



the evaluation exchange

A PERIODICAL ON EMERGING STRATEGIES IN EVALUATING CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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from the director's desk



Heather Weiss

Professional development for those who work with children and youth is fraught with challenges and ripe with opportunity—specifically, the opportunity to increase staff quality, which experts agree is critical to positive experiences for children and youth. This theme has been reflected in many *Evaluation Exchange* issues over the past several years, including the spring 2004 issue on Evaluating Out-

of-School Time Program Quality, in which a group of experts pointed to staffing as the most essential element of program quality.

In this issue, we hone in on professional development in four key sectors affecting children, youth, and families—K–12 education, early childhood education, child welfare, and youth development. Though these sectors face many of the same professional development challenges, each has its own unique issues, strengths, and goals. The staffing shortage in the child welfare sector, for instance, has spurred public agency–university partnerships to educate workers and increase workforce retention.

We frame individual professional development not as an isolated activity but as nested within larger workforce systems. This issue's Theory & Practice features new work supported by Cornerstones for Kids (www.cornerstones4kids.org) examining research evidence about the links among training, worker performance, service quality, and child and youth outcomes. We introduce a theory of change for workforce development, which includes not only individual professional development but also organizational capacity and policy supports.

Now more than ever, as labor markets shift, workers experience multiple demands on their time, and accountability reigns, professionals across sectors are searching for learning experiences that are time and cost

efficient but also engaging and meaningful. However, the common “one-shot” workshop model is widely critiqued for failing to deliver depth and application of learning. This issue offers new and innovative approaches to professional development—including coaching, a cascade model, online professional development, and the case method—and describes how these efforts are being evaluated.

Although innovations like these are important, the bottom line for educators and other human service professionals is positive impact on children and youth outcomes. Yet evidence of impact from professional development often goes unmeasured. In this issue, we share frameworks, processes, and measures for assessing impact, as well as an interview with Dr. Thomas Guskey, who explains how multiple levels of evaluation and learning can build on one another to improve quality.

Professional development in the emerging field of out-of-school time programs and youth development also receives special attention through generous support from the William T. Grant Foundation. In our Ask the Expert section, we hear about the unique characteristics of the after school workforce and challenges for its professional development. Promising Practices highlights a site-based coaching model for after school staff that has met with promising evaluation findings.

In our zeal to cover these topics in more breadth and depth, this issue also features supplemental resources on our website, including an expanded New & Noteworthy section, a research bibliography, and an expanded Promising Practices article.

As always, we invite you to share your feedback and ideas about this and future issues.

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> theory & practice

Pathways from Workforce Development to Child Outcomes

Harvard Family Research Project explores connections between workforce development and child outcomes in four human service sectors.

In the current era of performance management and transparent accountability, public, nonprofit, and private providers of human services are attempting to understand what contributes to a high performing workforce, and in turn, improved outcomes for children and youth—and to use this knowledge to strengthen the workforce and improve child outcomes. In the belief that workforce quality contributes powerfully and directly to better service outcomes, many providers are examining how training, advanced education, and other organizational supports enhance frontline staff.

A random sample survey of over 1,200 frontline child care, child welfare, employment and training, juvenile justice, and youth service workers revealed that over 75% described their work as frustrating, 51% felt unappreciated, and 42% estimated that 1 out of every 10 of their coworkers was not doing his or her job well.¹ These data suggest that the frontline human services workforce is at risk of burnout, high turnover, and poor performance. An interrelated set of individual and organizational issues—including poor or lack of training and advanced education, and inadequate compensation and career advancement opportunities—contribute to what has been described as a state of crisis in the human services workforce.²

In response to this crisis, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, working with Cornerstones for Kids (C4K), has developed a multiyear project to learn more about enhancing the human services workforce. C4K has engaged Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) to examine the connections between the workforce and child outcomes. To accomplish this task, we at HFRP are conducting a literature review and interviewing thought leaders in order to look at the linkages between professional workforce development and child outcomes in four sectors—child welfare, early childhood, juvenile justice, and youth development.

We are examining the human services sector as a whole as well as similarities and differences across the four sectors. Our work is focused on finding existing evidence of a connection between the human services workforce and child outcomes. In instances in which empirical evidence is lacking, we are identifying future directions for research that will provide evidence of this link. Through these activities, we are attempting to answer five research questions:

1. In each sector, what evidence is available to test the hypothesis that a better trained and supported human services workforce will result in improved services and better child outcomes?
2. What are the strengths, limitations, and gaps in the evidence, and what, if any, research is in progress to address them?
3. How strong a case can be made for or against this hypothesis?
4. What are the most strategic future research priorities?
5. What does the evidence suggest are the proven or the most promising ways to strengthen the performance of the human service workforce?

After reviewing the literature and pooling findings across the sectors, we have arrived at four assumptions about the workforce as it relates to child outcomes:

1. Professional staff development is one key activity in a larger system of overall workforce development.

1. Light, P. (2003). *The health of the human services workforce*. Washington, DC: Center for Public Service, The Brookings Institution and the Wagner School of Public Service, New York University.

2. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2003). *The unsolved challenge of system reform: The condition of the frontline human services workforce*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Available at http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/hswi/report_rev.pdf

2. Policy and organizational support activities are necessary for improving child outcomes.
3. High quality relationships and interactions between staff and children/youth in all the service sectors lead to better child/youth outcomes.
4. Some activities that lead to improved outcomes are likely to differ across the service sectors.

Pathways Linking the Professional Workforce with Child Outcomes

Our preliminary findings suggest that the path connecting the workforce with child outcomes is more complex than we originally thought. The early childhood literature is full of citations that link increased teacher education and training to improved quality of the workplace.³ Often, the link is between one type of staff development (e.g., increased level of teacher education) and improved quality of the workplace. Most of the earlier research, however, does not make a direct connection between staff development and changes in young children.

In contrast, more recent research on prekindergarten programs looks at the connection between the level of teacher education and student achievement. Findings from a multistate study show a

3. NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2005). Pathways to reading: The role of oral language in the transition to reading. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(2), 428–442; Burchinal, M., Cryer, D., Clifford, R., & Howes, C. (2002). Caregiver training and classroom quality in child care centers. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(1), 2–11; Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1990). *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America: Final report of the national child care staffing study*. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.

small association between the two.⁴ Another new study finds that in addition to enhanced teacher education, incentives for teachers, the content and processes of training, and integrating the early education system with the K–12 education system are necessary to improve the quality of early learning classrooms and to achieve increased achievement of young children.⁵ These studies support the idea that there are multiple activities and pathways linking the professional workforce and improved child outcomes.

Creating a Logic Model

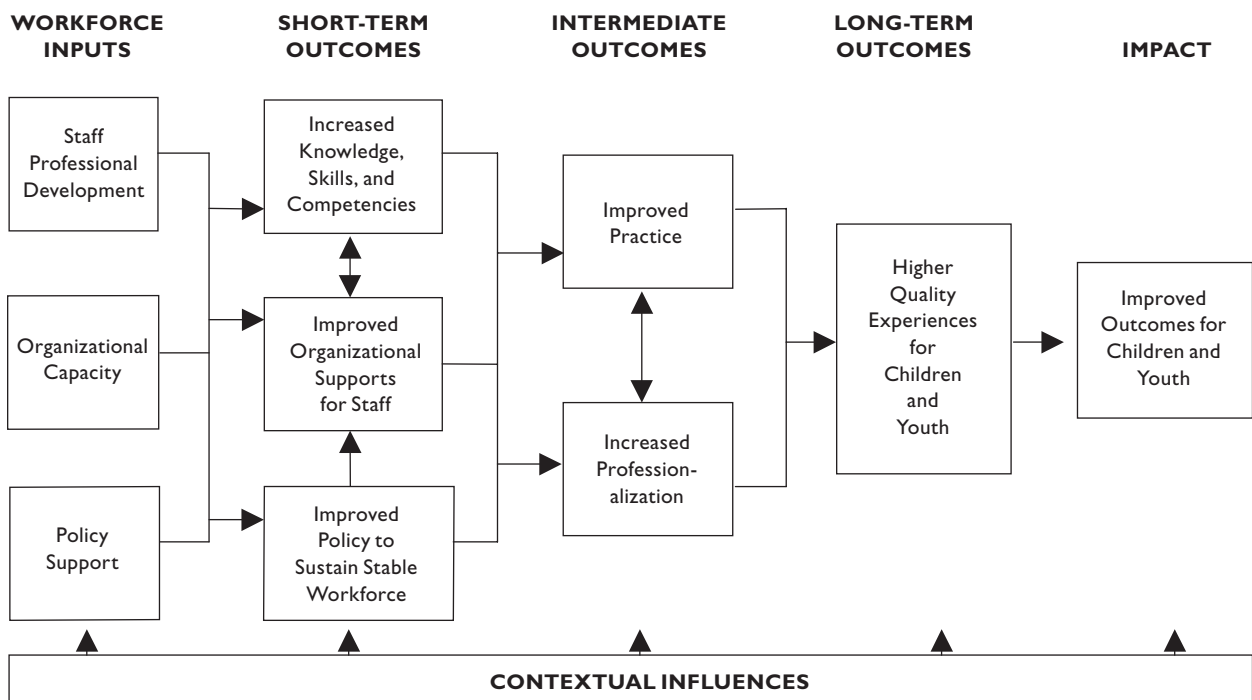
HFRP has created a logic model to begin conceptualizing what the linkages and pathways between the workforce and child outcomes look like. Using a logic model can help inform decisions about both program and funding priorities. A logic model is also useful for mapping the research to date in order to understand the different pathways and identify knowledge gaps. Logic models that focus on outcomes show the interrelationships between activities and their outcomes, using arrows to indicate which sets of activities are believed to contribute to specific outcomes.⁶ In

4. Early, D., Barbarin, O., Bryant, D., Burchinal, M., Chang, F., Clifford, D., Crawford, G., et al. (2005). *Pre-kindergarten in eleven states: NCEdL's multi-state study of pre-kindergarten & study of state-wide early education programs (SWEEP)*. New York: Foundation for Child Development.

5. Pianta, R. C., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, D., Early, D., & Barbarin, O. (2005). Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions? *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(3), 144–159.

6. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). *Logic model development guide*. Battle Creek, MI: Author. Available at <http://www.wkcf.org/pubs/tools/evaluation/pub3669.pdf>

The Logic Model



our model, professional staff development is one of the inputs that contribute to a professional workforce. Professional staff development, however, is not equated with professional workforce development; rather professional staff development is one key component of professional workforce development. This holds true for all four sectors. In each of the sectors, contextual factors such as characteristics of the workforce shape workforce inputs and outcomes.

