but they were not concrete. Two advantages of having a plan included designing "a much better program… for this year that was a result of that collaboration than we had for last year" and feeling less "anxious and worried about what is going to happen [next] year because dates are now set."

The four SEA teams who began the coaching process without a professional development plan in place were able to design a plan only for the following year. This finding calls into question whether having SEAs work on a three to five year plan is a feasible goal. We suggest that it may not be. For the first coaching cycle it may be best to focus on designing a one-year plan that is anchored in a powerful vision. We suggest that the coaching cycle during Year 2 of the process should have a different focus: evaluation of the effectiveness of that plan. Such a focus may guide states in revising their plan for future years based on data they collect. The goal of the coaching process may thus shift from designing a three-to-five-year plan to working with SEAs on a plan-evaluate-revise cycle of design.

Collaborative relationship and dialogue

The third major benefit of the coaching process for SEAs was that it a) fostered a collaborative relationship between the WIDA coach and the SEA team; and b) created a space in which the members of the SEA team could work together. Both of these aspects of collaboration (working with a WIDA partner and working with one another) seem equally important outcomes of the process.

The benefits of the collaborative relationship were described in different terms by the SEAs. Several state representatives highlighted the importance of having a "sounding board," someone that they could run ideas by. As one of the coaches put it, "I think perhaps the best thing that I provided was I was an echo." This role was made possible by the emphasis that all WIDA coaches placed on listening to their SEAs, on being present and attentive to what their partners were saying. This was a difficult skill and one whose development many coaches saw as an important accomplishment.

Another aspect of the collaborative relationship that was much appreciated by states was that it provided them with guidance, with someone "to lead them." The WIDA coaches worked very hard to stay within the coaching role and their guiding questions were valued greatly by SEAs. (As a couple of the WIDA coaches pointed out, the coaching process highlighted for them how important and at the same time difficult it is to learn to ask constructive and powerful guiding questions.)

A third benefit of the collaborative relationship and the trust that goes along with it is that it helped validate what the states were doing. They felt surer of themselves when an external partner had confirmed their decisions. During a short debrief at the end of a coaching session, the SEAs in one state described a positive outcome of the session as: "We are on the right track; you are helping us validate our thinking."

Last but definitely not least, the collaborative process created a space in which new ideas could be generated. The guiding questions and the listening ear that the coaches provided, along with the opportunity for the SEA team members to sit down in a room together for a length of time, created the right conditions for innovative thinking. As one SEA put it, "I think once you go through that process and you start thinking of new things: how can I reach this audience, or how can I reach that audience."

The coaching process also created a space for dialogue within the SEA team. SEAs were able to hear each others' perspectives on the same issues and together arrive at new and better ideas about professional development. They greatly

valued the opportunity to "lock themselves in a room and be sequestered for more than 5 minutes" and "put their heads together." The coaching process provided a treasured opportunity for SEAs to think "separately, as well as together." They appreciated that the coaches "didn't try to tell us what it was we needed to do. [The coach] kind of let us talk it through, which I thought was very good." The coaches recorded feeling superfluous sometimes as the team members engaged deeply in conversation with each other: "Many times I did not need to ask questions as they worked together."

Connection to the field

Using data was an important component of the coaching cycle. In five cases out of six (the exception being State D), SEAs made data-informed decisions. Three SEA teams took advantage of the needs analysis survey that WIDA made available to them and used it either as their sole source of information about the needs and wishes of practitioners related to professional development, or in conjunction with other data sources (such as school visits or discussions with regional trainers). In all three cases the survey provided the impetus for many of the shifts in professional development plans discussed earlier. It also gave SEAs an important resource for gathering data to which they can resort time and again. In cases in which data collection had been informal and sporadic, the survey helped formalize the feedback process.

Two of the SEAs did not use the needs analysis survey provided by WIDA because they had gathered sufficient data through other means (such as a federal audit). Even in those cases, however, incorporating data in the planning process was important to both SEAs and WIDA staff. Whether or not SEAs used the WIDA-designed needs assessment had no ramifications for the coaching cycle and the collaborative discussions around data were relevant to all collaborative partners.

Awareness of existing options

WIDA coaches served as important resources for information related to different aspects of professional development trainings provided by WIDA. All SEAs stated that they benefitted from becoming aware of the types of professional development that other states found useful. In some instances (as in the case of State D) this involved becoming aware of a new training format (webinars). In other cases the coaching process expanded what SEAs through WIDA could provide because WIDA coaches discussed with SEAs trainings that were in development. State D, for instance, was interested in the early childhood work currently being carried out at WIDA. In other cases still, the collaboration process helped SEAs realize the flexibility in WIDA's professional development offerings and find ways to better tailor those offerings to the needs of their state (for instance by having a training be brought to the state rather than being conducted at WIDA Central).

The benefits discussed in this section focus on recurring themes. There were other benefits specific only to one state, which are not discussed here. This includes the benefit of having someone with whom the SEA could plan short-term and discuss the topics and audience for remaining WIDA professional development days.

It is also very likely that there are additional benefits to SEAs that neither they nor the WIDA coaches brought up in interviews. In addition, we would anticipate that the benefits of the coaching process would change as the collaborative relationships evolve and different topics are discussed in subsequent coaching cycles.

