

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



TOOLKIT 2005

ON

VIRTUAL LEARNING

www.setda.org



STATE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

On November 14-17, 2004, SETDA hosted the third annual National Leadership Institute (NLI). The overarching theme for the NLI was eLearning. Participation at the NLI included 137 state leaders from 47 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands. There were also 18 staff members from the U.S. Department of Education, 24 resource specialists, 22 SETDA platinum partner representatives and directors from all ten of the Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TEC).

The NLI was an intensive, hands-on workshop structured to produce deliverables that will aid state technology leaders in effectively implementing and integrating technology throughout schools, curricula and learning. A planning committee comprised of SETDA members developed the work group topics and the Institute's agenda to ensure relevant and significant areas of focus.

Each Institute participant selected one of the following work groups: **eLearning; Leadership & Policies; Evaluation of Student Achievement; Professional Development; Program Evaluation; Curriculum Development; and Infrastructure & Technology.** The work groups then developed the tools for educators that comprise the *2005 SETDA National Leadership Institute Toolkit on Virtual Learning*.

Additional copies of the Toolkit can be downloaded at www.setda.org.

ABOUT THE STATE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (SETDA)

Founded in the fall of 2001, the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) is the principal association representing the state directors for educational technology. SETDA's goal is to improve student achievement through technology. Our mission is directed by three organizational

principles: 1) to promote national leadership in educational technology to support achievement in lifelong learning; 2) to provide professional development for state educational technology directors; and 3) to build partnerships to advance learning opportunities.

SETDA's membership includes educational technology directors and staff from the state departments of education of all fifty states, the District of Columbia and American Samoa. As members of SETDA, state leaders work together in committees, subcommittees and task forces to assess, analyze and propose recommendations on how to improve student learning through technology. Through regular conference calls, meetings and electronic communiqué, SETDA members regularly exchange information on how to effectively improve student learning and teaching through technology.

SETDA strives to assist and guide education technology leaders by:

- Analyzing trends among states.
- Collecting data elements across states including the development of the *Profiling Educational Technology Integration (PETI)*, a framework, instruments and protocols for assessing technology impact.
- Providing opportunities to exchange ideas with education experts.
- Hosting two national meetings for state directors each year, the SETDA Annual Convocation and Emerging Technologies Forum and the SETDA National Leadership Institute.

SETDA works in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, education associations and the corporate community. More information about SETDA is available at www.setda.org.

MESSAGE TO READERS

Educational technology and virtual learning are critical components of education. Educational technology initiatives support every tenet of the No Child Left Behind Act including:

- Improving Student Achievement
- Ensuring Highly Qualified Teachers
- Using Data to Increase Accountability; and
- Providing Access to Close the Achievement Gap.

As state technology leaders, members of the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) are continually engaged in the development of strategies and tools that will assist educators and administrators in effectively implementing and integrating technology into classrooms, curricula and learning. During the 2004 National Leadership Institute (NLI), SETDA leaders focused on the topic of virtual learning. They examined, discussed and developed tools that are designed to help education leaders effectively use virtual learning to increase opportunities through technology that will help students learn and teachers teach.

The work group topics for the 2004 NLI included:

- Group One: **Curriculum Development**
- Group Two: **eLearning: Leadership & Policies**
- Group Three: **Evaluation of Student Achievement**
- Group Four: **Infrastructure & Technology**
- Group Five: **Professional Development**
- Group Six: **Program Evaluation**

We are pleased to include the outcomes of the six work groups in the 2005 *SETDA National Leadership Institute Toolkit on Virtual Learning*. Enclosed you will find a summary of the NLI and the tools developed. The actual tools are available online at www.setda.org.

While the Toolkit was developed for use by state leaders, SETDA does encourage sharing the tools broadly so that all educators and administrators can utilize the Toolkit to assist them in improving and enhancing education through virtual learning.

SETDA expresses its sincere appreciation to all of the education leaders who participated in the NLI and the development of these critical tools.

"We cannot assume that our schools will naturally drift toward using technology effectively. We must commit ourselves to staying the course and making the changes necessary to reach our goals of educating every child. These are ambitious goals, but they are goals worthy of a great nation such as ours. Together, we can use technology to ensure that no child is left behind."

—President George W. Bush, *National Education Technology Plan: Toward a New Golden Age in American Education*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As American schools strive to provide equitable, valuable, and individualized learning opportunities for all students, eLearning has emerged as a viable option for delivering quality instruction and content that can be provided anytime or anywhere. State educational technology leaders are working to support achievement in lifelong learning and build partnerships to advance learning opportunities, and therefore identified eLearning as the focus of this year's SETDA National Leadership Institute (NLI).