There are differences in how the model applies to each of the sectors. One difference is the degree to which existing research demonstrates linkages throughout the logic model. Studies in the early childhood field show how the pathways connect all the way to outcomes for children.⁷ In the other sectors, studies do not extend to the ultimate impact. In child welfare, there is evidence that increasing professional development through education and organizational support, in the form of reasonable caseloads and opportunities for advancement, results in increased staff retention⁸—an intermediate outcome—but no empirical evidence yet exists that such an intermediate outcome results in improved child outcomes. In youth development, one study of promising practices in after school programs puts forth a theory of change that emphasizes the importance of structural and institutional features, including staff qualifications and support, in providing meaningful and enriching activities for youth, which in turn have the potential to yield positive youth outcomes.⁹

Another difference across sectors is in the amount, rigor, and sophistication of the research available. In juvenile justice and youth development, the empirical evidence is more often from quasi-experimental than from random selection, experimental, and control-group designs. A recent study examining the evidence of effectiveness for training after school staff in a participatory learning model found evidence that participation in training led to higher program quality rankings and more positive outcomes for program participants.¹⁰ Although this new study begins to unpack the pathways through our logic model, most of the youth development workforce research to date does not.

The youth development field is in a nascent stage of development vis-à-vis understanding its workforce. Right now, the field is primarily focused on understanding the characteristics and needs of this workforce sector and has yet to examine its workforce's impact on youth outcomes. As we continue our work, we expect

7. Campbell, F. A., Ramey, C., Pungello, E. P., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(1), 42–57; Gormley, W., Gayer, T., Phillips, D. and Dawson, B. (2004). *The effects of Oklahoma's universal pre-K program on school readiness*. Washington, DC: Center for Research on Children in the U.S. Available at <http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu>; Schweinhart, L. J., Martie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2004). Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40. Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Press.

8. Zlotnik, J. L., DePanfilis, D., Daining, C. & Lane, M. M. (2005). *Factors influencing retention of child welfare staff: A systematic review of research*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research.

9. Marzke, C., Pechman, E., Reisner, E, Vandell, D. Pierce, K., and Brown, B. (2002). *Study of promising after-school programs: Theory of change guiding the research*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates and Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

10. Smith, C. (in press). *Evidence of effectiveness for training in the High/Scope participatory learning approach*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

Implications to Date

For Research

- We need to know more about who makes up and how to improve the human services workforce (e.g., who are existing workers, why they enter the field, why they leave the field).
- We need to know what specific organizational and policy supports positively affect children and youth outcomes.
- We need better measures to assess outcomes.
- We need new research with strong designs to test the logic model and proposed pathways linking professional workforce all the way to children and youth outcomes.

For Practice

- It is necessary but not sufficient for staff to have the qualifications (i.e., training and level of education) to implement best practices in their workplace.
- Staff need organizational supports, such as supervision and peer and administrative support, to implement these practices in their workplace.
- To impact children and youth, organizations need to have the capacity to recruit and retain good staff.

For Policy

- Policies are needed to increase the professionalization of the human services workforce through appropriate staff education, training, and certification.
- Policies should promote stability in the human services workforce by supporting adequate compensation, benefits, and a positive worker environment.
- Policies need to target increasing the quality of the workforce, evidenced in positive and effective interactions between staff and those they are serving. Policies should invest adequate resources in workforce development and hold organizations accountable for improving outcomes for children and youth through certification, accreditation, and high standards.

to provide greater detail about the pathways in the overarching logic model, as well as offer individual logic models for each of the four sectors. We will further elaborate on implications for research, practice, and policy as we complete our literature reviews and synthesize the findings across sectors.

A supplementary bibliography from our review of research about the human services workforce is available on our website at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue32/bibliography.html.

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Evaluating the Impact of Professional Development in Eight Steps

Joellen Killion from the National Staff Development Council outlines an eight-step process for measuring the impact of professional development.

For many years, the only evaluation of professional development was the traditional end-of-program “smiley” sheet on which participants reported their degree of satisfaction with the program, presenter, and facilities. Policy and decision makers who wanted to know if professional development produced any results had few options.

That changed in the mid-1990s, when sweeping changes in federal policy required those spending federal funds to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development. Many professional development specialists recognized the weakness of their evaluation attempts, and some argued that it was impossible to link professional development with student achievement because of the large number of intervening variables. Others wondered if the evaluation field provided the necessary tools and processes to measure impact of professional development.

In 1999, with a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, we at the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) launched a 2-year initiative to find ways to measure the impact of professional learning on teacher behavior and student learning. With a team of experts in evaluation and professional development, we discovered that the major problem with evaluating professional development lay not in evaluation but in the design of professional development. Educators wrongly believed that one-shot professional development sessions would transform not only teacher classroom behavior but also student learning. Confronting this fallacy presented a new challenge for professional development leaders and providers: If one-shot sessions do not work, what does it take to change teacher classroom behavior and student learning?

The answer was that it almost always takes more than just a single session. Ongoing sessions of learning, collaboration, and application, accompanied by school- and classroom-based support, over an ample time period are necessary to incorporate new behaviors fully into a teacher’s repertoire. If the design of professional development is sufficiently strong and long enough to promote deep changes, it will be possible to measure the impact of professional development on student learning.

Using a theory of change¹ evaluation model and building on

1. A *theory of change* identifies the sequence of actions a program intends to take to accomplish its goals and the assumptions upon which those actions rest.

Related Resource

Killion, J. (2002). *Assessing impact: Evaluating staff development*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

logic models² that define the transformation process, we developed an eight-step evaluation process that encourages evaluators to build pathways with evidence to measure the impact of professional development on teacher classroom behavior and student learning.

An Eight-Step Process for Measuring Impact

1. Assess evaluability. Evaluators examine the design of the professional development program to determine its likelihood of producing the intended results; scrutinize the program’s goals, objectives, standards of success, indicators of success, theory of change, and logic model; and ask about the program’s clarity, feasibility, strength, and worth. If, after that analysis, the program is deemed *evaluable*, the evaluator moves ahead to Step 2. If the program is deemed *not evaluable*, the evaluator encourages the program’s designer(s) to revise the program.

2. Formulate evaluation questions. Evaluators design the formative³ and summative⁴ questions, which focus on the initial and intermediate outcomes and the program’s goals and objectives. By asking questions about results (e.g., did teachers use the strategies? did student work demonstrate evidence of teachers’ application of the strategies?) rather than about services, evaluators can measure impact rather than program delivery.

3. Construct the evaluation framework. Evaluators determine what evidence to collect, from whom or what sources to collect the evidence, how to collect the evidence, and how to analyze the evidence.

4. Collect data. Evaluators use the data collection methods determined in Step 3 to collect evidence to answer the evaluation questions.

5. Organize and analyze data. Evaluators organize and analyze collected data and display analyzed data in multiple formats to use in Step 6.

6. Interpret data. Working together, stakeholders and evaluators interpret the data to make sense of it, draw conclusions, assign meaning, and formulate recommendations. Including stakeholders in this process is essential because their participation expands and enhances the meaning of the data.

7. Report findings. Evaluators report findings and make recommendations in formats sensitive to the needs of the multiple audiences. Rather than a single technical report, evaluators prepare multiple reports of varied lengths and in varied levels of sophistication and formats.

2. A *logic model* is a tool that turns the actions into results, so that evaluators and program managers can monitor progress and results.

3. *Formative* evaluations are conducted during program implementation in order to provide information that will strengthen or improve the program being studied.

4. *Summative* evaluations are conducted either during or at the end of a program’s implementation. They determine whether a program’s intended outcomes have been achieved.

continued on page 11

Teacher Professional Development: How Do We Establish It and Know That It's Working?

Mary Russo, principal of the Richard J. Murphy School in Dorchester, Massachusetts, describes the professional development of school staff and school-level practices to assess its impact.

As a public elementary school principal, first at the Mason School in Roxbury and now at the Murphy School in Dorchester, I saw that professional development workshops did little to change instructional practices in the classroom. What worked were collaborative, effective methods of professional development for improving instructional practice and, in turn, student achievement.

Principles and Practices of Professional Development

Teachers first at the Mason School and then at the Murphy School worked together to develop a set of effective professional development practices, which embody principles of teacher ownership, accountability, and instructional consistency. Here are some of the steps we took:

Visiting other schools. Teachers visited a high-performing school in the suburbs and were struck by the excellence of student work. This experience shaped our vision for professional development—a vision that embodies “reciprocal responsibility,” whereby the principal provides adequate professional development and the teachers identify necessary supports and implement practices. To fund this professional development, we had to redefine our re-

sources as more than just money but also as time, materials, and job descriptions.

Designing a personal professional development plan. In all Massachusetts public schools, teachers create individual professional development plans approved by the principal. At the Murphy, we focus these plans on improving our teaching of reading, writing, and math. Plans still include attendance at outside workshops, but teachers are also responsible for applying learning in their classrooms and sharing information with their colleagues.

Induction of new staff. Each fall, incoming Murphy School teachers, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers participate in modules designed by lead teachers to orient new staff to “the Murphy way” for teaching math and literacy, managing discipline, and including students with special needs. This practice extends beyond the district’s mentor program to provide consistency at the school level and to give new teachers a team of people, rather than just one mentor, to whom they can go for help.

Collaborative coaching and learning. The idea of coaching arose from the teachers themselves, who requested a consultant to support their classroom instruction. Now, literacy and math coaches have become central to professional development, and teachers at the Murphy nominate their colleagues within the school to serve as coaches.

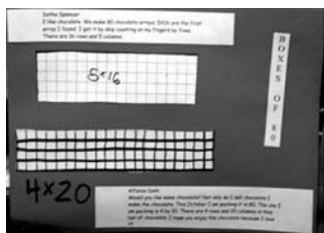
Every two weeks, all teachers from each grade convene with a math or literacy coach for 90-minute sessions to participate in a preparation session, an in-class demonstration, and a debriefing. This job-embedded approach allows teachers to see firsthand how students respond to new practices and gives teachers in each grade and across grades a consistent set of tools and the freedom to express individual variations.

Exercising teacher leadership. Murphy School teachers share their skills and knowledge with others by teaching district professional development courses, overseeing other adult learners in the school (e.g., resident teachers, graduate interns, and student teachers), serving as a site for visits by other schools, and writing for a teacher audience (see box).

Measuring Professional Development Efforts

A simple count of hours revealed that the Murphy and Mason teachers spent three times as many hours per year in professional development activities as are required by the district. The practices we use to determine if these professional development efforts are working have become integral parts of the schools and have focused strongly on student learning:

Hard data. In 3 years at the Mason School, students moved from performing in the lowest 10th percentile on standardized reading and math tests to the top 10th percentile. This helped earn the Mason School a professional development award from the U.S. Department of Education.