In this section, we have touched upon the benefits of the process to WIDA staff only in passing. This topic will be further discussed in the Coaches Development section of this report.

Factors that Support the Collaboration Process

At the end of the first coaching cycle, five out of six states had co-constructed a valued tangible product with their coach: an actionable professional development plan for the following academic year that was anchored in a vision for the professional learning of educators working with English language learners. The process of creating the plan, however, looked rather different from state to state. Our analysis highlights a number of factors that supported the success of this process. (Success is defined here both in terms of having the desired product and engendering a positive relationship between SEAs and WIDA staff). Although these factors are relevant to all cases, they are of dissimilar salience for the process in which each WIDA coach engaged with their coachee(s). These factors include: features of the collaborative relationship (clear definition of roles, accountability, flexibility, and evolution over time), features of the coaching process (face-to-face component and WIDA support), and characteristics of the SEA team (history of collaboration and commitment to the process).

Collaborative relationship

Several features of the collaborative relationship emerged as crucial to a positive, sustained, and constructive partnership between WIDA coaches and SEAs. The first such feature was a *clear understanding by both parties of the purpose of the process and the role of the coach.* Several WIDA coaches explicitly discussed WIDA's goals for the collaboration and the role that they were intending to play during the first and second collaborative sessions with their SEAs. For many SEAs, this seemed sufficient to get the process started on the right foot. Still, all coaches felt a constant tension between being a coach who guides the planning process and being a consultant who advises and points to solutions. The coaches resolved this tension in different ways, such as: reminding the SEA team of their role as a coach, inviting another WIDA staff person to the coaching call with the specific purpose of serving as a consultant, and/or being explicit about the instances in which they shifted roles and became consultants in response to the needs of the SEA. Staying out of the consulting role was seen by all coaches as one of their major accomplishments.

The significance of a shared purpose and a clearly defined role for the coach has several implications for the coaching process. First, working to establish such a shared purpose should be a priority for WIDA when engaging in initial conversations with SEAs about the coaching process. Second, the intake interview conducted by WIDA staff during the first collaborative meeting can be revised to emphasize the purpose of the process and roles of the coach to a greater extent. Third, the evolving understanding of the role of the coach by the SEA should be one of the topics addressed at each coaching session.

The second feature of the collaborative relationship that supported the success of the coaching process was the ability of the coach to *hold SEAs accountable* to the collaboratively constructed timeline and focus of the process. Some coaches struggled with this particular aspect of the relationship because they were uncertain about the extent to which they should hold busy, overstretched SEAs to their coaching commitments. The SEAs, however, overwhelmingly valued being held accountable for participating in coaching sessions and working on their professional development plan. They appreciated being "forced" to come together and think about professional development because they saw the benefits of the process. As one of the SEAs put it,

> You don't really hear things sometimes until they're beat into you a couple times. I think [our coach] … had to work really hard to keep bringing this back for our follow up. And, you know, we left that room hoping to have a five-year plan in place, but we didn't because we had so many "if"s and "what"s and things we had to follow up on. And then just having to keep bringing us back and say, "Okay we had all these great meetings and now you've got all these great ideas. But we still don't have on a piece of paper what our three-year plan is." You know, and so just very, I don't

want to say rigid because we don't work well rigidly, but sometimes we need that… Because if you don't bring me back to what I've committed to… then it's you I'm going to be unhappy with, not me.

The third feature of the collaborative process that supported its success was the *flexibility of the coach.* All WIDA staff involved in the coaching pilot had to adapt in a number of ways. Coaches found themselves forced to: a) alter the timeline for the process as a whole and for the sequence of the steps in the coaching cycle based on the organization and availability of the SEA partners; b) adapt the session protocols developed by Christy Reveles based on the types of conversations that took place during the coaching sessions and the needs of their state partners; c) adjust their expectations of the outcomes of the coaching process based on the SEAs' ways of processing information and priorities, and d) change their notions about what the process was going to be like and what their role was going to be. All these transformations highlight the importance of ongoing support for coaches as they engage in the collaborative process.

Many of the adjustments mentioned in the previous paragraph are unavoidable given the *evolving nature of the coaching relationship.* Coaches shared that it took several sessions for them to understand the SEA team-members' communicative styles and adjust their own styles accordingly. One of the coaches stated the following: "in my last couple of conversations…, we have been spiraling back to the same ideas, which initially felt as though we kept going around and around in circles, but now I can see that every time they revisit these ideas, [the SEAs] tighten and refine them." In addition, coaches unfamiliar with the SEA context needed time to "understand the SEA role more in order to really understand coaching in the capacity of our position at WIDA." Finally, it took time for WIDA staff to establish a relationship of trust and understanding with their SEA partners, which in turn enabled them to take greater ownership of the coaching process: "I felt the most confident during and after the face-to-face visit. I felt like we were able to truly establish a relationship that is essential in a coaching model… After this time, my last two calls felt more natural and I tossed the script."

Coaching process

The last quote hints at the significance of one of the features of the coaching process itself: *the face-to-face meeting.* The face-to-face session was seen as a crucial point in the coaching relationship by all coaches. Several of the SEAs also brought it up as an important component of the process. The face-to-face session was pivotal for those coaches who did not have an existing relationship with their SEA partners. The meeting changed the nature of the relationship by enabling them to establish deeper trust and understanding. Even those coaches who had an established relationship with their SEA partners valued the face-to-face meeting because of the direct contact it makes possible. Most of the coaches cited communicating over the phone as one of their main challenges during the coaching process.