As planning began in the summer of 2004 for the NLI, it became evident that a framework for the discussions and a definition of eLearning needed to be developed and agreed upon. After surveying the full SETDA membership, it was determined that for purposes of the NLI, eLearning would be defined as follows:

eLearning is the blended system of content, resources, and strategies that enables results-oriented, synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning.

The NLI eLearning Framework provides a picture of how the many components of eLearning fit together to improve student achievement and is based upon the scope delineated in the NLI definition of eLearning. The components identified include: **Curriculum Development, eLearning Leadership & Policies, Evaluation of Student Achievement, Infrastructure & Technology, Professional Development and Program Evaluation** and all of these components work together to improve teaching and learning. Because the work of the states in this area varies widely in breadth and depth, the Framework was purposefully designed to allow a collective vision of the states but also maintain an opportunity for flexibility of use within each individual state.

In November 2004, SETDA hosted the third annual NLI where state participants worked hand-in-hand with resource

specialists, corporate partners, R*TEC partners and U.S. Department of Education staff to produce the *SETDA Toolkit 2005 on Virtual Learning*. The NLI work groups were built to address each of the eLearning components identified above. The tools and outcomes that resulted will strengthen states' abilities to effectively implement eLearning and also address how the components work together and affect one another.

NLI participants were assigned to a Work Group, which studied one of the six eLearning components comprising the Framework. Based on the discussions and research, each Work Group developed guidance documents, tools and resources addressing key questions for their designated topic. The Toolkit is the result of these discussions and work by state leaders. In it you will find practical checklists, matrices, surveys and other tangible tools that can help educational technology leaders at all levels in the policy and practice decision-making needed to build or support robust eLearning programs.

Each chapter of the NLI Toolkit is a foundation – a starting point to guide the effective use and implementation of eLearning. All of the tools are built to help ensure success and all speak to the importance of an effective leader in making sure that success is achieved. Whether it be a set of talking points to use when meeting with stakeholder groups or a Making the Case Fact Sheet for Funding, state and community leaders have come together to develop this Toolkit because they believe in implementing eLearning effectively and they could draw on their shared knowledge and collective expertise to help each Toolkit user to benefit from this experience.

CHAPTER 1: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development and instructional practices are fundamental to the successful implementation of an eLearning program at the state or local level. This Work Group focused on the process by which technology directors and educators

"The NLI is one of the most important activities I participate in each year. The wonderful opportunity to collaborate with my counterparts across the nation to create tools and share ideas is vital to Pennsylvania's success in helping all students achieve in this environment of accountability. With limited budgets and a stringent focus on evidenced-based practices, we must develop and share effective programs and proven practices across states and the NLI is the perfect forum for that."

—Michael Golden, Deputy Secretary,
Pennsylvania Department of Education

develop, choose and share digital content and courses. To aid education leaders in choosing or designing digital content, this Work Group developed a set of technical specifications for both development and delivery. They also created a selection tool that would help to ensure that these specifications had been incorporated. Finally, they developed a set of dissemination models to enable distribution of these principles and guidelines to creators and consumers.

CHAPTER 2: eLEARNING: LEADERSHIP & POLICIES

In beginning its work, the Leadership & Policies Work Group acknowledged that eLearning can take on many different forms and that states are all at very different stages of implementation. Effective leadership and understanding of the policy choices and their implications is critical to the success of an eLearning program. This Work Group developed a matrix of key attributes of different eLearning models, as well as the policy implications that accompany these attributes. They also created a guide to assist state leaders in identifying key issues and decision points. They made a list of different kinds of policies and legislation in place in states and they created a step-by-step action plan to help leaders overcome unforeseen challenges.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Data and technology are effective tools in improving student learning. The Evaluation of Student Achievement Work Group examined the importance of formative and summative assessments in an online environment, as well as how technology can be used to assess technology literacy and student achievement in core content areas. The Work Group created a “Buyer’s Guide” for evaluating the effectiveness of online programs and courses. They also produced two policy statements. The first recognizes the importance of having students and their learning at the center of any evaluation program and the second addresses the absence of a technology literacy requirement in the federal Consolidated State Performance Report. The Work Group developed a chart to aid decision makers in whether to use embedded or separate assessments and a “State of the States” matrix clearly identifying how each state is addressing these evaluation issues.