Student work is prominently displayed throughout the Murphy School in classrooms, corridors, and foyers. The quality of student work produced is one way the school gauges the quality of instruction and professional development. (Photos: Lauren Grace, Murphy School)

Compelling evidence of effective professional development at the Murphy School comes from concrete data by the district's research and evaluation unit and the Massachusetts Department of Education, which correlates these activities with improved student performance. At the Murphy, 58% of students failed the state math exam in 1999. Now, the percentage has been reduced to 11%, and the Murphy was named a Compass School by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Teachers receive training to understand and use student performance data to assess the performance of both individual students and entire grade levels. When a cluster of teachers noticed low scores on a test item for reading comprehension, they looked to the one teacher whose students performed higher on that task and adopted her practices as their own across the grade level.

Visual displays of student work. Convincing visual evidence of teacher learning and its subsequent impact on students is captured in the display of student work on walls throughout the school. Posting children's work makes teacher practice public and holds teachers accountable to colleagues, parents, and other community members.

Learning walks. Each day, as principal at the Murphy School, I conduct "learning walks" through classrooms to observe instructional practices and give feedback to teachers. Using a protocol of description, inference, and feedback, I offer teachers face-to-face or written input on their practice each week. Teachers are held accountable to me and to teacher colleagues in other ways as well—for example, by reviewing each other's student work in grade-level teams.

School- and district-level supports facilitate these professional development and assessment practices. District flexibility in how school funds are spent, permission to develop a school-based mentoring program in lieu of the district program, and a district commitment to professional development aided work at the Murphy School, as did whole school staffing and budgeting at the school level. At both schools, the deep commitment of the teaching staff has been at the heart of successful professional development design, implementation, and assessment.

Mary Russo

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Related Resource

Brochu, A. M., Concannon, H., Grace, L. R., Keefe, E., Murphy, E., Petrie, A., & Tarentino, L. (n.d.). *Creating professional learning communities: A step-by-step guide to improving student achievement through teacher collaboration.* Dorchester, MA: Project for School Innovation. Available at www.psinnovation.org/PSI/btft12.html



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Classroom Observation, Professional Development, and Teacher Quality

Robert Pianta from the University of Virginia describes a classroom assessment scoring system that measures teacher–child interactions and serves as the basis for individualized professional development to strengthen teachers’ classroom practice.

At the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia, we are developing and evaluating a system of preservice and in-service professional development and support called MyTeachingPartner (MTP). MTP has its basis in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)¹—an across-grade/age system for observing classroom and teacher quality. Since its creation in 2000, the CLASS has been used in hundreds of classrooms from pre-K through eighth grade and included in efforts by teacher training institutions and state departments of education to evaluate teacher quality. It relies on a large body of research that demonstrates the added value of various dimensions of teaching and classroom processes in improving child outcomes and on measurement, logistic, and psychometric analyses that address the use of observation in large-scale applications across multiple states and districts.

The CLASS focuses on the interactions of teachers and children in the classroom and assesses the quality of teachers’ implementation and use of a curriculum, their social and instructional interactions with children, and the intentionality and productivity evident in the classroom setting. In the CLASS-based MTP approach to professional development, the focus is on what teachers do with the materials they have and on their interactions with children as they implement a curriculum.

Observation and Measurement

Using the CLASS involves observing the interactions of teachers and children for cycles of up to 30 minutes and then rating what was observed on a number of dimensions codified in seven-point rating scales. At the broadest level, the CLASS measures classroom and teacher quality using a set of 10 dimensions that load on two broad factors—*emotional quality* (positive and negative emotional climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for students’ perspectives, and effective behavior management) and *instructional quality* (productive use of time, concept development, instructional learning formats, quality of feedback, and language modeling).

Evidence from several studies indicates that higher ratings on the dimensions assessed by the CLASS predict higher performance by children on standardized assessments of academic achievement and better social adjustment in the early grades of school. In a

1. Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. (2004). Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Unpublished.

new effort, we at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning are expanding the CLASS to secondary settings and focusing on a small set of additional scales to explore the evidence that the CLASS measures aspects of teacher–child interaction that predict children’s success later in school.

The MTP Approach

In the MTP conceptualization of professional development, teachers’ training leads to improved child outcomes as a consequence of more effective teacher–child interactions. MTP’s work with teachers focuses on using the CLASS-based observation of teachers’ instructional, social, and management interactions with children to raise the level of resources in a classroom.

The MTP approach is not course or workshop based. Instead, MTP professional development resources offer individualized feedback and support to teachers focused on observation and analysis of each teacher’s own classroom practices and interactions with children. In this approach, the CLASS observations provide a standard way of measuring and noting teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and form the basis from which professional development can support teachers’ high quality implementation and improve teacher–child interactions.

MTP provides professional development resources at a distance via the Internet without requiring evaluators to meet with teachers in person or visit classrooms. Instead, the MTP

website offers a detailed description of each of the CLASS dimensions, specific examples of classroom practices, hundreds of video examples of high quality teaching based on the CLASS, and interactive activities that provide teachers with a way to analyze their own and others’ practice using the CLASS scales. MTP consultants, who possess with expertise in the CLASS, observe teachers’ classroom interactions via videotape and give teachers feedback and support via the Internet.

The CLASS and MTP are parts of a systematic and standardized observation of real classroom practice, in which professional development resources are targeted to those observations, that is currently being tested in several preservice and in-service evaluation and training initiatives across the country. In its most basic form, this approach is based on accumulated evidence indicating that teacher and classroom quality is embedded not only in credentials or in coursework but in what teachers do in classrooms with children.

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This approach is based on accumulated evidence indicating that teacher and classroom quality is embedded not only in credentials or in coursework but in what teachers do in classrooms with children.

The Three-Step Assessment Tango: Nurturing and Measuring Learning in Online Professional Development

David Eddy Spicer, Roland Stark, and Martha Stone Wiske from WIDE World describe their process of measuring learning in online professional development.

How do you create an assessment system for professional development that is as useful to learners as it is to instructors and program managers and at the same time provides evidence of learning to those on the outside? Accountability standards give a prominent role to assessment as critical to educational effectiveness. Yet new views of teaching and learning make clear that if assessment is truly to support instruction, then assessment strategies must be made integral to students' learning activities. Online environments for professional learning offer both challenges and opportunities in striking this balance. One big challenge in online environments is getting a geographically dispersed instructional team to agree on what constitutes valid and fair assessment; one big opportunity is the chance to assess student work that is well documented and largely text based, with a trail of evidence from the beginning to the end of the learning process.

A team from the WIDE World online professional development program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (wideworld.pz.harvard.edu) developed a three-step process that effectively negotiated this balancing act with educators enrolled in our online courses. First, we helped instructors sharpen course goals. Next, we developed performance assessments that included rubrics to guide progress toward those goals. Finally, we devised a testable system for applying the rubrics to score a key course assignment. Summarized in this way, this three-step process might appear to be a straightforward march. In practice, it is more of a tango, with bold moves forward toward greater definition of instructional intent, then back, as each successive step demands new, creative ways of maintaining balance and rhythm.

We chose three online courses with which to test this assessment process. All three drew on the Teaching for Understanding framework,¹ which emphasizes the use of well-defined goals and ongoing assessment in teacher professional development. The educators enrolled in these courses are supported by online teaching assistants or "coaches." Participants work on creating lesson plan designs and sharing them via online tools; feedback from the coaches is supplemented by exercises to stimulate self- and peer reflection.

Our three-step assessment tango helped us move from an ad hoc approach in each course to a systematic one. This meant finding our collaborative rhythm in the first step, making bold moves forward to tighten important instructional links in the second step, and finally "going quantitative" to track outcomes in the third step.

First Step: Sharpening Course Goals and Key Performances

We structured initial meetings with instructors using a tuning pro-

ocol² designed by the Coalition of Essential Schools as a tool for sharing curricular work. This process succeeded in fostering open communication among all instructors. In these meetings, we also conducted an assessment inventory to examine how key assignments related to instructional goals and to understand existing coach, peer, and self-assessment activities.

Second Step: Tightening Links Among Goals, Performance, and Assessment

Effective assessment, whether online or face-to-face, gives learners clear criteria, frequent feedback, and opportunities for reflection. The three courses already had rubrics in place to accomplish these tasks for certain assignments. The assessment inventory from Step 1, along with subsequent discussions with coaches, helped to clarify the criteria in these rubrics. From there, we built these criteria into a more global rubric or reflection guide, which directed participants' work toward a cumulative course product.

Third Step: Going Quantitative

Our final step was to help instructors translate each reflection guide into a scoring guide for evaluating learners' final products on a numerical scale. Instructors initially hesitated for fear that a reductionist emphasis on scoring would derail learning and create issues around fairness and efficiency. Other issues arose that were particular to online environments, especially the inability to make quick changes to the course and, in particular, tweak the assessment process on the fly, as one might do during a face-to-face course. However, instructors soon saw that they could make the approach fit their own instructional intentions and preferences. Coaches' enthusiasm for finding constructive ways to make the rubrics work also boosted instructors' confidence in the process.

By the end of our first trial run, our team had developed a solid, systematic approach to participant assessment. Our three-step tango had helped us move past the perils of "dumbing down" measures that threatened to reduce learning to jumping through hoops. We are now well on the way to mastering the three steps that help drive learning forward and provide evidence of the learning process.

An expanded version of this article is available on our website at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue32/pp3full.html.

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1. For an in-depth explanation of the Teaching for Understanding framework, see Wiske, S., & Spicer, D. E. (2004). WIDE: Using Networked Technologies to Promote Professional Development. *The Evaluation Exchange*, 10(3) 10 (available online at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue27/bbt2.html).

2. A tuning protocol is a widely used series of steps for reflecting on teacher and/or student work. For additional details, please see Allen, D., & McDonald, J. (n.d.). *The tuning protocol: A process for reflection on teacher and student work*. Retrieved November 30, 2005, from http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/54

Key Strategies to Educate Public Child Welfare Workers and Improve Child Welfare Systems

Joan Levy Zlotnik, Mary McCarthy, and Katharine Briar-Lawson review research and evaluation findings on public agency–university partnerships to educate public child welfare workers and the impact of such partnerships on workforce retention.

Recent targeted workforce improvements have sought to address caseload size and the child welfare staffing shortage by increasing the number of undergraduate and graduate social work students specially educated for public child welfare practice. These improvements occur primarily through university–agency partnerships that educate social workers with enhanced curricula, field education, and training. At present, about 40 states are involved in professional education partnerships, most supported by Title IV-E¹ training funds, federal grants, and state funds.²

Because minimum requirements for front-line child welfare staff vary from state to state, university–agency partnerships also differ. As these partnerships become more common, interest in documenting their outcomes continues to grow. Attention has begun to focus on understanding the linkages between social work education, workforce improvements, and the quality of child welfare practices.