Moreover, the face-to-face meeting was important to all coaches because of its productivity. Being longer, it was the point at which the SEAs professional development plans took shape.

The second key feature of the coaching process that contributed to its success was the *support provided to coaches by WIDA.* The coaches involved in the pilot process needed access to both a community and certain individuals. Support from the community of other WIDA coaching peers was essential for the self-confidence of coaches, who found themselves forced to make numerous adjustments to their expectations, plan for the coaching sessions, and timelines. The existence of a community also allowed coaches to swap stories and share resources. In addition, the coaches needed access to particular people. These people included Christy Reveles (who supported them when they had questions about the coaching process), Mariana Castro (who supported them by answering questions, providing feedback, and being a guest during coaching sessions), and Jen Aleckson (who supported them in their work with the needs analysis survey and in scheduling professional development for their state partners). The amount of support that WIDA coaches received was invisible to SEAs but essential for the success of the collaborative process.

SEA teams

Two features of the SEA teams that participated in the pilot project seem to be particularly important in supporting the success of the coaching process. The first essential feature is an SEA team's *experience and familiarity with collaboration.* The process went most smoothly for those SEAs that had a history of partnering with each other as well as with other educators. The experience with and commitment to collaboration greatly facilitated the coaching process even if the SEAs had no experience with coaching per se. It may be that this commitment and experience make SEAs more open to different types of relationships and willing to learn with others. Whatever the specific reasons for the connection between an SEA's history of engagement in collaboration and the success of the coaching process may be, we believe that it is no coincidence that the most challenging coaching relationship was with a state in which the SEA team-members did not collaborate on a regular basis and which has a history of a top-down relationship with districts.

The SEA team's commitment to the coaching relationship also supported the success of the pilot project. Some SEAs were highly committed to the process from the very beginning because they had experienced the benefits of collaboration in the past. Others were committed because they had a passion for professional development and/or an urgent need for guidance and support from WIDA in planning professional development. This commitment to the process, whatever its origins, made SEAs responsive to being held accountable. It also facilitated their preparation for the coaching calls and the site visit. The commitment is the foundation for the kind of reciprocity that is at the heart of any partnership. As one of the WIDA coaches pointed out, "so much of the collaboration process with SEAs is at the mercy of the SEA's schedule and priorities."

Coaches' Development

While the primary purpose for this collaboration process was to support SEAs in their strategic long-term planning for ELL-focused professional learning, the WIDA staff who served as coach-collaborators also benefitted from this process. In our analysis of the data, four themes surfaced as most noteworthy: a) the coaches' evolving understanding of the collaboration process; b) the dual focus and purpose of the collaboration relationship (capacity building as well as logistics); c) the need for structure and flexibility within the collaboration process; and d) the ways in which WIDA coaches grew professionally and personally as a result of this project.

Evolving understanding of the process

Two of the WIDA coaches came to the collaboration process with experience in instructional coaching at their school sites. They thus had specific expectations of what the SEA collaboration experience would entail. The new process, however, forced them to rethink what coaching could look like. One of the experienced coaches reported:

> I struggled at times in the pilot to reconcile what I had previously done and thought of as "coaching" with what I was doing in this pilot. At times, [the SEA] would ask me to consult as they are a new state and had some questions that did require an "expert"; I tried to make each role transparent. However, I felt that most of the time I was being a reflective listener and giving [the SEA] the time and space to collaborate.

The other experienced coach reflected in a similar vein:

> I think for me…the accomplishment has been picking the old coaching that I kind of understood…and then applying this new system and then using I think both of them kind of simultaneously.

During the collaboration process, all WIDA coaches gained a deeper understanding of and experience with the new

coaching role. Typically, WIDA staff members serve as consultants who have the answers, provide solutions, and advise their SEAs regarding professional development options. As coaches, though, WIDA staff use a partnership approach that supports the SEA in creating a long-term vision and professional development plan that advances the SEA toward a capacity-building professional development model. The coach is not there to "tell" people what to do, but rather to engage in reflective dialogue that supports the SEA in developing their own solutions and strategies that will best serve their context and needs. For example, the coaches reported engaging with SEAs to "…collaborate to solve problems," "…provide feedback on ideas or situations," and to "…provide new or different perspectives." As one coach reflected:

> I knew that it might be easy to start brainstorming possible PD activities that would "fix" or "solve" the problem. I wanted to make sure I stayed focused in my collaborator role to ask reflective questions that would encourage my partners in exploring all possibilities: green light thinking.

Similarly, a second coach reported, "I think I'm in the process of accomplishing a better understanding of how to ask questions and how to stay out of the way. In other words, discern at several levels the difference between being a consultant and being a coach." Another coach reflected on this change in roles this way: "…I think the other part for me, too, was letting go. That if you don't know, it's ok to say I don't know." This represents *a notable shift in the role WIDA staff have typically played in working with SEAs.*

Several staff found that it was necessary for them to be explicit about the differences between a coach and consultant with their SEAs. One coach found it helpful to her and her SEA to be transparent about which role she was playing and when. For example,

> …sometimes I would step out and say, "Okay. I can put on my consulting hat right now." Just in terms of (the realm) that we offer, or what that meant, or why we recommend certain numbers for certain PD experiences…they really needed to know some of those why's and how's and things like that. So then you know I'd have to switch back and forth between roles.

