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STRENGTHENING THE “TAP IN WAY”: A CASE STUDY OF AN EVALUATION  
CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORT IN TAP IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY’S SUMMER  
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes an effort to build evaluation capacity in a community-based organization – Tap In Leadership Academy. Following a 4-Step ECB Process, this study included facilitated work sessions with program staff and organizational leadership; observations of relevant program activities; interviews with program site leaders and organizational leadership; and researcher reflective memos. This study aimed to answer three questions: 1) To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations to *systematically collect* data that can be used to improve their programs? 2) To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations to *use* systematically-collected data to improve their programs? and 3) What contextual factors matter when an ECB practitioner is attempting to build evaluation capacity in a community-based organization? How do they matter? While prior research has been conducted on ECB, there has been minimal research conducted on the implementation of ECB efforts in community-based organizations. This dissertation presents important findings on the extent to which evaluation capacity was built in Tap In Leadership Academy. Additionally, this dissertation presents how and why training, process, and accountability emerged as important contextual factors that influence building ECB in community-based organizations. This study contributes to the ECB literature in several ways. First, by highlighting the importance of viewing data collection and data use as separate components of the ECB process, that need to be measured separately. Second, by presenting a new organizational-level ECB assessment tool. Third, by presenting contextual factors that future ECB practitioners should recognize and address if they want to be effective at building evaluation capacity in community-based organizations at the organizational-level. And finally, this study contributes to the ECB literature by presenting a four-step process that other ECB practitioners can use to build evaluation capacity in organizations.

## **DEDICATION**

*I dedicate this work to my first, and most important teacher, - my mother, Sheila Holmes.  
Thank you for your love, protection, patience, and most of all, your sacrifice. None of  
what I have accomplished would have been possible without you. I LOVE you dearly.*

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One time for the West Side.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Afterschool programs hold a special place in my heart. From the time I began pre-k until the time I graduated from high school, I was a participant, staff member, or volunteer in an afterschool program. The programs that I attended provided a space for me to be intellectually challenged, emotionally supported, and physically protected. For that, I am grateful.

From my experiences in afterschool programs, I have learned that they have the potential to improve the academic, social/emotional, and physical development of the children that they serve. Equally as important, I learned that high staff turnover, inadequate funding, and an inability to use data for program improvement – among other things - can stand in the way of programs achieving their desired youth outcomes. These experiences led me to graduate school to study afterschool programs in more depth. I decided to use my dissertation as an opportunity to add theoretically to the evaluation capacity building literature, as well as an opportunity to contribute practically to the quality of a specific afterschool program. To this end, I conducted an evaluation capacity building (ECB) study with Tap In Leadership Academy – a community-based organization that provides a Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) and an After School Program (ASP) to youth.

This study attempted to build Tap In Leadership Academy's evaluation capacity through improving the content and usefulness of the organization's scholar debriefing form. The underlying logic of the study, was that by improving the scholar debriefing form, the organization would be able to collect stronger and more defensible data on each scholar. Eventually, once this was achieved, the data could be used by the site leaders, the site coordinators, the Program Director, and the Executive Director, during the program to make changes based on what they learned from the data while the program was in session. And, the

data could be used after the program was complete to assess whether the program achieved its desired youth outcomes.

To this end, the study had two goals. The primary goal of the study was to improve Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to collect meaningful data using their scholar debriefing form. This was the study's primary practical goal because before data can be used, quality data had to be collected. The secondary goal of the study was to improve the Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to use the scholar debriefing form data to improve the SEP and to assess the impact of the SEP.

Before I move on to discuss what this study theoretically aimed to contribute to the evaluation capacity building literature, I will describe the scholar debriefing form. Since the focus of this ECB study was to improve the scholar debriefing form – I believe it is important to describe the form's purpose and the form's content. This description aims to contextualize why the scholar debriefing form became the focus of this study and how I sought to improve the scholar debriefing form because of this study.

The first version of the scholar debriefing form was created by the organization's founding Executive Director in 2010. The form was created to document the development of the scholars' leadership and social skills while they were participants in the program. One of Tap In Leadership Academy's core values is providing scholars with individual attention. Thus, the scholar debriefing form was created to capture a snapshot of each individual scholar's day. More specifically, the form provided space to highlight positive leadership characteristics and social skills that each scholar demonstrated throughout the day. And, the form provided space to identify poor actions and/or decisions that scholars made throughout the day, so that site leaders could assist scholars with improving in those areas. The scholar debriefing form was completed

by site leaders for each scholar at the end of each day.

The second version of the scholar debriefing form was created in 2012. This form is presented in Appendix A. This version of the form shifted from capturing a snapshot of each scholar's day individually, to capturing a broad snapshot of all scholars at each program site. The form's change was initiated by site leaders who complained that completing the scholar debriefing form for each scholar at the end of each day was too time consuming. After continuous complaints, the Program Director and Executive Director created and approved the revised scholar debriefing form. Since its creation, some variation of the second version of the scholar debriefing has been used at each program site, until this study.

At the start of this study the organization's leadership (Executive Director, Program Director, and Director of Support Services) identified several problems with the second version of the scholar debriefing form, they included: 1) different forms were being used across the 7 program sites, 2) the different forms did not accurately capture the information the organization wanted to collect, 3) the forms were not consistently being completed, and 4) the forms were collecting data from scholars as a group rather than individuals. As a result of these issues, the primary and secondary goals of this study that were previously discussed were created.

To accomplish the first goal - improve Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to collect meaningful data using the SEP scholar debriefing form, I worked alongside the organization's leadership and staff to create a revised individual scholar debriefing form and a rubric that explained how the individual scholar debriefing form should be completed. The revised individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric were implemented at all program sites during the 2016 SEP. After the SEP, I produced a document, *Evaluation Capacity Building Mid-Project Report*, that presented what I learned about the

debriefing process, views on the individual scholar debriefing form and individual scholar debriefing form rubric, and debriefing training. This report is presented in Appendix E. Interview data from site leaders and my observations of debriefing session at each program site over the course of the SEP were used to create the report. More specifically, this report highlighted what I learned about data collection and the factors that influenced data collection. Based on my presentation of this report to the Executive Director and the Director of Support Services, the individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric were revised. The individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric were revised a total of three times over the course of the project – once before SEP and twice after SEP. Each version of the individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric are presented in Appendices B – D.

To accomplish the second goal - improve the Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to use the data from their scholar debriefing forms to improve their SEP, I did two things. First, I assessed if and how the data was used in the 2016 SEP. This assessment resulted in the creation of the *Evaluation Capacity Building Data Use Report*, which presented a list of barriers that currently existed to using the data and a presented a list of suggestions that could be implemented to improve data use. This report is presented in Appendix F. Since improving data use was secondary to improving data collection most of my effort was focused on improving data collection. To this end, the extent of my contribution to accomplishing the second goal of the project was the creation of the *Evaluation Capacity Building Data Use Report*.

Three major suggestions were made in *Evaluation Capacity Building Data Use Report*, they include: 1) shift from collecting data manually to collecting data electronically, 2) create a document that explains: a) who the intended users of the data are, b) how each intended user

should use the data to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills, and c) when the data should be used to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills, and 3) design and implement an accountability system that holds each intended user responsible for using the data as it is intended. The third suggestion was implemented into the third and final version of the individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric.

This study theoretically aimed to investigate if the practice of ECB was a useful tool for helping community-based organizations (CBO) improve their evaluation capacity. To this end, I implemented an ECB project in Tap In Leadership Academy's SEP. The goal of this study was to: 1) improve the organization's ability to collect data from individual scholar debriefing forms, and 2) improve the organization's ability to use the individual scholar debriefing data to systematically improve their programs. The research questions that guided this study included:

1. To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations to *systematically collect* data that can be used to improve their programs?
2. To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations to *use* systematically-collected data to improve their programs?
3. What contextual factors matter when an ECB practitioner is attempting to build evaluation capacity in a community-based organization? How do they matter?

This study contributes to the ECB literature. It offers a case example of an evaluation capacity building effort in a community-based afterschool program. More specifically, it adds another ECB strategy to the literature, a set of contextual factors that are important for ECB practitioners to address when attempting to building ECB in community-based afterschool programs, and important lessons learned for ECB practitioners and ECB researchers.

Throughout the course of this dissertation I discuss in more detail the steps that were used

to carry out the study and the results of the study. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center's (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative, an important problem that the Illinois Board of Education has identified, and a rationale for how this project has modestly attempted to address it. Tap In Leadership Academy's SEP is a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantee, and has been since 2011.

### **21st Century Community Learning Centers**

The U.S education system faces a myriad of complex issues in the 21st century as it attempts to educate a growing multicultural student population. As challenges mount in areas of curriculum reform, academic achievement, school closings, decreased opportunities for physical activity, and limited arts opportunities, the importance of alternative youth development programs is growing. Among these alternative youth development programs are afterschool programs. Afterschool programs are safe spaces for youth to develop and learn outside of the typical school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2015; Harvard Family Research Project, 2008). Currently, a plethora of afterschool programs exist at the national and community-based level. While these programs have grown in importance, they must continue to receive financial support from private donors, states, and the federal government to continue doing this important work.

Arguably, to date, the most important and influential contributor to the afterschool program field is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative. The 21st CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source that exclusively supports afterschool programs. In 2015, it served more than 1.6 million youth with a budget of 1.152 billion (Afterschool Alliance, 2015). No other U.S. governmental source contributes more money to afterschool programs yearly than the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative. For this reason, and my longstanding interest in afterschool programs, I have decided to use my dissertation as a tool to address an

issue identified by the Illinois State Board of Education for their 21st CCLC program grantees. Before I detail the issue identified by the Illinois State Board of Education for their 21<sup>st</sup> program grantees I will describe the origin of the 21st CCLC initiative and highlight several of its important developments.

Congress authorized the 21st CCLC initiative in 1994. At its inception, the initiative's purpose was to make school spaces available to communities during non-school hours, thus, transforming the school into a 'community learning center' by providing educational opportunities for the entire school community (U.S. Department of Education & Office of the Under Secretary, 2003). In 1998, the initiative shifted from broadening school use to solely providing academic assistance and recreational activities during the non-school hours for the children who attended the school (Department of Education & Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs, 2003). In 2003, the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation altered the 21st CCLC initiative once again.

NCLB altered the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative in several important ways. The new changes required programs to emphasize academic enrichment for assisting students in reaching state and local academic standards in reading and math. The changes also expanded where programs could be held. Organizations that served youth outside of schools were now eligible for the grants or monies previously unavailable to them. Another important change was that the administration of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant shifted from The Department of Education to state agencies such as Illinois State Board of Education. Because of this change, state agencies must apply for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant funds and then administer them based on the federal grant program guidelines. Finally, evaluation and accountability increased as states that applied for and were awarded the federal

grant were now required to conduct an annual evaluation of all their funded programs. In addition, each program grantee was required to conduct periodic evaluations of their own program efforts (Department of Education & Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs, 2003). Together these evaluation requirements serve as accountability measures for the states that administer the grant, and the programs that receive the grant.

Of all the changes, the new evaluation requirements have arguably had the most impact on the afterschool program field's ability to identify the factors that are needed for an afterschool program to achieve its desired youth outcomes (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008). Some of these factors that have been identified include: "access to and sustained participation in program, quality programming (appropriate supervision and structure, well-prepared staff, intention programming), and partnerships with families, other community organizations, and schools" (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 6).

However, while these evaluation requirements have helped identify factors that contribute to program achieving their desired youth outcomes, they have also created a new set of challenges for state agencies administering the grant. In recent years several state agencies have identified evaluation-related issues with the local programs that they fund.

A 2013 Texas 21st CCLC annual evaluation report concluded that local programs needed to create better systems to collect and organize academic performance data for program leaders to use that data to improve programming (American Institutes for Research, 2013). Similarly, a 2012-2013 21st CCLC annual evaluation report from Vermont concluded that programs needed to submit better attendance and academic data and that the state agency needed to develop a common set of evaluation measures for all of its funded programs (Schwab, 2013). A 2014

annual evaluation report from the state of Washington concluded that the grantee programs should strive towards using data to inform services for individual students (Naftzeger, Vinson, Feng, Zhu, Foley, 2013).

The most recent Illinois 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC annual evaluation report (2014) highlighted that of the 56 agencies that were awarded the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant, 12 of them did not submit any evaluation report, and for the organizations that did submit reports, the quality and substance of the reports varied greatly. Furthermore, only a small percentage of the programs that submitted reports used their evaluations to assess important program components (Goodyear, Mansori, Cox, Rodriguez, 2014). Illinois's 2014 annual evaluation found that many of the evaluation reports submitted by grantees simply provided tables or screen shots of the data collected in the nationwide 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC data system - Annual Performance Report (APR), which included the percentage of students improving their grades, test scores, and an APR teacher survey. Others supplemented these data with their evaluation efforts that collected data and feedback from parents, students, and or staff about the how the program worked, positive changes that they experienced or observed, and how the program could be improved (p. 97). In closing, the evaluation report concludes that the quality of the grantee evaluation reports is too varied to aggregate the outcome data. The report states:

The quality and substance of the local evaluations varied greatly. Most reports reiterated information and data included in the APR and PPICs systems. A small number of sub-grantees used the local evaluation to document and understand particular aspects of their program not captured or reflected in these other data systems. Less than half of the reports offered information about data collection methods or data quality. In reviewing the local evaluation reports, it became clear that it was not possible to aggregate specific outcome findings, as sub-grants and sites were not asking the same questions, or collecting data in the same way. Instead, the review focused on the categories of data included, the extent to which the evaluations addressed state goals, and the recommendations for program improvement (p. 95).

The challenges that concern these state agencies can comfortably fit into two categories—state agency evaluation challenges and local program evaluation challenges. The need for developing common evaluation measures and programs failing to submit evaluation reports is a state-level challenge. These challenges appear to be, in part, the result of ill-developed or unclear state agency evaluation guidelines or a lack of accountability mechanisms to ensure that local programs comply with evaluation mandates. A solution to this challenge could be to restructure existing evaluation requirements or to create new evaluation requirements to account for these shortcomings. While this is a worthy challenge, it is one that can be addressed through some type of policy change.

However, the challenge of inadequate systems for collecting, storing, and using evaluation data, I argue cannot be addressed through a policy change, at least, not only through policy. Since programs have different structures, goals, and resources, requiring them to use the same systems would be an inadequate solution. It appears that one solution to address this challenge is for state agencies to provide local programs with the necessary resources to build their evaluation capacity. I argue, based on my reading of the evaluation capacity building literature, that the practice of evaluation capacity building is well positioned to assist community-based organizations build their evaluation capacity - if it is required by their funders, and if, funds are set aside specifically for improving evaluation capacity.

The lack of evaluation capacity that has been recognized by these state agencies is an important concern for all stakeholders involved in the afterschool program field. If program staff members are unable to use data to improve their programs on an ongoing basis, the children that they serve will suffer. If the government continues to fund programs that have potential, but that never reach their potential because of inadequate systems, then we are making a poor investment

in the lives of American children. The aforementioned state evaluation reports suggest that a more direct approach is needed to address this evaluation related challenge.

### **Problem Statement**

While evaluators may indirectly or directly contribute to building a program's evaluation capacity during an evaluation, it is often secondary to the primary task of conducting a quality evaluation. On the other hand, the growing practice of evaluation capacity building (ECB) directly focuses on improving organizations' ability to conduct and use evaluations to improve their programs on a routine basis. An important aspect of this work is developing the organization's evaluation systems (Preskill and Boyle, 2008). Consequently, the practice of evaluation capacity building (ECB) is uniquely positioned to explicitly contribute to building evaluation capacity in the afterschool program field.

Through evaluation capacity building, local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool program staff can partner with ECB practitioners to improve their evaluation process, procedures, and policies and or work with ECB practitioners to learn about how to conduct evaluations themselves – both have the goal of increasing an organization's ability to improve their organization using evaluative data. While ECB appears to potentially be a useful tool for assisting afterschool programs, it remains just that – potential. My search of the ECB literature did not yield a single evaluation capacity building study conducted in an afterschool program. As a field, it is unknown if ECB will be effective in afterschool programs. However, this presented a great opportunity, because empirical data are needed to assess the viability of evaluation capacity building as a tool for afterschool program improvement. Since the most recent Illinois state evaluation identified the need for improving their grantees' ability to collect, store, and use evaluation data for program improvement, Tap In Leadership Academy's SEP was selected for this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Evaluation Capacity Building Defined**

Several definitions have been presented by evaluators to describe ECB as an evaluative practice. Baizerman, Compton, & Stockdill (2002) describe ECB as, “a context-dependent, intentional action system of guided processes and practices for bringing about and sustaining a state of affairs in which quality program evaluation and its appropriate uses are ordinary and ongoing practices within and/or between one or more organizations/programs/sites” (p. 8). Others have defined it as the process of developing sustainable evaluation practices within an organization so that program staff and program leadership have the skills to collect, analyze, interpret, and use evaluation data for decision-making and action (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Evaluation capacity building has also been defined as a process that increases an individual’s motivation, skills and knowledge of evaluation so that his/her ability to conduct and use evaluation regularly is improved (Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, & Lesesne, 2012).

A review of these definitions suggest that the goal of ECB is to create a sustainable system of evaluation policies and/or practices that ensures that organizations conduct quality evaluations and use the data from those evaluations to improve their programs on a continual basis. The individual responsible assisting for organizations to achieve this aim is the ECB practitioner. The ECB practitioner is an evaluator. However, her/his task is to bring about a state of affairs in which quality program evaluation is conducted and used routinely to improve an organization or program (Baizerman, Compton, & Stockdill, 2002). This contrasts with the program evaluator who is focused on conducting a high-quality program evaluation.

To accomplish the goal of ECB, the ECB practitioner must either: a) work alongside the organization or program leadership to develop suitable policies, processes, practices, and plans that support the production of quality evaluation and ensure that these evaluation data are routinely used to make decisions and to improve the organization or program, and or to b) provide program staff and program leadership with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct and use evaluation data for decision making and program improvement (Baizerman, Compton, & Stockdill, 2002). Thus, by co-creating the necessary evaluative systems and or equipping program staff and leadership with evaluation knowledge and skills, the ECB practitioner aims to achieve the chief aim of ECB, which is to create the state of affairs in which evaluation is valued, collected and used routinely to improve an organization or its programs.

#### **Four Step Evaluation Capacity Building Process**

After reading multiple ECB case studies and several ECB conceptual frameworks, I created a process for building evaluation capacity within an organization to guide this study. While none of the ECB case studies that I reviewed for this literature review referenced a ‘four step ECB process’, each case study followed a similar set of steps to build evaluation capacity within an organization (Anderson, Chase, Johnson III, Mekiana, McIntyre, Ruerup, & Kerr, 2014; Cohen, 2006; Compton, Glover-Kudon Smith, Avery, 2002; Diaz-Puerto, Yague, Afonso, 2008; Garcia-Iriarte, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler & Luna, 2011; Haeffele, Hood, & Feldman, 2011; Milstein, Chapel, Wetterhall, Cotton, 2002; Naccarella, Pirkis, Kohn, Morley, Burgess, & Blashki, 2007; Tang, Cowling, Koumjian, Roeseler, Lloyd, & Rogers, 2002; Taut, 2007). Additionally, the three conceptual frameworks that were found and reviewed for this literature review support a general four step process for building evaluation capacity within organizations (Cousins, Goh, Elliott, & Bourgeois, 2014; Labin, 2014; Preskill & Boyle, 2008).

Thus, I coined the phrase, “Four Step ECB Process”, to describe how ECB can be built within organization. Next I define and describe this four-step process. The four steps include: 1) understanding the organization’s context, 2) designing an ECB strategy, 3) implementing the ECB strategy, and 4) assessing the effectiveness of the ECB strategy to achieve the organization’s ECB goals. Each step is described in detail below.

The first step in this ECB process is gaining an understanding of the organization’s primary purpose or mission and their organizational context. More specifically, this step includes gaining some understanding of the underlying program theory, staff roles and responsibilities, sources of funding and their requirements, organizational processes and evaluation practices. The ECB practitioner gains understanding of these different organizational factors so that he or she can: 1) assess the organization’s ECB readiness and 2) understand the organization’s ECB goals. If the ECB practitioner believes that the organization is ready to implement an ECB process, this information is used to assist the ECB practitioner and organizational staff in designing an ECB strategy that is appropriate for the organization’s context and proposed ECB goals. Interviews, document review and observations are methods that are commonly used to gain some understanding of the organization’s context. The methods that are used to gain understanding of the organization is determined by the ECB practitioner. Regardless of the approach, the ECB’s practitioner’s goal in the first step of the process is to gain enough information to assess the organization so that she or he can make informed decisions during the ECB process.

The second step in the ECB process is designing a unique ECB strategy to be implemented in the program. The goal of the ECB strategy is to assist the organization in achieving the ECB goals that were set in the first step of the process. In this step, the ECB practitioner must design an ECB strategy or set of ECB strategies with the assistance of the

organization's leadership and or staff that are appropriate for the organization's context. This strategy must consider the organization's existing culture, existing evaluation practices and processes, and the evaluation capacity building goal.