Research and evaluations of university–agency partnerships indicate that retention of workers with both graduate and undergraduate social work degrees is higher when employees received tuition support for social work education.³ In Kentucky, Barbee⁴ found that special preparation for public child welfare practice through the Bachelor's in Social Work program supported employee retention and improved permanency outcomes for children and families.

A recent systematic review of retention studies finds that personal and organizational factors intertwine to impact retention. Workers with the lowest level of education and less relevant education are the most likely to leave.⁵ Studies in several states indicate that each worker's personal commitment to child welfare is an important factor in retention. Educational programs add value by providing workers with the necessary competencies and an increased commitment to the job.⁶

Several states have embarked on multiyear university–agency partnerships to address the staffing crisis in child welfare. One such partnership is the Social Work Education Consortium.⁷ Launched 5 years ago, the Social Work Education Consortium partners the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, New York's 57 county commissioners, New York City's Administration for Children's Services, and the deans and directors of graduate and undergraduate social work education programs at public and private universities.

The partnership provides funding for child welfare staff to pursue graduate social work degrees. Studies are underway to assess the retention and promotion pathways of these graduates. In addition, a pilot project is underway with workers in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Unit (TANF) pursuing bachelor's degrees in social work. They will receive tuition support and upon graduation will be eligible for promotion into child welfare positions.

Meanwhile, seven regional groups are addressing local goals for workforce professionalization and stabilization. In two regions, examinations of how workers transfer and infuse new knowledge and skills from graduate social work programs and in-service training into their practice are underway.

So far, New York's research affirms that high-performing child welfare systems require more than just trained social workers.⁸ Effective organizational structures and supervisory skills are also essential for supporting good practices. Four years of research with 24 high- and low-turnover child welfare systems have led to a pilot organizational intervention designed to improve workforce retention. In the ongoing intervention, five agency-based design and improvement teams have been established. The teams, comprised of workers, supervisors and administrators, examine policies, procedures, and practices that impact worker retention and then recommend action strategies designed to improve those organizational and supervisory factors which negatively impact retention. Eventually, control group comparisons will be made. The study probes each worker's intent to remain on the job and perception of organizational and supervisory factors related to retention.

As the New York example demonstrates, evaluating workforce issues is a complex task. Special journal issues, presentations at social work education and research conferences, websites, and the recently convened Child Welfare Workforce Development and Workplace Enhancement Institute all contribute to the effort to document workforce improvements. Future work must include research that examines child welfare outcomes in relation to the many dimensions of workforce and workplace issues, creates

1. Created as part of Public Law 96-272, Title IV-E entitlement training funds are available to states to train public child welfare staff who work for the state or local agencies that administer the title IV-E state plan or those preparing for employment in those agencies.

2. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides an online clearinghouse of Child Welfare Workforce and Training Resources at nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/profess/workforce.

3. Briar-Lawson, K. & Zlotnik, J. L. (Eds.). (2002). Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university–public agency partnerships. *Journal of Health & Social Policy*, 15(3/4); Briar-Lawson, K. & Zlotnik, J. L. (Eds.). (2003). Charting the impacts of university–child welfare collaboration. *Journal of Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, 7(1/2).

4. Barbee, A. (2005). Child welfare workforce development and workplace enhancement institute. [Conference presentation]. Crystal City, MD: Children's Bureau.

5. Zlotnik, J. L., DePanfilis, D., Daining, C., & Lane, M. M. (2005). *Factors influencing retention of child welfare staff: A systematic review of research*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research.

6. Zlotnik, J. L., DePanfilis, D., Daining, C., & Lane, M. M., 2005.

7. Funding for the Consortium is provided by a grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Commissioner John J. Johnson. Contract # CO24153

8. Lawson, H. A., Claiborne, N. (2005). *Retention Planning to Reduce Workforce Turnover in New York State's Public Child Welfare Systems: Developing Knowledge, Lessons Learned, and Emergent Priorities*. Albany, NY: Social Work Education Consortium.

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Coaching for Quality

Sarah Jonas describes the Children's Aid Society's model of site-based coaching for quality after school programming and the supports they provide to build the capacity of their coaches.

The Children's Aid Society's (CAS) after school programs are committed to providing high quality youth development, a key feature of which is helping young people achieve academic success. Our view, that academic support and enrichment are essential components of a comprehensive after school program, is not new. However, we have become more intentional about this work in recent years, as we have watched youth we serve struggle with basic skills and post low scores on standardized tests. Taking a page from our colleagues at L.A.'s BEST, who developed a model whereby central staff fanned out to programs to provide on-site support, we created the position of a site-based education coordinator (EC)—a teacher or staff developer from the school who works part-time in the after school program as a coach and serves as a bridge between school and after school.

Working closely with the after school program director at each site, the EC coaches after school staff by providing regular feedback and training on how best to implement academic programs to support children's achievement. Based on formal and informal observations, the EC may seek out an individual group leader to share ideas (such as tips for reading aloud), model program delivery, cofacilitate an activity, or develop a workshop for the entire staff. This intense, daily academic programming support for staff is something the after school program director—who spends her time focused on program planning, scheduling, staff supervision, and helping children and families address behavioral and developmental concerns—is unable to offer.

CAS provides support to the ECs in the following ways:

- *Individual supervision.* The CAS director of education, who works to develop and support educational programming across CAS's 20 after school programs, meets regularly with the ECs when she makes her own site visits to programs. This interaction provides a forum for the ECs to communicate concerns and seek guidance on how best to support site staff and at the same time allows the director of education to understand what issues are common across sites and to attend to these issues by making curriculum modifications or providing staff training.
- *Attendance at staff trainings.* Whenever we introduce a new educational curriculum, we expect the ECs to attend any training we offer for staff. In this way, the coordinators learn about the curriculum alongside those whom they support and build their own capacity to train staff. For example, when we first introduced the KidzLit curriculum, the CAS director of education trained the staff. However, in subsequent years, we have asked the ECs to deliver this training. In some sites, ECs have coached veteran group leaders in effective facilitation skills so that they can train their peers.
- *Peer networking.* When CAS introduced our core literacy curricula—KidzLit and Foundations, Inc.—into our after school programs, the director of education brought together the ECs

for a series of monthly meeting to discuss implementation issues and concerns. These meetings provided an opportunity for troubleshooting and sharing of best practices. In the past few years, CAS has hired several former teachers as program directors, and some core returning group leaders have become so skilled at implementing the curricula that they have assisted the ECs with supporting newer staff through mechanisms such as joint lesson-planning. As site-based expertise has grown, we have experienced a decreasing need for these meetings.

- *Communication with site managers.* At each site, the EC meets regularly with the after school program director to assess the curriculum implementation process and make adjustments as needed. One EC, who observed that the staff at her site was struggling with youth behavioral issues, spoke with the program director. Together, they made the decision to jointly offer the staff additional training on class management.

This coaching model requires a financial investment, both for the ECs and for a central position, such as the director of education, that supports the ECs. At CAS, we believe such an investment is worthwhile because it enhances program quality. A year after we instituted the model, an external evaluation conducted by the Education Development Center found that the CAS after school programs had become more engaging to children and staff, that staff reported an increase in the amount and quality of training they received, and that students (and their parents) felt the program helped them to be better prepared for their school classes. Such feedback, along with our own observations, has convinced us of the tremendous return on our investments.

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Eight Steps

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8. Evaluate the evaluation. The evaluator analyzes his or her own evaluation methodology, processes, resources, skills, and so forth. As a reflective practitioner, the evaluator looks back at the work done and identifies its strengths and areas for continued refinement and growth.

In addition to using this eight-step process, it is essential that evaluators believe that the professional development program has the potential to produce the intended results. Lack of belief in professional development's potential—not evaluation—has been the greatest challenge in evaluating professional development.

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A conversation with

Thomas R. Guskey

Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D., is a professor in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky and an expert in research and evaluation who has authored or edited 12 books, including *Evaluating Professional Development* (Corwin, 2000). He has twice won the National Staff Development Council's prestigious Book of the Year Award and three times won the Article of the Year Award. Below, he discusses his five-step process for evaluating professional development in education and its connection to professional development planning.

Q What is your five-level model for evaluating professional development, and how did it come to be?

A My thinking was influenced by the work of Donald Kirkpatrick, who developed a model for evaluating training programs in business and industry. Kirkpatrick described four levels of evaluation that he found necessary in determining the value and worth of training programs. The first was participants' reactions to the training—whether they liked it or not. A second level was what new knowledge and/or skills participants gained from the training. A third level was how it influenced what they did on the job. And a fourth level considered how the training affected their productivity.

I thought this model could be useful for what we do in professional development in education. As we applied the model, however, we found that professional development efforts still were not yielding positive results—but nothing in the model explained why. Examining programs more closely, I found that things were done right from a training perspective, but educators were then sent back to organizations that did not support them in what we asked them to do. Things broke down at the organization level. So I added a new level in the middle of the model, labeled “organizational support and change,” to consider those aspects of the organization that have critical influence on the implementation of new policies and practices. (See Figure 1 on page 14 for the model.)

Q What do you hope people take away from your model?

A There are three major aspects of the model that I hope people will consider. First, each of these five levels is important in its own right. Each level provides different types of information that can be used in both formative and summative ways. Formatively, we need to find out at each level what's been done well and, if not done well, how it can be improved. Summatively, we need to know the effectiveness of elements at each level to judge the true value and worth of any professional development endeavor.

Second, each level builds on those that come before. For example, people must have a positive reaction to a professional

development experience before we can expect them to learn anything from it. They need to gain specific knowledge and skills before we look to the organization for critical aspects of support or change. Organizational support is necessary to gain high quality implementation of new policies and practices. And appropriate implementation is a prerequisite to seeing improvements in student learning. Things can break down at any point along the way, and once they break down, the improvement process comes to a screeching halt.

Third, many educators are now finding how useful it can be to reverse these five levels in professional development planning. In other words, the first thing people need to do when they plan professional development is to specify what impact they want to have on student learning. They begin planning by asking, “What improvements in student learning do we want to attain and what evidence best reflects those improvements?” Then they step back and ask, “If that's the impact we want, what new policies or practices must be implemented to gain that impact?” Next, they consider what types

of organizational support or change are needed to facilitate that implementation, and so forth. This planning process compels educators to plan not in terms of what they are going to do but in terms of what they want to accomplish with their students. All other decisions are then based on that fundamental premise.