As the coaches engaged in the process, they commented on the importance of cultivating basic coaching competencies with their SEA, such as building trust and rapport, active listening, and reflective questioning. There were several instances of "revelation" in how powerful the act of simply listening was, and then using coaching language to paraphrase, summarize, and probe more deeply to understand what their SEAs were really saying. As one coach commented: "…I felt it was critical for me to actively listen during the first call so the [SEA] team would know that listening is important in the conversations…we have to build rapport, trust and to make sure we capture output accurately."

Some WIDA staff reflected on the ways in which their evolving relationship with the SEAs helped them see the possibilities as well as the constraints of the collaboration process. As one of the coaches put it,

> …it was important for me to understand the SEA role more in order to really understand coaching in the capacity of our position at WIDA…. I think it is becoming more clear for me, at least for [my SEA], what this collaboration process really could be as well as what it is, like the reality.

Although WIDA staff received training on being coaches before the pilot began, it was through their engagement in the collaboration process that they really understood what it meant to be a coach. For many of them, this understanding grew throughout the process and was still evolving when they completed the first coaching cycle. The reflections of WIDA staff shared with us at the end of the first coaching cycle underscore the importance of time for true understanding of any new role.

Dual focus on capacity building and logistics

The coaches appeared to clearly understand their purpose in collaborating with their SEAs: to "…partner with [the SEA] to collaboratively create an ELL-focused professional development plan for the coming 3-5 years," and to "…serve as a resource and support to the [SEA] team." These tangible goals provided the coaches with a sense of direction as they initiated their work with SEAs. The coaches also acknowledged the need to toggle between the big picture and logistical details. As one coach noted, "Our dialogue was data-focused and continually went back to our overall vision for the ELL professional development plan."

However, as the partnership unfolded, what continually came up for coaches was their ambiguity and uncertainty regarding how to effectively manage their SEAs' progress. This suggests an awareness of the *dynamic tension between collaboration and accountability.* One coach reflected on this dynamic: "Are you…kind of like a task master? I don't want to be that. I want to be… this supportive listening role but in an accountable way. You know, so how can we make it real accountable talk?" Another coach elaborated further on her feelings about this:

> I think it was just, "What are the boundaries?" I think that was also a really hard part of this too, was figuring out what the boundaries in a relationship are. You know, obviously [the SEAs are] doing this voluntarily, but at the same time, it's not my responsibility to keep them on task or on target…But at the same time, I never knew how far to go, because I always felt like at some point, [I] might cross the line. 'Cause I'm not their supervisor, I'm not their boss. I'm their co-collaborator, so is it my responsibility to reach out to them, or is it their responsibility to reach out to me?...I think there were just a lot of unanswered questions around that.

As coaches navigated this unknown territory between process, product, and partnership, they learned to connect the coaching skills of managing progress and accountability to the SEA team goals and vision. One coach reflected on how taking on the role of note-taker during the SEA collaboration sessions helped to facilitate the "accountability piece." Another coach found that using reflective questioning helped the SEA team link their visionary ideas to forming a feasible plan: "…[the SEA team] had all these great ideas, and then I just say, 'But what of those is actionable? What is something you can take action on?' Because I think that's the other challenge of very complex plans, is that it can get away from you very quickly."

The tension evident in the data speaks to the importance of clarity regarding coaching roles, especially in terms of the differences between coach and consultant. Furthermore, this tension suggests that WIDA needs to support their coaches to reconcile their desire to ensure SEA accountability for the process with the role of a supportive collaborator. The coaches understood that their ultimate goal was to help SEAs build their leadership and organizational capacity for visioning and planning. At the same time, they struggled with following up on SEAs' progress in ways that felt supportive and authentic without being perceived as overly directive or controlling.

Need for structure and flexibility

At the onset of the SEA collaboration initiative, the coaches expressed appreciation of and desire for a high level of structure in terms of coaching protocols and procedures. After all, they were charting unknown waters with their SEAs, so having a defined course of action seemed to provide a sense of security. Interestingly, as the coaches engaged in the work with their SEAS, they quickly realized the need to customize the process to meet their SEA's needs, priorities, and communication styles. WIDA coaches began to see that the protocols were provided to serve as a guide, and that they could be adjusted and modified according to need. As one coach reflected,

> I felt that they [WIDA collaboration program developers] were very responsive initially to our group being, "Oh my goodness, please tell us what to do!" and then when we spent a lot of time looking at these session agendas… many of us just didn't end up using them. It was nice to have a roadmap, 'cause then a roadmap allows you to go bushwhacking if you want to. At least you know how to get back to the road in case you get lost.

Another coach commented similarly,

> I think also just kind of feeling like, "Am I doing this right? Am I doing this right?" That was present for the first few calls. And then I also just got over that, too. You know, like, okay I don't think there's a really wrong way about doing this, except for ignoring it or not caring about what your collaborative partners think, so… I got over that and I think realizing that some of the process was really internalized, so I didn't have to worry.

