

Teaching, Empowering, Leading, & Learning (TELL) Survey Construct Composites



What are TELL construct composites?

The Teaching Empowering Leading and Learning (TELL) survey items measure eight constructs: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development, Facilities and Resources, and Instructional Practices and Support. Responses to the survey items for each construct are combined to create a construct composite. Construct composites provide a high-level overview of educators' perceptions of each of the constructs and are useful for identifying broad trends in the data, such as areas of improvement over time or areas that may need attention.

How have they been computed in the past?

Construct composites are averages across a set of items that all measure some aspect of the same construct. For example, there are 8 TELL items that measure Use of Time in schools (e.g., "Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students," and "Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.") The Use of Time construct composite is an average across all 8 time items.

Historically, NTC has computed construct composites for TELL clients based on the specific survey items included on their version of the TELL survey, including any items that may have been modified or added to suit a specific state or district context. In the past, construct composites were computed using all items on the survey that addressed the topic, including custom items^[1].

How will they be computed beginning in 2018?

Based on the best and most current data available, beginning in 2018 NTC will compute construct composites using a core set of survey items for each construct with a demonstrable impact on important outcomes for schools. Core items for each construct were chosen based on many years of analyses of TELL data and student achievement and teacher retention data. Most recently, NTC and Dr. Richard Ingersoll at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education released the teacher working conditions report School Leadership Counts. Based on data from 25,000 schools in 16 states, this report summarized the relationship between working conditions and school outcomes using TELL survey data from one million educators. Results of these analyses informed the item selection for the new construct composites. The new construct composites will be longitudinally consistent and comparable across clients.

What are the implications for NCTWCS?

For the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS), several state-specific items will be dropped from the computation of the composites. One key difference between composite calculations in the past and those forthcoming for 2018 is the calculation of the Instructional Practices and Support composite. This includes three state-specific items that will *no longer be included* in the Instructional Practices and Support construct: "State assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices," "State assessment provide schools with data that can help improve teaching," and "State assessments accurately gauge students' understanding of standards."

¹ Pending item alignment with the core survey items. Custom items may have been omitted in the construct composites if they did not load well with the core items.

Composite and Construct Average Calculations

The construct averages and overall composite average are calculated at the respondent level and then aggregated to the school level. All of the items included are on the same Likert agreement scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree, and 5 = Don't Know. For these calculations, responses of "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" are coded as 0, responses of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" are coded as 1, and responses of "Don't Know" are coded as missing.

The construct averages are then calculated by averaging the coded responses for the items associated with each given construct at the respondent level. The equation (1) for the respondent-level calculation is shown below.

$$(1) \text{ Construct Average}_i = \frac{\sum(\text{Coded Item Responses})}{\# \text{ Items in Construct}}$$

The Overall Composite Average is calculated by averaging the Construct Averages at the respondent level. The equation (2) for the respondent-level Overall Composite is shown below.

$$(2) \text{ Overall Composite Average}_i = \frac{\sum(\text{Construct Averages})}{\# \text{ Constructs}}$$

Once calculated at the respondent level, these figures are then averaged across respondents at the school level. The school-level equations are shown below.

$$(3) \text{ Construct Average}_j = \frac{\sum(\text{Construct Average}_{ij})}{\# \text{ Respondents}_j}$$

$$(4) \text{ Construct Average}_i = \frac{\sum(\text{Overall Composite}_{ij})}{\# \text{ Respondents}_j}$$

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TELL Constructs and Associated Items

Construct	Survey Items
<p>Use of Time—Available time to plan, to collaborate, to provide instruction, and to eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day</p>	Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.
	Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.
	The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.
	Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.
	Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.
	Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.
	Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.
<p>Facilities and Resources—Availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers</p>	Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials.
	Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.
	Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.
	Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.
	Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional support personnel.
	The school environment is clean and well maintained.
	Teachers have adequate space to work productively.
	The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.
The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.	

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<p>Community Support & Involvement— Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school</p>	Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.
	This school maintains clear, two-way communication with parents/guardians and the community.
	This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.
	Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.
	Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.
	Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.
	Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.
	The community we serve is supportive of this school.
<p>Managing Student Conduct—Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment</p>	Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.
	Students at this school follow rules of conduct.
	Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.
	School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
	School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.
	Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
	The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.
	Teachers are recognized as educational experts.
<p>Teacher Leadership— Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices</p>	Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.
	Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.
	Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.
	The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.
	In this school we take steps to solve problems.
	Teachers are effective leaders in this school.
	Teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in this school.

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<p>School Leadership— The ability of school leader- ship to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns</p>	The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.
	There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.
	Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.
	The school leadership consistently supports teachers.
	Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
	The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
	Teacher performance is assessed objectively.
	Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.
	The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.
	The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.
	The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.
	<p>Professional Development— Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching</p>
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	
Professional development offerings are data driven.	
Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school’s improvement plan.	
Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers.	
Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	
Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.	
In this school, follow up is provided from professional development.	
Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.	
Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.	
Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.	
Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.	

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<p>Instructional Practices & Support—Data and support available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning</p>	<p>Teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction.</p>
	<p>Teachers work in professional learning communities or cluster groups to develop and align instructional practices.</p>
	<p>Provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.</p>
	<p>Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.</p>
	<p>Teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.</p>
	<p>Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e. pacing, materials and pedagogy).</p>

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