I argue that most of the critical evaluation questions that need to be addressed in determining a professional development program's effectiveness should be asked in the planning stage. Planning more carefully and more intentionally not only makes evaluation easier, it also leads to much more effective professional development. Increasingly, educators at all levels are coming to view professional development as a purposeful and intentional endeavor that should be designed with specific goals in mind.

Q Why are levels four and five of your evaluation model—in which professional development is linked to student outcomes—so difficult to accomplish?

A The primary reason is that getting information at those levels must be delayed. Immediately following any professional development activity, I can gather information

Planning more carefully and more intentionally not only makes evaluation easier, it also leads to much more effective professional development.

about levels one and two—finding out if people liked it and what they gained from that experience in terms of new knowledge and skills. But information on levels three, four, and five cannot be gathered at that time. Again, planning backward makes this clearer. If I know what I want to accomplish and what evidence best reflects those goals, it's easier for me to decide how and when I'm going to gather that evidence and what I will do with it once I have it.

Q What are some of the other challenges in evaluating professional development, and how can these be addressed?

A Many professional development leaders avoid systematic evaluations for fear that the evaluation won't yield "proof" that what they're doing leads to improvements in student learning. And if this is the case, funding may be withdrawn. Recognizing the distinction between "evidence" and "proof," however, can help resolve this dilemma.

To obtain proof—by which I mean to show that professional development uniquely and alone leads to improvements in student learning—is very difficult. It requires a level of experimental rigor that is hard and often impossible to attain in practical school settings. But most policymakers, legislators, and school leaders are not asking for ironclad proof. What they want is evidence that things are getting better. They want to see improvements in assessment results or test scores, increased attendance, fewer discipline problems, or decreased dropout rates. Historically, professional development leaders haven't done a very good job of providing any such evidence.

A related challenge concerns the nature of that evidence, especially its credibility and its timing. I recently discovered, for example, that not all stakeholders in professional development trust the same evidence. I conducted a study in which groups of educators were asked to rank order 15 different indicators of student learning in terms of which they believed provided the most valid evidence. When I compared administrators' and teachers' rankings, I found they were almost exactly reversed! Administrators rated national and state tests highly, while teachers trusted their own, more immediate sources of evidence. From a policy perspective, that indicates to me that no single source of evidence is going to be adequate. Instead, we need to consider multiple indicators. We also need to involve multiple stakeholders in the planning process to identify the sources of evidence that they believe provide the best and most valid representation of success.

Some experts suggest that when educators engage in professional development endeavors, results might not be evident for two or three years. But when teachers are experimenting with new approaches to instruction or a new curriculum, they need to gain evidence rapidly to show that it's making a difference. If they don't see such evidence, they quite naturally revert back to the tried and true things they've done in the past. This isn't because

they are afraid of change. Rather, it's because they are so committed their students and fear that the new approach might lead to less positive results. So, in planning professional development, we must include some mechanism whereby those responsible for implementation can gain evidence of success from their students rather quickly—within the first month of implementation.

Q Can you comment on what we know and don't know about what makes professional development effective? How can we go about reaching some consensus about what is important?

A A couple of years ago, I identified thirteen lists of characteristics of effective professional development that had been assembled by different professional organizations and research groups. In analyzing these lists, I found very little consensus. There wasn't even agreement on the criteria for effectiveness. Some lists were based on the concurrence opinions among researchers, others used teacher self-reports, and only a few looked at impact on student learning. My conclusion was that we may not have a true consensus on what makes professional development effective, and that moving toward one may be more complicated than most people think.

I helped to develop the Standards for Staff Development published by the National Staff Development Council. These Standards represent an attempt to give people in the field some guidelines for their work and some criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of their efforts. Because of their general nature, however, these Standards leave a lot of room for interpretation. For example, they describe the importance of extended time for professional development and the need to ensure that activities are ongoing and job-embedded.

Researchers have shown, however, that simply adding more time for job-embedded activities is insufficient. Doing ineffective things longer doesn't make them any better. Instead, we must ensure that the extended time provided for professional development is structured carefully and used wisely, engaging educators in activities shown to yield improved results.

Q How do you think the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is impacting professional development and its evaluation?

A I believe that certain aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act are motivated by frustration on the part of the federal government in allocating funds to education and not seeing much come from it. Too often in the past, educators have planned professional development based on what's new and what's hot, rather than on what is known to work with students. In NCLB, the federal government imposes specific requirements that compel educators to consider only programs and innovations that are "scientifically based research." Educators must now ver-



Thomas Guskey

ify the research behind different programs and innovations. They must ensure that research comes from reliable sources, specifically peer-reviewed journals. They must show that the program has been applied in a wide variety of contexts and that its effects evaluated by third parties. They must demonstrate that the evidence of effects has been gathered over a significant period of time so that the program can be shown to be sustainable.

I agree with those who suggest that insistence on this definition of “scientifically based research” may be too restricting. A lot of valuable research does not meet the criteria of randomized designs, but can provide us with good, important evidence. Still, NCLB and other national efforts are moving us in the right direction.

This past year, I’ve met with leaders in the U.S. Department of Education and various philanthropic organizations, who are considering changing the request for proposal process to be more specific with regard to evaluation. In particular, they want people, within proposals, to outline specifically how they will gather evidence at each of the five levels in the evaluation model. Their hope is that this will lead to improved results from various funded programs. I share their hope.

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Figure I. Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation¹

Evaluation Level	What Questions Are Addressed?	How Will Information Be Gathered?	What Is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
1. Participants' Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they like it? • Was their time well spent? • Did the material make sense? • Will it be useful? • Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful? • Were the refreshments fresh and tasty? • Was the room the right temperature? • Were the chairs comfortable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires administered at the end of the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial satisfaction with the experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve program design and delivery
2. Participants' Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper-and-pencil instruments • Simulations • Demonstrations • Participant reflections (oral and/or written) • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge and skills of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve program content, format, and organization
3. Organization Support & Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact on the organization? • Did it affect organizational climate and procedures? • Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported? • Was the support public and overt? • Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? • Were sufficient resources made available? • Were successes recognized and shared? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and school records • Minutes from follow-up meetings. • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with participants and district or school administrators • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document and improve organizational support • To inform future change efforts
4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with participants and their supervisors • Participant reflections (oral and/or written) • Participant portfolios • Direct observations • Video or audio tapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree and quality of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document and improve the implementation of program content
5. Student Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact on students? • Did it affect student performance or achievement? • Did it influence students' physical or emotional well-being? • Are students more confident as learners? • Is student attendance improving? • Are dropouts decreasing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student records • School records • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and/or administrators • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cognitive (Performance & Achievement) – Affective (Attitudes & Dispositions) – Psychomotor (Skills & Behaviors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up • To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development

1. Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Engaging Stakeholders in Professional Development and Its Evaluation

Ila Deshmukh Towery and Rachel Oliveri offer lessons for engaging teacher and student stakeholders in the evaluation of a professional development program.

The Gender Equity Model Sites initiative (GEMS) is a pilot application of the Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity model (SEED) in a Boston-area middle school and high school. GEMS is a peer-led professional development program that aims to facilitate school-wide change by fostering in teachers a greater awareness of how gender, race/ethnicity, and class impact their teaching practices and their understanding of and interactions with students. The initiative seeks to encourage self-reflection and raise consciousness around issues of inequity in schools in order to create more equitable and safe school environments.

Our goals in evaluating GEMS are to document program implementation, identify any changes in teaching practices and teacher awareness around issues of equity and diversity, and provide feedback to the schools for program improvement. Our evaluation employs a mixed-method approach through student and teacher surveys, student research groups, semistructured teacher interviews, and student focus groups; we use the latter three methods to actively engage stakeholder voices. The first 2 years of our 3-year evaluation of GEMS offer the following lessons for engaging stakeholders, including youth, in professional development and its evaluation.

1. A conceptual model for evaluation helps prioritize stakeholder engagement. The evaluation of the GEMS initiative uses a conceptual model in which integrating the voices of stakeholders is critical to understanding program impact. The model, Jacobs' five-tiered approach to evaluation, organizes evaluation activities at five levels—moving from generating descriptive and process-oriented information to determining the program effects and outcomes.¹ Our evaluation emphasizes understanding program implementation and participants' experiences of the program. Stakeholder voices matter for both of these goals. Early in our evaluation, we identified the program's key stakeholders as both teachers and students.

2. Program buy-in facilitates stakeholder engagement in evaluation. Thus far, teacher and student buy-in to the GEMS initiative seems to facilitate their buy-in to our evaluation. For example, when we conducted semistructured, open-ended interviews with program participants to better understand teachers' experiences of GEMS, their enthusiasm for GEMS was apparent in their eagerness to share their personal experiences with us. It may also be possible that teachers' commitment to the program's ideals of

social justice has enabled them to become more deeply engaged in the learning opportunities created by the evaluation.

3. Stakeholders can be instrumental in engaging other groups. We partnered with teachers to conduct student focus groups that grouped students together according to their racial, ethnic, sexual, or gender identities. These groupings were meant to encourage a safe forum for frank expression of students' personal experiences at school with regard to their identities. Teachers were eager to hear about students' experiences and share students' concerns with their colleagues as part of their work toward school equity, and they played an active role in recruiting students and leading the discussions in the focus groups. The combination of teacher involvement; stipends and incentives for student and teacher participation, respectively; and students' interest in sharing their personal experiences contributed to both teachers' and students' successful engagement in these groups and resulted in our gaining valuable insights into their school experiences.

4. Direct program involvement and depth of contact may matter for engaging youth stakeholders. In an attempt to further include student voices in our evaluation, we designed student research groups in which students were to assess their school climates through photo documentation. It was our intention to develop a researcher–student collaboration in which we, as researchers, would offer students the opportunity to gain research skills, while the students provided us with their perspectives on school climate.

Attaining student buy-in to these groups proved challenging, however, because most students were not directly involved in any GEMS activities and thus were unaware of the program and how it pertained to them. Moreover, the only way the school could accommodate these groups was through a two-part guest visit during a single teacher's class period. As a result, we did not have the opportunity to develop relationships with the students, and our inability to train students in research methods in such a short time weakened students' contributions to the evaluation data and analysis. However, as noted earlier, teacher recruitment and the use of incentives helped engage students in some of our other evaluation activities.

As evaluators, we are discovering that it is important that both program and evaluation design take into account the varying levels of stakeholder involvement in order to create successful researcher–stakeholder collaborations.

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Who is the after school workforce?

Beth Miller, senior research advisor to the National Institute for Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and Ellen Gannett, codirector of NIOST, discuss the characteristics of the after school workforce.

What are the characteristics of the after school workforce?

A comprehensive picture of the after school workforce does not yet exist because most existing surveys look at one sector of the field, such as 21st CCLC programs or licensed school-age child care programs. We do know that one of the primary characteristics of the after school workforce, unlike other human services workforces, is its predominantly *part-time* nature. Because after school “wraps around” a 6-hour school day, most workers do not receive the benefits or earnings associated with a full-time job.