The coaches' comments suggest a growing sense of confidence both in their skills and in the process as they made decisions about which pathways to pursue with their SEAs. As the SEA partnership evolved, so too did the coaches' ability to respond appropriately to their SEA needs using the provided coaching tools, as well as their own customized processes. This also suggests a growing sense of ownership of the process in that they were making it their own based on their coaching style, expertise, and the needs of their SEA. For example,

> I think that the process we learned was perhaps necessarily boiler plate, and connoted the fact that you go from step A to step B to step C. I suspect and I feel that sometimes we have to skip steps or go back, that it's not as clean as a clearly designated process as the way we learned it….I went with the flow rather than sticking to the agenda. Using the planning documents to structure my thinking, but being aware that the conversation could very appropriately move in a different direction as a result of active listening and reflective conversations.

Flexibility on the part of the coach was essential for the success of both the collaboration process and the development of a trusting relationship between coaches and SEAs. One of the WIDA coaches reflected on the tension between structure and flexibility, or between planned steps and in-time adjustments, in the following way:

> I didn't want them to feel like they had to conform to this one way of speaking and listening; I really tried to follow where they were going, and I think it's [like] if you're riding or you're leading a horse and you're on a circular track and you're going around the track and all of a sudden the horse decides it wants to go for a walk on the field, how much do you pull on that reign and have that horse come back into that corral again, or do you just go walking with the horse and just make sure it doesn't wander off and hurt itself.

The coaches, overall, seemed more comfortable the longer they worked with their SEAs. They became more nimble in their ability to navigate between the structure of the process and the need to be flexible and responsive to SEA needs, goals, and communication styles. This is a hallmark of the development as an effective coach; it demonstrates the recognition by the coach that the true coaching "agenda" belongs to the one being coached. Through deep listening and reflective questioning, the coach supports the coachees to mediate their own learning, choose options, and design courses of action that are best for them - not for the coach.

Professional growth of WIDA staff

One of the ways in which WIDA staff grew professionally was in the *ability to build trust, rapport, and a positive working relationship with SEAs.* WIDA coaches were concerned about this issue at the onset of the project for two reasons. First, four of the coaches had never met their SEAs face-to-face prior to initiating this project. Second, all WIDA coaches but one had no experience working at the SEA level. As they engaged in the collaboration process, coaches expanded their

knowledge about the work of SEAs and about their own abilities to engage SEAs in a productive partnership. Several coaches commented both on the importance of a positive relationship for the success of the collaboration process and on their newly acquired trust in themselves as coaches who are able to build such a relationship with SEAs:

> A big takeaway for me from our face-to-face session was how critically important the relationship building is for collaboration and coaching. It was so great to meet…and get to know [the SEA team] and their personalities. I felt as though we were able to build rapport and trust that made the meeting so much more enriching and productive. I think we all felt much safer to share our thinking and ideas with one another after getting to know each other… And then another big accomplishment for me is the trust…I really feel like the [SEA team members] trust me now and I think that's really positive for not only myself but for WIDA.

Another coach, who had been quite concerned initially about her ability to establish trust via conference calls reported that as she and her SEA partners got to know each other better, they built rapport which in turn helped her feel more self-assured and productive in the coaching process: "I felt the most confident during and after the face-to-face visit. I felt like we were able to truly establish a relationship that is essential in a coaching model. [The SEA] stated the same thing – that ideas really fell into place at this time…After this time, my last two calls felt more natural and I tossed the script."

This same coach found that she became more comfortable than she had thought possible in coaching over the phone. At the beginning of the project, she reported feeling hesitant and even resistant to the idea that she could effectively build a trusting relationship via the phone. However, through practice and coach-the-coach support from WIDA, she learned that this was something she could do.

> I feel more comfortable with it [interacting by phone], at least in terms of the coaching process just because of the training…provided, and now I know the sequence. And so, to pick up the phone and talk with someone with whom I barely know or don't know well, like I don't think I'll go so far as to say "a total stranger,"…it's a more comfortable feeling now and I like that added quality to the [coaching] skill set.

Coaches also developed *effective communication skills, specifically active listening and reflective questioning.* Their comments suggest how acutely aware they were of their role as a mediator of learning, not as an advisor telling SEAs what to do. One coach reflected, "I'm eager to continue the process and to hone my skills at being able to not jump in in a consultant mode and to ask carefully guiding questions that will enable the SEA to think more independently." They came to see how closely connected active listening was to their ability to ask thought-provoking and meaningful reflective questions. This coach comment underscores how vital these communication skills were:

> It really is an important skill to be able to listen to what's being said and what's not being said…how to formulate questions, how to take stuff that's said and to really formulate questions. Not just questions that I think of…but questions that would actually be what's needed at that particular moment in the discussion. So it's really hard for me to explain…but one thing I learned throughout this process is it's not as easy as people think to come up with a question.