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

This Work Group focused on the strategies, policies and procedures related to building a statewide network. The Work Group created a collaborative vision statement for a statewide network that any state can use in focusing on the purpose of a network and its relationship to learning. The group also developed a survey that can be used to collect information from states about their network infrastructure. A matrix of technology components was developed that identifies key considerations and benefits by service and function as well as a matrix of policy questions with links to resources. Finally, the group developed a list of talking points to use with stakeholder groups.

CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The NLI Professional Development Work Group looked at how online professional development could help in building learning communities for teachers and other educational leaders. To this end, the Work Group developed a document for Building and Sustaining Professional Communities that includes models, components of effective eLearning communities and a resource guide. The Work Group also developed a Fact Sheet for making the case for funding of professional development. They examined how to coordinate professional development and they developed a guide to effectively communicating needs and visions for professional development with all entities within education.

CHAPTER 6: PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Program Evaluation Work Group focused their work on helping education leaders to evaluate how a program is working and to make decisions about improvement and continuation. To that end, the work groups developed an eLearning Evaluation Lens. The lens is a progressive way to consider critical issues and questions that frame successful eLearning program evaluations. Some of the components included in this lens are categories, goals, indicators, measures, lessons learned and models.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

To provide eLearning curriculum guidelines and resources to help technology directors develop, choose, and share digital content and courses.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are essential curriculum development design principles for eLearning content and courses for elementary school, middle school, high school and adult learners?
- What dissemination models can facilitate distribution of these curriculum development design principles for eLearning content and courses to creators and consumers?
- What are some guidelines for sharing curriculum development design principles and standards for eLearning content and courses? How can SETDA contribute to the development and sharing of eLearning content and courses among states and private industry?
- What are some new and emerging technologies that could affect eLearning curriculum development, content and courses, and their delivery or distribution?

NLI WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

The 2004 NLI eLearning Curriculum Development Work Group attempted to enlighten the process by which technology directors and educators develop, choose, and share digital content and courses. State technology directors must consider a wide range of problems and issues when developing and soliciting eLearning curriculum including issues of accessibility, copyright responsibilities, alignment with state standards, as well as financial limitations.

Until this time, technology directors have had limited opportunities to share eLearning curriculum and instructional practices across state borders. Ultimately, this problem stems from the wide ranging instructional and curriculum design practices employed in private industry and among state curriculum developers. Thus, the Curriculum Development Work Group set out to develop a foundation of eLearning curriculum design principles that will allow for further collaboration among SETDA members to develop, choose, and share eLearning curricula.

Working from this core idea, the Curriculum Development Work Group divided into three subgroups. The first subgroup created a set of technical principles and guidelines for the development and delivery of digital content. The second subgroup created a model tool for technology directors and consumers of eLearning curricula to use when choosing online and electronic courses. The third subgroup explored dissemination models that can most effectively reach important target audiences including policymakers, teachers, students and parents as well as private curriculum developers.



SETDA TOOLS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

- **Principles and Considerations for Digital Content - Technical Specifications for Development and Delivery:** A set of essential curriculum development design principles and considerations for eLearning content and courses for elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult learners (K-12).
- **A Model to Apply or Judge eLearning Curriculum:** A selection tool to evaluate eLearning content and courses to apply or judge if essential curriculum development design principles and standards have been incorporated.
- **A Process for Creating Dissemination Models of eLearning Principles and Guidelines:** Dissemination models that can facilitate distribution of principles and guidelines for eLearning content and courses to creators and consumers.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Develop a repository of eLearning curriculum development principles, standards, and policies currently being used in states and other arenas that can facilitate and encourage local, state and national sharing.
- Create and share a list of barriers and possible solutions for sharing eLearning curriculum development content and courses.
- Disseminate a list of current technologies available and places to watch for emerging technologies in and for eLearning curriculum development and delivery.
- Continue to develop guidelines, essential information, and resources for the technical specifications for digital content.
- Develop guidelines, principles, and resources for the development and delivery of digital content especially within the areas of teacher professional qualifications, program evaluation, and the administration, management, and infrastructure of digital content, courses and virtual schools.
- Facilitate virtual meetings for SETDA members to define and develop other eLearning dissemination models such as model professional development kits, model brochures, and model presentations.

eLEARNING LEADERSHIP & POLICIES

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the range of possible eLearning models and current policies in place in different states as well as the implications associated with these different options and models; and
- To provide information and strategies to assist state leaders in effectively choosing, creating and/or implementing eLearning policies and programs.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the key characteristics of different eLearning models and the policy implications associated with these different models?
- What are the key criteria or guidelines for evaluating whether to adopt an eLearning Program and for selecting which specific eLearning option to put in place?
- What are some examples of legislation and policies in place to guide eLearning efforts across and within different states and what implications does each of these kinds of policies have for implementing eLearning?
- What are the strategies for overcoming the challenges associated with implementing eLearning opportunities?

WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

During the 2004 National Leadership Institute (NLI), the eLearning Leadership and Policies Work Group worked from the shared premise that the term “eLearning” has an array of different purposes and meanings and encompasses many things—that eLearning can look very different when put into practice in different states and locales. Another shared premise in this work group is that effective leadership is imperative to effective eLearning programs. An important component of effective leadership is drawing upon the

successes and collective knowledge of programs at different stages of development. The Leadership and Policies Work Group sought to identify the range of possible and actual eLearning models and policies in place in different states and the implications of those programs and policies. To make this a more workable task, Work Group participants began by identifying key aspects of the process a state leader must pursue when creating eLearning legislation as well as for selecting and implementing eLearning models within states. The Work Group formed subgroups around pivotal parts of this process.

One group focused on creating a matrix of key attributes associated with a range of different kinds of eLearning models, as well as potential policy implications associated with the different types of programs and options. A second group focused on creating a guide to assist state leaders in identifying key issues and decision points for determining the state’s role regarding eLearning as well as potential benefits associated with different choices. The third subgroup created a detailed list of the different kinds of eLearning policies and legislation currently in place in different states. This included breaking down the language and nature of these policies by the issues involved so as to provide state leaders with an easy reference guide of tangible examples when working to create legislation in their respective states. A fourth group created a step-by-step action plan to help state leaders overcome unforeseen challenges, along a wide variety of specific issues, while implementing eLearning programs within their states.

Another critical role for an eLearning leader is to be able to effectively communicate the importance of eLearning to policy-makers and the community. The work group also spent a great deal of time considering how to effectively “make the case” for eLearning to various audiences. Ideas and strategies for reaching this goal are embedded within each of these tools—both explicitly with a step-by-step action plan to

“This year’s National Leadership Institute was an incredible sharing experience. Virginia is now beginning to put its virtual learning program in place and the focus on eLearning at the NLI could not have come at a better time. Without the NLI, it is likely that we would have tried to ‘reinvent the wheel’. Instead, we can use the Toolkit to build upon proven best practices and select from a myriad of informed options.”

—Lan Neugent, Assistant Superintendent and CIO, Virginia Department of Education

overcome the challenges of doing so with specific audiences and implicitly with benefits listed alongside different eLearning models throughout that provide compelling reasons for adopting such programs.

SETDA TOOLS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

The tools developed by the Leadership and Policies Work Group are intended to provide state leaders with a guide to assist them in four key steps of the process of considering, selecting and ultimately implementing eLearning policies and programs within their states. These tools are meant to address the key issues that arise and the essential leadership skills needed for individuals leading the efforts to create and implement eLearning opportunities for students within states.

- **Step One: Understanding the Models and Adopting a Common Language – The Matrix of Key Attributes and Characteristics of eLearning Models:** This matrix outlines some of the key characteristics of different eLearning models that states either have developed or are in the process of developing and the advantages or disadvantages associated with these different models.
- **Step Two: Beginning the Conversation – The List of Key Issues and Decision Points Involved in the Selection of eLearning Options:** This list will serve to alert state leaders and other stakeholders to the important issues that must be examined before selecting an eLearning option.
- **Step Three: Identifying Existing Legislative Options – The Checklist of Key Legislative Issues:** This checklist will assist states in developing virtual learning legislation.
- **Step Four: Overcoming Barriers – The Barrier Identification Matrix: The Building Blocks of a State eLearning Action Plan:** This matrix provides a set of questions to help guide state leaders to identify and overcome challenges associated with implementing eLearning programs.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The Leadership and Policies Work Group recommends that some next steps be taken to supplement these tools and increase their utility for state leaders.

- As more state leaders develop and implement eLearning policies within their states, an important next step would be to fill in the Barrier Identification Action Plan with tangible examples of how different states have overcome the specific challenges.
- The group recommends the development of an action plan specifically targeted at helping state leaders deal with the challenges of making the case to stakeholders within their states.
- The group recommends the further development of the Key eLearning Legislative Issues Matrix to include current state examples and models for each of the policy options identified.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

OBJECTIVES

To demonstrate how the informed use of data and technology can improve student learning, to identify the importance of rich formative and summative assessments to enhance the teaching and learning process, and to determine ways to assess twenty-first century skills within the eLearning context.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How should technology be used to evaluate online student learning? What makes a successful online course? What new metrics and standards are needed for online learning?
2. How should technology be used to assess technology literacy? What metrics are being used or are needed for measuring technology literacy?
3. How should technology be used to evaluate student achievement in core content areas? How do states “make the case” that technology improves student learning? By what metrics is AYP being evaluated?