Evaluation capacity can be built by implementing an ECB strategy at the organizational level, the individual level, or at both levels. To improve evaluation capacity at the organizational level, the ECB practitioner works closely with the organization's leadership and staff to develop policies, practices, or procedures that ensure that high quality evaluations are conducted and used within the organization to improve its programs. At the individual level, the ECB practitioner works closely with one or more members of the organization's leadership or staff to enhance their evaluation knowledge and/or their evaluation skills. Most often the evaluation skills that are improved are the ability to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The level at which an evaluation capacity-building practitioner targets an ECB strategy is based on the organization's context (existing evaluation capacity and evaluation capacity building goals).

The design of the strategy is determined based on the organizational context and the organization's ECB goals. Once the ECB strategy is designed, it is presented to the organization – approved, or amended and then approved, and then implemented. To this end, the first step of the process is essential for the ECB practitioner to design an appropriate ECB strategy.

The third step in the ECB process is ECB strategy implementation. During this step, the ECB strategy that was designed in the second step of the process is implemented in the organization or program. The length of time that the ECB strategy is implemented is based on the organization's context, the type of ECB strategy that is implemented, and the ECB goals of the organization.

The fourth step of the ECB process is assessment. During this step, the ECB practitioner

assesses if the organization has achieved its ECB goals as a result of the ECB strategy that has been implemented. In addition to examining if the organization's ECB goals were met, the ECB practitioner identifies the factors that contributed to successfully achieving the organization's ECB goals or the factors that constrained the organization from achieving its ECB goals. Like each of the other steps, how the ECB effort is assessed is determined by the ECB practitioner. To this end, success in ECB work is achieving the organization's ECB goals.

To further explain the practice of evaluation capacity building, in the next section I present two case examples of evaluation capacity building studies to highlight the four step ECB process and the types of strategies that have been implemented to build evaluation capacity. Furthermore, I have chosen to present case examples of evaluation capacity building efforts in community-based organizations since they are most closely aligned with my dissertation project. It is important to note that ECB studies in community-based organizations are in the minority of ECB studies that have been conducted. Most published ECB studies have been conducted in organizations at the state, national, and international levels. I assume that community-based organizations' lack of access to resources to fund evaluation capacity-building is the result of this disparity.

More specifically, I discuss the 'catalyst for change' strategy and the 'evaluation learning circle' strategy. It is important to note that the case examples do not use the same ECB strategies that I implemented in my study. The ECB strategies that have been implemented in published ECB studies vary greatly because each strategy is specifically designed based on the organization's existing evaluation capacity and the organization's evaluation capacity building needs. Consequently, since no two ECB studies are the same, there are no existing ECB studies that implement the ECB strategy that I implemented in this study. However, it is possible for me

to tailor the literature review to primarily detail ECB studies that have been conducted at the same organizational level as the ECB study that I have designed. By organizational level I am referring to the community, state, national, or international level at which the organization operates. The studies discussed in detail in my literature review are studies that were conducted in community-based organizations, since Tap In is a community based organization. Since ECB studies conducted in community-based organizations are limited, my study contributes another case example to the literature.

### **Examples of Community-Based Organization ECB Case Studies**

Garcia-Iriarte, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler & Luna (2011) conducted an evaluation capacity building effort within a community-based organization with the goal of improving the organization's capacity to assess the impact of their program activities (p. 170). The process began with an assessment of the program's readiness for implementing an evaluation capacity building effort in the organization. Their assessment included partners sharing their motivations, assumptions and expectations for the ECB project effort and their knowledge about the program. Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) used Preskill and Boyle's 2008 evaluation capacity building framework to guide their assessment (p. 170). Through their assessment of the program context, the evaluation capacity building practitioners concluded that both time and resources were limited for the evaluation capacity building effort. Additionally, they found that the program coordinator was responsible for all the organization's evaluation activities, but that she did not have any evaluation training. To account for these contextual factors, they created an evaluation capacity building strategy called the 'catalyst-for-change'.

Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) explain that a 'catalyst-for-change' is "an individual in a leadership position who facilitates significant change in (a) other staff members' evaluation

knowledge and skills and (b) the organization's mainstreaming and use of evaluation practices" (p. 170). Garcia-Iriarte, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler & Luna (2011) explain that since the organization had limited resources and time to allocate to the ECB effort, and since the program coordinator was directly responsible for all of the evaluation activities within the organization, an ECB strategy specifically focused on building the evaluation skills and knowledge of the program coordinator would be the most effective approach for building evaluation capacity within the organization. Following the selection of the evaluation capacity building strategy, the evaluation capacity building practitioners led a series of brainstorming sessions with the program coordinator and her supervisor to determine what specific evaluation capacity building efforts should be implemented.

From these brainstorming sessions, the group decided to take three actions: 1) develop a logic model of the program, 2) conduct an analysis of archival data, and 3) to develop evaluation-related SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound) goals for the program. The goal of these efforts was to improve the program coordinator's evaluation knowledge and skills and to develop next steps for the evaluation efforts in the organization. Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) led a one day workshop to teach the program coordinator how to build a logic model for the program. Once the logic model was developed, the ECB practitioners collaboratively conducted an outcome evaluation of the previous five years of archival data with the program coordinator (p.173). Once these two tasks were completed, the ECB practitioners worked with the program coordinator to develop evaluation-related SMART goals for future evaluation efforts for the program.

After the evaluation knowledge and skills of the program coordinator were improved, the program coordinator was tasked with disseminating her evaluation knowledge and skills to other

program staff. To this end, she replicated the process that was used to teach her about evaluation. She conducted workshops and brainstorming sessions to assist program staff develop logic models and SMART goals (p. 174). Once the program coordinator completed the task of teaching her program staff how to build logic models and develop SMART goals, she went on to help program leaders in other programs within the organization to do the same.

To assess the overall ECB effort, the practitioners used direct observations, reviewed documents, and conducted interviews with the program coordinator to determine her evaluation knowledge and skills as well as the extent to which quality evaluations continued and were used to improve the program (p.175). Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) conclude that the strategy was successful in building the evaluation knowledge and skills of the program coordinator and diffusing them throughout the program. It was contended that as a result of the evaluation capacity building strategy the program coordinator learned how to frame evaluation questions, develop an evaluation plan, identify which methods to use, interpret findings, and write an evaluation report (p. 174). Furthermore, Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) argue that because of the program coordinator's efforts, the staff has become more involved in program evaluation activities. One example of staff members' increased involvement in evaluation activities is a regularly-scheduled meeting at which staff members plan evaluations and discuss evaluation findings. The ECB practitioners explain that the program coordinator believes these meetings provide the space for staff to continue their learning about evaluation and be more involved in the evaluation process (p.175).

The evaluation capacity building practitioners highlight several factors that contributed to successfully using the catalyst-for-change strategy. First, the evaluation capacity building practitioner must identify the right person to be the catalyst. This person must have a leadership

position and evaluation-related responsibilities within the program. Second, the catalyst must be committed to sharing his/her skills and knowledge with other staff once he/she has acquired them. Third, the catalyst must have support from other program leaders and administrators so that the evaluation efforts are sustained.

Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) argue that the ‘catalyst-for-change’ approach is a promising strategy for ECB in community-based organizations. They argue that ECB provides a cost-effective alternative to programs that have limited time and resources to commit in an ECB effort. One strength of this strategy is that it provides flexibility for the catalyst to teach and intervene strategically without altering the daily activities of other staff members. However, Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) assert that one important limitation of this strategy is its dependence on the perception and action of one person, rather than a collaborative effort between program staff. Thus, if the right person is not selected and supported by program leadership this approach will not be effective.

While Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) argue that the overall ECB effort was successful, there are several important shortcomings with the article. First, Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) cite that the program coordinator’s ability to frame evaluation questions, develop an evaluation plan, identify which methods to use, interpret findings, and write an evaluation report was developed from their ECB efforts, but the article fails to detail when and how those skills were developed. Second, the researchers do not explicitly discuss the staff lead evaluations reports that were developed prior to the ECB effort or the staff lead evaluation reports that were developed after the ECB effort, so as readers we are not given the opportunity to judge if the quality of their evaluations in fact improved. Third, Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) do not explicitly discuss how the evaluation data were used after they were collected - so there is no way for the reader to know if

the evaluation directly contributed to improving the program. While Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2011) argue that this ECB strategy is promising, these shortcomings call into question the effectiveness of this ECB strategy. All of the things that the authors failed to include may have happened, but since they were not provided in the report, as readers we do not have the ability to judge the ECB effort fully.

Cohen (2006) provides another community-based evaluation capacity building example. Cohen was contracted to work with the Puget Sound Center for Teaching Learning and Technology program to provide strategic advice and to serve as an external evaluator (p. 86). Through this work, ECB became one of the services that she provided to the program staff. Cohen identified the need to build evaluation capacity within the program when she struggled to develop the program's logic model and overall goals with the program staff. To assist in this effort Cohen and the program director attended a two-day workshop on program theory.

After returning from the workshop, Cohen convened a small group of program staff to share what she and the program director learned at the program theory workshop. Cohen notes that the small group structure was effective for teaching the program staff about program theory. She subsequently proposed to continue using this format in providing an ongoing study session for program staff to learn about evaluation. Furthermore, she argued that the small group sessions would be used to study evaluation theory and provide space for program staff to reflect on their evaluation activities. Consequently, Cohen named these study sessions the 'evaluation learning circle' (p. 87).

Once her proposal was accepted, Cohen recruited key stakeholders from the program to participate in the group. She recruited a total of eight key stakeholders. Cohen explains that the group met every two or three months for ninety minutes over a two-year period. At each meeting

Cohen facilitated the discussion surrounding the reading and discussion guides that she distributed prior to the meeting. Over the course of the two years they discussed nine themes:

evaluation design, logic models, observation tools, focus groups, qualitative data analysis, online surveys, appreciative inquiry, success case method, and evaluation theories (p. 87).

Although Cohen does not explicitly state how she assessed her evaluation capacity building effort she argues that the evaluation learning circle had a positive impact on the program. She highlights organizational leaders continuing to use the evaluation learning circle after her contractual obligation was complete as a sign of its positive impact. However, Cohen notes that there is no systematic way for her to quantify the impact of the ECB effort because other organizational capacity building efforts that were simultaneously occurring.

Even with this caveat, Cohen believes the evaluation learning circle is a promising ECB strategy, and that future work should focus on its best practices and how evaluation learning circles can best support other evaluation capacity building efforts (p. 93).

While Cohen (2006) argues that the evaluation learning circle was successful, she acknowledges that the evaluation learning circle strategy is somewhat of a luxury, because it requires both time and finances to be successful. She admits that both time and finances are often scarce within local programs, resulting in minimal funds for evaluation related activities.

In systematically assessing the impact of the evaluation capacity building effort, Cohen suggests that six factors accounted for her success. They include: assessing organizational readiness, developing a close relationship with the organization and an understanding of their work, teaching strategies in context and providing space for reflection, breaking learning into manageable pieces and reviewing topics as needed, turning the relationship between the

evaluation capacity building practitioner and the program into a partnership, and keeping the atmosphere informal (p. 90).

These community-based evaluation capacity building examples provide more insight into the practice of evaluation capacity building. More specifically, these two case studies highlight the general process of an ECB practitioner to build evaluation capacity within an organization or program. First, the ECB practitioner assesses the program. This assessment provides the ECB practitioner with an understanding of the program context and an understanding of the program's evaluation strengths, weaknesses and needs. Second, the goal of the ECB effort is determined. Third, an evaluation capacity building strategy is developed, and then, implemented. Lastly, an assessment of the overall evaluation capacity building effort and the ECB strategy is conducted. While the extent of this assessment varied in the two case examples it is an important step in the evaluation capacity building process.

Additionally, these case study examples show that the program context and the needs of the program determine the ECB goal and strategy. Both case examples highlight time and money as important contextual factors for community-based organizations. The first describes a strategy that was designed to account for limited time and money. The second describes an example of a strategy that had the luxury of time and money. While the second case example had the luxury of time and money, the evaluation capacity building practitioner still acknowledges that without those resources the strategy will not be successful. In the end, these case study examples provide an important lesson for evaluation capacity building practitioners – program context is the most important component of the evaluation capacity building process, because it dictates the ECB goal and the ECB strategy that will be implemented within the organization.

## **Lessons Learned from Evaluation Capacity Building Practice**

The prior section describes two case examples of ECB efforts in community-based organizations because of their particular relevance for the dissertation project that will be undertaken. As I stated earlier, ECB efforts have been carried out in a wide array of organizations. Such organizations include state agencies (Haeffele, Hood, & Feldman, 2011; Tang, Cowling, Koumjian, Roeseler, Lloyd, & Rogers, 2002), national organizations (Compton, Glover-Kudon Smith, Avery, 2002; Milstein, Chapel, Wetterhall, Cotton, 2002), and in international organizations (Anderson, Chase, Johnson III, Mekiana, McIntyre, Ruerup, & Kerr, 2014; Diaz-Puerto, Yague, Afonso, 2008; Naccarella, Pirkis, Kohn, Morley, Burgess, & Blashki, 2007). Like the ECB studies conducted in community-based organizations, I have read and assessed the aforementioned case studies at the state, national, and international level. Through my reading of all the case studies that I found through my literature search I found that every case study provides valuable learning lessons on how to be a more effective ECB practitioner.

While each case study presents lessons learned, I have chosen to highlight the lessons that appeared the most across case studies. They include: implementing appropriate strategies for the organizational context, being culturally and contextually responsive, accepting that the ECB process is gradual, and understanding that success in ECB is never guaranteed.

First, it is important to implement strategies that are appropriate for the organization. These strategies must take into consideration the organization's existing culture, existing evaluation practices and processes, and the evaluation capacity building goal (Compton, Glover-Kudon Smith, Avery, 2002; King, 2007; Naccarella, Pirkis, Kohn, Morley, Burgess, & Blashki, 2007). The organizational context must determine the ECB strategy's design and length of implementation. It is also essential for the ECB practitioner to understand that every organization

is different. Thus, previous success using an ECB strategy or set of in one context does not guarantee success in another.

Second, the ECB practitioner must be contextually responsive throughout the four step ECB process. The ECB practitioner must be open to changing course as need be and to responding to new issues as they arise throughout the project, because unexpected circumstances are inherit in the process of building evaluation capacity in organizations (Baizerman, Compton, Stockdill, 2002). Another important component of being contextually responsive is understanding when you need to teach the organization's leadership and/or staff – whether it be because of interest and/or need (King, 2002; King 2007). More specifically, the ECB practitioner must teach through facilitation. He or she must aim to guide rather than control throughout the evaluation capacity building process because the ECB practitioner does not have the authority to require anything of the organization's leadership or staff (Compton, Glover-Kudon Smith, Avery, 2002). To strive towards this contextual responsiveness the ECB practitioner must remain reflective throughout the four step ECB process.

Third, ECB practitioners must accept that the process of building evaluation capacity is gradual (Milstein, Chapel, Wetterhall, Cotton, 2002). Changing the culture and practices of an organization takes time. Evaluation capacity building practitioners must understand that the goal may take longer to achieve than they estimate. This literature review yielded ECB projects that ranged from six months to ten years.

Lastly, an ECB practitioner can never guarantee that an evaluation capacity building effort will be successful (King, 2007). At best, an ECB practitioner can increase the likelihood of success by being responsive and implementing strategies that he or she believes are contextually appropriate, but the unpredictability of organizations and the ECB practitioner's lack of control

prohibit them from guaranteeing success to organizations.

### **Evaluation Capacity Building Impact**

Prior to this section I have defined ECB practice, described the ECB process, provided case examples of ECB studies, and presented important learning lessons from ECB practice. Now I turn to the question of impact - what has been the impact of ECB studies that have been implemented in organizations? In short, the answer is we do not know.

Suarez-Balcazar & Taylor-Ritzler (2014) summarize the state of ECB impact by explaining that,

The evidence base for the utility of ECB in improving organizational program outcomes is, at best, nascent. There are now several theoretical models of ECB and even a validated instrument. However, as Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, and Lesesne (2012) point out, most of the empirical research involves descriptive case study designs and little use of reliable and valid instruments. As a result, although ECB holds much promise in improving program outcomes for program participants and accountability for organizations, there is, as yet, little evidence that ECB practices actually help organizations systematically improve services that lead to positive outcomes for their program participants (p.97).

Their assessment of what we know about ECB impact is supported by other researchers who also suggest that we do not have enough evidence to support claims of effectiveness of ECB (Leviton's article, 2014; Preskill, 2014).

In my assessment of the literature at least three factors have contributed to the field's limited understanding of ECB impact. First, not many ECB studies have been conducted. This literature review search yielded eleven ECB studies, all of which are case studies. These studies were conducted at four different organizational levels: community-based organizations, state agencies, national organizations and international organizations. This literature search yielded two community-based organization ECB case studies, three state- ECB case studies, two national ECB case studies and four international ECB case studies. Thus, what we can know about ECB

practice is limited by the number of times the field has had opportunities to conduct ECB case studies. Second, most ECB case studies simply describe what they did. They do not report if their ECB activities resulted in improving the organization's programmatic outcomes. Third, the case studies that do report impact often cite organizational change as the indicator for increased evaluation capacity without describing the methods that were used to systematically assess the impact that they highlight.

As a result of the limited understanding about the impact of ECB in organizations researchers have suggested that assessing the impact of ECB efforts in organizations is the most important thing for future ECB studies to focus on (Preskill, 2014; Suarez-Balcazar & Taylor-Ritzler, 2014). Furthermore, they support this direction by suggesting that the field has a firm understanding of the definition of ECB, the ECB process, and issues related to measurement in the ECB field, so a focus on impact is merited. This is supported by the literature that was found during this literature review search.

Given what we know about ECB in general and ECB in community-based organizations, this study engaged several important concerns that will add to the ECB literature.

First, this study addressed the need for more ECB case studies. There is a lot that needs to be tested and learned to build the ECB literature, and the only way to do so is to conduct more ECB case studies. More specifically, there is a need to conduct more ECB case studies in community-based organizations. This review of literature revealed that the least amount of ECB studies have been conducted in the community-based organizations. In my assessment, the limited number of ECB case studies that have been conducted in this organizational type is because ECB studies require a great deal of time and resources to implement. ECB studies require that the ECB practitioner spend large amounts of time with program staff and or program

leadership throughout the process. Additionally, they require program staff and or program leadership to take time away from their regular job responsibilities, which are often immediate, to allocate time to a task that may or may not produce results. Thus, engaging in an ECB project is a costly long-term investment with no guarantee of success.

Furthermore, funds have to be made available to support ECB efforts. Evaluators must be paid for their work and program leadership and staff have to justify spending time on ECB activities as opposed to other work related tasks. Thus, if funders do not provide programs with funds to support ECB efforts, program leadership have to take funds from something else to support these efforts.

Since building ECB is not a requirement for organizations, getting them to understand the importance of and to agree to dedicate the time and resources to building their evaluation capacity can be a challenge. This challenge is increased when evaluators identify that increased evaluation capacity may benefit a community-based organization that has limited staff, time and financial resources to dedicate to the effort, even if it has the potential to benefit the organization. Thus, since this project is a dissertation and the evaluator does not receive pay for the work, it eliminates the organization's burden of having to pay an evaluator to do the work.

The literature shows that the small number of ECB studies that have been undertaken across all organizational contexts is partly a result of limited time and limited money. More specifically, it also appears that limited time and limited money may have disproportionately affected community-based organizations, because only a handful of ECB studies have been conducted in the community-based organization context. Like other organizations, community-based organizations often have limited funds and staff, but they have the added burden of often times being smaller and not necessarily connected to a larger system like national organizations

or state organizations. This study engages the need for more ECB studies in general, and in the community-based organizational context in particular – a space that is extremely difficult to gather the time and money to conduct studies in. This study wills another set of lessons learned and useful strategies for building evaluation capacity in the community-based organization context.

Second, this study intended to identify specific contextual factors that matter when building evaluation capacity in community-based organizations. Previous research has shown us that implementing appropriate ECB strategies, being contextually responsive, understanding that the process of building evaluation capacity is gradual and that success cannot be guaranteed are important lessons that each ECB practitioner should understand and implement in his/her work. These important contextual factors and lessons may be important to building evaluation in all organizations, but they are practically limiting and not specific to community-based organizations. But, what about other important factors? This study intended to address this question by empirically exploring what other factors are important and how those factors contribute to success or failure when ECB practitioners are attempting to building ECB in community-based organizations. This is an important issue to address because to date contextual factors have not been identified specifically for ECB practitioners conducting ECB activities in community-based organizations have not been described. By identifying these factors future ECB practitioners will be able to better assess the ECB readiness of community-based organizations and to provide them with a set of other factors to consider when designing their ECB strategies. As the field of ECB continues to grow more and more factors will be added to the ECB practitioner's toolbox to generate best practices. This study attempts to add to that toolbox a set of important factors that are necessary to consider when attempting to build

evaluation capacity in community-based organizations.