WIDA coaches also reported that they improved their ability to deal effectively with resistance or difficult coaching situations. For a few coaches, their SEAs provided ample opportunity to practice these skills, particularly when working with teams whose members were "storming." One coach knew that this was going to come up for her in working with her team, as she reflected: "…a goal for me was to…continue to build my coaching skills…it was interesting because I think [this] experience gave me a lot of opportunity to really use everything that Christy taught us on resistance." This topic of being able to deal more effectively with resistance also emerged with another coach:

> I feel so much more confident in my ability to facilitate conversations…around resistance, where people may not be willing to think about an idea or are not acknowledging that they actually may have the resources (within) themselves. I think I'm much more aware- or I feel a little bit braver now, perhaps, taking on situations that might be more challenging from a group dynamic than I was before. I feel a bit more confident there.

This topic (dealing with resistance within the coaching partnership) was addressed during the initial professional development session for coaches. Participants had the opportunity to practice coaching techniques with each other within the workshop setting. The real-life experience in helping to break resistance with their SEAs, however, seems to have been a pivotal learning experience for some of the coaches.

The collaboration process also brought home for coaches how important it is to be organized, and to plan coaching sessions carefully. While the coaching protocols were provided, the coaches quickly realized that they would need to modify and adjust these according to the needs of their SEAs. The coaches were highly cognizant of creating value from this process for the SEA. Several of them remarked that they did not want to waste their SEAs time, and wanted them to walk away with a high-quality professional development plan. Hence, securing time for preparation and planning became a priority for the coaches. Even if they had to do this while on the road and in airports, they found the time.

Finally, one coach reported an area of growth that was completely unexpected. She reflected that this coaching process actually helped her *become a better professional development facilitator.* She reflected,

> I think the coaching support and instruction that we got…has had a much more profound impact on my facilitation of workshops than it actually has on the coaching relationship with my SEA, my collaborative relationship with the SEA…so if we're making a distinction between a facilitator and a coach, I think I am much more comfortable as a facilitator than I am as a coach.

This coach found that using coaching language and strategies to address concerns and queries during her workshop presentations enhanced her skills as a presenter. During one workshop presentation in particular, she found herself suddenly in the unplanned role of process facilitator. She was able to quickly mentally access her "coaching toolkit," and proceeded to work with the whole group. While not an easy thing to do, the coaching competencies she had learned supported her to make this quick change from presenter to group process facilitator.

Recommendations

General recommendations

We recommend that WIDA continue to engage in this type of collaborative process with SEAs in the future and that we expand the number of states involved in it. We make these recommendations for a number of reasons:

- The process contributed to shifts in the professional development provided by states to their educators. These shifts were viewed as positive by both SEAs and WIDA staff because they contributed to a number of important changes in professional development offerings, such as a timelier schedule, greater coherence, wider variety, and a stronger connection to local needs;
- The process had different but equally significant benefits for both veteran as well as new WIDA member-states;
- The process was highly valued by the majority of the participants in the pilot; and
- WIDA staff saw the process as important not only because it helped them grow professionally but also because they felt it provides a service that helps WIDA stand out as an organization.

If WIDA leadership follows this recommendation, however, there are several key issues that need to be considered. The first of those issues has to do with the **selection of participating SEAs.** If coaching becomes a service available to more SEAs, how can WIDA best assess which of the states are ready for the process and which are not? Does that matter? Our data analysis suggests that the "readiness" of an SEA to engage in the process affects the process significantly and can best be described in terms of their history of collaboration with each other, their clear understanding of the purpose of the process, and the power they have to make a professional development plan a reality. The SEA team that expressed least satisfaction with the process was not a collaborative team and did not embrace the partnership that the coaching process offered. Instead, they consistently saw their coach as a consultant. Another SEA team that benefited from the process ended up being frustrated because their superiors made decisions that undermined the professional development plan they had designed. In particular, the timeline for the plan was shifted and its vision for building capacity was no longer supported.

If WIDA decides to invite other states to participate, it would be important to consider whether the team's ability to engage meaningfully with the coaching process should be a factor in the selection. The team's "readiness" can be overridden by the team's need for more support. Whichever criteria WIDA decides to use, selection will impact not only the nature of the coaching process but also the materials designed to support coaches as they engage their SEAs.

Another important question is that of **capacity in terms of WIDA staff.** Many of the coaches shared that the process was time-consuming and were concerned about having the time to engage in coaching with other SEAs. As one of the WIDA coaches put it, "I can see where this would be beneficial to other sates. I'm not sure how sustainable it is right now. I was sometimes making calls while packing or doing write-ups in the airport."

WIDA staff spent a lot of time on the coaching process outside of the coaching session itself. They spent time preparing, and this time ranged from 30 minutes to 3 hours. They also spent time summarizing the main points from the call, and this time ranged from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. WIDA coaches spent time completing action steps outlined during the collaborative sessions with their SEAs, such as reviewing the needs assessment survey or inquiring about scheduling options for professional development trainings. WIDA staff spent time practicing with each other, debriefing the coaching experience as a group, and working with Christy Reveles when they felt they needed her support.

The issue of time is particularly relevant given the length of time partners need in order to build a trusting relationship and the value that both SEAs and WIDA coaches placed on the face-to-face meeting. In addition, two of the participating states called their coaches with very little notice and did not have coaching sessions scheduled in advance. It thus seems important for coaches to have some flexibility in their schedule in order to provide the type of support their partners may need.