NLI WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

The Evaluation of Student Achievement Work Group broke into three distinct subgroups to create their deliverables:

- Evaluation of Online Learning;
- Assessment of the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements; and
- Assessment of Student Achievement in Core Content Areas.

The Evaluation Online Learning subgroup created a Buyer’s Guide for evaluating the effectiveness of online programs and courses. This Guide is aimed at helping states determine the quality of their programs and courses—whether the programs are commercially developed or developed in-house. The Buyer’s Guide can serve as the first step toward filling a gap in the information that is currently available on the relative quality and success of various online courses and programs.

The Evaluating Student Achievement in Core Content Areas subgroup produced a policy statement laying out a set of core beliefs about the evaluation of student achievement that places students and their learning at the center of the evaluation processes. This subgroup also created a visual representation of an Assessment for Learning framework, which can be used to operationalize these core beliefs as a framework for assessing student achievement.

The Assessment of 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements subgroup created a policy statement addressing the issue of reporting on the Consolidated State Performance Report, and makes the case for including the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirement, but with specific guidelines and room for flexibility clearly spelled out ahead of time. They also developed matrices of the pros and cons of embedded versus separate assessments and a “state of the states” matrix that outlines how each state is currently dealing with assessing the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements.



SETDA TOOLS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

- **Integral Role of Technology in Assessing Student Achievement & Assessment for Learning Framework:** The policy document outlines core beliefs about the processes of evaluating student achievement in core content areas, and also visually diagrams an Assessment for Learning framework that can be used to operationalize the core beliefs about assessing student achievement.
- **Evaluating Online Learning Policy Document and a Buyer's Guide for Online Programs and Courses:** This policy document outlines the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of online courses and programs, and the Buyer's Guide is a tool for sorting out quality online courses and programs.
- **Assessment of the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB):** This policy document addresses the absence of the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Statutory Requirement in the Consolidated State Performance Report.
- **Assessment Consideration Chart:** This chart provides some of the pros and cons of embedded versus separate assessments, defines the available types of assessments, and organizes these assessment types into a continuum.
- **State of the States Matrix:** This chart catalogs the "state of the states" in terms of meeting the 8th grade technology literacy requirement, and includes states' definitions, policies, assessment processes, reporting strategies and supporting URLs.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

1. Evaluation of Online Learning
 - Create an end-of-course assessment and quality of online teaching tool;
 - Create mechanisms that incorporate student voices into the evaluation of online courses; and
 - Develop a comprehensive list of what criteria constitute a well-designed course and a rubric for evaluating the interactive quality of student learning.
2. Evaluation of Student Achievement in Core Content Areas
 - Identify ways to build the capacity of administrators who do not have the knowledge of how to incorporate technology into assessment mechanisms; and
 - Identify successful methods of creating classroom teacher buy-in to the core beliefs.
3. Assessment of the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements
 - Gain approval of the recommendation from SETDA's federal policy group that states begin reporting on their progress towards meeting the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirement in the Consolidated State Performance Report;
 - Identify ways to build the capacity of administrators to support the teaching and assessment of the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Requirements; and
 - Complete and analyze the state of the States matrix.

"Over the next decade, the United States will face ever increasing competition in the global economy. To an overwhelming extent, this competition will involve the mastery and application of new technologies in virtually every field of human endeavor... It is the responsibility of this nation's educational enterprise – including policymakers – to help secure our economic future by ensuring that our young people are adequately prepared to meet these challenges."

—National Education
Technology Plan: Toward a
New Golden Age in American
Education

INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

- To develop tools to assist state education technology leaders in creating and/or updating a statewide network; and
- To develop a common vision of a statewide network that focuses on how infrastructure and technology relates to eLearning and learning as a whole.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the driving forces for eLearning within your state?
- What are some of the models of statewide networks?
- What factors are important to consider when building or updating a statewide network?

- What are the key technology components?
- What are the top infrastructure policy issues?
- Who are the possible partners in such statewide networks?

NLI WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

Members of the Infrastructure & Technology (IT) Work Group acknowledged that issues surrounding infrastructure and technology of statewide networks are broad and that states are at very different points in terms of expertise, implementation, leadership, and legislative policies. As a result, the group decided to focus on the strategies, policies and procedures related to building a statewide network, and not on the specific technologies necessary such as computers, software and bandwidth.

Initial discussions focused on identifying the driving forces for eLearning within the states. The answers to this question provide guidance on whether a state may be in a position to implement a statewide network to deliver content and connectivity to school districts and individual schools.