Third, this study intended to address the issue of the limited amount of assessment that has been carried out in ECB activities. Across all ECB case studies there is a need for empirically assessing the ECB activities made any change in the organization in which they were implemented in. Previous studies either neglect to report the impact of their ECB activities or provide claims of effectiveness without highlighting the methods that were used to justify their claims. This study addressed this issue by clearly explaining what assessment activities were used to assess ECB effectiveness. This is a significant contribution of the ECB field because as many scholars have suggested, assessing the impact of ECB activities is the next important step for strengthening the field.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to assess if ECB is an effective practice for assisting community-based organizations improve their evaluation capacity. To this end, an ECB study was conducted with Tap In Leadership Academy's SEP to improve their scholar debriefing form. The goal of the study was to: 1) enhance the organization's ability to collect more defensible and meaningful data on the scholar debriefing form and 2) increase the organization's ability to use the data to make changes while the program is in session and to use the data to assess whether the program achieved its desired youth outcomes. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations that provide youth-serving programs to *systematically collect* data that can be used to improve their programs?
2. To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations that provide youth programs to *use* systematically-collected data to improve their programs?
3. What contextual factors matter when an ECB practitioner is attempting to build evaluation capacity in a community-based organization that serves youth? How do they matter?

In the next section I describe the rationale for selecting Tap In Leadership Academy for this dissertation project, and then, I detail the organization's context.

### Organization Selection Rationale

Tap In Leadership Academy was selected as the organization with which I implemented this ECB study for many reasons. First, the organization has been awarded the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant since 2011. Thus, the program was included in the most recent Illinois state-wide annual evaluation report that highlighted the need for improved evaluation capacity in local initiative grantees. Second, I had a personal relationship

with the leadership team of the program. This relationship was developed through conducting a past research study in the organization. Through this relationship, I learned that the leadership team has a desire to strengthen the organization's ability to collect important and relevant data. Third, the founding executive director is still the executive director, and therefore has invaluable knowledge about program history, successes, challenges, and changes that would be critically important for understanding the organization's context and evaluation practices. Finally, this program is a community-based afterschool program and not a national program. I define a community-based program as a program that is created by a leader or group of leaders within the community to address a specific set of youth needs in their community. On the other hand, I define a national program as a program that has been developed elsewhere, but that has a branch of the national program existing within a community. Both program models have different strengths and weaknesses. This distinction is important to make because unlike national programs, community-based afterschool programs often lack the resources, networks, and support found in national programs. As such, efforts to build community-based afterschool programs' evaluation capacity may be more essential for their survival and growth.

### **Organization Context**

Tap In Leadership Academy is located in Champaign, Illinois. The organization provides program services to children and families from Champaign's Unit 4 School District. Below I chose to include the direct text from Tap In Leadership Academy's official website to describe the context of the program. This approach also ensures that the information is accurate. The text from the website is situated in between the (---) indicators. While all text is taken from the official website verbatim, I have formatted it so that it is easier to read.

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### Our Story

Tap In Leadership Academy (Tap In) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit academic enrichment organization serving youth in pre-k through high school. Tap In was founded in February 2010 by Executive Director, Sally K. Carter, as a Summer Enrichment Program housed at the McKinley Foundation, on the University of Illinois campus. A relationship-centered, intentional learning community, Tap In offers Afterschool Enrichment Programs (AEP), Summer Enrichment Programs (SEP), Family Enrichment Programs (FEP), a Kickback Lounge (KBL), and Tap In Prep Academy (TIPA) throughout Central Illinois and Chicago.

### Mission

The mission of Tap In Leadership Academy is to enhance educational achievement, support leadership development, and raise cultural awareness so that all of our scholars are college and career ready upon high school graduation. The Tap In Way® affirms the existing knowledge, skills, and potential of student-scholars and creates equitable opportunities for intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

### Vision

The vision of Tap In Leadership Academy is to educate, equip and empower scholars to become the next generation of leaders. By serving scholars as young as 4 years old, Tap In Leadership Academy provides youth with early opportunities to grow and learn in a multi-age environment. Through interactive lessons, hands-on learning activities, and engaging field studies, Tap In scholars are exposed to a holistic and culturally diverse assortment of options. Peer mentoring and one-on-one tutoring give scholars the time and attention they need to achieve excellence in academics and learn healthy ways to navigate relationships. Our team consults directly with scholars' teachers and parents in order to maximize scholar success. As our scholars blossom into leaders through these experiences, Tap In Leadership Academy strives to maintain and sustain communication as our scholars travel through multiple levels of learning.

### Who We Serve

Scholars are enrolled based on their academic performance and leadership skills. Scholars should not be failing core classes. Because all enrolled scholars are performing well academically, they can better benefit from the additional academic assistance and encouragement that we provide.

Examples of age-consistent leadership skills include:

- Excellent school attendance

- Turning in homework with regularity
- Asking questions in class
- Influencing others
- Helping others
- Being attentive in school
- Being open to exploring new things

#### What We Do

- Provide one-to-one tutoring and mentoring with trained volunteers from the University of Illinois and the community
- Offer Summer Enrichment Programs
- Provide daily healthy snacks
- Build positive, caring relationships between scholars and their peers, as well as adults
- Encourage scholars to work hard in school and excel in academics
- Build upon and nurture leadership skills
- Offer trainings and workshops to our scholars' families
- Provide enrichment opportunities

#### The Tap In Way®

We use the Tap In Way® to educate, equip, and empower scholars to become the next generation of leaders.

Think Big!

- Never limit your dreams
- See where you want to be

Achieve what you believe

- Be open to new experiences
- Embrace opportunities for leadership development

Prepare yourself for greatness

- Maintain a standard of excellence
- Be on time, productive, and positive

Inspire others

- Live life as a role model
- Act with kindness

Nurture your spirit

- Find something to be grateful for everyday
- Surround yourself with people who build you up

Programs

Our Afterschool Enrichment Program serves scholars at several locations throughout Central Illinois: Booker T. Washington Elementary School, Garden Hills Elementary School, Kenwood Elementary School, Stratton Elementary School, Edison Middle School, Jefferson Middle School, and Centennial High School.

The program provides scholars one-to-one tutoring in the areas of math, science, technology, and language. Tap In staff and dedicated volunteers from the University of Illinois and Parkland College serve as mentor/tutors for our scholars. Our curriculum is derived from Illinois State Standards, approved 4-H curriculum, and innovative S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) modules.

Tap In Leadership Academy offers a relationship-centered, hands on Summer Enrichment Program. Our students embark on a multicultural journey; focusing on a different region of the world each week. Each enrichment activity is designed to expand on old skills, and develop new ones through creative, S.T.E.A.M. based activities. Students are given the opportunity to build new friendships, advance academic and literary achievement, release some energy outdoors, and incorporate leadership skills through our diverse, adventure-filled curriculum.

Previous activities include: a study of Brazil, Egypt and Traditional Native American culture. Alongside a cultural expert, students created masks, head dresses, rain sticks and drums; cooked a variety of ethnic foods; participated in traditional ritual dances and martial arts; recreated culturally specific games and experimented with creating hieroglyphics and make-up. Exciting field studies have included the Community FabLab, UI Pollinatarium, Krannert Center, Holocaust Museum, St. Louis Zoo, American Obstacle for zip-lining and much more!

Our Family Enrichment Program provides Tap In parents with special workshops, training, and connections to community resources.

Tap In believes in the necessity of family and community collaboration, and recognizes parents and family members as key members of our team. Tap In believes in a holistic approach to child development. We recognize the role of parents in their child's success, and therefore, we work to create active, productive relationships with the families of our scholars.

Parents enjoy learning alongside their scholars. 4-H extension has provided personality assessments to parents and scholars to help them better communicate. Tap In offers free workshops with topics ranging from Adult Cyber Night and Financial Literacy to Lotion Making Classes for scholars and their parents to provide opportunities for families to engage with their scholars.

Tap In Prep Academy is our school readiness, pre-k program specifically designed to serve the youngest members of our community starting at age 4 through 5. The goal of this program is to provide a solid foundation for academic success in kindergarten and beyond. Tap In Prep Academy provide educational foundations necessary for kindergarten readiness which incorporates Tap In's style of culturally-relevant teaching to reflect the Tap In Way®: leadership development; cultural awareness; self-directed learning; tender loving care and the Tap In tradition of a relationship-centered community.

Tap In Leadership Academy opened the community's first Kickback Lounge (KBL); a high-tech space that middle school scholars conceptualized, designed and built featuring digital literacy. It includes a music recording and film production studio and a digital deejay booth. The KBL serves as a gathering place for Champaign and Urbana's youth after Tap In program hours as a way of producing a productive, safe space and encourages many youth to stay with Tap In friends or make new ones over

the weekend.

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## Research Design

The research design that was used for this study was the four step ECB process that I designed based on my review of the ECB literature. These four steps include: 1) understanding the organization's context, 2) designing an ECB strategy, 3) implementation of the ECB strategy, and 4) assessment of the ECB strategy. This research design was selected because every ECB case study reviewed for this project followed a similar four step process. The next section describes data collection methods and data analysis approaches conducted in this study. Data collection methods and data analysis are discussed together because the four step ECB process is sequential – data are collected, analyzed, and used to inform the next step in the four step ECB process. Thus, it is impossible to separate data collection and data analysis into separate steps and still employ the four step ECB process – so I did not separate them. Table 1 presents an overview of the data that was collected in each step of the ECB process. Data collection and data analysis are presented in more detail in the next section.

Table 1

### *ECB steps with data collection methods*

ECB Steps	Data Collection Methods
Step One: Understanding the Organization's Context	2 Facilitated Works Sessions 4 Reflective Memos
Step 2: Designing the ECB Strategy	5 Facilitated Works Sessions 1 Reflective Memo
Step 3: Implementing the ECB Strategy	9 Observations 4 Reflective Memos
Step 4: Assessment of the ECB Strategy	7 Interviews

Table 1 ECB steps with data collection methods

## **Data Collection Methods & Data Analysis**

### **Step One: Understanding the Organization's Context**

Since I worked with the organization in the past I was familiar with the SEP's underlying program theory, the program staff roles and responsibilities, sources of funding for the program, and the structure of the program. Additionally, I was aware that the organization's leadership (Executive Director, Director of Programs, and Director of Support Services) believed that their evaluation capacity needed to be improved. Since I was aware of this information I presented the idea of conducting an ECB study to the organization's Executive Director (ED) and Founder. After explaining the practice of ECB, the ED agreed that an ECB study could potentially add value to Tap In Leadership Academy's Summer Enrichment. In the meeting, the ED expressed that the organization was interested in conducting an ECB study and that program staff would dedicate the resources (time) needed to improve the program's evaluation capacity. After this meeting I concluded that Tap In Leadership Academy was ready to conduct an ECB study.

While I was familiar with the components of the program, I was not aware of the specific ECB goal that the organization wanted to achieve. To identify the organization's ECB goal, I conducted a series of "facilitated work sessions (FWS)". Torres (2016) describes facilitated work sessions as a process that brings together stakeholders to learn, develop new insights, and to identify potential next steps and actions (p. 53). I decided to use facilitated work sessions instead of traditional focus groups because I believed that a participatory process was the most appropriate approach for gathering information in this organization.

In addition to the FWS I decided to write reflective memos. Preskill and Torres (1999) explain that reflection is a "process that enables individuals and groups to review their ideas,

understandings, and experiences” (p. 56). Furthermore, they highlight that Mezirow (1991) has identified three types of reflection: content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection (p. 57). Preskill and Torres (1999) explain that Mezirow (1991) describes content reflection as “reflection on the content or description of a problem or issue”, process reflection as, “analyzing the methods and strategies that are being used to resolve a problem” and premise reflection as reflection on why the problem exists in the first place (p. 57). For this project, I used process reflection to reflect on the ECB process as it unfolded. More specifically, I reflected on successes, shortcomings, and lessons learned along the way about the contextual context of the organization, the ECB strategy being implemented, and the four step ECB process being implemented. Reflective memos were written during every step of the four step ECB process. The reflective memo guide is presented in Appendix G.

The ECB goal for the project was established after two FWSs were conducted. Each FWS was recorded and notes based on the recording were produced. These notes were summarized and used to determine the next step in the ECB process. The first FWS was attended by the Executive Director, Director of Programs, and the Director of Support Services. The meeting lasted for two hours. In this meeting, I presented what the practice of ECB entailed and answered questions related to ECB. After this, we discussed potential evaluation related processes that the program leadership believed the organization needed to improve. The group unanimously decided that they wanted to improve the scholar debriefing form.

The organization’s leadership identified four issues with the existing debriefing form: 1) different forms were being used across the 7 program sites; 2) the different forms did not accurately capture the information the organization wanted to collect; 3) the forms were not consistently being filled out completely; and 4) the forms were collecting data from scholars as a

group rather than individuals. During the first FWS the organization's leadership expressed that the scholar debriefing form was central to the organization's work because it documented the development of their scholars.

After the meeting, I reviewed the organizations past evaluation reports and the reports did not report any scholar debriefing form data. The previous evaluations of the program used school grades, parent interviews, parent surveys, student interviews, or student surveys to make judgments about the effectiveness of the program. Even though the organization's leadership explained that the student debriefing forms were important and central to the organization's work, their past evaluations showed that data from the debriefing forms had never been used to systematically improve the program. I used the notes from FWS 1 and the review of the past evaluation reports to create the agenda for the second FWS meeting.

The second FWS meeting was attended by the Executive Director and the Director of Support Services. These leaders expressed the role that they wanted the debriefing form to play in the organization during this meeting. In addition, the ECB goals for the project were decided: 1) improve the debriefing form's ability to accurately capture the information that the organization wanted to collect, and 2) teach the organizations' leadership how the individual scholar debriefing data can be used to systematically improve the SEP. I also suggested creating a step by step rubric to assist program staff with completing the individual scholar debriefing forms. The leadership agreed. Creating a clear set of ECB goals completed the first step of the four step ECB process.

### **Step Two: Designing an ECB Strategy**

To create the revised individual scholar debriefing form and the new individual scholar debriefing form rubric I conducted five additional FWSs to gather the content for each of the

documents. The first FWS was conducted with the Executive Director and it lasted for one hour and 30 minutes. At this meeting, we discussed the individual components that the ED wanted reflected in the individual scholar debriefing form, which included: academics, enrichment, leadership, and social skills. Additionally, the ED explained why each component was important to include on the form. At the close of the meeting we decided that the next step would be to: 1) operationalize each component based on Tap In Leadership Academy's conceptualization of the component, and 2) decide how each component would be measured. This interview was recorded and a set of notes were produced from the recording. Once the notes were produced they were used to guide the next FWS, which focused on further operationalizing what Tap In Leadership Academy means by: academics, enrichment, leadership characteristics, and social skills.

The second FWS was conducted with the Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator and the Family Outreach Coordinator. The meeting lasted two hours and we discussed the intricacy of attendance during the Summer Enrichment Program. The consultation resulted in an operationalized definition of attendance, and a scale to measure attendance for each scholar. The notes that were written during this FWS were used to guide the next FWS.

The third FWS was conducted with the Volunteer Coordinator, Family Outreach Coordinator, and the Director of Extended Learning. The session lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes. During this session we discussed: enrichment, leadership characteristics, and social skills. The session resulted in the creation of: two scales to measure enrichment, a list of leadership characteristics that the group believed were important to recognize and build in Tap In Leadership Academy scholars, and a list of social skills that the group believed were important to recognize and build in Tap In Leadership Academy scholars. The notes that were written during this FWS were used to guide the next FWS.

The fourth FWS was conducted with the Director of Support Services. The session lasted for 1 hour and we discussed leadership characteristics and social skills that the Director of Support Services believed were important to recognize and build in Tap In Leadership Academy scholars. The session resulted in the Director of Support Services adding to the leadership characteristic list and the social skills list. The notes that were written during this FWS were used to guide the next FWS meeting.

The fifth, and final FWS, was conducted with the Executive Director, the Director of Support Services and the Family Outreach Coordinator. The session lasted 2 hours. At this session, the list of leadership characteristics and social skills that were important to recognize and build in Tap In Leadership Scholars was refined. Our conversations resulted in the ED's approval of the final set of leadership characteristics and social skills to be included on the individual scholar debriefing form. The ED intentionally wanted the leadership characteristics and social skills that the organization focused on to be created by the organization. The ED wanted the list to reflect what the organization thought they should be looking for in the scholars that they served. Thus, the list of leadership characteristics or social skills that are represented on the individual scholar debriefing form were intentionally created by the organization to reflect what the organization was looking for and wanted to develop in their scholars. The notes that were written during this FWS were used to create the revised individual scholar debriefing form.

Once all the content for the individual scholar debriefing form was collected, I used all of the FWS notes to produce a master list of content. Then, I revised the list to eliminate duplicate content. Next, I created drafts of both the individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric. After the forms were created I presented each of them to the Executive Director for review. At this meeting the ED provided feedback on each form's content

and design. Each form was revised using the ED's feedback and sent to the ED for implementation in the program. The individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric that were used in the SEP are presented in Appendix A.

No measurement analyses assessing the quality (notably, reliability and validity) were conducted on the Individual Scholar Debriefing Form before it was implemented into the Summer Enrichment Program for several reasons. First, the goal of this step was to create the Individual Scholar Debriefing Form. The creation of the form required a rigorous process (described in detail above) of operationalizing academics, enrichment, leadership characteristics, and social skills as constructs by Tap In Leadership Academy's leadership and staff. Second, the form could not be tested for reliability or validity because the SEP staff had not been assembled and the SEP was not in session. Furthermore, all of the organization's leadership and staff that were currently employed by the organization were a part of the creation process, thus having them provide further feedback on the form would not have added any more value. Thus, there was not any measurement analysis conducted on the form prior to its implementation because the form was not developed enough to merit any measurement analysis at the time.

Under these circumstances, the quality of the form was determined by Tap In Leadership Academy's approval of the individual scholar debriefing Form for implementation. Their approval indicated that they believed the individual scholar debriefing form was well-aligned with their conceptualization of the constructs and how they sought to measure each of the constructs. While an assessment of reliability and validity of the individual scholar debriefing form did not happen prior to implementation (because it was not possible), it is important to note that an assessment happened after the program was complete with the actual users of the form. Once the revised individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form

rubric were created (prior to the start of the SEP) they were used at all three program sites over the course of the SEP.

### **Step Three: Implementation of the ECB Strategy**

The revised individual scholar debriefing form and the individual scholar debriefing form rubric were used in the SEP. The SEP had three program sites – Pre-Kindergarten (for scholars who have not yet attended kindergarten), Elementary (for scholars entering first through fifth grade), and Middle School (for scholars entering sixth through eighth grade). The Pre-K and Elementary program sites were held at Garden Hills Elementary in Champaign and the Middle School program site was held at Tap In Leadership Academy’s Kick Back Lounge in Champaign. To train program staff on how to complete the new form, a program staff member from Tap In Leadership Academy’s main office met with each program site team to explain the purpose of the form and to instruct site staff members on how to complete the form.

During this step, my role shifted from co-creator to observer. In total, I conducted nine observations across all of the program sites over the course of the program. Four observations were conducted at the Kick Back Lounge Site - 6/14, 6/21, 6/27 and 7/12. Four observations were conducted at the Garden Hills Elementary Site – 6/16, 6/22, 6/28 and 7/13. Three observations were conducted at the Garden Hills Elementary Site – 6/15, 6/28 and 7/13. In addition to my observations I continued to write reflective memos on important observations that occurred during the implementation of the ECB strategy. Observing the debriefing process allowed me to: describe how the debriefing process was carried out at each program site, describe the character of the interactions between program staff during the debriefing process, identify challenges to completing the debriefing form at each program site, and quantify

references made to the individual scholar debriefing rubric. An observation guide was created to guide my observations. This guide is included in Appendix H.

#### **Step Four: Assessment of the ECB Strategy**

To assess the effectiveness of the ECB strategy data were analyzed from three sources - observations, reflective memos, and interviews. The same four step analysis process was used to analyze data from each source. First, all data were transcribed. Second, codes were created for each data source. All codes were created based on the information that I was most interested in understanding from each source. These codes are described for each data source later. Third, the data were put into an excel spreadsheet by code. All narrative data was first put into excel verbatim. Then, the data from each code was summarized to make the data more manageable. In the end, each code from each data source had a verbatim narrative copy and summary narrative copy of the data, so that both could be referred to as I needed them. Fourth, major themes were generated across each code for each data source.

A total of nine observations were conducted during the implementation step of the process. The aforementioned four step analysis process was used to analyze the observation data. The observation data codes included: 1) debriefing process, 2) character of interactions, 3) challenges with completing the debriefing form, 4) references made to the debriefing rubric, 5) methodological comments, and 6) analytic comments.

A total of seven reflective memos were written during the study. The study's four step analysis process was used to analyze the reflective memo data. The reflective memo data codes included: 1) ECB process thoughts, 2) ECB strategy thoughts, 3) thoughts on guiding research questions, and 4) major insights from the week.

A total of five interviews were conducted with site leaders. The four program site leaders that were not interviewed were contacted, but were unable to speak for various reasons. The site leader interviews were conducted the week after the SEP ended. The site leader interview protocol is presented in Appendix I. The Executive Director and the Director of Support Services were interviewed as organizational leaders. The organization leadership interview protocol is presented in Appendix J. By the end of the study, these two were the only organizational leaders in the organization, so they were the only organizational leaders interviewed. After the SEP commenced, the site leader interview data, observation data and reflective memo data were analyzed and presented in a Mid-Project Report to the Executive Director and the Director of Support Services. The purpose of the Mid-Project Report was to present the major findings and recommendations for improving the individual scholar debriefing form based on the form's implementation in the SEP. The Mid-Project Report is included in Appendix I. The organization's leadership team and I met to discuss the Mid Project Report. Based on the report the organization's leadership provided suggestions for improving the individual scholar debriefing form and individual scholar debriefing form rubric. I made those changes and resubmitted each of the forms to the organization's leadership before the interviews took place.