Specific recommendations

In their interviews, research participants made remarks that we felt are important for WIDA to take into account when considering the ways in which the coaching process can be strengthened. Some of these recommendations include:

- *Clarifying WIDA's role in supporting the professional development plans designed by SEAs:* The WIDA coaches participating in the pilot project knew what their role entailed in general terms but needed more clarity in terms of WIDA's role in the professional development plans that their SEA partners created. If the plan was created with WIDA's involvement, was WIDA then committed to support it? If so, in what capacity would WIDA support it? Some of the coaches felt that WIDA would not have the capacity to support the types of professional development activities included in the SEA's plans.

- *Clarifying the purpose of the process and the coach's role in it:* Given the important role that a shared purpose and a clear understanding of roles have for the coaching process, we recommend the following. First, establishing a shared purpose should be a priority for WIDA when engaging in initial conversations with SEAs about the coaching process. Second, the intake interview conducted by WIDA staff during the first collaborative meeting can be revised to emphasize the purpose of the process and roles of the coach to a greater extent. Third, the evolving understanding of the role of the coach by the SEA should be one of the topics addressed at each coaching session.

- *Strengthening new relationships:* Based on the great value that WIDA coaches as well as some SEAs attributed to the face-to-face session in terms of relationship-building, we recommend that coaches and future SEA partners meet face-to-face at the beginning of the coaching process if they do not have a history of working with each other. The Board Meeting can provide one opportunity for such face-to-face contact.

- *Exploring implementation in Year 2 of the coaching cycle:* We recommend a coaching cycle that consists of a reflect-evaluate-revise cycle of design for the state's professional development plan. As one coaching partner put it, "I guess moving forward it's time to hone in on what really make that plan effective and how we are going to measure the effectiveness and how we are going to do a check halfway whether we're on the right track and are getting it, or we have to provide additional support. Just going through that process and having a sounding board and help is a huge benefit."

- *Including partnerships as part of the conversation:* Partnerships with other organizations (such as regional education agencies and institutes of higher education) may play an important role in the professional development plans designed by SEAs. These partnerships were naturally brought up in some states as teams discussed professional development with their coaches. Nevertheless, some SEAs felt that the issue of partnerships could be incorporated in the planning process more explicitly. It took some time for SEAs to realize that the planning process in which they were engaging did not aim for a WIDA plan but for a comprehensive professional development plan for the state that utilizes existing infrastructures for collaboration and incorporates current state initiatives.

- *Increasing the emphasis on variability and unpredictability:* Many of the WIDA coaches were unsure when they found themselves adapting session protocols and redesigning the general coaching cycle. They needed reassurance that the changes they were making in the coaching process were natural and expected. One of the coaches summed up this sentiment when asking for "more emphasis on the fact that it will be different. That there will be changes and to anticipate them perhaps. Not to know what to anticipate, but to- just to acknowledge that… when you are trying to follow a sequence of steps, it is just not going to be possible, that there are going to be bumps along the road and to realize that those are going to happen." This recommendation does not argue for a shift in the training that WIDA provided to coaches but for a greater emphasis on a message that was already there.

- *Present WIDA professional development offerings differently:* The flexibility and variation in WIDA professional development offerings seem to remain hidden for most SEAs. WIDA's offerings on the implementation of English language development (ELD) standards in the classroom are a case in point. Standards-focused trainings may look very different based on the background knowledge of the audience and the goal for the training: a session on language differentiation for general education teachers may look very different from a session on language differentiation for ESL/bilingual specialists, though both will be based on the WIDA ELP standards. We thus recommend that WIDA move away from a topical way of categorizing offerings to a system that highlights the objective or end result.

- *Being aware of the benefits of the coaching process for WIDA staff:* In this report we do not use the professional growth of WIDA coaches as a criterion for the success of the coaching process. Still, it is important to be aware of the numerous

benefits of the process for WIDA staff. Several coaches felt that the coach training they received made them much more effective as facilitators. The process also fostered new relationships among WIDA professional development staff. Finally, the coaching pilot led to introspection about the professional development staff as a community. In our view, these are important benefits that should not be ignored when decisions about staff's involvement in the coaching project are made.

- *Continuing the evaluation of the coaching process:* The present report is based on data collected during 2012. It is important to keep evaluating the coaching relationships in the future, both for new states and for those states who are continuing with the partnership. We expect that unexplored benefits and needs will arise as new states become involved in the process and as existing coaching relationships mature.

- *Differentiating coaching:* WIDA coaches expressed a desire for more direction and practice in coaching pairs as well as larger groups.

Conclusion

The collaborative partnership in which WIDA and SEAs engaged during 2012 took different shapes based on the priorities and personalities of the people involved but everyone agreed that the process accomplished one major goal: it changed the way WIDA is perceived by SEAs. This shift was a positive one and involved a greater awareness among SEAs of the flexibility at WIDA in terms of professional development offerings, and a new understanding of the collaborative spirit in which WIDA sees its partnership with states. Going forward, it is important for WIDA to consider the nature as well as the limits of its flexibility and partnerships. We see the coaching process as an infrastructure that can offer needed guidance to SEAs at the same time as it provides WIDA with feedback on the needs of the field and the extent to which its professional development meets those needs. As such, the coaching process can help WIDA be more attuned and responsive to its members.