The Work Group members were unanimous in their opinion that each state must develop a strong vision of a statewide network. The Work Group members decided to craft a vision for state directors to consider when building or updating a network. The Work Group's vision focuses on how infrastructure and technology relates to both eLearning and student learning as a whole.

The IT Work Group members identified current models of statewide networks and developed a survey to collect information that would allow them to delve more deeply into the strategies, policies and infrastructure in the model states of Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, Utah and Washington.



The Work Group members discussed what issues are important to consider when building a statewide network. Discussions included components, content, policies, partnerships, and funding issues. Based upon these broad discussions, the Work Group members divided into four subgroups to address the following topics:

- Models of statewide networks;
- Technology components to consider for a statewide network;
- Policy issues around state infrastructure; and
- Partnership needs and challenges.

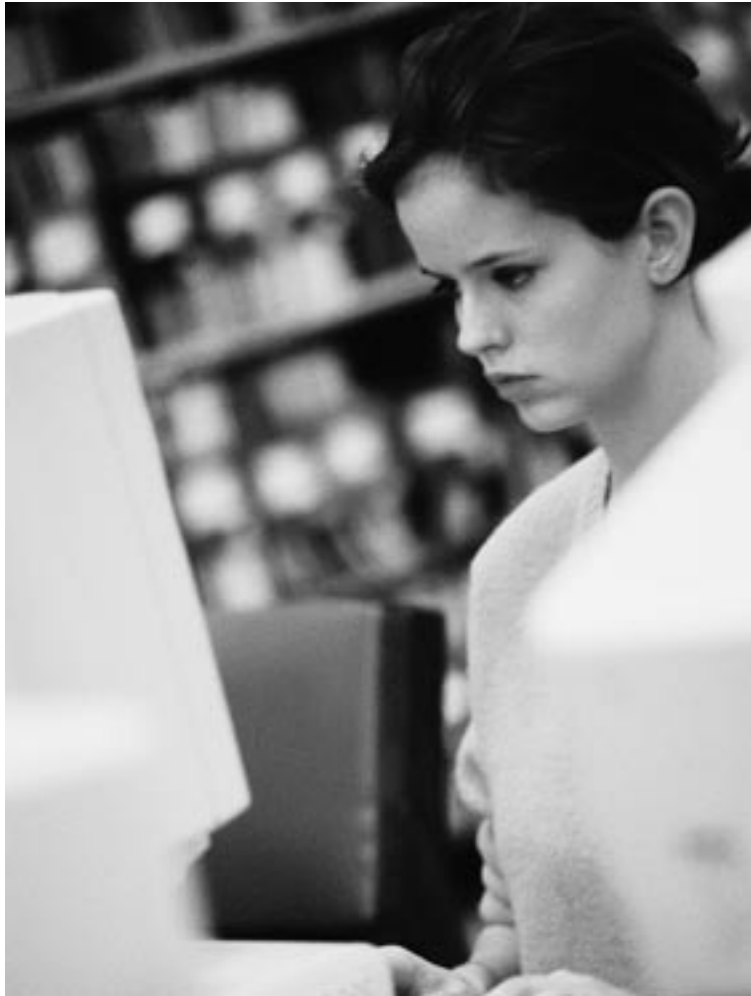
SETDA TOOLS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

The IT Work Group developed the following tools to assist states in creating or updating a statewide network:

- **Vision for a Statewide Network:** A collaborative vision statement of a statewide network that focuses on the purpose of a network and its relationship to learning.
- **Various Models of Statewide Networks:** A survey to collect information from select states about their network infrastructure.
- **Components to Consider for a Statewide Network:** A matrix of technology components listing the key considerations, benefits, and justification for each component by service and function.
- **Key Infrastructure Policy Questions:** A matrix of policy questions and links to resources.
- **Partnership Talking Points:** A list of talking points, with both questions and answers that may be used as a guide during conversations with various stakeholder groups.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Expand the survey of statewide educational networks to collect data from all states.



“The SETDA National Leadership Institute just keeps getting better and better. There is no other national opportunity for State Educational Technology Directors to receive this kind of in-depth and hands on professional development that produces a product we can use to help our states and districts. The NLI gives us the chance to use our expertise to help each other.”

—David Walddon, K-20
Education Technology,
Washington Office of the
Superintendent of Instruction

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

To assist educational leaders (federal, state, and local) in designing, implementing, assessing and communicating high quality professional development models that utilize electronic tools and resources.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How does online professional development support the building and maintenance of professional learning communities for teachers and other educational leaders?
- How can educational technology leaders make the case for funding and support for professional development that will facilitate the development of highly qualified teachers as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001?
- How can educational technology leaders create a more coordinated approach to professional development (i.e. between federal and state government, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, districts, schools, and classroom teachers) that results in improved processes of teaching and learning?



