Protocol for monitoring NCLB Title II grantee work

Query – 01.23.2004

Query: I am preparing to begin my first round of monitoring visits. I could sure benefit from your experience. Would those of you who do site visits for your Title II, Part A(3) awardees, be willing to share your monitoring protocol? What processes do you use and what questions do you ask? Thanks in advance to those of you who are able to take some time to respond. **From:** Michigan	
Responses:	
West Virginia	I have no prescribed protocol for my monitoring visits. My visit is used to first ascertain whether the project matches what was described in the proposal. Secondly I am interested in whether the project is being effective in meeting its goals and objectives. This is done through conversations with the project director, teachers and instructors. Much of my time is spent simply observing the activity. On many occasions I actually participate in the activity. Normally when I arrive I am given an opportunity to inform the group about the purpose of my visit. I indicate that I would welcome any input they would like to provide. Some participants seek me out. I also solicit input from others while participating or observing the activity. Lunch time is a good time to sit down with the participants. I look forward to seeing what others are doing.
Iowa	As the Iowa person doing the monitoring visits, I go and participate as though I were any participant in the project. The project staff usually introduce me and ask me to say a few words and explain the process. I shut up as quickly as I can and let the program get back to schedule. I've re-read the proposal and I am checking to see if they are doing the things they said they were going to do. If they are lecturing, I am taking notes. If they are doing a hands on activity, I team up with loners or a group of individuals and do the activity. I listen, listen, listen. You can tell alot if you let the participants talk. I hear about the successes and the failures. I contribute to conversations and discussions as I am able. When I leave, I have a good idea of what the project is doing and how far, if any, they have strayed from the proposal. I end with a de-briefing with the project leader. By participating, I have left an imprint on several projects that are still visible in subsequent iterations of the projects. When I have not been able to visit and hired someone to do it, I devised (against my better judgment) a checklist for this person to use. Checklists got in the way of really seeing what was going on as the hiree went out interviewing participants and leaders to get a picture of what was happening. She was not able to use a variety of assessments, which we were trying to help teachers understand. The important thing to do, and I admit I am bad at this, is to write up the impressions and evidence that you have collected and place it in the project files for the federal auditors. Any handout that I get during my visit becomes part of the project file. And I have had to copy several good things so that I could keep a copy for my future use! By getting to know participants, I too am identifying teachers of excellence within the

	state and can watch what these people are doing and how they are leading the drive for improving and continued excellence in Iowa school systems.
Georgia	We look mainly at the participants behavior in our unannounced visits. Almost all our visits are unannounced. We observe and try to gauge the involvement of the teachers in the activities and interview a few of them - asking them if they are learning things that they will or are using with their students and how this is received by their students and if they have any suggestions to improve the project. We leave our email address with all the teachers and invite them to send comments (now or later) if we do not get a chance to talk with them or if they prefer a more private setting.
Washington	I attended the Summer Institutes to observe faculty teaching K-12 practitioners. I have also hired a statewide evaluator who is conducting focus groups and observing K-12 practitioners teaching in the classroom. In addition, the evaluator is collecting pre and post data for the K-12 practitioners and their students.
Kentucky	In Kentucky we developed a form for site visits, although our questions are not limited to those on the form. After the site visit is conducted, we send a follow up letter that summarizes our observations and lists concerns, if any were observed. Site Visit monitor form.doc
Nebraska	Regarding the monitoring of NCLB Professional Development: I try to visit every funded project once and use a generic form to complete and put in the file. It is similar to Kentucky's, but shorter. Our form focuses on verifying that the activity actually is taking place as proposed, so I don't include items like budget. I have basic information at the top (project name, director, date of visit, location, project staff present, etc.) and spaces for "Activities Conducted this Day", "Participant Comments" (I try to talk with them at breaks or lunch), and "Observations". This allows me to use one form for the variety of professional development activities we fund.
Puerto Rico	We have a group of external evaluators that do the monitoring visits to the projects. Each project is visited by one evaluator twice during the project's duration. They have an interview with the project's director, and look at all of the partnership's related documents. The evaluators check that the projects are developing as planned, and document if there are any changes in resources, number of participants, schedule, workshops or courses etc. If there are changes, they document the partnership's plans to achieve the project's goals and/or objectives affected. The evaluators give us the information in a form for our evaluation, and assistance to the project. If you would like a copy of the form that we use, please let me know and I'll translate it and send it to you.
North Carolina	In NC I visit each project twice during the year. The site visits are to determine if the project is proceeding as proposed, to garner reactions from the participants and team members, and to check quality of professional development activities. The site visits are arranged with the project director and are usually scheduled for a particular activity that may be unique to the project. Depending on the activity I may participate, but primarily observe so the activity will proceed as planned. I always find opportunities to talk with the participants and get feedback on the project and the benefits to them.

	During a site visit I meet with members of the project team from the university and LEAs to get verbal progress reports, hear good news and listen to any concerns. If the deans of education/college of arts and sciences are not on the project team, I schedule a courtesy call with them. I require a mid-year progress report at the end of first semester. The report is customized for each project so they don't have to "fit" their project work into a standardized form. A financial report will be due in the spring to ensure all projects are on track with expenditures and a final project report will be due at the end of the summer. The reports become part of the project file as well as materials/handouts I pick up during the site visit, notes taken during the visit, emails from project team members, etc.