Again, the four step analysis process was used to analyze the interview data. The site leader data codes included: 1) Number of times they worked Tap In Leadership Academy's Summer Enrichment Program; 2) Views on the purpose of the debriefing process after working Tap In Leadership Academy's Summer Enrichment Program; 3) How they debriefed at their program site; 4) Debriefing Form; 5) Debriefing form data use to make programmatic decisions; 6) Debrief form training; 7) View on usefulness of Debriefing Form Rubric; 8) Advice to Tap In Leadership Academy's leadership for improving the debriefing process and debriefing form; and

9) Advice to future Summer Enrichment program staff for successfully carrying out the debriefing process and completing all of your debriefing forms. The organizational leadership data codes included: 1) Data collection, 2) Data use, 3) ECB reflections 4) ECB personal reflections, 5) Evaluator improvement suggestions, and 6) ECB and funding.

Together, these data from the observations, reflective memos, and interviews were used to answer the guiding research questions. The findings from this assessment are presented in the next chapter.

### **Data Quality**

Ensuring the quality of data collected is an important consideration in every research study. It is important that the researcher knows that the data that he/she collects are sound and trustworthy. For this study, I used three criteria to assess data quality: dependability, confirmability, and credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 2001; Shenton, K.A., 2004). Dependability refers to the repeatability of the project. More specifically, dependability refers to the likelihood that similar conclusions would be reached if another researcher did what you did in the same context. Researchers have argued that for qualitative researcher this idea of dependability is problematic because the researcher's interpretations and observations are tied to the situation (p. 71). However, there are strategies for ensuring dependability in qualitative research. In this study, I used three strategies to assess ensure dependability. First, I detailed each step that was taken in study, so that outside readers can follow my process. This explanation is detailed in the four-step process that I conducted for the ECB study. This explanation details my methods, whom I spoke to, and the decisions that were made because of data collected. Second, I detailed the process for analyzing data collected so that outside readers can follow my logic and how I established my findings. Third, I provide reflective thoughts in Chapter 5 about my view of what

I found from conducting the study and an assessment of the study at large.

Confirmability is another data quality criterion, and it commonly refers to ensuring that your study does not have researcher bias. While having absolutely no researcher bias is impossible, I implemented several strategies to reduce researcher bias. These strategies include multiple feedback check-points from the organization's leadership, writing reflective memos, and conducting interviews with program staff and the organization's leadership. The four step ECB process inherently has a level of responsiveness built into it that assist with minimizing researcher bias. The first step of the process dictates the second, and the second cannot be implemented until it is approved by the organization's leadership. While it could be argued that I unfairly influenced the organization's leadership about what ECB strategy to implement, it is unlikely because the organization's leadership had the final say in approving, supporting and implementing the ECB strategy into their program. In addition to this check-point, another organizational check-point occurred after the Summer Enrichment Program concluded. The mid-project report and the presentation that were presented to the organization's leadership provided a space for the organization's leadership to provide input into the process and determine the next steps of the project. These check-points served as mechanisms for ensuring that the researcher did not guide the process unfairly. In terms of researcher bias in terms of data analysis, reflective memos were written throughout the project and used as tools to challenge my perspective and analysis of the ECB strategy's effectiveness. These memos served as another mechanism to shield against researcher bias. Lastly, an external inquirer was used to provide feedback on data analysis throughout the process of the project.

Credibility is the final data quality criterion that I used and it commonly refers to making sure that your findings are congruent with experienced reality (Shenton, K.A., 2004). To this

end, several strategies were employed. First, I developed familiarity with the organization through what some call ‘prolonged engagement’, which refers to the researcher gaining an understanding of the organization in which his/her work is being carried out. At the start of the study, I had several years of various types of engagement with the organization as a researcher and volunteer, thus, I brought to this research study considerable familiarity and experience with the Tap In program and organization. Second, I collected data on the same areas of interest from different sources. Data sources include observations, interviews, and reflective memos. Collecting data from these different sources about the same components of the program allowed me to compare what I found in one source to what I found in another source. This comparison strengthens my findings. Third, I had frequent debriefing sessions with members of the organization about what I was finding and my interpretations throughout the study. For example, a Mid Project Report was presented to the organization’s leadership about what I found in the first half of the study. This presentation provided the space for dialogue about the project and an assessment of my interpretation of my observations.

Collectively, these three data quality criterion and the strategies carried out in each allowed me to have confidence that the data collected for this study were of high quality.

### **Methodological and Practical Limitations**

All research studies have limitations. This study is no different. This study had one major methodological limitation - the Individual Scholar Debriefing Form was only able to be implemented in the Summer Enrichment Program. My plan was to make revisions to the form based on what I learned from its implementation in the Summer Enrichment Program (which was done) and then implement the revised form in the After School Program. However, since the state of Illinois did not release funds for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program for the fall of 2016 I was unable

to implement the revised form in the After School Program. A second round of implementation would have been ideal but it was out of my hands as a researcher. While I did not have a chance to implement the form a second-round I continued to work with the organization's leadership to improve the form. The first methodological limitation created the second limitation - the inability to conduct reliability and validity test on the Individual Scholar Debriefing form. These tests were not able to be conducted on the form because the form was not developed to a point where it merited conducting these analysis. While I argue that the forms have been improved as a result of this study, I do not argue that they are in their final iteration. There is still quite a bit of work to be done before these important measurement analyses can be conducted on the form.

The project had several practical limitations as well. First, I had limited resources for the study. Most ECB projects have budgets to assist with developing evaluation capacity within organizations. To address this limitation, I selected a program that was geographically close. This made it easier for me to travel to the program throughout the study. Additionally, I designed an ECB strategy that did not require money to create or implement. Thus, the primary resource used in this study was time. The second design limitation was researcher bias. Since I had an existing relationship with the organization's leadership, it can be argued that I would bias my data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. To address this limitation, I implemented the strategies described in the data quality section.

This study attempted to improve Tap In Leadership Academy's evaluation capacity by improving the organization's ability to collect data from their individual scholar debriefing forms, and to use the data for making judgements about the program's influence on the development of the youth that the organization serves. The next chapter details the findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the major findings from this ECB study. The chapter begins with a discussion of organization-level ECB strategy assessment in the field of ECB. Second, the tools that are used to assess organization-level ECB strategy impact for this study are described. Alongside the tools description, a rationale for why these tools were selected to be used for this study is provided. Third, Tap In Leadership Academy's evaluation capacity prior to engaging in the ECB project is described. Fourth, Tap In Leadership Academy's evaluation capacity after the ECB project is described. In this section I answer research question one and research question two. The chapter closes with an answer to research question three. In this section I discuss the contextual factors that contributed to Tap In Leadership Academy's evaluation capacity in this study.

### **Organization-Level ECB Strategy Assessment**

In Chapter three, I explained that ECB researchers have not been able to make evidence-based claims about the effectiveness of ECB as an evaluative practice because previous ECB studies have involved limited assessment. However, I noted that some ECB researchers have begun to assess evaluation capacity using various approaches. Evaluation capacity has commonly been measured by assessing an organization's leadership or program staff's evaluation knowledge, evaluation skills, and/or evaluative thinking. While these approaches to measuring evaluation capacity are valuable, they have one common link and limitation which is that they all measure evaluation capacity by assessing competence of an individual or set of individuals.

As I detailed in chapter two, ECB strategies can be implemented at the individual level, the organizational level or at both levels. At the individual level, the ECB practitioner works

closely with one or more members of the organization’s leadership or staff to enhance their evaluation knowledge and/or evaluation skills. To improve evaluation capacity at the organizational level, the ECB practitioner works closely with the organization’s leadership and staff to develop policies, practices, or procedures that ensure that high quality evaluations are conducted and used within the organization to improve its programs. The existing approaches for measuring evaluation capacity are well-suited for assessing evaluation capacity at the individual level, not at the organizational level. If an organizational-level ECB strategy that aims to develop or strengthen a policy, practice or procedure is implemented, assessing an individual’s evaluation competence may not allow us to determine if evaluation capacity was increased. To address this limitation, I created the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Assessment Spectrum* which is made up of two tools, they include the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*. Collectively, these tools serve to assess the impact of organizational-level ECB strategies. Each of the tools is presented below in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

**Description of ECB Assessment Tools.** Together these tools have been designed to assess evaluation capacity for organizational-level ECB strategies. Outside of the need for an organization-level ECB strategy assessment tool, engaging in this ECB study has taught me two important lessons about the ECB process. These lessons have directly contributed to my conceptualization and design of these tools.

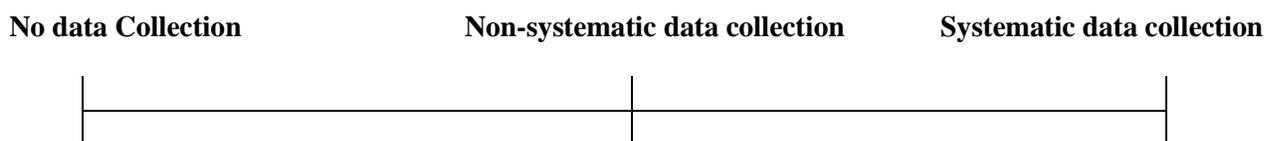
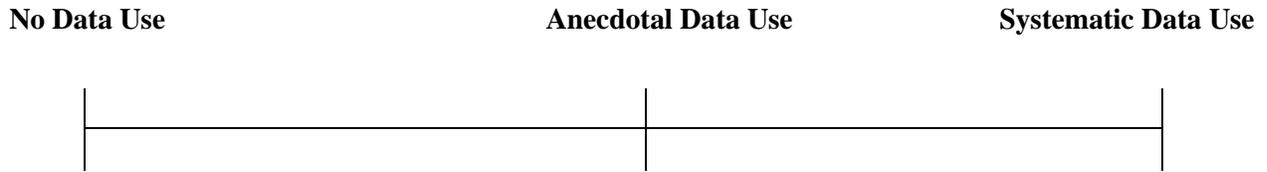


Figure 1. *Organizational-level ECB strategy data collection spectrum*



*Figure 2. Organizational-level ECB strategy data use spectrum*

First, the tools recognize that data collection and data use are two separate components of the ECB process. Previous measurement tools have not explicitly measured data collection and data use separately. Measuring data collection and data use separately are essential for organizational-level strategies because an organizational-level system (policy, practice or procedure) is the target of the strategy, not an individual person. You cannot measure the competence of a system. But you can measure the extent to which the system is achieving its intended goal.

Data collection and data use are presented as separate systems because while the two systems are connected, they can be developed separately and they can function separately. For example, an organization can develop its capacity to collect data systematically, while not using that data systematically to improve its programs. Or, an organization can systematically use data to improve its program without having collected the data systematically. Thus, it is important for organizational-level ECB strategies to measure data collection and data use separately. While the focus of this study is organizational-level ECB strategies, it is important to note that individual-level ECB strategies may also benefit from measuring data collection and data use separately.

The second lesson I learned from conducting this ECB strategy that has factored into my design of these tools is that data collection and data use may be best measured on a spectrum.

The spectrum allows the ECB practitioner and the organization to ask, “to what extent did the program improve its ability to systematically collect data that can be used for program improvement? And, to what extent did the program improve its ability to systematically use the data that was collected to improve the program on a routine basis?” ECB is about development. The spectrum allows the ECB practitioner and the organization to focus on movement rather than answering the yes/no question of “was evaluation capacity built because of the project?” The spectrum requires the ECB practitioner and the organization to detail what factors they believe contributed to the policy, practice, or procedure’s position on the spectrum both before the strategy was implemented and after the strategy was implemented.

The *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* has three points: 1) No data collection, 2) Non-systematic data collection, and 3) Systematic data collection.

*No data collection* refers to a policy, practice, or procedure that does not involve collecting data on important program activities. Thus, the organization’s staff and or leadership are unable to make judgments about the impact of their work because they do not have any data collected on this specific activity.

*Non-systematic data collection* refers to a policy, practice, or procedure that involves collecting data on a specific program activity, but: 1) the constructs on which data are collected are not clearly operationalized, 2) the process for collecting the data is not standardized, or 3) data is not collected on a consistent basis. While data are collected at the “Non-systematic data collection” point on the scale, the data’s validity is questionable because either the constructs are unclear, the process for collecting the data is not standardized, or the data are inconsistently collected. If an organization’s score on the scale is at “non-systematic data collection”, that is better than if the organization’s score is at “no data collection”, but it is not an ideal score for an

organization because the lack of validity prohibits the organization's leadership and staff from being able to make evidence-based claims about the impact of the activity.

*Systematic data collection* refers to a policy, practice, or procedure in which 1) the constructs are clearly operationalized, 2) there is a standardized process for collecting the data, 3) the data are collected on a routine basis, and 4) accountability mechanisms are set in place to ensure that the necessary data is collected in the intended manner. This is the point on the scale that all organizations should strive for, because it means that an organization is systematically collecting data, thus the organization's staff are able to confidently make evidence-based judgments about the impact of its program activities.

The *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum* has three points: 1) Non-Use, 2) Anecdotal Use, and 3) Systematic Use.

*Non-Use* refers to data that were collected but that is not used in any way. These data are simply collected and stored.

*Anecdotal Use* refers to data used to make improvements and judgments about the program activity for which data was collected. However, the intended users of these data do not have clear instructions on how it should be used. This results in the intended users applying data in different ways. In this situation, the intended users may or may not be using data in the way the organization intends the data to be used.

*Systematic Use* takes place when intended users of data use it in the way the organization intended. This is in part the result of the organization providing the intended users with clear instructions on how to use data.. Both the clear instructions and continued use of these data are supported by an accountability system that ensures that the intended data users employ it as intended, and on a consistent basis.

**Using the ECB Assessment Tools.** There are two steps to using these tools correctly. First, once the ECB practitioner and the organization's leadership have decided that an organizational-level ECB strategy will be implemented the ECB practitioner can suggest using these tools to assess the extent to which the organizational-level ECB strategy achieved its intended ECB goal. If the organization agrees, then the ECB practitioner should explain the tools in detail. The ECB practitioner should answer all questions and not proceed until the organization's leadership fully understands each of the tools. After this process, the ECB practitioner and the organization's leadership should decide where to locate the policy, practice or procedure that will be the focus of the project on each of the spectrums. Each placement on the spectrum must be supported by evidence. This step in the process is done before the organizational-level ECB strategy is implemented in the organization. The purpose of this step is to create a baseline for the organizations' understanding of the policy, practice or procedure prior to implementing the organizational-level ECB strategy within the organization. Furthermore, this step seeks to understand how each stakeholder group perceives the current placement on the spectrum of the organization's policy, practice or procedure. Individuals participating in this process do not have to reach consensus regarding the placement of the policy, practice, or procedure, but individuals participating should provide rationales for supporting their suggestion for the placement on the spectrum. Consensus is not mandatory because there may be different opinions amongst the organization's leadership and the ECB practitioner. The most important part of the process is for each stakeholder group to think deeply about their placement on the spectrum and to support their placement on the spectrum.

After the project has been completed the group should reconvene to discuss the post-project placement of the policy, process or procedure on the spectrum. Again, consensus does not have to be met but evidence must be provided to support each stakeholder's claim.

**Spectrum Scores for Debriefing Form Strategy.** The process that I detailed above is how I envision the tools can be used in the future. Since I developed the tools as a result of implementing this project, the tools were not used in the ECB project outlined in this dissertation. However, since gaining an in-depth understanding of the organization and its needs are embedded in the ECB process, I have been able to use the tool retroactively to suggest where I would have placed the debriefing form before the project was started, and where I would place the debriefing form after the project.

Below I begin with a discussion of where I placed the debriefing form on each of the tools prior to the project with evidence to support each of these placements.

#### **Tap In Leadership Academy's Debriefing Form Prior to ECB Project**

To inform my placement on the spectrum before the project, I used my notes from meetings with the organization's leadership and my review of the organization's previous evaluation reports.

**Data collection.** Three factors contributed to my decision to place Tap In Leadership Academy's pre-ECB debriefing form near the "non-systematic data collection" point on the spectrum. These factors include: 1) inconsistent structure and scoring across program sites; 2) collecting group level data rather than individual level data; and 3) partial completion of the form by site leaders who were responsible for completing the form. Below I include notes and quotations taken from the Facilitated Work Sessions held with Tap In Leadership Academy's Leadership to support my claims.

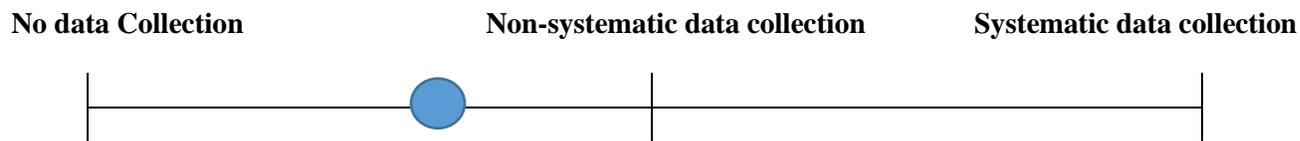


Figure 3. Scholar debriefing form data collection prior to project

**1) The Scholar Debriefing Form’s structure and scoring was inconsistent across program sites:**

*At this point, we began a discussion about the debriefing process in detail. The Executive Director began to describe it and asked the Program Director to go and get copies of the forms. Several forms were brought out and they had different versions for different sites, which they recognized was problematic for consistency. – Observation note taken from Facilitated Work Session #1*

*The form has a great foundation. They capture some very important information. I recognized that some of the scoring components needed to be more clearly defined because there was some subjectively based on how the form was written. And the open-ended questions also needed some refinement. – observation note taken from Facilitated Work Session #1*

**2) The Scholar Debriefing Form collected group level data rather than individual scholar data:**

*I believe that is one of the missing links with our children. No one is taking the time to tell their stories. As a parent I see my child a few hours a day. The school has my children more than I do. By the time they get older they are in so many activities that they are often viewed as a collective group. No one is really taking the time to know the child, the individual scholar. I did not realize how important this was six years ago when we created the debriefing form. But, in hindsight, it was always about the individual scholar... we changed the form to accommodate the staff, but they still have not done it correctly. And six years later, we still don’t know their stories. This is a problem for me... This is the original. It was created in the beginning. Its purpose is to be a snapshot of each scholar’s day. It’s just that simple– Executive Director quote taken from Facilitated Work Session #2*

**3) The Scholar Debriefing Form was not being filled out completely by site leaders:**

*They explained that staff often did not fully fill out the forms or that what they wrote was inconsistent or half done. The Executive Director said an issue is that on their time sheets it shows that they are not taking the time to fully complete the debriefing forms. So, she thinks a huge part of the problem is that staff simply are not taking the time to complete the debriefing form thoroughly. – Observation note taken from Facilitated Work Session #1*

*I continued to suggest that they need to be more specific about “leadership skills.” And that they need something to say this is Tap In’s description of this thing and how they are assessing it. I also suggested that their lack of filling it out could have been the result of not knowing what to write or what they should be looking for. I suggested something that they can have to use while they are debriefing. Since they did not want to make changes to the time and because of the overemphasis on staff responsibility I suggested creating a rubric with instructions for how to complete the form. – Observation note taken from Facilitated Work Session #2*

The debriefing form was selected as the target of this project during the Facilitated Work Sessions that were held with Tap In Leadership Academy’s leadership at the beginning of the project. During this process, the organization’s leadership identified four existing debriefing form issues: 1) forms were inconsistent across sites, 2) forms did not accurately capture the data the leadership wanted to collect, 3) forms were not being filled out, and 4) forms collected group level data rather than individual scholar data. Tap In Leadership Academy’s leadership was clear about the issues that contributed to the form not functioning as they intended. Consequently, the form challenges that existed at the beginning of the project are evidence for my pre-project placement of the debriefing form on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum*.

**Data use.** Two components contributed to my decision to place Tap In Leadership Academy’s pre-ECB debriefing form near the “non-use” point on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*. They include: 1) lack of discussion about the data on previous evaluation reports and 2) no clear instructions to guide intended data users’ use of the data. Below I include notes and quotations taken from the Facilitated Work Sessions held with Tap In Leadership Academy’s Leadership to support my claims.