Appendix: Shifts in professional development per state

State A

Topics for state trainings arranged based on the frequency with which a particular training is provided:

> 2011-12 1. ACCESS/W-APT1 2. Data Analysis 3. Collaboration 4. ELD Standards 5. CAN-DO Descriptors
>   6. Differentiation
> 2012-13 1. ELD Standards 2. CAN-DO Descriptors 3. Language Differentiation 4. ACCESS/W-APT
>   5. Collaboration 6. Data Analysis

There is also shift in the types of trainings provided:

> 2011-12 Webinars only
> 2012-13 Webinars, Workshops, Train-the-Trainer, Academies, Coaching, and other types of trainings.

The third shift is in targeting general education for training related to ELLs:

> 2011-12 0-2 hours of training
> 2012-13 ESL/bilingual and general education staff in the core areas listed as audiences for the PD on ELLs provided
>   by the state

The fourth shift is in duration of overall training, probably due to the fact that state A was able to use all their professional development days during 2012-13:

> 2011-12 4-8 hours of training
> 2012-13 2-3 days of training

State B

The major shift in State B was conceptual and related to the focus of professional development trainings. Rather than thinking about PD offerings in terms of different topics, the coaching process guided the SEA in planning theme-based professional development. The theme is formative assessment and it runs through all the trainings offered by the state during 2012-13 and provides a unifying focus.

Another shift in State B was a shift in format. Based on feedback collected through the needs assessment survey, the SEA began planning to record professional development trainings and make them available to educators online.

A third shift, and one which is not reflected in Table 1, is a shift in anxiety level and overall preparedness of the SEA in terms of professional development. For the first time, the state representative was able to plan the state professional development days in advance and provide these days to districts.

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1 ACCESS for ELLs is WIDA's summative language assessment. It is taken annually by students designated as English language learners in all WIDA states. W-APT is WIDA's diagnostic language assessment, given to English language learners when they first arrive at a school and no record of their English language proficiency exists or can be located.

State C

The shift in topics in State C is illustrated below:

> 2009-10 ACCESS/W-APT
> 2010-11 Scaffolding, Formative assessment, Collaboration
> 2011-12 Collaboration, other
> 2012-13 Language Differentiation

The second shift in State C was in terms of audience. The SEA team decided to invest in building capacity in district coaches both in terms of their knowledge of the WIDA standards and in terms of their facilitation skills. The team planned to provide a series of trainings that specifically targeted the coaches. This plan was subsequently undermined by decisions at a higher level to return the coaches to the classroom.

State D

State D's team underwent significant changes in the course of the collaboration process. These changes may explain why some of the shifts in professional development that seem evident in the documents we collected were not mentioned by the members of the team we interviewed at the end of the process.

The state's professional development plan documents a major shift in the topics selected for professional development offerings in 2012.

> 2007-10 Exclusive focus on ACCESS/MODEL[2] training;
> 2010-11 Emphasis on using data for school improvement, so only Data Retreats offered by the state;
> 2011-12 7 PD days: ACCESS refreshers. 5 days (all planned during the pilot): ELD Standards, ELD Standards and the Common Core, and Spanish Language Arts Standards. The state also offered two webinars on Assessments 101 and Data analysis.

The coaching process also seems to have spurred a shift in the SEA team's thinking about the audience for professional development offerings. The coach's interview suggests that she guided the state in prioritizing capacity building by investing in professional development not for teachers but for regional coaches.

Both the SEA team and the coach acknowledged a shift in the format of professional development offerings. Although State D is one of the oldest WIDA member states, the SEA team was unaware of the option to have webinars instead of face-to-face trainings. This option was brought up by the coach and immediately seized upon by the team.

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2 MODEL is a diagnostic language assessment similar to W-APT. Unlike the W-APT, however, MODEL can also be used as a benchmark assessment.

State E

The shift in topics for the professional development provided by State E is as follows:

2011-12 Assessment only (WAPT scores interpretation with CAN-DOs and Performance Definitions, ACCESS test administration and score interpretation);

2012-13 ACCESS in the fall, then ELD Standards, Lesson planning, Curriculum development, and 1 day on Score reports.

2013-14 Include more Curriculum Development (2 days), Language Differentiation, Collaboration (2 days), Formative Language Assessment, and Data Digging/Data Discovery (2 days).

The coaching process also seems to have guided the SEA team in targeting different audiences for different professional development offerings. The audiences explicitly discussed in the professional development plan include: experienced ESL teachers, new ESL teachers, general education teachers, and administrators.

State F

The collaboration process did not shift in any way the approach that the SEA team took to their PD plan. It did, however, help the team see ways in which it could make professional development even more site-based. A major shift for the team was the realization that they could have training on site in their state rather than send a team of educators to attend a general training provided by WIDA in Madison. This new awareness allowed them to see new ways in which they could build capacity in teacher leaders in their state, and made this particular professional development opportunity a much more urgent priority.

WCER

WISCONSIN CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

The Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) is one of the nation's oldest university-based education research and development centers. WCER is based in the UW–Madison School of Education, which is consistently ranked one of the top schools of education in the country. With annual outside funding exceeding $47 million, WCER is home to centers for research on the improvement of mathematics and science education from kindergarten through postsecondary levels, the strategic management of human capital in public education, and value-added achievement, as well as the Minority Student Achievement Network and a multistate collaborative project to develop assessments for English language learners.

WIDA™ RESEARCH REPORT

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