- What are the steps that can be taken to alleviate the “disconnect” between the design of the plan for quality professional development at the state and/or district level and the actual implementation at the building level?

NLI WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

Professional development is an extremely broad topic. The Work Group determined early on that in order to create tools most targeted at the needs of the states, the work of the group needed to be focused on the guiding questions. When the group met at the NLI, each member greeted the others by providing a personal definition of professional development. From these introductions came a shared vision and statement of the objective of the Work Group. Each of the guiding questions was then discussed in terms of: (1) issues and needs of the states; (2) potential indicators of success; (3) gaps and barriers that prevent the states from addressing these questions or meeting these needs; and (4) potential NLI action that would advance the states’ work in the areas identified.

Four subgroups were created around each of the guiding questions and four sets of tools were created. Each set of tools is designed to illuminate the various facets of the guiding question chosen by the subgroup members.

SETDA TOOLS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

- **Building and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities Document:**
 - **Tools for Online Professional Development Models**
 - A model and definition of “learning community”;
 - two High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium (HPR*TEC) TrackStars with important website links; and an online rubric from RubiStar which lists benchmarks along a Professional Learning Communities continuum;

- **Components of Effective eLearning Communities** - A table listing essential components for building and sustaining collaborative communities in eLearning environments; and
- **Resource Guide for Building eLearning Communities** - A matrix of tools (e.g. courseware, communications, teleconferencing, instant messaging, discussion boards) and resources for each tool, for building and sustaining collaborative learning communities.

- **Making the Case for Funding and Support of Professional Development Fact Sheet:** This list contains key facts about effective professional development targeted to key audiences such as state-level policy makers, district and building-level policy and decision makers, and the corporate community. This fact sheet also includes strategies on how best to address each of these constituencies.
- **Creating a Coordinated Approach to Professional Development:** This document lays out components that will serve as resources for creating a more coordinated approach to professional development including a set of common elements, a matrix of funding sources, and a case study design template, with examples.
- **Guide to Alleviating the Disconnect Between Professional Development Planning and Implementation:** This set of six graphics, along with the Professional Development Process and Communication Guides, represent steps in the professional development planning process and the entities within education, as well as the standards, resources, targeted audiences, and communication strategies applicable to those entities. The model is designed to be used by leaders of staff development to ensure that stakeholders are effectively communicating their needs and visions to one another.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The Professional Development Work Group recommends that SETDA take these next steps:

- Maintain and update the HPR*TEC tools (TrackStars and Rubrics).
- Encourage states and others to add to the matrix of funding sources begun by the Work Group.
- Encourage states and others to create additional case studies using the template developed by the Work Group. The template might be posted online in a format that allows others to contribute. This might provide the content for a searchable database of case studies which could be added to SETDA Connects.
- Recommend that the model for the Professional Development Process and Communication Guide be adapted by state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to reflect the unique needs of each, thereby improving the professional development process within and between organizations.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

OBJECTIVE

- To establish a collection of questions and critical issues for framing and building capacity for successful eLearning evaluations.
- To include within this framework: eLearning categories; goals; indicators; measures; lessons learned; models; and state eLearning initiatives.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the effective models for evaluation of eLearning programs?

- What are characteristics of these evaluations (e.g. benchmarks, criteria, approach, considerations)?
- What are the lessons learned?
- What are the pitfalls?
- What can we learn from the federal evaluation grants and the approaches the states are taking to program evaluation?

- How do Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) build capacity to facilitate and maintain project evaluation?
- How do states fund their evaluations?

NLI WORK GROUP OVERVIEW

Addressing core goals outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Program Evaluation Work Group collaborated during the National Leadership Institute (NLI) to determine how to support and guide states in conducting successful eLearning evaluations.

The Program Evaluation Work Group was firm in the notion that evaluation is not research. The purpose of an evaluation is to find out how a program is working and to make decisions about improvement and continuation. The goal of the NLI work group was to provide states with a set of questions and critical issues to consider when describing and defining the components of a successful eLearning program, rather than a “how-to guide” for evaluation. These critical questions and issues can be seen as a framework that can be used when: 1) developing RFPs; 2) working with school district grant awardees; 3) providing projects with criteria to consider in hiring outside evaluators; and 4) identifying and collecting project data elements that could be aggregated and used in a statewide evaluation.