A second and related characteristic of the after school workforce is its overall lack of identity as a profession. Many people enter after school with little or no preparation for it, since there exists little educational infrastructure to prepare workers for jobs in the field. Although some full-time directors or coordinators in the school-age care sector see after school work as their primary profession and make a long-term commitment to the field, many others come to the field as a “pass through” or supplemental job opportunity. Some programs rely heavily on college students looking for part-time work, others utilize paraprofessionals and teachers who have full-time jobs in schools, and still others hire individuals such as artists or morning preschool workers in need of part-time positions. Few of these workers see after school as a career, and they often move on to other positions when opportunities arise.

What are the implications of these characteristics for professional development?

People who work in after school have diverse prior experience and work in diverse settings. This makes “standardizing” professional development challenging. Until recently, we have tried to tailor training to the particular program setting, but there is now a growing movement to build some consensus about a set of core skills that all after school workers should have.

The out-of-school time workforce is comprised of three interrelated workforces—after school workers, youth workers, and credentialed teachers, such as those working in 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Although each of these workforces has its own training needs, initiatives like Achieve Boston¹ aim to build a professional development infrastructure for *all* members of the out-of-school time field.

In this underresourced field, who pays for training? Many after school programs lack the financial capacity for extensive training. The logistics of training a part-time staff pose further chal-

1. Achieve Boston is a collaborative effort to help after school and youth workers develop their professional skills and knowledge, advance their careers, and ultimately better serve children, youth, and families.

lenges. When do you schedule training if the staff have other jobs? How will staff get to the training if it does not take place on site?

Another consideration is the focus of professional development. Do you invest limited professional development resources in training transient, part-time line staff, or do you invest in the leadership of the program, who tend to be full-time and with a longer job tenure?

Given these challenges, what are some promising strategies for professional development in after school?

- *Coaching and on-site technical assistance.* Depending on the organizational context and content of the professional development, coaching can be provided by external experts, such as in the Literacy Coaching Initiative in Boston,² or by specialists within the organization. Line staff can benefit from strong coaching and modeling within the program without attending off-site trainings. A strong orientation program and ongoing supervision can help ensure the benefits of coaching are maintained over the long run.
- *Evidence of concrete change.* When we looked at initiatives where programs had received grants that they could apply toward physical, tangible changes to their program environments in addition to training and technical assistance, we saw that staff buy-in to the program improvement effort increased.
- *Engage young people in staff development efforts.* An often-overlooked strategy for professional development is to ask young people themselves what they would like in the program and to use their answers to shape professional development efforts. The most successful training model is one that goes vertically up the through the organization so that all program stakeholders, including youth, are engaged in the professional development process.
- *An organizational mindset that values and supports professional development.* An organization committed to sustained professional growth values all stakeholders in the process. Successful administrators make a significant investment in the growth and development of their people and their program. Training and technical assistance alone will not contribute to continuous program improvement, unless staff feel valued, appreciated, and respected. Within a climate of teambuilding and shared decision-making, everyone should feel that they are making a positive difference for young people and their families.

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2. Information on the Literacy Coaching Initiative is available at: <http://www.mass2020.org/projects.lci.html>.



Thinking Like an Educator: An Integrative Approach to Preparing Educators

Veronica Boix Mansilla and Robert Kegan from the Harvard Graduate School of Education describe a new course that uses an integrative approach to help education students learn to “think like an educator.”

What does it mean to think like a professional educator? How does one go about preparing educators to address the multiple demands of schooling in informed and effective ways? To address these questions, a group of faculty¹ at the Harvard Graduate School of Education piloted a course entitled “Thinking Like an Educator.” A guiding premise of the course, first offered in the fall of 2004, is that education presents complex challenges that warrant the integration of multiple perspectives to address them: (a) the expert perspectives of disciplines such as psychology, economics, pedagogy; and (b) the enacted perspectives of those involved with children’s education in a variety of roles (i.e., parents, teachers, administrators).

Below, we describe this evolving course and its promise for teaching education students to think in new and complex ways. These observations are drawn from the process of planning and teaching the course and from an evaluation of the course conducted in its first year, which involved a survey of all students, numerous student and faculty interviews, an analysis of student work, and classroom observations.²

An intentional planning process. A full year prior to piloting the course, key faculty charged with designing the course began to meet regularly. Many had never before talked with each other at length about their work and its links to schooling. Such long-term planning allowed faculty to place substance at the center of the course and to avoid the typical smorgasbord-type survey of faculty expertise. The planning process also enabled faculty to distill their knowledge into the most essential message for educators, to understand each other’s specialties, and to find promising points of interaction and complementarity. Although the project was not undertaken as a “stealth” faculty development initiative, it became obvious that, in designing the course, faculty were simultaneously fostering a more substantive form of collaboration with one another. One faculty member said that the planning process was her best professional development experience since she had been at Harvard.

Pedagogies and curricular materials reflecting a cross-perspectival approach. A central feature of this course is a multipart teaching case and related activities that allow students to analyze and problem-solve dilemmas of practice from multiple perspectives. The case features a fictional school principal nested in a real school district in Massachusetts and is supplemented by district-level

data. Participating faculty members have written different parts of the case focused on key issues in education, such as school reform, students’ social relationships, instructional challenges, and organizational leadership.

The case unfolds as the semester proceeds. At one point in the course, students assess the fit of various literacy programs, while at other points they consider a professional development plan to improve instruction. Later in the course students are called on to seek richer analyses by bringing two or more perspectives together—e.g., how does adult developmental theory help us understand the differing challenges teachers may experience delivering a given instructional approach to literacy? In their final projects, students typically receive a problem to address as informed consulting teams for the fictional school. Their mandate is to bring multiple perspectives together to frame the issue productively and to propose a well-supported action plan for the school.

Growth in students’ integrative understanding. Overall, our evaluation revealed that students in the first year’s class showed progress in their capacity to integrate perspectives. Specifically, students showed evidence of:

- *Enlarging their repertoire of analytic perspectives on which they drew to address matters of education.* Students borrowed concepts and modes of reasoning associated with new disciplinary perspectives. They also developed criteria for selecting various perspectives. They valued, for instance, how a discipline like psychology can offer empirical evidence to inform a decision and how one like economics may provide actionable tools. However, students also struggled to define “perspective” clearly, to translate theory into action, and to understand and use perspectives deeply.
- *Advancing their understanding through integrative approaches.* Students articulated the advantages of integrative thinking. Some used graphic models, rich grounding examples, and multicausal explanations to capture and make use of integrative thinking. However, students sometimes erred on the side of including too many perspectives and/or avoiding perspectives perceived as more insular (such as cultural anthropology or literacy).
- *Acquiring mindfulness about the purpose, balance, and limitations of integrative work.* Students came to recognize the limits of individual perspectives, as well as the conflict and complementarity between perspectives. Successful students also reflected on the intended goal of a learning situation in monitoring each perspective’s contribution and relative dominance.

As the course goes forward, involved faculty members plan to:

- *Build on the strengths of the course and address its weaknesses.* Early in the course, students may receive a preliminary integrative framework to orient their thinking and a more explicit rationale for integrative thinking to frame their work as a means to an end worthy of their genuine effort. An assessment schema

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1. Faculty who participated in the planning process and cotaught the course in its first year include Chris Dede, Richard Elmore, Wendy Luttrell, Susan Moore Johnson, Robert Kegan, Kay Merseeth, Robert Selman, and Catherine Snow.

2. Boix Mansilla, V. (2004). *Thinking like an educator: Documenting growth in students’ integrative understanding*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Staff Characteristics and Professional Development in Quality After School Programs

Denise Huang describes her work with the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning to identify best practices for learning in after school programs, including characteristics of effective professional development.

After school programs promote enrichment and social development, especially for underserved, at-risk populations. Following the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, national attention has turned to after school programs' potential to supplement academic learning. Research into 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) has found considerable variation in after school programs' structure and curricula, as well as the extent to which they focus on academic content.

In 2004, in an effort to identify and incorporate exemplary practices into after school programs, the Department of Education commissioned the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning.¹ Over a 5-year period, we at the Partnership will identify and validate promising and exemplary after school practices and offer strategies to address two continuing challenges: (a) ensuring that programs offer high quality, researched-based academic content using appropriate methods; and (b) ensuring that programs attract and retain students.

We have engaged in a study of promising after school sites and their practices, the development of tools and models, the delivery of technical assistance within state education agencies, and partnerships with federal and state education agencies that provide training and support for the adoption of promising practices.

To determine the sample for the study, we identified programs based on expert recommendations, 21st CCLC sites' evaluation data, and sites' impact on student achievement. We visited a wide range of programs—both 21st CCLC sites and others—and selected a representative sampling of promising practices that showed considerable impact on student performance. The first year of data, from 2004, includes 11 sites with promising literacy practices and 7 sites with promising mathematics practices. Data in subsequent years will focus on programs with promising practices in other areas, including science, technology, homework, and the arts. By 2007, we will have visited up to 60 after school sites throughout the United States.²

We are currently analyzing data from the study's first year. Among the program characteristics we are studying are those related to staffing and professional development. Findings highlight the importance of program management components—such as leadership skills, support, and staff capital (i.e., personal characteristics, relational skills, and subject matter knowledge)—to enhance the quality of instructional practices in specific academic subjects

1. The Partnership is comprised of the Southwest Educational Laboratory (SEDL); the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST); Mid-Continent Resources for Education and Learning (McREL); the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL); the WGBH Educational Foundation; SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro; and the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE).

2. The full study report will be available in June 2007, with periodic reports to be released as early as spring 2006.

and to facilitate student engagement and retention. So far, we have identified the following characteristics of promising programs:

Staffing

- Strong program leadership facilitated relationships among and between school, district, and local communities.
- Site coordinators and staff tended to be experienced. Site coordinators had worked in the after school field for a mean of 4.6 years and at their current sites for 4.3 years. Staff members had worked in the field for an average of 3.6 years and at their current sites for 3.5 years.
- This group of staff tended to be more educated than after school staff in general, with the majority of staff members holding bachelor's or master's degrees.