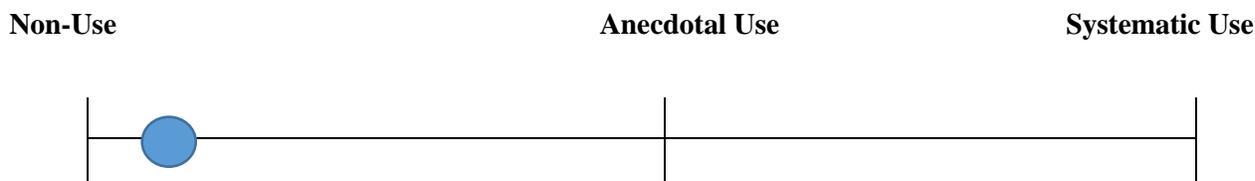


Figure 4. Scholar debriefing form use prior to project

**1) Past evaluation reports did not include debriefing form data to assess scholar development:**

*A review of the 2011- 2012, 2012 – 2013, 2013 – 2014, 2015 evaluation reports show that data from the scholar debriefing forms were not included in the overall evaluation of the program in previous years. The student data that were included across the past reports was related to: demographic characteristics, average daily attendance, state assessments, and classroom grades in reading and mathematics, and discipline referrals incidents. While a lack of inclusion on past evaluation reports does not mean that the data was not systematically used to improve the program, is it an indicator that the data was not used to make judgments about the Tap In Leadership Academy’s program effectiveness as a whole. – Observation note taken from assessment of evaluation report review*

**2) No clear instructions on how intended data users should use the data:**

*The purpose of the form is to provide a snapshot of each scholar’s day. It should be the straight to the point where anyone can pull the form and be able to get a feel for that scholar’s personality, things they contribute, and things we need to assist in strengthening. However, this is not a discipline form. The program has to be solution driven” Executive Director quote taken from Facilitated Work Session #2*

Unlike data collection, very little attention was given to data use at the beginning of the project. In my estimation data use was not highlighted at the beginning of the project because the major issues that Tap In Leadership Academy’s leadership identified were related to data collection. Furthermore, from my engagement with the organization’s leadership during the Facilitated Work Sessions I believe the leadership thought that once the form was improved and the site leaders took the time to complete the form, the site leaders would naturally know how the data should be used and use it correctly. For these reasons, I have chosen to place the debriefing form near the “non-use” point on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*.

## **Tap In Leadership Academy's Debriefing Form after the ECB Project**

This section presents my placement of Tap In Leadership Academy's debriefing form on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum* after the project was complete. To inform my placement on the spectrum after the project, I used observation notes from the debriefing sessions that I attended at each program site, site leader interviews, organization leadership interviews and reflective memos. While the debriefing form did not reach systematic data collection or systematic data use, the post-project placement of the debriefing form was improved from the pre-project placement on both spectrums; data collection was improved more than data use.

This section presents evidence to support my placement of the form on each tool by presenting factors that positively and negatively influenced the placement of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* on each tool. I begin each explanation with the negative factors that contributed to the placement on the spectrum and close with a discussion of the positive factors that contributed to the placement on the spectrum. To assist with comparison, the placement of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* before the project is in blue and the place of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* after the project is in red.

Each section answers one of this study's guiding research questions. The research question that the section answers precedes the section.

## Research Question 1:

To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations that provide youth-serving programs to *systematically collect* data that can be used to improve their programs?

### *Data collection.*

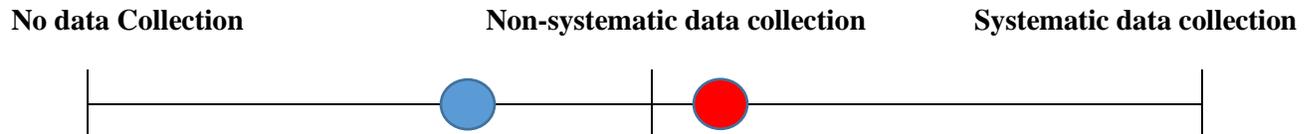


Figure 5. Scholar debriefing form data collection after project

*Negative factors.* One factor negatively influenced the placement of Tap In Leadership Academy's individual scholar debriefing form on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* after the ECB project. That factor was daily completion of the form. All of the site leaders explained that while they thought the new *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* was an improvement, they were not able to complete the form every day for every scholar as it was intended. At best, site leaders completed all the forms for their scholars three out of the five program days during the time designated for the completion of the form. Other times they completed the forms at home or during another day.

Two sets of challenges contributed to site leaders not being able to complete their forms daily – form related challenges and organizational challenges. Form related challenges refer to design and/or misunderstanding of the actual *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* that contributed to site leaders not being able to complete the form as intended. And organizational challenges refer to interruptions of the designated debriefing time for completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* by the organization's leadership or staff.

The required open-ended response was highlighted by most site leaders as the main form-related challenge to completing their forms daily. Site leaders explained that they either struggled to think of something to write for the open-ended section or they explained that the act of having to write out a response to the open-ended section required more time than completing the closed-ended sections of the form. One site leader stated:

*We really didn't have as much time as we needed to complete it as thoroughly as we wanted to. Like for instance, we may have been able to go through the front but not really fill in the back where they ask us the questions like, you know, what would you tell a scholar's parents and filled that part of the debrief sheet out, so that sometimes we didn't really have enough time to do that. Most of the time we completed the front and then not so much the back.* – Site leader quote taken from site leader interview

Another site leader explained that she had help to complete her *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form*. She stated:

*I used my junior leaders. I had two. It was a lot because I had 12 and usually my scholars came every day. So, it was a lot. I think the front part was the quickest part to do – like the easiest. But, when it came to the back and like trying to be specific about what was noteworthy and their strengths and stuff, that took a little bit longer.* – Site leader quote taken from site leader interview

However, when asked if she thought she could complete the forms without their help she responded:

*Not if I didn't have junior leaders to help. Like if I had the help from them, then yeah because then we could split it. I could split it into six, they could do six at the same time. But, if it's just me, no that's not comfortable.* – Site leader quote taken from site leader interview

Another site leader echoed her sentiments but acknowledged that the open-ended section took time but that they were important. He stated:

*This required that we go through each individual scholar and at least give a thought to how their day was or how they're doing. I think it's good. I think it's tedious, but I think it's good and helpful. -- Yeah. By virtue of doing it, it's tedious, and I think it's, perhaps, necessary because you have to go through each scholar. You at least think about each scholar. You at least go through and think*

*on, how is this scholar doing? How is this scholar? What can the scholar improve?* – Site leader quote taken from site leader interview

Most of the site leaders explained that completing the open-ended section of the form was a time-consuming task that contributed to them not being able to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* on a daily basis for each of their scholars. However, as shown by the aforementioned quotes some of the site leaders understood the importance of completing the open-ended section and worked to create strategies to complete the open-ended section during the designated time for completing the form. Thus, the challenge was not adhering to the form's purpose or content, but with the challenge was consistently completing every scholar's form during the designated debriefing time.

While form-related challenges impacted site leaders' ability to complete the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* on a daily basis, by far, the organizational challenges accounted for most the site leaders' inability to complete the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* on a daily basis. Two organizational challenges emerged as the most salient interrupters across program sites: meetings and the team debriefing process.

Throughout the summer, planned and unplanned meetings prevented site leaders from completing their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* during the designated debriefing time. Teams often met with: organizational leadership, other staff members, or scholars' parents. While these meetings appeared to add value to site leaders in terms of professional development, providing important information, or conferencing with scholar parents, they all directly contributed to site leaders not being able to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* during the designated debriefing time. On several occasions, I observed these meetings taking place during the designated debriefing time at the same program site, and on one occasion at another program site. At one site, my observations narrative summary reads:

*The debriefing session began with instructional coordinator asking the group what they thought about the lesson plans that the group has been implementing. The team provided their feedback on the lesson plans and they also discussed the challenges that they have been experiencing thus far. After they voiced their concerns the instructor coordinator provided them with a set of strategies to assist them with their challenges. After the instructor coordinator left, team had small talk about the scholars and then started preparing for the next day. The team did not complete the individual scholar debriefing forms. I inquired about the individual scholar debriefing forms and one of the site leaders said that Monday they had a meeting with Sally, so they could not complete them. On Tuesday, they started them but they had to prepare for the next day so they did not complete. They also did not complete the debriefing forms today because they met with instruction coordinator and had to do some preparing for tomorrow. – Observation note taken from debriefing session observation*

At the same site, on another day, my observations narrative summary reads:

*The meeting began with the two leaders sitting in the room speaking about a struggling scholar. At 3:45pm the social worker came into the room, and the group continued to have the conversation about the struggling scholar. This conversation ended at 4:05pm when the father of the struggling scholar came into the room. During the meeting they discussed the issues that the scholar was having and the father provided strategies for working with his son for the remainder of the program. This conversation was the majority of the meeting. After the meeting, the two leaders and social worker continued to have a conversation about the scholar. After that conversation the social worker left, and the two leaders began to prepare for the next day at 4:25pm.*

At another site, on another day, my observation narrative summary reads:

*The site leaders completed their individual scholar debriefing forms together. A member of the organization's staff came into the meeting and began to make announcements about scholar disciplinary issues and strategies navigating them, how the site leaders can better manage their time and the management of the program. – Observation note taken from debriefing session observation*

My analytic reflection on that same day reads:

*I have observed that these announcements are generally about program logistics and/or providing feedback for improving the team's management of the program. Today a staff member spoke about addressing disrespectful scholars, managing their time as leaders at the site, and strategies for classroom management. It appears that this time is also used as a space for the staff to learn from someone who visits periodically and who is not permanently a part of their program. While these announcements appear to be helpful and needed, I have not observed them*

*directly contributing to the completion of the individual scholar debriefing forms.*  
– Observation note taken from debriefing session observation

As described in my observation note, I recognized that the meetings appeared to interrupt the debriefing process; however, I did not reach this conclusion until interviews with staff members revealed this pattern as a challenge for their completion of the forms.

When asked to elaborate on why staff members at her site were unable to complete all of their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* on a daily basis, one site leader stated:

*I feel like the meetings with the scholars' parents, I felt that that was something that needed to be done immediately. So that kinda took away from it. And then also the preparation, making sure that we have all the supplies and stuff that we need for the next day and getting that stuff ready. So I feel like it's kinda like a tie between the meetings and also the preparation.* Observation note taken from debriefing session observation

The site leader who worked with her echoed her sentiments. He stated:

*We couldn't do them every day because some days of the week we would have meetings with Ms. Sally or with the instruction coordinator. Usually we would recap the debrief with the instructor coordinator on a Thursday and a Friday. Mondays were tough because we didn't receive the lesson plans until Sunday, so on Monday we had to work on the whole lesson plans for the week. So it kind of depended on the day, but I think maybe three times a week we worked on the forms.* Quote taken from site leader interview

Together, these site leaders attributed meetings as contributors to why they were not able to complete their forms on a daily basis. Meetings varied but were often called by the organization's leadership or a program staff member. As I stated earlier, the meetings that I observed appeared to either bring value to the site leaders in terms of professional development or by relying important information. Or, they served as a space for the organization's leadership and/or staff to highlight concerns that they had with the site leaders' behaviors. While these meeting did appear to add value, they directly contributed to site leaders not being able to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* during the designated debriefing time.

The second organizational challenge to completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* was the team debriefing process. I observed on several occasions the team debriefing process contributing to site leaders not being able to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* at two sites. It was most prevalent at one program site. My observations of this challenge are supported by site leaders' thoughts on the debriefing process.

At the site where the team debriefing process was largely an issue, one of my observation narrative summaries reads:

*Members came into the room at different times. Each team leader began to complete their forms independently. One leader had a question and posed to another member to get assistance with scholar attendance. 10 minutes into the meeting a staff member became to give announcements to the group about the program – updates and logistics. After announcements she led the team debriefing form process which included team “highs” and “lows”. This was a conversation with the entire group (both leaders and junior leaders). During this time, team members made suggestions for program improvements. Also the team members asked for assistance about the struggles that they had with scholars during the day. At the end of the meeting the group discussed scholar of the week. They selected boy and a girl for scholar of the week. – Observation note taken from debriefing session observation*

On another occasion, at the same site my observation narrative summary reads:

*The meeting began with small talk between the leaders and junior leaders. Seven minutes into the meeting a staff member came into the meeting and asked about highs for the day – this started the team debriefing process. During the team debriefing time they spoke about scholar highs and scholar lows. They discussed challenges and came up with strategies to address their challenges. This was the entire meeting. However, during this time some leaders and junior leaders worked on their individual debriefing forms.*

On a third occasion, at the same site, my narrative summary shows that the team debriefing process dominated the designated debriefing time for completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms*. My observation narrative reads:

*The meeting began with site leaders and junior leaders having small talk before the official meeting started. This lasted until 4:45pm when a staff member came into the room and “officially” started the meeting by asking, “What are our*

*scholar highs for the day?” A site leader took notes. This question initiated the process of the group debriefing form – scholar highs, scholar lows, scholar of the day, highs for the team, and lows for the team. I did not observe anyone completing their individual scholar debriefing forms during this time. Sally came into the meeting at 4:45pm. After Sally came in site leader asked her a question about something they were planning for the last week of the program. The second half of this meeting focused on this discussion. – Observation note taken from debriefing session observation*

Three out of the four times that I observed this site the team debriefing process appeared to take most of the attention of the site leaders at the site. When site leaders from this site spoke about their inability to complete their forms daily they mentioned the structure of the debriefing process as a main contributor. One site leader stated:

*Like while debriefing, I think we need at least 30 minutes in silence to think about this because, me, it's hard for me to write and focus when people are talking. -- So when we're writing and people are talking about these students and stuff, it's hard for me just to focus on that. And I know they said this is our time to focus on our students, but we're not really focused on individual students writing out these debrief forms if we've already started talking about highs and lows. So I do think, if we're there for an hour, we at least need 20 minutes to write our debrief forms and then talk about it. - Quote taken from site leader interview*

Another site leader from the same site highlighted the team debriefing process as a challenge, and suggested a possible way to address it, she commented:

*Like, okay we're gonna do – we gonna come in, we gonna do the group debriefing, and then that'll help us when we do our individual kinda thing instead of us doing it at the same time. So, like putting a restriction on how long we talk about the general overall day, so that we could still have that time to focus on our scholars. - Quote taken from site leader interview*

Above all, the structure of the debriefing process contributed to these site leaders' inability to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* for each of their scholars on a daily basis. During the time designated for debriefing, site leaders had to participate in a team debriefing process (that was led by a program staff member) while simultaneously completing their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms*. As highlighted above, the team debriefing process

often dominated the time because it required the entire group and because it was facilitated by a program staff member. This resulted in several site members having to either take their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* home to complete them or to complete them on another day.

*Positive factors.* Four factors positively influenced Tap In Leadership Academy's *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form's* placement on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* after the ECB project. They include: 1) refined social skills and leadership characteristics format, 2) having a clear set of instructions for how to complete the individual scholar debriefing form, 3) using the same form across all the sites, and 4) collecting individual scholar data rather than group level scholar data.

All of the site leaders and the organization's leadership explained that the refined format of the form in terms of the social skills and leadership characteristics was a definite improvement to the form. One site leader stated:

*I like the fact that it was more specific across the board, so it was like volunteer, took initiative, rather than last year where it was just like say some positive things about the scholars or – basically highs and lows like we would do all together and we would kinda have to come up with it. So, then different leaders did it differently. Like there was a different scale, now it's the same across the board. So, that was better. We just like pretty much had to come up with numbers. Like it wasn't set – like, okay they did this, this, this, this, therefore they get five. It was like what would you give them? - Quote taken from site leader interview*

This site leader argued the form was improved because it was more detailed than the previous scholar debriefing form. More specifically, this site leader alluded to the form providing examples of leadership characteristics and social skills that scholars could have displayed throughout the day. The previous form provided space for the site leader to write any leadership characteristic or social skill that the site leader observed a scholar displaying. Most of the site leaders that were interviewed stated that the previous open-ended question was harder to answer

than checking one of the boxes that corresponded to a leadership characteristic or social skill displayed on the new form.

The organization's leadership echoed the sentiments of the site leaders in believing that new leadership characteristics and the social skills structure was an improvement. The Director of Support Services stated:

*I think the main improvement is really defining leadership characteristics and social skills because at the end of the day those are words that we talk about and reference all the time. They are a core part of our old debrief forms, but for individuals who aren't sitting in this office everyday it's harder for them to understand what they look like. But adding the check boxes really helped with that.* - Quote taken from leadership interview

The Director of Support Services further explained that she believes the new format reduced site leaders' ability to have different views on the same characteristics because what the program leadership was looking for was made much clearer on the new form. Additionally, she believed the new form was more aesthetically pleasing and that the flow of the form made it easy to understand.

The Executive Director agreed with the Director of Support Services' assessment of the new form, she stated:

*This form is a drastic improvement from the original form. The original form that I created wasn't detailed enough. It wasn't clear to other people like it was clear to me. But I created so, of course it was clear to me. I realized that there were too many holes and too much room for error. But this new form is really clear, it's detailed, and there are step by step instructions.* – Quote taken from leadership interview

Both of the organization's leaders believed the individual scholar debriefing form now better represented the information they wanted to collect about their scholars using the form. They both explained that as the organization's leadership they understood what social skills and leadership characteristics they were interested in identifying in scholars, but that they realized

that the previous form did not allow them to accurately gather the information that they were interested in capturing.

While the organization's leadership spoke highly of the refined form format in relation to the social skills and leadership characteristics sections they admitted that the process of operationalizing the constructs was grueling. On many occasions they referred to the amount of time that it took to come to a common understanding about what they wanted for each section of the new form. They also noted how my position as devil's advocate served as a tool for challenging and pushing them to think deeper. Thus, the final product in relation to the social skills and leadership characteristics was the result of the leadership's commitment to improving the form.

The creation of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* proved to be a contributor to improving how site leaders collected data on the *Individual Scholar Debriefing form*. Most of the site leaders explained that the most important aspect of the rubric was its explanation of how to score each section on the *Individual Scholar Debriefing form*. One site leader stated:

*Like the scale, especially when I'm going through each thing, the scale really helped. It gave us a number so we knew exactly what to put on the form. And then like for me not having the training that the other staff members had, this was really helpful for me to really understand the debrief form and what it really was about. Because it gave a thorough breakdown of everything and it was very beneficial to me. And I used it every time when I completed the debrief sheets for the first two weeks so I can get more understanding of it. – Quote taken from site leader interview*

In addition to serving as a reminder to some site leaders, this site leader explained that *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* served as a teaching tool for understanding how to complete the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* since she was unable to attend the training on the debriefing form and the debriefing process. Like other site leaders, this site leader explained that she referred to the rubric mostly at the beginning of the program. Most of the site leaders

reported that they referred to the rubric mostly during the first and/or second week of the program. Once they had committed the scoring to memory they stopped referring to the rubric, but they mentioned that they always had it if they ever needed to refer to it for assistance. Thus, the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* served as a helpful supplemental guide for completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form*.

The final two factors that contributed to the debriefing form's ability to move towards systematic collection are using the same form across all of the sites and collecting individual scholar data rather than group level scholar data. At the outset of the project the organization's leadership explained that they wanted one form that could be used across all program sites that focused on the individual scholar rather than scholars as a group. Each of these issues was addressed in the revision of the form. The same individual scholar debriefing form was used at all three of the program sites over the course of the summer program and the organization's leadership expressed that they will continue to use the form across all of the program sites in the future. Additionally, the form collected data on scholars individually rather than as a group.

Both positive and negative factors contributed to Tap In Leadership Academy's *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* position on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* after the ECB project. Improvements to the form increased its content and design. These changes increased the organization's ability to define and measure the constructs that they were interested in more accurately. The rubric that was created proved to be a great supplement to the form because it served as a reminder and instructive tool on how to complete the form.

While these improvements moved the form closer towards systematic data collection on the spectrum, challenges related to completing the form as intended prohibited it from being a

systematic data collection process. There are several form-related and organization-related challenges that must be addressed before data on the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* is systematically collected. Since ECB is concerned with movement, the ECB Mid-Project Report highlights these challenges for data collection and provides recommendations to address these concerns in the future.

**Research Question 2:**

To what extent is ECB effective for improving the ability of community-based organizations that provide youth programs to *use* systematically-collected data to improve their programs?

**Data use.**

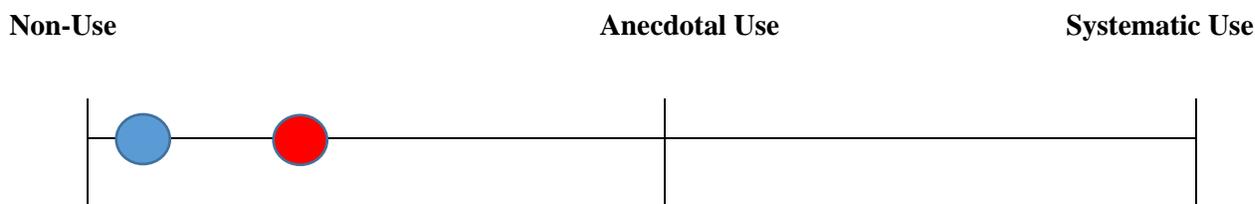


Figure 6. Scholar debriefing form use after project

As stated earlier, the ECB project was largely focused on improving how the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* collected data. Because of the issues that the organization’s leadership were interested in addressing, data collection was their number one concern. In my estimation, I believe the organization’s leadership believed that once the form was improved the intended users of the data would naturally know how to use the data to improve their work with the scholars. Consequently, what I found was that even with the improvements that were made to the form, the site leaders did not use the data the way that the organization’s leadership implicitly thought the site leaders should.

*Negative factors.* Two factors negatively influenced my post-ECB project placement of Tap In Leadership Academy’s individual scholar debriefing form on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*. These factors include: 1) non-systematic anecdotal use of the form and 2) unclear instructions about how the form should be used. The form was used by site leaders in two ways – 1) to determine how many Tap In Dollars a scholar should receive, and 2) to assist with lesson plan development.