Participants began by sharing ideas that informed the final toolkit efforts. Early discussions included:

“The opportunity to join together in creating policy recommendations that reflect the best thinking from across the country has been invaluable. It has informed our work at the state level, while simultaneously extending to this work the influence of a nationally recognized and respected organization.”

—Frances Bradburn, Director,
Instructional Technologies,
North Carolina Department of
Public Instruction



- Making a distinction between program and project evaluation according to the NSF definitions;
- Developing a common ground on how to evaluate programs from different funding sources;
- Establishing parameters for program evaluation;
- Producing different criteria for evaluating various eLearning programs (e.g. resources, online courses, virtual schools, professional development, distance learning); and
- Recognizing the need to identify the consumer/ audience of an evaluation.

The Work Group decided to establish broad components that transcend all possible definitions of eLearning and to develop a framework for eLearning evaluation centered on program goals and objectives. The resulting product balances the overall umbrella evaluation approach versus state-specific projects. Subsequently, participants categorized types of eLearning programs into three areas: 1. Student-centered projects; 2. Educator-centered projects; and 3. Resource-centered projects.

The Work Group then considered technical, implementation, educational, and institutional aspects for each of the three eLearning categories and identified the following primary outcomes associated with these types of programs:

- Increase equity and access;
- Increase and improve teaching and learning;
- Increase community and collegial collaboration as well as parent involvement;
- Increase efficiency;
- Increase choice and the opportunity to learn; and
- Capitalize on any positive unintended outcomes.

SETDA TOOL DEVELOPED TO ASSIST STATES

- **eLearning Evaluation Lens:** The lens is a progressive way to consider critical issues and questions that frame successful eLearning program evaluations including components such as categories, goals, indicators, measures, lessons learned, models, and state eLearning initiatives.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Continue to collect case studies to add to the eLearning Evaluation Lens.
- Identify additional models, examples, and resources to add to the eLearning Evaluation Lens.
- Develop a matrix that displays funding models currently in use by states that includes examples of states using the various models presented as well as a collection of supporting documents that states use in connection with funding including tools such as outlines and templates.
- Explore all resources and create an annotated bibliography of solid scientifically-based resources.
- Conduct self-studies utilizing the tools created during the NLI.
- Brainstorm strategies to utilize when presenting a multitude of data to various stakeholders and clients (i.e. in terms that are easy to understand and digest).

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SETDA PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COMMITTEE — NLI LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PLANNING COMMITTEE

John O'Connell, Chair
Monica Beglau
Frances Bradburn
Elsie Brumback
Julie Fox
Anita Givens
Liz Glowa
Wayne Hartschuh
Cheri Hayes
Nicole Honore
Vicki Kajioka
Tammy Mainwaring

George Miller
Jayne Moore
Rob Roy
Wayne Shimizu
Arthur Skerker
Brenda Staggs
Gloria Steele
Deb Sutton
Laura Taylor
Carla Wade
James Smith
Kathleen Webb

SETDA 2004 NLI FACILITATORS AND WRITERS

Erin Anderson
Dave Brittain
Mike Eason
Geoff Fletcher
Larry Fruth
Adrienne Hunt
Rachel Jones

Cheryl Lemke
Erin Martin
Steven Sanchez
Whitney Sherman
John Stroup
Nancy Sullivan

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RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

Karine Apollon
Dean Bergman
Bridget Foster
Valerie Greenhill
Van Krebs
Lynn Nolan
Chris O'Neal
Jon Bernstein
David Byer
Andrew Henry
Justin McMorrow
Dave Richards

Judith Singleton
Tom Szuba
Scott Young
Bob Darby
Matt Dawson
Kurt Knestis
Don Knezek
Dan MacFetridge
Jill Weber
Jessie Wooley-Wilson
Derrick Lindsay
Holly Sagues

Stephen Andrews
Leslie Conery
Helen Morris
Andy Rogers
Billie Sherrod
Patrick Supanc
Barbara Clements
Walt Heinecke
Kim Mulkey
Tim Stroud

Gil Valdez
Barbara Treacy
Kirk deFord
Art Sheekey
Vicki Dimock
Jill Stoltzfus
Kurt Larsen

Steve Baxendale
Glenn Kleiman
Jayne James
Laurence Peters
Elizabeth Byrom
Seymour Hanfling
Nita Matzen

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SETDA ANNUAL PLATINUM PARTNERS



SETDA ANNUAL GOLD PARTNERS



SETDA CONTENT PARTNERS



SETDA
6213 North 22nd Street
Arlington, VA 22205
www.setda.org

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additional copies of this publication or the
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