Professional Development

- Both site coordinators and program staff agreed on their need for professional development.
- Similar opportunities for professional development were *offered* to the site coordinators and staff members (at an average about 3.5 times a year), but site coordinators *participated* slightly more often than staff members (about 2.5 times a year).
- Staff characteristics—and as a result, professional development opportunities—varied according to program emphasis:
 - The community-oriented programs tended to draw their staff from the community and to have a more comprehensive program focus. Professional development tended to be in-house.
 - The school district-related programs tended to hire accredited teachers and to have a more academic focus. These staff members had more opportunities to share professional development opportunities provided by their schools.
 - Some of the larger scale programs funded by both private and public sources had a mixed-composition staff and more resources to conduct professional development and recruitment of content-specific specialists to serve as trainers and curriculum developers.
- Professional development content varied according to the needs of specific populations and programs (e.g., training in serving youth with ADHD, behavioral problems, and language barriers; gang prevention; and using assessment data to improve academic programming and youth outcomes).

These findings support emerging knowledge about the importance of relationships among site coordinators, program staff, and youth, and demonstrate that staff in effective programs are competent leaders skilled in retaining their staff and in selecting appropriate professional development opportunities.

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Examining the Efficacy of Two Models of Preschool Professional Development in Language and Literacy

Nancy Clark-Chiarelli from Education Development Center, Inc. describes an evaluation of two approaches to early literacy professional development—one with a traditional face-to-face mode of delivery and one with a technology-enhanced component.

To plan an effective literacy-related curriculum for young children, teachers must know enough about child development and possess the necessary content knowledge to establish worthwhile goals and create relevant, engaging activities. Unfortunately, there exists a “great disjunction between what is optimal pedagogically for children’s language and literacy and development and the level of preparation that currently typifies early childhood educators.”¹

Typically, the professional development provided for early childhood teachers is characterized by episodic workshops that do not reflect research-based knowledge about effective learning² or build on teachers’ current practice.³ Consequently, teachers cannot connect the ideas and approaches explored in professional development to their own practice. When professional development focuses on curriculum, it does so in a largely process-oriented way not connected to content. Despite the importance of pedagogical content knowledge,⁴ such knowledge is not the focus of established professional development programs.

Examining the Efficacy of Two Models of Preschool Professional Development in Language and Literacy, an evaluation funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, is examining two approaches to implementing empirically based early literacy professional development in West Virginia. Over 4 years, Education Development Center (EDC), in collaboration with the West Virginia Department of Education, Concord University, and early childhood leaders and staff from six counties, will implement and research two content-rich professional development programs. An estimated 110 early childhood teachers will participate in these credit-bearing courses, potentially impacting the language and literacy learning of over 2,000 children.

One version of the course, Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP), uses a traditional face-to-face mode of delivery. The other, Technology-Enhanced Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (T-LEEP), is delivered through interactive television, Web-based instruction, and face-to-face instruction and draws on the technological infrastructure in place in all schools across West Virginia. The LEEP course will be taught by EDC

staff and West Virginia Higher Education faculty in a central location. T-LEEP participants will attend sessions, broadcast from EDC in Newton, Massachusetts, at two remote locations in West Virginia. Both approaches to professional development are delivered in three intensive, 2-day sessions.

The LEEP and T-LEEP course content incorporates six overarching topics: book reading, children’s conversations and personal narratives, phonological awareness, understanding print, writing, and integrating literacy into the curriculum.

Beginning in fall 2005, teachers and their students in West Virginia’s universal pre-K classrooms in three counties will be recruited and randomly assigned to three conditions: LEEP, T-LEEP, and control. In this 1st year of the study, teachers in both intervention conditions will engage in LEEP and T-LEEP. In the 2nd school year, we will provide on-site, content-based mentoring. Prior to the first of four mentoring visits, teachers will be asked to videotape a lesson of their choosing related to a core literacy topic (e.g., book reading). Mentors will view videotapes and engage teachers in reflection on the teaching practices presented in the tapes. In the 3rd and 4th school years, LEEP and T-LEEP will be delivered to teachers in three additional counties.

We are using a pre/post experimental design to assess the interventions’ impact on teacher and child outcomes; assessments will be administered each year in both the fall and spring. Teacher measures will include the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit* (ELLCO) to assess the quality of the classroom environment and instruction in language and literacy. The project will also assess teachers’ implementation of the curriculum through videos, review of teacher logs, and two observations per year of each participant’s classroom. To guide these observations, we will employ a rubric-based protocol that uses criteria such as dosage, use and type of materials, and delivery. Child outcome measures will include several standardized and observational measures of language and literacy development such as the *Test of Early Reading Ability*, *Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test*, and *Get It, Got It, Go*.

Qualitative methods (e.g., observation and interview) will also be used to construct detailed case studies and provide additional contextual information important to the examination of intervention efficacy, such as the degree to which teachers incorporate the language and literacy instructional strategies discussed in the professional development into their daily practice.

Although previous studies of LEEP and T-LEEP have resulted in positive teacher and child outcomes, the proposed study will allow us to replicate these findings using a more rigorous research design. The study will also address the field’s needs for high quality, research-based professional development for early childhood education teachers.

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1. Bowman, B., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers* (p. 13). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

2. Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). The quiet revolution: Rethinking teacher development. *Educational Leadership*, 53(6), 4–10; Hyson, M. (2001). Better futures for young children, better preparation for their teachers: Challenges emerging from recent national reports. *Young Children*, 56, 60–62.

3. Darling-Hammond, L., 1996.

4. Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations for the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57, 1–22.

Theory of Action in Practice

Claudia Weisburd and Tamara Sniad from Foundations, Inc. describe the use of a theory of change and a theory of action to help address questions about how to develop and evaluate professional development for after school staff.

For 10 years, Foundations, Inc. has been conducting professional development in the field of after school. Most recently, we have expanded our professional development activities from training providers on our written curricula to developing staff more broadly in the contexts of their own programs, including YMCA programs, parks and recreation programs, and many others. Last year, under a grant from the C. S. Mott Foundation, we offered professional development to close to 1,000 after school practitioners nationwide in a variety of full- and multiday formats, including a series of 3-day Afterschool Academies. All of our sessions present after school education as a distinct form of engaging with children and youth and offer core methodologies to facilitate learning and development.

As we describe below, we developed both a theory of change and a theory of action¹ to articulate our approach, define our intended impact, and design a comprehensive evaluation strategy to measure the impact of our professional development programs. In the long term, we aim to change practice and develop staff as educators in the field of after school.

Identifying Desired Outcomes of Professional Development

With help from the Bridgespan Group,² we modeled an overall theory of change (ToC) to represent our beliefs about how the

1. A *theory of change* identifies the process(es) through which a given type of social change is expected to occur. A *theory of action* maps out a specific pathway in that theory of change, or an organization's role with respect to achieving that change, based on an assessment of how it can add the most value to the change process.

2. The Bridgespan Group is a nonprofit organization applying leading-edge management strategies, tools and talent to help other nonprofits and foundations achieve greater social impact. Their work with Foundations was generously supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies.

professional development that we provide will lead to positive outcomes. Through the ToC development process, we identified our ultimate goal as improvement in learning and development for low-income children through their participation in high quality after school programs. The ToC highlighted that frontline staff skill is a core factor in high quality after school programs, along with other key factors, such as supervision, resources, and program infrastructure.

Identifying a Focused Set of Professional Development Activities and Staff Competencies

As part of our ToC, we developed a theory of action (ToA), or a plan for how our actions will affect the desired youth outcomes. These actions focus on our methods for building staff skills, as well as the program-level practices and characteristics that help staff to sustain what they have learned.

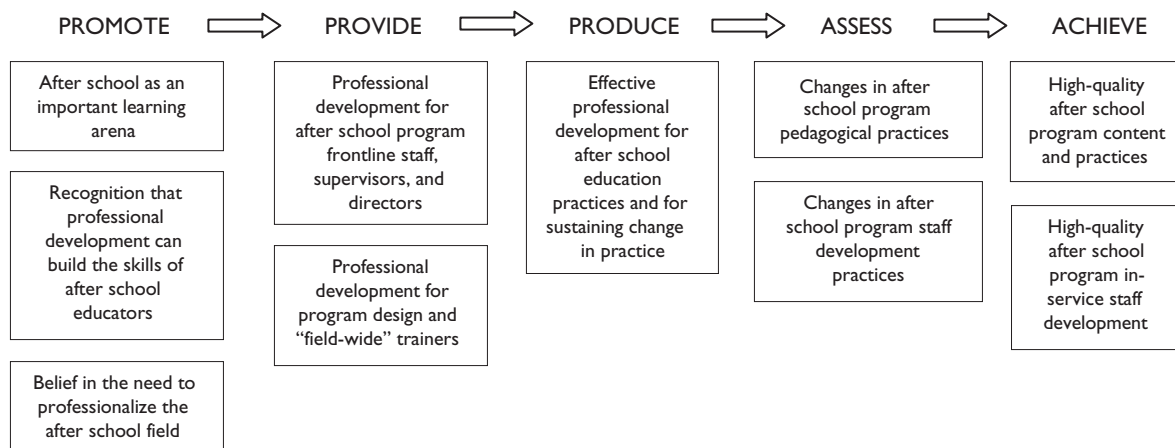
Our ToA pushed us to consider how to address staff who range widely in education and experience. We also faced the task of determining the fundamental competencies that define skilled after school educators. Unlike the field of education, in which instructors acquire an agreed-upon body of skills and knowledge via college curricula and supervised student teaching, an agreed-upon set of skills for after school providers is still evolving. Staff competencies that shape the content of our own workshops include competencies in linking to school content, building relationships, addressing the whole child, and using nonformal teaching methods.

Identifying Indicators of Change

Our ToA helped us develop indicators to measure whether our professional development has effects on practitioner and program levels—such as articulated and substantial learning objectives, positive learning environments and relationships, and resources devoted to staff development. We plan to evaluate degrees of change and measurement over time and relate that change to program infrastructure to capture other systemic factors.

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Foundations, Inc. Theory of Action



Building an Evaluation Tool Kit for Professional Development

Jennifer Buher-Kane, Nancy Peter, and Susan Kinnevy of the Center for Research on Youth and Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania share their experience of creating a tool kit designed specifically for those who provide professional development to out-of-school time program staff.

The need for effective professional development for out-of-school time (OST) staff is well documented.¹ Researchers and practitioners have shown increasing interest in finding and utilizing methods that effectively evaluate professional development for this population. In the summer of 2004, we at the Out-of-School Time Resource Center (OSTRC), housed within the Center for Research on Youth and Social Policy (CRYSP) at the University of Pennsylvania, attempted to locate research-based survey instruments used to evaluate OST professional development.

After an extensive literature review and conversations with key stakeholders, we determined that these instruments did not exist. Seeing a need for such tools, we implemented a mixed-method pilot study to design and test survey instruments that can be used in OST workshops and conference settings.