Most of the site leaders explained that they only used the form to award Tap In Dollars. Tap In Dollars is fictional money that scholars can earn based on their behavior. Each day scholars have an opportunity to earn Tap In Dollars, and at the end of the week they can use the Tap In Dollars that they earned to purchase items from the Tap In Store. One site leader explains that:

*So a good number of times, it felt like I basically was going through asking, “What is the total points that this scholar has so I can fill out the check,” and never actually going back to say, “Okay, these are challenges this scholar is having, how we can work on this?”– Quote taken site leader interview*

This site leader’s experience represented how the data from the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* was being used at two of the program sites. While site leaders from these two sites believed that the process of completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* was helpful for reflecting about each scholar, when it came to actually using the data they only used it to award points for Tap In Dollars. However, at one program site, the site leaders explained that they used the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* to assist them in deciding what things to do with the scholars. One site leader from this site explained:

*I feel that when we did look back at the debrief sheets, they were useful and you could see certain patterns with certain scholars. You can be able to look at it and see the behavior changes whether they have improved or they've gotten better or the ups and downs.– Quote taken from staff interview*

The other site leader from this site echoed his coworker's sentiments, stating:

*So it's not like, oh, these students aren't doing whatever. It's like, okay, we need to make sure that our lesson plans kind of integrate following these things too to make sure their social skills are developing as well as the leadership skills, too. –*  
Quote taken from staff interview

Here we see the program sites collecting the same data but using it differently. While there may have been some benefits to how each site used data, there were not any clear instructions about how the data should be used. The site leaders used the data in the way that they thought it should be used. For two program sites, the site leaders explained that in theory the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* was a great idea, but that as the program progressed they saw it as merely a piece of paper work to complete. And while the one program site explained that they used the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* data to assist with lesson planning, they sporadically completed the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* and did not have much data to use from it. Irrespective of how the data was used, the fact remains that the intended users used the data differently. To this end, at best, the data was used anecdotally. Coincidentally, the lack of data use lead to the one factor that positively influenced the post-ECB placement of Tap In Leadership Academy's *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*.

The factor that positively influenced the post-ECB placement of Tap In Leadership Academy's individual scholar debriefing form on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum* was the recognition that data use is a separate task from data collection and that it deserves an equal amount of attention. The Executive Director recognized that the organization needs to: 1) identify each of the intended users of the data, 2) explicitly explain how they should use the data, and 3) train the intended users on how to use the data once it has been collected.

Reflecting on the project, and data use specifically, the Executive Director explained that not enough attention was given to data use as a separate task. She stated:

*I don't but in fairness to them I don't think enough time was spent on really training them on the uses of the form. Because I don't think I thought deeply enough about how each team member could use the form's data. But after it was implemented in the summer, now we know that this form requires a lot more training than I originally thought. Moving forward I know that each of the categories will have to be taught. We will need to define each component, provide examples, and explain why the form is important to the work we do at Tap In Leadership Academy. I realize now that this form should be a least a whole day of training. And since they did not get enough training our expectations of how it should be used were clear or understood.— Quote taken from leadership interview*

While data use was not improved much because of engaging in the project, the Executive Director's recognition of the need to explicitly focus on data use as a result of engaging in the project is an important milestone that should not be overlooked. Prior to the project, the organization's leadership believed that the intended users of the data would naturally know how to use the data, but as a result of engaging in the project we found that this was not the case. In response to the lack of data use attention and the leadership's interest in addressing data use, I produced a document entitled, *Evaluation Capacity Building Data Use Report* (included in Appendix K). In this document, I present the barriers to systematic data use of the individual scholar debriefing form that I identified as a result of engaging in the project. I also provide recommendations for addressing each barrier. While the recognition of a need and a document that analyzes the issues and provides recommendations for addressing the issue does not guarantee that the organization will address the issue, it does demonstrate interest in addressing the issue.

### **Research Question 3:**

What contextual factors matter when an ECB practitioner is attempting to build evaluation capacity in a community-based organization that serves youth? How do they matter?

## **Contextual Factors that Influenced Data Collection and Data Use**

Three contextual factors emerged as important influencers of data collection and data use: 1) training, 2) process, and 3) accountability. Collectively, I identified these factors as direct contributors to the placement that the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* received on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*.

Training proved to be an important influencer of both data collection and data use. As stated by the Executive Director in her reflective thoughts on data use, the site leaders did not receive enough training about how to use the data once it was collected. Moreover, site leaders were not adequately trained on ‘how’ to collect the data on the form. Several site leaders explained that the training simply involved a staff member reading the rubric to them, and thus, staff members did not thoroughly learn about the purpose of debriefing, how to debrief, or strategies for successfully completing all of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* daily. One site leader stated:

*So we just kind of sit at a table and she went over what we had to do, but it wasn't anything specific like training in terms of like how to integrate these social skills if they're not being met or what else did these leader characteristics look like for these different students. We didn't have any training in terms of going deep into this, just kind of like, okay, for attendance if they're here, or for this sheet it's a four if they're on time. If not it's a three and stuff like that – Quote taken from program staff interview*

As explained by this site leader, they did not feel they were adequately prepared to engage in the debriefing process after they had participated in the training. The training largely focused on content rather than context. Both proved to be equally important. The site leaders' reflections on their training and my observations of them debriefing showed that site leaders

needed to be taught how to collect the data and explicitly how they should use the data once it is collected.

I believe three ideas could assist with strengthening the organization's training process. First, organization leadership or staff could create a debriefing document (Debriefing the Tap In Way) that explains the purpose of the debriefing at Tap In Leadership Academy, steps of the debriefing process, and how each intended user should use the individual scholar debriefing data once it is collected. Second, organization leadership or staff could create a resource sheet to accompany the debriefing rubric that provides examples for how the leadership characteristics and social skills may be demonstrated by scholars. This list can continually be expanded as program team members add examples. Third, organization leadership or staff could record the debriefing training so that all staff members receive the same information about debriefing no matter when they start working at the program. Collectively, I believe these three suggestions can help the Tap In Leadership Academy strengthen its training process, and thus, better equip site leaders to systematically collect and use the data from the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* as leadership intends it to be used.

In terms of process, I recognized that each of the program sites used a different debriefing process. One site completed the team debriefing process while simultaneously completing the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form*. Site leaders often split their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* with their junior leaders, so that they could all get completed. Typically, site leaders were not able to complete all of their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* daily, and they cited the team debriefing as the factor that hindered their ability to complete all of their forms on a daily basis. The site leaders either completed the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* at home or on another day. At another site, leaders completed the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms*

collectively. Most often one site leader recorded their collective responses. Sometimes they split the forms and completed them separately, asking each other for assistance as they needed it. Site leaders cited having to prepare for the next day as the factor that most hindered their ability to complete the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* on a daily basis. Because site leaders were unable to complete all of their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* on a daily basis, they often completed the forms on a different day. At the third site, site leaders simultaneously completed the team debriefing form and the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms*. All site leaders cited that they needed more time to complete all of their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* on a daily basis and often completed the forms at home or on another day.

While what site leaders were supposed to do was clear, there was a clear set of steps in place to facilitate the collection of the data. As it exists, site leaders are given an hour to complete their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms*. They do not have a step by step process to complete the forms. To strengthen the debriefing process, the organization can create a standardized debriefing process. The standardized process should be created by the organization's leadership and current and or past site leaders. The purpose for designing this process would be to maximize the site leaders' ability to complete the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* for each scholar daily and to use the data collected from the form in the way that the organization intends it to be used. The process should account for interrupters that the site leaders listed, such as: meetings, preparing for the next day and the team debriefing process. I do believe that some flexibility in process could be provided to account for group size and site leader personality but I found that the site leaders need more structure to assist them with completing their *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* for each scholar daily. Additionally, space should be built into the program to receive feedback from site leaders on how to improve the

process during and after the program so that the process is dynamic and responsive. Creating a unique process for completing and using the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* has the potential to increase the likelihood of site leaders completing all of their scholars forms daily with quality, and it should increase the likelihood of the data being used as the organization intended it to be used.

Accountability is the final contextual component that I observed influencing both data collection and data use. Currently, the organization does not have any accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that data are collected and used as intended. Many of the challenges related to data collection and data use could have been addressed if the organization had built in checks and balances for data collection and data use. Site coordinators from each of the sites reported in their interviews that they did not complete each of their scholars' *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* on a daily basis. Many things accounted for not completing the forms, but the fact remains that they were not completed when they were intended to be completed. Additionally, once the data was collected, the site leaders used the data in non-systematic anecdotal ways. While the data was used, its use was inconsistent and not congruent with what the organization's leadership wanted – as I found out in my closing interviews with the organization's leadership. Data collection and data use are connected. If you do not have data collected there is no way that you can use the data to make any programmatic changes. Having an accountability system set in place would allow the organization to monitor, support, and hold site leaders accountable for collecting and using the data as they intend it to be used.

Here is an example of a set of steps to increase accountability in the debriefing process. First, site coordinators should be responsible for reviewing each of the site leader's *Individual Scholar Debriefing Forms* at the end of each day. This first check would to assess the completion

and quality of completion of the forms. Site coordinators could provide feedback if needed and support as they see fit. Once the site leader has approved the forms, they could sign them to show that they have reviewed and approved the forms. Of course, a rubric or set of criteria for quality of form completion would have to be created to assist in this process. All of the files should be filed in a systematic manner. Second, at the end of the week the site coordinator could give the Program Director all of the forms for his/her review. The Program Director could use the same criteria for assessing quality or a different rubric for assessing quality. Or, if going through each of the forms is too tedious, the site coordinator could provide some type of presentation about each scholar. Once this step is complete the Program Director should provide feedback, sign and approve the debriefing forms. Lastly, the Executive Director should review the forms or some subset of the forms monthly. Or, the Program Director could present the forms monthly to highlight trends, challenges and successes. Then, the Executive Director could approve and sign off on that month's debriefing forms for the program.

Any accountability system that the organization creates will be time consuming. But if the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* is a vital component of the organization's work, some sacrifice will have to be made to ensure that the data is collected and used as the organization intends it to be.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Conducting this study has been an amazing learning experience for me as a scholar and as an evaluator. When I decided to attend graduate school, I knew that I wanted my dissertation project to add to a body of literature while simultaneously contributing to the development of an organization in a practical way. The former is required in all PhD programs, but the latter is optional and even frowned upon in some programs. Entering graduate school with this understanding, I knew my task was to design a dissertation project that would satisfy my program's requirements while also respecting my personal commitment to practically contributing to the development of an organization.

Throughout this dissertation process I have been unwavering in my conviction to respect my personal commitment to practically adding value to an organization. I did not want to be a researcher that used an organization or community to benefit myself without adding any practical value to that organization or community like many researchers do. The thought of not using my PhD capstone project as a tool to add value to an organization seemed counter to the reason I chose to attend graduate school in the first place – which was to acquire a knowledge base and skill set that would enable me to improve the types of organizations that intellectually challenged, emotionally supported, and physically protected me as a child, teen and young adult.

I am grateful for finding the field of ECB because it allowed me to accomplish my personal goal. The Executive Director's reflections on my work showed me that my personal goal was realized. In our final interview, when I asked how she believed I conducted myself throughout the project, she had this to say about my work:

*You have a spirit of excellence. You have tenacity. You are a natural entrepreneur – so you go hard at everything that you do and it was definitely reflective in this project from start to finish. And even when you were pushing us hard, I know it was coming from a place of, 'I want to get this right' and 'I want it to be solid'. I*

*also believe it came from a place of caring about our organization by making sure that you created something that we truly could use, and not just completing the project so you have PhD behind your name and Dr. in front of your name. I knew where it was coming from. I appreciated working with someone who I knew genuinely cared and that makes all the difference in the world.”– Quote taken from leadership interview*

The Executive Director’s words humbled me. They also reminded me that maintaining my commitment to practically adding value to Tap In Leadership Academy as an organization was worth the sacrifice.

In the following pages, I will discuss: 1) what I believe this study contributes to the ECB field, 2) what practical value I believe this study has provided to Tap In Leadership Academy, 3) my broader reflections on ECB, and 4) what important lessons I learned from conducting this study.

### **Contributions to the ECB Field**

This study contributes four important insights to the ECB field. They are: 1) the importance of recognizing data collection and data use as separate components of organizational-level ECB strategies, 2) the creation of a new organizational-level ECB assessment tool, 3) three contextual factors for ECB practitioner to recognize and address as he/she attempts to build evaluation capacity within organizations at the organizational-level, and 4) the four step ECB process.

Recognizing data collection and data use as separate components of organizational-level ECB strategies is an important contribution to the field of ECB. As I explained in the previous chapter, data collection and data use are different components of the organizational-level ECB strategy. A strategy can focus on developing data collection, data use, and/or both. Ideally, an

ECB practitioner would want to develop both components simultaneously, but the organization's capacity and need will dictate which component should receive the most attention.

This study largely focused on improving data collection because that is what the organization's leadership was interested in improving. And as data collection improved, the organization's leadership recognized that the data were not being used as they would have liked it to be used. This led the organization's leadership to recognize that data use required separate attention. I do not believe this connection would have been made without first improving the organization's data collection. Collaboratively working with the organization's leadership to place the specific evaluative policy, process, or procedure on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum* prior to the project will assist an ECB practitioner with understanding where most of the attention should be spent in the project—on data collection, data use, or on both. Understanding each component separately will enable the ECB practitioner to design an organizational-level strategy that is more effective and responsive to the organization's goals and needs.

Another important contribution to the literature that this study makes is the creation of a new organizational-level ECB assessment tool—the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Assessment Spectrum* includes the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum*. This new assessment tool is specifically designed to assess organizational-level ECB strategies. Previous assessments have focused on individuals' competence to assess the impact of ECB strategies. Those tools work for assessing individual-level ECB strategies but they do not work for assessing organizational-level ECB strategies. The *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Assessment Spectrum* provides an

option to ECB practitioners to assess whether the policy, process, or procedure they have created or refined has contributed to creating an environment where quality evaluation is conducted and used to make decisions and to improve an organization's program.

The *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Assessment Spectrum* does this by allowing the ECB practitioner and the organization's leadership to begin the process by placing the specific policy, process, or procedure on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Collection Spectrum* and on the *Organizational-Level ECB Strategy Data Use Spectrum* to get an understanding of where the policy, process, or procedure currently stands before any changes are made. Even if stakeholders do not reach consensus on where to place the policy, process, or procedure on the spectrums, all stakeholders will be aware of where others place the policy, process or procedure prior to the organizational-level ECB strategy is implemented. Once the organizational-level ECB strategy is implemented the ECB practitioner and the organization's leadership can determine if the strategy had an impact, based on the post-ECB placement of the policy, process, or procedure on the spectrums.

An additional contribution that I believe this study makes to the ECB field is that this study identifies three contextual factors that are important for ECB practitioners to recognize and address as they attempt to build evaluation capacity within organizations at the organizational-level. These contextual factors are training, process, and accountability. When an ECB practitioner is working to build evaluation capacity at the organizational-level is it not enough to focus on the creation or strengthening of the policy, process, or procedure in isolation. The ECB practitioner must understand that how individuals are trained influences their ability to implement the policy, process, or procedure. In the case of this study, that meant understanding that training influenced how individuals collected and used data. The ECB practitioner also must

understand that the process that is used to collect data influences how it is collected and the extent to which it is used. And, the ECB practitioner must understand that accountability mechanisms influence if data is collected and used. While the ECB practitioner may not have time to directly contribute to each of these factors, it is important that he/she understands that these factors will contribute to the success of the organizational-level ECB strategy.

The final contribution that I believe this study makes to the ECB field is the four step ECB process that I created and used to carry out this study. While other ECB studies have followed similar steps to build evaluation capacity in organizations, there has not been an explicit discussion of what activities are a part of each step. The four step ECB process that I articulated in this study defines each step and provides a description for each step in the ECB process. Additionally, it discusses the connection between each step. This four step ECB process is a contribution to the ECB field because it provides a roadmap for future ECB practitioners to follow as they work to build evaluation capacity within organizations.

### **Contributions to Tap In Leadership Academy**

The project added practical value to Tap In Leadership Academy in multiple ways. Specifically, the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* was improved as a result of engaging in this study. Prior to the project the organization had a debriefing form that was: 1) not being used across all program sites, 2) not accurately capturing the information that program leadership and staff wanted it to capture, and 3) collecting group level data rather than individual level data about scholars. After engaging in the project, the organization: 1) improved its operationalization of the constructs that are measured on the form, 2) refined its measurement scales for each of the constructs measured on the form, and 3) received a more aesthetically-pleasing form. The

organization's leadership felt that as a result of engaging in the study they had a form that they felt confident about, and that they planned to use in future programs.

The creation of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* added practical value to the organization as well. The creation of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* is an important organizational development because it presents in written form the organization's explanation of each section of the form and the scale that is used to score each section. Previous debriefing training included a verbal presentation about the purpose of debriefing and a discussion of the form. Prior to the creation of the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form Rubric* no supplemental material existed to describe the individual sections of the form and how each section should be scored; thus, the rubric is an important tool for assisting the organization during training.

### **Broader Reflections on ECB**

After engaging in this study, I believe that ECB is a viable option for building evaluation capacity within community-based organizations (CBOs). But, I also believe that before ECB can begin to have a broad impact in CBOs and other types of organizations, there is a lot of work to be done by all the stakeholders involved in the ECB process.

First, ECB practitioners must teach more about ECB. Before engaging in this process, Tap In Leadership Academy's leadership had no idea what ECB was. I have a feeling that they are not alone. As ECB practitioners, we must find creative ways to educate both organizations and funders of organizations about what ECB is and its potential benefits. In the past, much of this education has come from conducting ECB studies. This should remain a place where ECB is taught. However, I believe we need to create other opportunities for organizations and funders to learn about ECB. Perhaps, this can be done through workshops, reader-friendly documents, or

videos. Whatever the medium I believe we must do a better job of educating organizations and funders about ECB so that interest is increased and that more organizations build their evaluation capacity. As ECB practitioners, we must show that by investing in an organization's evaluation capacity you are putting them in a better position to systematically learn from their mistakes and to systematically enhance their strengths. Being able to do these two things on a consistent basis will increase the likelihood that an organization will achieve its desired program goals. In short, ECB cannot make an impact in organizations if people do not know it exists.

Second, funders must require or incentivize organizations to engage in ECB. Furthermore, funders must provide the resources for organizations to engage in ECB. In recent years, more funders have required the organizations that they fund to conduct some type of program evaluation. This is an important step in the right direction. But, if the organizations that seek to conduct their own program evaluation or who hire an external evaluator to conduct their evaluation does not have the knowledge or skill to identify what they need or to determine how to use the evaluative data that they receive, we will be setting those organizations up for failure. Tying ECB to funding could increase organizations' focus on improving their evaluation capacity. And, from a financial statement improving an organization's ECB may save funders money in the long term, because theoretically, organizations should be better prepared to self-correct themselves. But, for this to be successful funders must be thoroughly taught about ECB and understand that it is a gradual process.

Third, organizations should understand that investing time and money in ECB is an important organizational investment like any other professional development activity. This is hard to sell because is unknown and because it returns may not be immediate. However, as more

and more organizations learn about ECB it is important that they understand that by taking the time to gradually build their evaluation capacity they will be improving their ability to serve.

Work needs to be done on multiple fronts to prove ECB as an intentional practice is viability to CBOs and other types of organizations. But like the process of engaging in an ECB study, we should remember that it will be gradual and that we must meet the field where it is at, to properly build it.

### **Important Learning Lessons**

I learned several important lessons as a result of engaging in this study. Two lessons made a deep impression on me. First, by understanding and truly accepting that ECB is focused on growth, I determined that I needed to build the project slowly. As I engaged in the project I realized that there were many things that needed to be done. But, on more than one occasion I was reminded that not everything needed to be done, or should have been done, within the confines of this one project. By the end of the project, I had come to accept that there will always be more things to do than there is time to do them. This acceptance led me to conclude that the best thing that I can do as an evaluator is to work with the organization's leadership to identify their needs and to contribute based on what I am most uniquely suited to assist with. In short, I learned that both pace and focus have important roles when you are attempting to build evaluation capacity within an organization.

The second important lesson that I learned from this study is that the evaluator is a servant. At times, I caught myself trying to get the organization's leadership to understand what I thought they needed based on my assessment of the organization, rather than listening to what the organization's leadership *said* they needed as an organization. The importance of this learning lesson was increased when I asked the Executive Director to speak on one thing that she

thought I fell short on in the project and she spoke about the importance of remembering that as an evaluator I am here to serve. In our final interview, she stated:

*I would say understanding that your role is to provide a service to your client. Regardless of if you feel like you have a great idea, that it should be a certain way, or that you understand it. Sometimes your role isn't to make sure your client understands it. Sometimes it's understanding when to need to step back and hear what your client is saying. And I think the more we have progressed in this project the more you grew. I see the transition. And here we are today, and I can see that you listened, and we created something so magical. Something so awesome that I know will be lasting. But, it's not a short-coming. It's growth. – Quote taken from leadership interview*

She continued on to say:

*You cannot, as an evaluator, regardless of how much data you've seen or how much of an expert you think you are - think you already know. If you think you already know, then don't come through the door. You cannot come through our doors already knowing, because then you don't hear us. And that's the problem with so many professions. When we become 'experts' we go in believing that we already know. And when we think we already know, you stop listening. And when you stop listening, you can't effectively serve. And service is in everything we do. Including evaluation. – Quote taken from leadership interview*

I am grateful for this project, and Tap In Leadership Academy's Executive Director in particular, for teaching me that an evaluator is a servant. Going into this project I understood that as an evaluator there is a time to teach and that there is a time to learn. This project taught me how to better discern when I should do each.

