Building Capacity for Collaborative Research and Practice Among Students and Community Partners

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Roundtable Presentation at
7th Living Knowledge Conference
Dublin, Ireland
jcook@uncc.edu
Key Points

- **Definitions**
  - Capacity Building – strengths building to improve ability to “get things done”
  - Partnerships – enduring connections among individuals or groups that provide mutual benefit

- **Outline partnership model for building capacity, combining:**
  - 5Wins approach
  - Capacity building model
  - RRI Principles
Key Points

- Example using model
  - Early childhood intervention in large school system

- You, participants in this process
  - Comment on strengths, weaknesses of model
  - Provide other examples
  - Identify additional steps to build capacity
  - Assess relevance for RRI enhancement efforts
Capacity Building is...

- Recognizing strengths, assets and abilities of individuals, organizations, communities
- Increasing those strengths and abilities
- Enabling ongoing quality and improvement
Organizational Capacity model (Strater Hogan et al, 2015)
Partnerships are...

- Specific types of relationships that:
  - Are enduring and stable
  - Provide mutual benefit
  - Use partners’ complementary skills
  - Work toward common interests

- Partners:
  - Rely on one another
  - Assume the best of intentions and actions
  - Share expectations
Successful Partnerships Require...

- Sharing, which is not always easy
- Flexibility
- Investment of time, resources
- Risk of loss, or investment without gain
- Slower processes due to shared decision making
- Careful listening
- Honesty
- Reasonably equitable distribution of power
How to Retain Good Partnerships

- Good Partners –
  - Push and encourage one another
  - Identify opportunities others may not see
  - Hold each other accountable
  - Advocate and cheer for the other
  - Cover for one another when needed
  - Help other expand vision of possible, and through the joint effort, make the vision real
  - Ensure that the others “win” from the partnership
5Win Strategies

- To build and maintain university partnerships, we need to ensure that key stakeholders “win”
  - Faculty
  - Organization (staff)
  - Student
  - University
  - Community

- Repeatedly ask “how can they benefit from this effort?”
## Stakeholder “Wins” for Each Capacity Building Strategy

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**Illustrative wins**

- Sustain Change
- Develop Infrastructure
- Modify Processes
- Enhance Skills
- Monitor and Document
- Partnership Goals
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Example: Bright Beginnings

- Early childhood education program for 4-year olds in large school system

- Wanted to know:
  - How it worked
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - How to improve it

- Assessed socio-emotional and verbal ability changes; implementation of curriculum; teacher, parent and “coach” views

- Spent 1 year, visiting 99 classrooms x 2; assessed 2700 children
## Bright Beginnings

### Solid base for program and its evaluation
- Seek funding for more research
- Program can grow with evidence
- ↑ Ability to serve as org change agents
- Increased federal grants
- Public supports program

### ↑ data management & coaching
- Expand research possibilities
- Reduce workload; ↑ information
- ↑ Ability to serve as org change agents
- Greater potential for contracts
- ↑ partnerships to solve problems

### Use data in coaching and teaching
- Apply change processes to test
- More efficient/effective program
- See impact of change efforts
- Better use of public funds

### Teachers ↑ curriculum fidelity
- ↑ student support for research
- ↑ Child outcomes/success
- Learn applied research skills
- Tout student achievements
- Better educated children

### Identify factors -> child benefit
- ↑ Student funding new research
- Learn about program, effects
- Gains program knowledge
- Credit as engaged university
- Increased support of program
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**University**

**Community**
How did we do?

If goal is to have everyone win...

- Faculty – applied for federal grant to continue work; just received notice of funding
- School system – key individuals welcome application for funding; system didn’t implement recommended changes; will work to improve coaching/data use
- Students – developed good skills; want to be involved with new grant project
- University – likes funding, but we should do better at communicating to increase support
- Community – little awareness; school held data until it became “old news”
How does this structure work?

- Goal is to think about capacity building across different stakeholders
- Template helps push to consider different parties with different goals
- Can this help us improve our partnerships for change?
- Do you have partnerships where this could be applicable?
Example: RRI
Gender Equality Processes

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Broader workforce</th>
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<td>Institutions have gender equality plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Better recruiting of faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools promote equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student have more peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training re inclusion is provided</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions document barriers</td>
<td>Faculty find support re barriers</td>
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<td>Greater opportunities for students</td>
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**Gender Equity Goals**
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### Worksheet: Wins by Strategies

(Some cells may not work)

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Does this work for RRI goals?

- They seem to focus on capacity building
- Is there a need for “organization” in the 5Wins?
- Where is the partnership/who are the partners?
  - Schools, faculty, research institutions seem to be
  - Does it make sense to focus on students, community