As part of the planning process, we at the OSTRC reviewed literature on effective implementation and evaluation of professional development, including models of evaluation from the professional development researchers Guskey, Killion, Kirkpatrick, and others.² These models have common elements; in particular, each defines various “levels” of evaluating professional development, such as participants’ satisfaction, learning, application, and results.³ To adapt these education-based models to OST, we added another evaluation level: extension. Extension refers to adapting knowledge to suit a particular program and/or sharing this knowledge with others such as OST staff, programs, or youth.⁴

Using the theoretical frameworks described in the literature, we next developed instruments to measure knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as intended versus actual application, at several points in time during the professional development process:

- *Preworkshop surveys* primarily gather baseline data regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- *Postworkshop surveys* gather the following information: com-

parative data regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes; reactions to workshops and presenters; and baseline data regarding intended application.

- *Follow-up workshop surveys* gather comparative data regarding actual application, benefit to students, and organizational support.
- *Presenter self-assessments* gather information regarding reactions to workshops that compares with participant responses.
- *Overall conference evaluations* gather information regarding reactions to conference components.

The preworkshop and postworkshop surveys are administered immediately before and after the workshops. The follow-up workshop survey is administered 1 month after the workshops; the inclusion of this longer-term follow-up is a distinction between the OSTRC design and those used in formal and early childhood education.

The OSTRC tested our new surveys at several conferences. The first pilot test was conducted in November of 2004 with 339 staff at one OST conference in Philadelphia. This conference yielded 1,174 surveys. After the conference, we conducted a series of five focus groups with 50 OST staff in Philadelphia to determine how the surveys could be revised. After analyzing the qualitative data, the results and feedback were incorporated into the survey questions.

A second pilot test was conducted in April and May of 2005 at two conferences. One conference hosted OST staff from across Pennsylvania, while the other hosted OST staff from multiple states within the mid-Atlantic region. Taken together, these two conferences included 740 staff and yielded 3,540 surveys. OSTRC and CRYSP staff performed a comprehensive data analysis, after which the surveys were further revised and sent to a survey design expert at the University of Pennsylvania for review. The results of this review are still pending, but will be used to revise again if necessary.

We at the OSTRC plan to publish these survey instruments as part of an evaluation tool kit that will be available, free of charge, for those who design or provide professional development to OST staff. We will share the data collected through these surveys and maintain a data storehouse that will track their use over time on a national level. We are also conducting further research on evaluating alternative forms of professional development and accurately measuring changes in OST student outcomes that result from professional development.

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3. To read more about the levels of professional development evaluation, see Questions and Answers with Thomas Guskey, page 12.

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Evaluating a Professional Development “Cascade”: From Facilitators to University Faculty to Early Childhood Providers

Caroline Wilkinson and Shelley Billig from RMC Research Corporation describe their evaluation of the New England Professional Development Initiative’s cascade approach to professional development in early childhood education.

The New England Professional Development Initiative uses a unique cascade approach to professional development for the field of early childhood education. In the first level of the cascade model, expert facilitators provide professional development to core university faculty members and early childhood specialists from three states—Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. In the second level, this cadre of core trainers provides professional development to child care providers throughout their respective states. In the third level, the core trainers select additional faculty members and specialists from their states and train them to provide professional development for child care providers.

The Cascade Model

The cascade model has some unique advantages. It is designed to take advantage of specific levels of support within each state and to build on individual state standards for early childhood education. It is also very cost-effective and focuses on building a sustained infrastructure for support. In a field characterized by rapid turnover, the cascade model should yield longer term consistency and quality.

The New England Professional Development Initiative

The New England Professional Development Initiative is based on the successful National Science Foundation-funded project, Mother Goose Cares About Math and Science. The Mother Goose curriculum, developed by the Vermont Center for the Book, features in-depth lessons to help young children learn mathematics and science process skills related to content standards. The Initiative’s 2-day professional development sessions for teachers who will use the Mother Goose Curriculum focus on using children’s literature to teach developmentally appropriate math and science concepts, such as collecting and using data, finding patterns, estimating and predicting, sorting and classifying, and recognizing relationships.

To date, 18 core faculty members have provided training to 36 other faculty members in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. As of December 2005, these faculty members have conducted professional development sessions with 203 child care providers. Over the course of the 2-year initiative, it is expected that 900 early childhood educators will attend training and that they in turn will affect the lives of over 7,000 children.

RMC’s Evaluation

Researchers at RMC Research are conducting the evaluation of this project. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, our evaluation examines the extent to which the project results in participants’ acquisition of knowledge and skills at each level of the cascade. We are exploring the degree to which participants

learn and utilize skills, fidelity to the original training approach, acceptable variation, and impact on practice. Data collection tools include surveys, interviews, and observations.

The quality of professional development is measured by the degree to which the training is aligned with the National Staff Development Council standards and benchmarks for instructional design, developed by RMC Research. We are also investigating the transfer of learning and impact on each type of provider/faculty member. To ensure that differences, if any, can be discerned, we use the same instruments for each level of the cascade. The evaluation will also identify factors that serve to facilitate or impede the effectiveness of the initiative, such as the context for support, experience and expertise of the individuals providing the training, competence and confidence in one’s knowledge base in mathematics and science, and consistency of audience.

Overall, the evaluation will focus on scalability of the professional development model and the conditions under which the model works best, in order to provide a possible model for future professional development efforts. Results of the evaluation will be available in the fall of 2006 through the Vermont Center for the Book (www.mothersgoosecares.org) and RMC Research Corporation in Denver (www.rmcdenver.com).

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Key Strategies

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integrated practice models and training programs, and supports policy improvements to ensure staff capacity that will best meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families.

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Thinking Like an Educator

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also may be developed to more thoroughly document students' integrative thinking.

- *Consider the challenges and opportunities of taking such a course to scale.* The course will soon be required in several of our master's programs. This will enable faculty to explore whether and how the course works with a large group that includes many students who, at least initially, may be less enthusiastic about its agenda.
- *Repeat the entire process in the development of a second core course.* A new group of faculty members is currently engaged in the planning phase of "CoreCourse II: Thinking Like an Educational Reformer." This course will continue many of the features of the first but will move the focus from elementary to secondary education, include more macro perspectives (i.e., politics, economics), and explicitly address the work of educational reform.

We believe that students and faculty together are refining an approach that offers future educators a thicker engagement in a number of different disciplines and ultimately promises to further professionalize the field.

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Theory of Action in Practice

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Uncovering the Complexities of Evaluating Impact

Finally, the ToC and ToA process has highlighted the complexities of evaluating the impact of professional development in after school. First, direct professional development is one part of a complex system needed to improve staff skills and build program quality. Professional development sessions may be excellent, but without other parts of the system, effects may not be manifested or sustained in practice. Second, adult learning and change are ongoing processes, which may require a trial and error approach and time for ideas to percolate.

We are now conducting training in different "dosages" and with different groups. Our training content includes ongoing staff development to address the goal of sustained change. Evaluation data collected from close to 700 diverse participants suggests that this is the right track: Two thirds of our participants are responsible for training or supervising staff in their programs, and three

quarters say they intend to use the materials we provide. A key component of our evolving outcomes assessment strategy is to collect follow-up data to identify whether intentions are translated into sustained action. Over the next 2 years, we hope to better understand what constitutes professional development that produces change, demonstrate the value of such professional development, and move the field toward improving staff capacities to provide high quality after school experiences for children and youth.

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HFRP Resources for Professional Development

A new guide for after school providers, *Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School*, has been produced through a partnership between HFRP, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and BOSTnet. This comprehensive, easy-to-read guide is a critical resource for any after school provider looking to create or expand a family engagement program. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/families

The Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation Brief, *Promoting Quality Through Professional Development: A Framework for Evaluation*, examines professional development efforts for out-of-school time staff and offers a framework for their evaluation based on the work of Donald Kirkpatrick and Thomas Guskey (see also Questions and Answers, page 12). www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief8.html

The After School Evaluation Symposium, held in September 2005 and sponsored by HFRP and the C. S. Mott Foundation, included a plenary session on *Developing and Evaluating Professional Development Efforts for After School*. This session featured panel presentations by researchers and practitioners, as well as discussion sections focused on the state of and future directions for professional development and its evaluation. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/conference/index.html

The New & Noteworthy section features an annotated list of papers, organizations, initiatives, and other resources related to the issue's theme.

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2003). *The unsolved challenge of system reform: The condition of the frontline human services workforce*. Baltimore, MD: Author. This report by the Casey Foundation explores the job conditions of the frontline workers who play a valuable role in the lives of children and families. The report includes profiles of current conditions, challenges faced by frontline workers, and strategies for improving human services delivery. The report also outlines eight factors that pose the greatest challenge to this workforce and describes approaches to significantly improve staff recruitment and quality. www.aecf.org/initiatives/hswi/report_rev.pdf

At issue: Evaluation. (2003, Fall). *Journal of Staff Development*, 24(4). The National Staff Development Council devotes the fall 2003 issue of its journal to evaluation techniques, focuses, and funding in K–12 education. Many of the articles emphasize the need to move beyond evaluating immediate participation satisfaction with program delivery to evaluation techniques and questions that measure the success of professional development programs in terms of ultimate student achievement. www.nsd.org/library/publications/jsd

Keeping professional learning on track with evaluation. (2004, Spring). *Notes & Reflections*, 6. This issue of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's online newsletter underscores the importance of evaluating professional development to ensure its effective impact on teachers' learning and student achievement. A tool kit included in the newsletter offers strategies and resources for evaluating teacher reactions, teacher learning, organizational support, classroom implementation, and student learning outcomes. www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring04

Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders*. Washington, DC: Education Schools Project. This report, written by the president of Columbia University Teachers College, critiques the quality of university-based preparation programs for school administrators. The 4-year study revealed that these programs suffer from curricular disarray, low admissions and graduation standards, and inadequate clinical instruction. Recommendations for improvement include redesigning educa-

tion leadership programs to have focused and rigorous instruction in management and education. The report positions postdegree professional development by way of certificate-based short-term programs as a more effective way for administrators to advance through career stages. www.edschools.org/reports_leaders.htm

Smith, C. (in press). *Evidence of effectiveness for training in the High/Scope participatory learning approach* (High/Scope Research Brief). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. This research brief provides evidence of effectiveness for training developed and delivered by High/Scope's Youth Development Group. Evidence is reviewed across four levels: customer satisfaction, staff knowledge gained, effects on staff performance, and youth outcomes. The author also suggests that training may be effective when it is research based, when organizations support individual learning efforts, when trainees are part of larger systemic initiatives, and when training aligns with a validated assessment tool.

An expanded version of New & Noteworthy is available on our website at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue32/newfull.html.

Upcoming Issues of The Evaluation Exchange

Complementary Learning Double Issue: Linkages in
Out-of-School Time – Summer 2006
Global, Participatory, Democratic Evaluation – Fall 2006

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