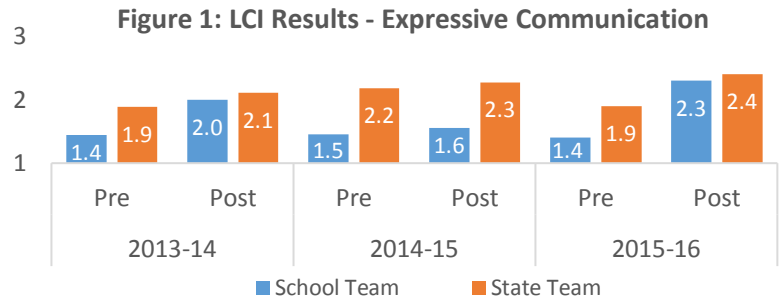




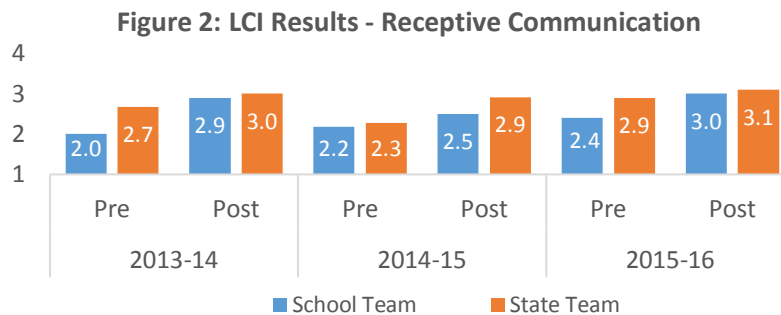
Delaware State Personnel Development Grant (DE SPDG) Systematic Processes for Enhancing and Assessing Communication Supports (SPEACS) 2013-16 Outcomes

Built on the premise that all students can communicate, the SPEACS initiative's goal is to assist teams in progressing students from pre-symbolic and emergent communication to symbolic communication. To accomplish this, SPEACS provides teams with training, technical assistance, and tri-weekly coaching to effectively impact student communication.

The project focuses on training school teams to work with targeted students with complex communication needs to increase communication skills with the ultimate goal of symbolic communication. The framework for SPEACS training focused on identifying communicative competence for students with complex communication needs and infusing communication skills and targets into the academic curriculum. At each initial training, student-based teams develop an action plan that drives implementation of an individual communication target/goal. Data from the first three years of SPEACS is shared in this summary.



Scale: 1 = Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc. 2 = Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level. 3 = Uses symbolic language to communicate.



Scale: 1 = Uncertain response to sensory stimuli. 2 = Alerts to sensory input. 3 = Requires additional cues to follow 1-2 step directions. 4 = Independently follows 1-2 step directions presented through words.

Figure 3: Pre/Post Communication Matrix Results

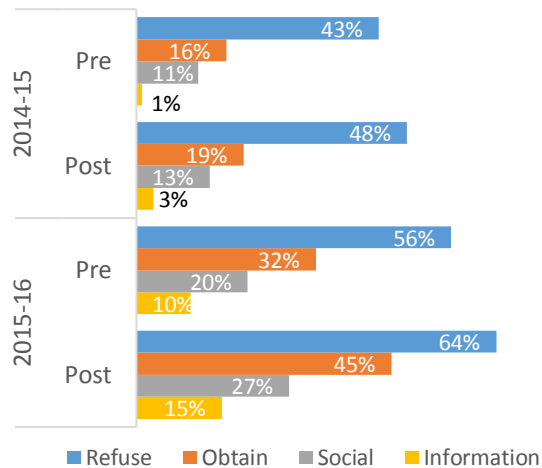
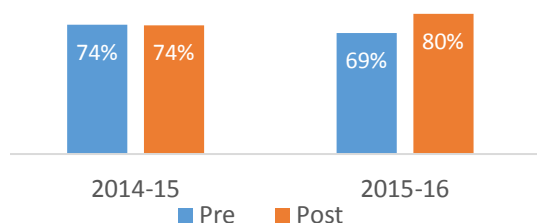


Figure 4: SPEACS Fidelity Data



Summary: Sixteen school teams participated in SPEACS in 2015-16, for a total of 27 teams in three years. Each team videoed their focus student in a classroom setting to gauge the student's communication capacity. Each teacher/school team and the state team completed the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) based on the student video, prior to the first training and at the end of the school year.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, school teams always scored their students lower at the initial observation than the state team, for both expressive and receptive communication. However, at least in 2013-14 and 2015-16, at the post-observation, scores for the school and state teams were more similar, suggesting improved reliability of measuring communicative competence. Over the course of each year, on average, students experienced growth in both their expressive and receptive communication skills.

Additionally, SPEACS state teams used pre/post data from the Communication Matrix to assess growth in how students used communication in four domains (Figure 3). In 2015-16, growth was seen in each domain, with the most growth in students communicating to obtain what they wanted.

Fidelity data in Figure 4 indicate that 2015-16 teams implemented SPEACS with a higher level of fidelity than the 2014-15 teams.