Just as I aimed to practically add value to Tap In Leadership Academy as an organization, it has practically added value to my development as a researcher and as an evaluator—and for that I am grateful. As they say at the end of program at Tap In Leadership Academy during clean up, “please leave the space better than you found it”, I hope I was able to leave Tap In Leadership Academy better off than when I found it, because I know that as a result of working with Tap In Leadership Academy, I am a better researcher and evaluator.

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## APPENDIX A: SCHOLAR DEBRIEFING FORM VERSION 2

Scholar Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Leaders' names: \_\_\_\_\_

Points /Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Points Earned	Potential Points
Attendance							20
Academics							20
Enrichments							20
Leadership Skills							20
Social Skills							20
Total Daily Points							100

	<b>High:</b>	<b>Lows:</b>	<b>Comments/Goals:</b>
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			

**APPENDIX B: ISDF #1 & ISDF RUBRIC #1**

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
	Attendance		Attendance		Attendance		Attendance
	Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement
	Enrichment		Enrichment		Enrichment		Enrichment
Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteered to help others						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Took initiative						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was willing to try						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asked questions						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Took responsibility for their mistake	<input type="checkbox"/>	Took responsibility for their mistake	<input type="checkbox"/>	Took responsibility for their mistake	<input type="checkbox"/>	Took responsibility for their mistake
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was excited to learn						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent written communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent written communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent written communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent written communication skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learned from mistakes/implemented changes						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was able to influence others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was able to influence others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was able to influence others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was able to influence others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thought outside the box						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other						
	Total		Total		Total		Total
Social Skills		Social Skills		Social Skills		Social Skills	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respected others' boundaries						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Followed program team directions						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other						
	Total		Total		Total		Total
	<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>						
+	<b>Leadership Total</b>						
+	<b>Social Skills Total</b>						

FRIDAY		MONDAY	TUESDAY
Program Characteristics		Today we would tell this scholar's parents that he/she _____.	Today we would tell this scholar's parents that he/she _____.
	Attendance	_____.	We believe this is noteworthy because _____.
	Academic Engagement	We believe this is noteworthy because _____.	_____.
	Enrichment	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____ To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____ To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.
Leadership Characteristics		WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteered to help others	Today we would tell this scholar's parents that he/she_____.	Today we would tell this scholar's parents that he/she_____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Took initiative	_____.	_____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was willing to try	We believe this is noteworthy because _____.	We believe this is noteworthy because _____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asked questions	_____.	_____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Took responsibility for their mistake	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____ To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____ To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was excited to learn	_____.	_____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	_____.	_____.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibited excellent written	_____.	_____.

	communication skills		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learned from mistakes/implemented changes		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was able to influence others		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thought outside the box		
	Total		
<b>Social Skills</b>		<b>FRIDAY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respected others' boundaries	Today we would tell this scholar's parents that he/she _____.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	We believe this is noteworthy because _____.	
		Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen _____.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not bully (tease/physically hit/inappropriate touch/ digitally)	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Followed program team directions		
	Total		
	<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>		
+	<b>Leadership Total</b>		
+	<b>Social Skills Total</b>		

The purpose of this rubric is to guide how you complete the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form. The form has five major sections: Attendance, Academic Engagement, Enrichment, Leadership Characteristics, and Social Skills. This rubric describes each major section and provides the scale that is used to measure it.

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	SCALE
ATTENDANCE	It is critical to accurately capture and document the amount of time that each scholar spends with us at Tap In. To report scholars' attendance use this scale. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write it in the box on the left-hand side of <i>attendance</i> on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- On time 3 -- 15 minutes late 2 -- 30 minutes late 1-- 45 minutes late 0 -- More than 45 minutes late
ACADEMIC	Engaging in academic activities during the allotted time is essential to our scholars' academic development. To report scholars' academic engagement, use this scale. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write it in the box on the left-hand side of <i>academic</i> on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.  <i>Note: A redirection is when you gently guide a scholar back to the task that he/she is supposed to be working on.</i>	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
ENRICHMENT	Engaging in enrichment activities during enrichment time is important to our scholars' social and leadership skills. To report scholars' engagement in enrichment activities, use this scale. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write it in the box on the left-hand side of <i>enrichment</i> on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	Recognizing our scholars' leadership style and developing them as leaders is one of Tap In Leadership Academy's chief aims. To report scholars' leadership characteristics check the characteristics that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. Once you have checked all of the leadership characteristics that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, calculate the total and write it into the "total box" at the bottom of the <i>leadership</i> section. The characteristics that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered to help others</li> <li>• Took initiative</li> <li>• Was willing to try</li> <li>• Asked questions</li> <li>• Took responsibility for their mistake</li> <li>• Was excited to learn</li> <li>• Exhibited excellent oral communication skills</li> <li>• Exhibited excellent</li> </ul>

		<p>written communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learned from mistakes/Implemented changes</li> <li>• Was able to influence others</li> <li>• Thought outside of the box</li> </ul>
SOCIAL SKILLS	<p>Identifying and developing our scholars' social skills is another chief aim of Tap In Leadership Academy. To report scholars' social skills, check the skills that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. Once you have checked all of the social skills that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, calculate the total and write it into the "total box" at the bottom of the <i>social skills</i> section. The social skills that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respected others' boundaries</li> <li>• Respectfully communicated with peers and program team</li> <li>• Did not bully (tease / physically hit / inappropriately touch / digitally)</li> <li>• Shared</li> <li>• Followed program team directions</li> </ul>
GRAND TOTAL	<p>Once you have recorded the appropriate number for each section, add the numbers, and then write the total number of points in the <i>grand total</i> box.</p> <p><i>Note: At the end of the week, add ALL the daily "grand totals" and write the sum on the "Total Points for the Week" line</i></p>	
SCHOLAR ACKNOWLEDGMENT	<p>Every day it is important to recognize something positive that our scholars have done. In this section you will report something noteworthy that the scholar has done today by completing the following two sentences on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.</p>	<p>Today we would tell this scholar's parent that he/she _____.</p> <p>We believe that this is noteworthy because _____.</p> <p>—</p>
AREA TO STRENGTHEN	<p>In addition to recognizing the positive things that our scholars exhibit, it is important to identify areas for them to strengthen. In this section you will report something that you believe this scholar can strengthen by completing the following two sentences on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.</p>	<p>Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen _____</p>

---

\_\_\_\_\_.

To help this scholar  
strengthen this area,  
as a team we will

\_\_\_\_\_.

---

## APPENDIX C: ISDF #2 & ISDF RUBRIC #2

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
Program Characteristics		Program Characteristics		Program Characteristics		Program Characteristics	
	Attendance		Attendance		Attendance		Attendance
	Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement		Academic Engagement
	Enrichment		Enrichment		Enrichment		Enrichment
	Total		Total		Total		Total
Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics		Leadership Characteristics	
	Volunteered to help others						
	Took initiative		Took initiative		Took initiative		Took initiative
	Was willing to try						
	Asked questions		Asked questions		Asked questions		Asked questions
	Took responsibility for their mistake						
	Was excited to learn						
	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills						
	Exhibited excellent written communication skills						
	Learned from mistakes/implemented changes						
	Was able to influence others						
	Thought outside the box						
	Total		Total		Total		Total
Social Skills		Social Skills		Social Skills		Social Skills	
	Respected others' boundaries						
	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team		Respectfully communicated with peers and program team		Respectfully communicated with peers and program team		Respectfully communicated with peers and program team
	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)		Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)		Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)		Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)
	Shared		Shared		Shared		Shared
	Followed program team directions						
	Total		Total		Total		Total
	<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>						
+	<b>Leadership Total</b>						
+	<b>Social Skills Total</b>						

FRIDAY		MONDAY	TUESDAY
Program Characteristics		Choose one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below. _____ _____.	Choose one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below. _____ _____.
	Attendance		
	Academic Engagement	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____.	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____.
	Enrichment	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.
	Total		
Leadership Characteristics		WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
	Volunteered to help others	Choose one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below. _____ _____.	Choose one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below. _____ _____.
	Took initiative		
	Was willing to try		
	Asked questions		
	Took responsibility for their mistake	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____.	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen_____.
	Was excited to learn	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____ _____.	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____ _____.
	Exhibited excellent oral communication skills		
	Exhibited excellent written communication skills		
	Learned from mistakes/implemented changes		

	Was able to influence others		
	Thought outside the box		
	Total		
<b>Social Skills</b>		<b>FRIDAY</b>	
	Respected others' boundaries	Choose one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below. _____.	
	Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen _____.	
	Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will _____.	
	Shared		
	Followed program team directions		
	Total		
	<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>		
+	<b>Leadership Total</b>		
	<b>Social Skills Total</b>		

The purpose of this rubric is to guide how you complete the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form. The form has three major sections: Program Characteristics, Leadership Characteristics, and Social Skills. This rubric describes each major section and provides the scale that is used to measure it.

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	SCALE
ATTENDANCE	It is critical to accurately capture and document the amount of time that each scholar spends with us at Tap In. To report scholars' attendance use the scale on the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Attendance</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- On time 3 -- 15 minutes late 2 -- 30 minutes late 1-- 45 minutes late 0 – More than 45 minutes late
ACADEMIC	Engaging in academic activities during the allotted time is essential to our scholars' academic development. To report scholars' academic engagement, use the scale on the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Academic</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.  <i>Note: A redirection is when you gently guide a scholar back to the task that he/she is supposed to be working on.</i>	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
ENRICHMENT	Engaging in enrichment activities during enrichment time is important to our scholars' social and leadership development. To report scholars' engagement in enrichment activities, use the scale to the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Enrichment</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
TOTAL	Once you have the number from ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC, and ENRICHMENT, add them together and put that number into the "total" box on the column on the left column.	_____
LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	Recognizing our scholars' leadership style and developing them as leaders is one of Tap In Leadership Academy's chief aims. To report scholars' leadership characteristics check the characteristics that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. Once you have checked all of the leadership characteristics that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, sum up the total and write it into the "total box" at the bottom of the <i>Leadership</i> section. The characteristics that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed to the right.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered to help others</li> <li>• Took initiative</li> <li>• Was willing to try</li> <li>• Asked questions</li> <li>• Took responsibility for their mistake</li> <li>• Was excited to learn</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibited excellent oral communication skills</li> <li>• Exhibited excellent written communication skills</li> <li>• Learned from mistakes/Implemented changes</li> <li>• Was able to influence others</li> <li>• Thought outside of the box</li> </ul>
SOCIAL SKILLS	<p>Identifying and developing our scholars' social skills is another chief aim of Tap In Leadership Academy. To report scholars' social skills, check the skills that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. Once you have checked all of the social skills that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, sum up the total and write it into the "total box" at the bottom of the <i>Social Skills</i> section. The social skills that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed to the right.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respected others' boundaries</li> <li>• Respectfully communicated with peers and program team</li> <li>• Did not bully (tease / physically hit / inappropriately touch / digitally)</li> <li>• Shared</li> <li>• Followed program team directions</li> </ul>
GRAND TOTAL	<p>Once you have recorded the appropriate number for each section, put those totals in the bottom box, and then add the <i>Program Characteristic Total</i>, <i>Leadership Characteristics Total</i>, and <i>Social Skill Total</i> to generate the <i>Grand Total</i> for the day.</p> <p><i>Note: At the end of the week, add ALL the daily "grand totals" and write the sum on the "Total Points for the Week" line</i></p>	<hr/>
SCHOLAR ACKNOWLEDGMENT	<p>Every day it is important to highlight a specific leadership characteristic or social skill that our scholars have displayed. In this section you will detail one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked in the leadership characteristic or social skills sections. The Scholar Acknowledgment section that you will complete on the individual scholar debriefing form is listed to the right.</p>	<p>Choose one of the leadership skills or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below.</p> <hr/> <hr/>

<p>AREA TO STRENGTHEN</p>	<p>In addition to recognizing the positive things that our scholars exhibit, it is important to identify areas for them to strengthen. In this section you will report something that you believe this scholar can strengthen by completing the following two sentences on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.</p>	<p>Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will</p>
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**APPENDIX D: ISDF #3 & ISDF RUBRIC #3**

MONDAY	
Program Characteristics	Scholar Highlight
Attendance	1) Choose one of the <u>leadership characteristics</u> or <u>social skills</u> that you checked on the left side of the form and 2) Explain how the scholar displayed it below:
Academic Engagement	
Enrichment	
Total	
Leadership Characteristics	Area To Strengthen
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteered to help others	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen:  To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will:
<input type="checkbox"/> Took initiative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was willing to try	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Took responsibility for their mistake	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was excited to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent written communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learned from mistakes/implemented changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was able to influence others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thought outside the box	
Total	
Social Skills	Daily Approval Signatures
<input type="checkbox"/> Respected others' boundaries	Site Leader: _____ Date: _____  Site Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared	
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed program team directions	
Total	
Grand Total	
<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>	
<b>+ Leadership Total</b>	
<b>+ Social Skills Total</b>	
<b>= GRAND TOTAL</b>	

TUESDAY	
Program Characteristics	Scholar Highlight
Attendance	1) Choose one of the <u>leadership characteristics</u> or <u>social skills</u> that you checked on the left side of the form and 2) Explain how the scholar displayed it below:
Academic Engagement	
Enrichment	
Total	
Leadership Characteristics	Area To Strengthen
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteered to help others	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen:  To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will:
<input type="checkbox"/> Took initiative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was willing to try	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Took responsibility for their mistake	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was excited to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent written communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learned from mistakes/implemented changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was able to influence others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thought outside the box	
Total	
Social Skills	Daily Approval Signatures
<input type="checkbox"/> Respected others' boundaries	Site Leader: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared	
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed program team directions	
Total	Site Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
Grand Total	
<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>	
<b>+ Leadership Total</b>	
<b>+ Social Skills Total</b>	
<b>= GRAND TOTAL</b>	

WEDNESDAY	
Program Characteristics	Scholar Highlight
Attendance	1) Choose one of the <u>leadership characteristics</u> or <u>social skills</u> that you checked on the left side of the form and 2) Explain how the scholar displayed it below:
Academic Engagement	
Enrichment	
Total	
Leadership Characteristics	Area To Strengthen
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteered to help others	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen:  To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will:
<input type="checkbox"/> Took initiative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was willing to try	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Took responsibility for their mistake	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was excited to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent written communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learned from mistakes/implemented changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was able to influence others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thought outside the box	
Total	
Social Skills	Daily Approval Signatures
<input type="checkbox"/> Respected others' boundaries	Site Leader: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared	
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed program team directions	
Total	Site Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
Grand Total	
<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>	
<b>+ Leadership Total</b>	
<b>+ Social Skills Total</b>	
<b>= GRAND TOTAL</b>	

THURSDAY	
<b>Program Characteristics</b>	
Attendance	1) Choose one of the <u>leadership characteristics</u> or <u>social skills</u> that you checked on the left side of the form and 2) Explain how the scholar displayed it below:
Academic Engagement	
Enrichment	
Total	
<b>Leadership Characteristics</b>	
<b>Area To Strengthen</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteered to help others	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen:  To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will:
<input type="checkbox"/> Took initiative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was willing to try	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Took responsibility for their mistake	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was excited to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent written communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learned from mistakes/implemented changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was able to influence others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thought outside the box	
Total	
<b>Social Skills</b>	
<b>Daily Approval Signatures</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Respected others' boundaries	Site Leader: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared	
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed program team directions	
Total	Site Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
<b>Grand Total</b>	
	<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>
+	<b>Leadership Total</b>
+	<b>Social Skills Total</b>
=	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>

FRIDAY	
Program Characteristics	Scholar Highlight
Attendance	1) Choose one of the <u>leadership characteristics</u> or <u>social skills</u> that you checked on the left side of the form and 2) Explain how the scholar displayed it below:
Academic Engagement	
Enrichment	
Total	
Leadership Characteristics	Area To Strengthen
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteered to help others	Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen:  To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will:
<input type="checkbox"/> Took initiative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was willing to try	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asked questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Took responsibility for their mistake	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was excited to learn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent oral communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibited excellent written communication skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learned from mistakes/implemented changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Was able to influence others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thought outside the box	
Total	
Social Skills	Daily Approval Signatures
<input type="checkbox"/> Respected others' boundaries	Site Leader: _____ Date: _____  Site Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfully communicated with peers and program team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not bully (tease/ physically hit/ inappropriate touch/ digitally)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared	
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed program team directions	
Total	
Grand Total	
<b>Program Characteristics Total</b>	
<b>+ Leadership Total</b>	
<b>+ Social Skills Total</b>	
<b>= GRAND TOTAL</b>	

**Program Director Comments:**

**Program Director's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive Director Comments:**

**Executive Director's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this rubric is to guide how you complete the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form. The form has three major sections: Program Characteristics, Leadership Characteristics, and Social Skills. This rubric describes each major section and provides the scale that is used to measure it.

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	SCALE
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS: ATTENDANCE	It is critical to accurately capture and document the amount of time that each scholar spends with us at Tap In. To report scholars' attendance use the scale on the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Attendance</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- On time 3 -- 15 minutes late 2 -- 30 minutes late 1-- 45 minutes late 0 – More than 45 minutes late
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS: ACADEMIC	Engaging in academic activities during the allotted time is essential to our scholars' academic development. To report scholars' academic engagement, use the scale on the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Academic</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.  <i>Note: A redirection is when you gently guide a scholar back to the task that he/she is supposed to be working on.</i>	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS: ENRICHMENT	Engaging in enrichment activities during enrichment time is important to our scholars' social and leadership development. To report scholars' engagement in enrichment activities, use the scale to the right. Once you have determined what number the scholar should receive, write that number in the box on the left side column of the <i>Enrichment</i> section on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.	4 -- No redirections 3 -- 1 redirection 2 -- 2 redirections 1-- 3 redirections 0 -- 4 redirections or more
PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS TOTAL	Once you have the number from ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC, and ENRICHMENT, add them together and put that number into the "total" box on the column on the left column.	
LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	Recognizing our scholars' leadership style and developing them as leaders is one of Tap In Leadership Academy's chief aims. To report scholars' leadership characteristics check the characteristics that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. The characteristics that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed to the right.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered to help others</li> <li>• Took initiative</li> <li>• Was willing to try</li> <li>• Asked questions</li> <li>• Took responsibility for their mistake</li> <li>• Was excited to</li> </ul>

		learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibited excellent oral communication skills</li> <li>• Exhibited excellent written communication skills</li> <li>• Learned from mistakes/Implemented changes</li> <li>• Was able to influence others</li> <li>• Thought outside of the box</li> </ul>
LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS  TOTAL	Once you have checked all of the leadership characteristics that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, sum up the total and write it into the “total box” at the bottom of the <i>Leadership</i> section.	_____
SOCIAL SKILLS	Identifying and developing our scholars’ social skills is another chief aim of Tap In Leadership Academy. To report scholars’ social skills, check the skills that you observe scholars displaying throughout the day. The social skills that are listed on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form are listed to the right.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respected others’ boundaries</li> <li>• Respectfully communicated with peers and program team</li> <li>• Did not bully (tease / physically hit / inappropriately touch / digitally)</li> <li>• Shared</li> <li>• Followed program team directions</li> </ul>
SOCIAL SKILLS TOTAL	Once you have checked all of the social skills that you have observed scholars displaying for the day, sum up the total and write it into the “total box” at the bottom of the <i>Social Skills</i> section.	_____
GRAND TOTAL	Once you have recorded the appropriate number for each section, put those totals in the bottom box, and then add the <i>Program Characteristic Total</i> , <i>Leadership Characteristics Total</i> , and <i>Social Skill Total</i> to generate the <i>Grand Total</i> for the day.  <i>Note: At the end of the week, add ALL the daily “grand totals” and write the sum on the “Total Points for the Week” line</i>	_____

<p>SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT</p>	<p>Every day it is important to highlight a specific leadership characteristic or social skill that our scholars have displayed. In this section you will detail one of the leadership characteristics or social skills that you checked in the leadership characteristic or social skills sections. The Scholar Acknowledgment section that you will complete on the individual scholar debriefing form is listed to the right.</p>	<p>Choose one of the leadership skills or social skills that you checked on the front of the form and explain how the scholar displayed it below.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____.</p>
<p>AREA TO STRENGTHEN</p>	<p>In addition to recognizing the positive things that our scholars exhibit, it is important to identify areas for them to strengthen. In this section you will report something that you believe this scholar can strengthen by completing the following two sentences on the Tap In Leadership Academy Scholar Debriefing Form.</p>	<p>Today we recognized that this scholar could strengthen</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>To help this scholar strengthen this area, as a team we will</p>
<p>DAILY APPROVAL SIGNATURES</p>	<p>At the end of each day the site leader will sign each scholar's form indicating that they have completed the form. Next, the site coordinator will review the form. If changes need to be made the form, the form will be given back to the site leader to make the changes. Once the changes have been made the site coordinator will sign the form, approving it. If there are no changes to be made, the site coordinator will sign the form, approving it.</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>WEEKLY APPROVAL SIGNATURE</p>	<p>At the end of each week, the Program Director will review each individual scholars' daily debriefing form. She/he will provide comments about the scholar <u>and</u> comments about the quality in which the form was completed by the site leader. Once the Program Director has reviewed the form she/he will sign the form, indicating that it has been read and approved by the Program Director.</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>MONTHLY APPROVAL SIGNATURE</p>	<p>At the end of each month, the Executive Director will review each scholar's daily debriefing form. She/he will provide comments about the scholar <u>and</u> comments about the quality in which the form was completed by the site leader. Once the Executive Director has reviewed the form she/he will sign the form, indicating that it has been read and approved by the Executive Director.</p>	<p>_____</p>

# APPENDIX E: EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING MID-PROJECT REPORT

Evaluation Capacity Building Mid-Project Report  
Tap In Leadership Academy  
Prepared by: Julian Williams  
August 2016

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- ❖ The purpose of this report is to present the major findings and recommendations for improving the individual scholar debriefing form (ISDF). The data presented in this report was collected during the Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). The suggested recommendations for improvement are intended to be implemented in the Afterschool Program (ASP) in the fall of 2016.
- ❖ The purpose of this project is to: 1) improve the organizations' ability to collect data using the ISDF, and to 2) improve the organization's ability to use the ISDF data to improve the SEP and the ASP. To accomplish these two goals, a unique two-prong ECB strategy will be designed and implemented. The first strategy is to design and implement the new ISDF in the SEP. The second strategy is to improve the ISDF based on the data collected about the implementation of the form in the SEP, and to teach the Tap In Leadership Academy's leadership how to systematically use the debriefing form data to improve the SEP and the ASP based on the data collected from the implementation of the ISDF in the SEP.

