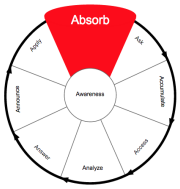
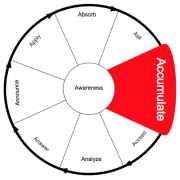
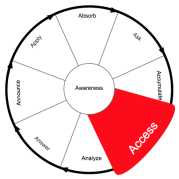
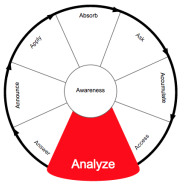
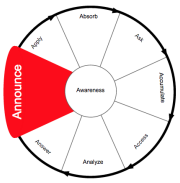
A+ INQUIRY
AdvancED Example (Statewide Longitudinal Data System)
Using Data in the SLDS District AdvancED Report to
Determine Which Areas Show a Positive Trend in Performance

ABSORB 	An elementary school in North Dakota has an accreditation visit scheduled for April 2015. The school leadership team is preparing a report that the external accreditation review team will read prior to the onsite visit. During February 2015, the leadership team is working on completing the section of the report relevant to student achievement. The school has been administering the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA) to 3rd-5th grade students for the past several years to help measure academic performance. The student achievement section requires the leadership team to describe areas that show a positive trend in performance; however, the team is not sure which areas have been trending in a positive direction.
ASK 	The school leadership team asks the following question: “What areas show a positive trend in performance based on NDSA achievement?”
ACCUMULATE 	The leadership team determines that NDSA data representing the most recent 3 or more years could be analyzed to help answer their question.
ACCESS 	The leadership team accesses the the data they need by logging in to an administrator level account in SLDS. They navigate to the “District” section of reports and run the “District AdvancED” report. The report presents math and reading data in tables, figures, and summary descriptions relevant to each student performance diagnostic question requiring a narrative response by AdvancED.
ANALYZE 	The tables, figures, and summary descriptions are displayed and written in formats conducive for efficient data analysis within the report. The leadership team directs attention toward math and reading data presented in NDSA Data Section 1.2: Describe the area(s) that show a positive or negative trend in performance. They look at the trend columns in Tables 5 and 6 to identify positive trends in math and reading, respectively, across a seven year period by grade level. The trend columns indicate the direction of each trend--positive or negative--and whether each trend is significant. They also analyze trend data by reading the summary descriptions below Tables 5 and 6 and looking at the direction and color of the graph lines in Figures 3 and 4; green lines in the graphs indicate significant positive trends. The tables, figures, and summary descriptions collectively reveal positive seven-year math and reading trends by grade level.

ANSWER 	The leadership team revisits the question presented in the “Ask” stage: “What areas show a positive trend in performance based on NDSA achievement?” They answer the question by listing the areas showing a positive trend, which include 3rd and 4th grade math and 3rd grade reading.
ANNOUNCE 	The leadership team writes a narrative in the accreditation report to describe areas showing a positive trend. For example, “Areas showing a positive trend include the following: 3rd Grade Language. During a three year period spanning the 2011-2012 through 2013-2014 academic years, the percents of 3rd grade students achieving proficient or advanced status on the Language area of the NDSA were as follows: 2011-2012: 68%, 2012-2013: 65%, 2013-2014: 75%. These values reflect a positive trend, represented by a slope of .035.” Additional areas are added as appropriate.
APPLY 	The school continues efforts and initiatives (e.g. funding, curriculum, etc.) in areas showing positive trends.
AWARENESS 	Mrs. Smith demonstrates awareness throughout, ensuring the right context is absorbed, the right questions are asked, the right data are accumulated, accessed, and analyzed, the right answers are derived, the right announcements are communicated, and the right applications are made.

A+ Inquiry framework adapted from “Disciplined inquiry: Using the A+ Inquiry framework as a tool for eliminating data hoarding, mindless decision-making, and other barriers to effective ESA programming,” by N. C. Anderson, M. R. Brockel, and T. E. Kana, 2014, *Perspectives: A Journal of Research and Opinion About Educational Service Agencies, 20*(3).