## DATA

- ❖ This report includes data from three sources: observations, reflective memos and interviews. Observations of the debriefing process were conducted at each program site over the course of the summer program. Four observations were conducted at the Kick Back Lounge Site - 6/14, 6/21, 6/27 and 7/12. Four observations were conducted at the Garden Hills Elementary Site – 6/16, 6/22, 6/28 and 7/13. Three observations were conducted at the Garden Hills Elementary Site – 6/15, 6/28 and 7/13. The observation guide is included in Appendix A. Reflective memos were written throughout the entire project. Reflective memos are used as a tool for researchers to reflect on and record insights that they recognize during the course of their research. Eight reflective memos were completed from the time the project began until the time that the Summer Enrichment program ended. The reflective memo guide is included in Appendix B. Interviews with five out of the nine program site leaders were conducted the week after the program ended. The 4 program site leaders that were not interviewed were contacted for interviews, but were unavailable for various reasons. At least one site leader from each program site was interviewed. Names of the program site leaders are not included in the report to provide confidentiality. The interview guide is included in Appendix C.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All of the data that were collected were summarized, triangulated (checked-against each other), and used to generate themes that were used to create findings from the data.

## FINDINGS

- ❖ **The new ISDF is an improvement from the previous scholar debriefing form, but there are some minor changes that can be made to improve it further.**

First, add the name of the program site to the top of the form. Second, make the form electronic so that it is easier to complete, assess and manage. Third, provide a set of examples of the ways that the leadership characteristics and social skills can be demonstrated by scholars. These examples can be added to the ISDF rubric or it can be a separate resource sheet.

- ❖ **A number of factors contributed to site leaders not completing their ISDFs daily during the designated debriefing time.**

The factors that contributed to site leaders not completing their ISDFs forms daily can be grouped into two categories – form factors and organizational factors. Form factors are aspects of the individual scholar debriefing form that directly contributed to site leaders not completing the forms daily. The open-ended response section was the main form factor that site leaders discussed. Site leaders explained the the open-ended response section required a great deal of time to complete and thus, they were often unable to complete all of the forms daily.

Organizational factors are parts of the organization that directly contributed to site leaders not completing the forms daily. Three organizational factors emerged: meetings, preparation for the next day and the team debriefing process. Throughout the summer, at each site, planned and unplanned meetings prohibited site leaders from completing their ISDFs during the designated debriefing time. Teams often met with: organizational leadership (Sally or Leila), other staff members (Jazzlyn, social worker, curriculum coordinator), and scholar's parents. While these meeting appeared to add value to site leaders in terms of professional development, providing announcements, or conferencing with scholar parents, they directly hindered site leaders' ability to complete their ISDFs on a daily basis. Another organizational factor that arose was preparing for the next day. Site leaders explained that they were often unable to complete all ISDFs on a daily basis because they needed time to prepare lesson plans. They often needed the debriefing time to prepare lesson plans because they had limited time to create lesson plans before the program began, they often received lesson plans on Monday of the week they were to be implemented, or they did not receive all of the necessary lesson plan materials and thus, had to create new activities. This was most present at the Pre-K site. Another prominent organizational factor was the team debriefing process. While debriefing as a group allowed the staff to complete the team debriefing form it took time away from the site leaders' ability to complete all of their ISDFs on a daily basis. This organizational factor was mostly prevalent at the Elementary site, but was also present at the Kick Back Lounge site.

❖ **The debriefing training did not adequately equip site leaders with the knowledge, skills and strategies to complete their individual scholar debriefing forms daily.**

Several site leaders explained that the training simply involved a staff member reading the rubric to them, and thus, staff members did not thoroughly learn about the purpose of debriefing, how to debrief, or strategies for successfully completing all of the ISDFs daily. A major issue that all site leaders cited was not having enough time to complete all of the ISDFs daily because there were many other tasks that needed to be completed during debriefing.

Several site leaders explained that they joined the program late and did not receive any training. Those site leaders stated that they reached out to other site leaders to learn how to complete the form or they used the ISDF rubric as a tool to learn how to complete the ISDF.

All site leaders explained that they believed the ISDF rubric was useful, and that they primarily used it during the first and second week of the program as they were getting comfortable with the scales.

❖ **A different process was used to debrief at every program site.**

Each program site utilized a different debriefing process. The Elementary site completed the team debriefing process while simultaneously completing the ISDF. Site leaders often split their ISDFs with their junior leaders, so that they could all get completed. Typically, site leaders were not able to complete all of their ISDFs daily, and they cited the team debriefing as the factor that hindered their ability to complete all of their forms on a daily basis. The site leaders either completed the ISDFs at home or on another day.

The Pre-K site leaders completed the ISDFs collectively. Most often one site leader recorded their collective responses. Sometimes they split the forms and completed them separately, asking each other for assistance as they needed it. Site leaders cited having to prepare for the next day as the factor that most hindered their ability to complete the ISDFs on a daily basis. Because site leaders were unable to complete all of their ISDFs on a daily basis, they often completed the forms on a different day.

The Kick Back Lounge site leaders simultaneously completed the team debriefing form and the ISDF. All site leaders cited that they needed more time to complete all of their ISDFs on a daily basis and often completed the forms at home or on another day.

❖ **The ISDF is largely viewed as a piece of paper work to be completed, rather than a tool for assisting site leaders with improving their practice.**

Most of the site leaders explained that they viewed the ISDFs as simply a paperwork task, even though they had some understanding of the purpose of the debriefing form and believed that the process was important. Most of the staff used the form for the purpose of giving scholars Tap In Dollars. Two site leaders used the information from the ISDF to identify patterns in scholars' development and to assist them with preparing their lesson plans. It

appeared that site leaders did not typically use the individual scholar debriefing data to improve their practice because the ISDF did not seem to be an organizational priority. More specifically, no one checked the forms regularly, there was no system for storing the forms, and there were no explicit guidelines for how to use the data outside of to provide Tap In Dollars to scholars.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ❖ **Revise the ISDF to incorporate the suggested improvements**

- Add program site name at the top of the form
- Have the form completed electronically and stored virtually
- Consider eliminating the open-ended section OR restructuring it so it is more directly connected to the leadership characteristics and social skills

### ❖ **Minimize time site leaders spend on creating lesson plans and scholar activities while the program is being implemented**

- Create a standardized curriculum for the summer program (this can be created by a curriculum expert in coordination with the organization's leadership).
- Create an electronic activity bank that houses age appropriate lesson plans and activities (this should be available to all program staff to view, to download, and to add lesson plans or activities that they create). This can be used for both the afterschool program and the summer program.

### ❖ **Create a standardized debriefing process that all program sites use**

- Create two standardized debriefing processes – one for the summer program and one for the afterschool program since the programs have two different structures.

### ❖ **Create a standardized debriefing training + Supporting debriefing training materials**

- Create a debriefing document (Debriefing the Tap In Way) that explains the purpose of the debriefing at Tap In Leadership Academy, steps of the debriefing process, and how to use the individual scholar debriefing data to enhance your work with scholars.
- Create a process for reviewing, collecting and storing the ISDFs. This process should be discussed at the training and explained in the Debriefing the Tap In Way document.
- Create a resource sheet to accompany the debriefing rubric that provides examples for how the leadership characteristics and social skills may be demonstrated by scholars. This list can continually be expanded as program team members add examples.

- Record the debriefing training so that all staff receive the same information about debriefing regardless of when they start working at the program.

❖ **Use the ISDF data to systematically improve the program on an ongoing basis**

- For site leaders: Create “scholar conferences” in which site leaders review their ISDFs for the week to assist scholars’ development and create action plans for each scholar. For the Afterschool Program this can be done on Friday. For the Summer Enrichment Program this can be done on Friday or Monday.
- For evaluators: In collaboration with the external evaluator that is conducting an evaluation of the respective programs, request that they use the ISDF data to assess the development of scholars in the ASP and SEP once the program is complete. A set of analyses that can be conducted by evaluators with the ISDF data is presented in Appendix D.
- For parents: Call each scholar’s parent every week to tell them one positive thing that their scholar did for the past week based on what is recorded on the ISDF.

## APPENDIX F: EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING DATA USE REPORT

Evaluation Capacity Building Data Use Report  
Tap In Leadership Academy  
Prepared by: Julian Williams  
November 2016

### REPORT PURPOSE

- ❖ This report presents suggestions for improving Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to systematically use the data collected on the individual scholar debriefing form (ISDF) to improve each scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills in the Afterschool Program (ASP) and the Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), while each program is in session. To improve systematic data use I suggest: 1) changing the data collection format, 2) training each intended user on how the data should be used and when the data is should be used to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills, and 3) creating accountability mechanisms that hold each intended user accountability for using the data has the organization intends it to be used. Together, I believe these suggestions will increase the systematically data use because they eliminate several barriers that currently contribute to the data not being used to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills. The barriers to systematic data use are presented below.

### BARRIERS TO SYSTEMATIC DATA USE

1. Program site leaders are currently complete the individual scholar debriefing form by pen or pencil on a printed document. While this method of data collection allows program staff leaders to document each scholar's development individually, it also presents a set of challenges for use. More specifically, manually completing the individual scholar debriefing form creates at least two challenges for use: 1) storing the data, and 2) analyzing the data.
  - Three primary barriers to storage exist. First, the organization has to develop a system for physically filing the forms since they are completed in paper form. Second, since the forms are completed in printed form, the organization has to develop a system more organizing a large number of documents. Third, since the organization stores the printed paper forms, there are many opportunities for documents to be lost or damaged.
  - One primary barrier to analysis exists. Because the data are collected manually, it is difficult for staff members to manipulate the data so that the data can be analyzed.
- ❖ When interviewed after the SEP most site leaders explained that they only used the ISDF to award Tap In Dollars to scholars. As I understand it, one purpose of the ISDF is to recognize scholars' display of leadership characteristics and social skills that Tap In Leadership Academy is interested in recognizing within scholars. In part, providing scholars with Tap In Dollars awards them for this. However, I also understand that a second purpose of the ISDF is to identify leadership characteristics and social skills that scholars can benefit from further

developing – and working to assist scholars with developing those leadership characteristics and social skills. Site leaders did not mention using the ISDF to do this, nor did they mention being given clear instructions on how to use the data to improve scholar’s leadership characteristics and social skills or when to use the data to improve scholar’s leadership characteristics and social skills.

- ❖ My interviews with site leaders and my observations of each program site’s debriefing process during SEP did not show any accountability mechanisms that were designed to ensure that each intended user of the data actually used the data in a specific way. As a result, site leaders sporadically used the data and used the data differently throughout the course of program.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED SYSTEMATIC DATA USE

### **1. Change the method of data collection from manual to electronic. Three methods to collecting the data electronically are presented below.**

*OPTION 1:* Staff can complete the individual scholar debriefing form (ISDF) on an electronic survey tool. A range of survey tools exist: Survey Monkey, Typeform, Google Forms, Client Heartbeat, Zoho Survey, and Survey Gizmo. Here is a link that provides a comparison between the survey tools mentioned: <http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2014/11/10/best-online-survey-tools/>. Each of these survey tools has the capacity to collect information for individual scholars and to produce basic graphic reports with the data. To use this option, each site leader will input data into the survey for each scholar.

This option addresses all of the barriers identified in this report related to storing and analyzing the ISDF data. This option eliminates the need to physically store documents and it avoids the possibility of damaging the physical documents. Additionally, each of the survey tools has the ability to easily analyze and produce basic reports from the data.

One challenge to consider with this option is that site leaders will need an electronic device to input the data for each scholar. Such devices that would work for this option include: computers, tablets, and mobile devices. In order to use this option, Tap In Leadership Academy would need to provide a set of devices for each program site.

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*OPTION 2:* Staff can continue to complete the forms manually, and someone will enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet weekly. Once the data are entered into the Excel spreadsheet, the person entering the data could conduct a number of analyses in Excel to produce basic tables and graphs.

To implement this option, program leadership and or staff will need to: 1) create a routine process for collecting the completed paper forms, and 2) designate a person to enter the form data into excel and analyze the data.

This option addresses most of the barriers identified in this report related to storing and analyzing the ISDF data. This option does not eliminate the barrier of having to physically store documents, nor does it eliminate the potential challenges of storing physical documents and protecting the documents from damage. However, this option does increase the ease of analyzing the data since the completed form data will be entered into Excel.

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*OPTION 3:* Program leadership or another designated individual could create a customized online system to collect, store, and analyze data from the ISDF. This system would be designed by a computer programmer and customized to meet the needs of the organization. An organization in Chicago named Exponent Partners specializes in working with nonprofits to build custom data systems. I am not sure of their cost but checking in with them may be a great starting place for identifying someone to assist with building a custom data system. The website is: <http://www.exponentpartners.com/>

This option addresses all of the barriers identified in this report, but it may be costly and time consuming to create the online system.

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EVALUATOR'S SUGGESTED OPTION: Option 1 appears to be the easiest to implement because it addresses all of the barriers to data use, and it is also the most time- and cost-friendly option. In order to implement Option 1, the survey form will need to be set up so that the data that are currently collected on the ISDF can also be appropriately collected via the survey form.

While I suggest implementing Option 1 now, I believe the goal should be to move towards creating and using a customized online system. The benefit of waiting to create the customized online system is that the organization will have time to refine the form after a few more rounds of usage. This can minimize the number of changes that have to be made to the online system once it is created.

- 2. Create a document that describes exactly how to use the data to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills or when to use the data to improve scholar's leadership characteristics and social skills for each intended. Additionally, this document should describe exactly how each intended user is expected to use the data. This document should accompany a verbal explanation during debrief training. I have included some possible descriptions of how each intended user could use the data.**

SITE LEADERS: Create "scholar conferences" in which site leaders review their scholars' ISDFs for the previous week to create individualized action plans for each of their scholars. Call each scholar's guardian at the end of the week to share one positive thing that the scholar did during the past week.

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS: Identify site leaders' professional development needs and identify activities that scholars may need for the development of their social skills and leadership characteristics.

EXTERNAL EVALUATOR: Assess the development of each individual scholar at the end of the ASP and SEP.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Identify professional development needs for the Director of Programs and provide data for grant writing and other financial support for the organization.

**3. Design and implement an accountability system that holds each intended user responsibility for using the data as it is intended.**

SITE LEADER: Complete IDSF and getting it approved by the Site Coordinator daily

SITE COORDINATOR: Review and approve each IDSF for each scholar daily. The site coordinator will review the form. If changes need to be made the form, the form will be given back to the site leader to make the changes. Once the changes have been made the site coordinator will sign the form, approving it. If there are no changes to be made, the site coordinator will sign the form, approving it.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Review and approve each IDSF for each scholar weekly. The program director will provide comments about the scholar and comments about the quality in which the form was completed by the site leader. Once the Program Director has reviewed the form she/he will sign the form, indicating that it has been read and approved by the Program Director.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Review and approve each IDSF for each scholar monthly. The executive director will provide comments about the scholar and comments about the quality in which the form was completed by the site leader. Once the Executive Director has reviewed the form she/he will sign the form, indicating that it has been read and approved by the Executive Director.

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Any accountability system that the organization creates will be time consuming. But if the *Individual Scholar Debriefing Form* is a vital component of the organization's work, some sacrifice will have to be made to ensure that the data is collected and used as the organization intends it to be.

## **APPENDIX G: REFLECTIVE MEMO GUIDE**

DATE:

TIME:

### **ECB PROCESS THOUGHTS**

### **ECB STRATEGY THOUGHTS**

### **THOUGHTS ON GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

*How can evaluation capacity building efforts be successful in afterschool programs given programs' contextual and cultural challenges?*

*To what extent is there a need for afterschool program funders such as the 21st CCLC initiative to allocate resources to assist local afterschool programs in building their evaluation capacity?*

*Did the evaluation capacity building effort influence the Tap In Leadership Academy's ability to collect evaluation data for ongoing program improvement? If so, how and to what extent?*

*What were the strengths and limitations of the evaluation capacity building strategy that was implemented?*

### **MAJOR INSIGHTS FROM THE WEEK**

## **APPENDIX H: TAP IN LEADERSHIP TEAM DEBRIEFING OBSERVATION GUIDE**

DATE:  
START TIME:  
END TIME:  
PRGORAM SITE:  
ATTENDANCE:

### **DATA**

*Narrative summary*

*Debriefing process (how the meeting was ran... How decisions were made about giving points)*

*Character of interactions (how – who speaks and who doesn't, “climate” in the room ...)*

*Challenges with completing the debriefing form*

*References made to the debriefing rubric (what sections? How many times?)*

### **METHODOLOGICAL COMMENTS**

On data quality – limitations and enhancements

### **ANALYTIC COMMENTS**

Comments on:

- The amount of time spent on each scholar
- Character and quality of substantive discussion about areas to strengthen and solutions

And, as relevant:

- Discussion of past team member actions to address scholars' area to strengthen
- Flow of conversation and interactions, including notable harmony and notable tensions
- What section or sections may be receiving the least amount of attention?
- Other comments of importance to this meeting (e.g., follow up needed)

## APPENDIX I: PROGRAM STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How many times have you worked at Tap In Leadership Academy's summer enrichment program including this summer?
2. From your experience working with Tap In Leadership Academy's summer enrichment program, what would you say the purpose of debriefing is?
3. Can you walk me through a typical day of debriefing at your site this summer?

A new debriefing form was used this summer that Tap In Leadership Academy's organization believed reflected the information they wanted to collect. I have a few specific questions about that form. *Give them a copy of the form.*

4. Generally, what are your thoughts about this form?
5. Were you able to complete the form for each of your scholars after each day of the program?
  - a. If not, why?
6. On average, how long did it take you to complete one form completely?
  - a. All of the forms completely?
7. Are there things on the form that you think need to be taken off, added, or changed to improve the form?
8. Throughout the summer did you use what you wrote on the form to change how you did anything in the program? If so, what did you use it to do it differently?
9. Did you feel that the form was useful to you as a site leader or that it was simply a form to be completed because it was required?
10. Did you receive any training on how to complete the form?
  - a. If so, did you find the training that you received about debriefing adequate for the debriefing process?
11. Did you use the rubric at all as you completed the forms?
  - a. What did you use it to help you do?
12. If you could tell the Tap In Leadership Academy's leadership anything about the debriefing process or the debriefing form?
13. What advice would you give a program staff member to assist them with debriefing successfully and completing all of their forms each day?

## APPENDIX J: ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

DATE:  
START TIME:  
END TIME:  
PRGORAM SITE:  
ATTENDANCE:

### DATA

*Narrative summary*

*Debriefing process (how the meeting was ran... How decisions were made about giving points)*

*Character of interactions (how – who speaks and who doesn't, “climate” in the room ...)*

*Challenges with completing the debriefing form*

*References made to the debriefing rubric (what sections? How many times?)*

### METHODOLOGICAL COMMENTS

On data quality – limitations and enhancements

### ANALYTIC COMMENTS

Comments on:

- The amount of time spent on each scholar
- Character and quality of substantive discussion about areas to strengthen and solutions

And, as relevant:

- Discussion of past team member actions to address scholars' area to strengthen
- Flow of conversation and interactions, including notable harmony and notable tensions
- What section or sections may be receiving the least amount of attention?
- Other comments of importance to this meeting (e.g., follow up needed)