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Evaluation can take many shapes and forms and ultimately contributes to improving the quality of an initiative.

For more information about NSDC's Standards for Staff Development, see **www.nsdc.org/ standards/ index.cfm**

Evaluation targets 4 areas

School-based, job-embedded professional learning responds to students' and teachers' learning needs. Based on goals for teacher learning that align with goals for student learning, this kind of professional learning focuses on what teachers want to learn to refine instruction rather than what someone less familiar with the school or classroom dictates. Teachers report overwhelmingly that the latter type of professional development is not useful to them (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009).

Because school-based, job-embedded, collaborative professional learning, the type of learning described in NSDC's definition of professional development (www.nsdc.org/standfor/ definition.cfm), is more relevant, meaningful, and aligned with school and district goals, schools may not take the time to evaluate its effectiveness.

Everything worth doing well is worth evaluating. Evaluation can take many shapes and forms and ultimately contributes to improving the quality of an initiative.

This is true for collaborative professional learning and its results. Because evaluation is often viewed negatively, those who facilitate learning teams and those who support them seek more positive ways to engage in evaluation that is informative and useful.

For coaches and teacher leaders this means taking an active role in engaging their colleagues in evaluation. For example, when faculty engage in collaborative learning teams, evaluation is necessary in four areas simultaneously, each critical to the learning teams' success.

The four areas are:
- The results the teams produce;
- The quality of the team's learning;
- The team's functionality; and
- Individual members' contributions to the team.

| **NSDC STANDARD** |

Evaluation: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

Each area requires a different type of evaluation, and the evaluation results in different actions.

1. Results

The results the team produces require looking at student data. This type of evaluation engages team members in examining both formative and summative data on student performance. Teams frequently set long- and short-term student achievement goals with clear benchmarks for measuring progress over time. This important yardstick helps team members know if their collaborative learning and work is paying dividends where it counts the most, in students' learning. Teams might write, administer, and analyze the results of common assessments, use progress monitoring tools, look at portfolios of student work, or analyze samples of some students' work to determine if their instruction, refined and informed by their

learning, is affecting student learning in the short and long term.

2. Quality

Those facilitating or advising collaborative learning teams assist them to embed evaluation of their learning experiences in their ongoing collaborative work. They might use NSDC's standards as benchmarks against which to assess their learning experiences. They assess the context, process, and content of their learning, asking themselves if their experience aligns with the standards and how they can improve their professional learning. If their school, district, or state makes the NSDC Standards Assessment Inventory available to assess professional learning, they analyze their results in light of the learning they do both in their team and schoolwide. Or they use the self-assessment tool NSDC offers in *Standards for Staff Development* to conduct an informal assessment of their learning. Taking time to assess their professional learning gives teams information to identify the strengths of their learning experiences and to target areas for growth.

3. Functionality

A third area for evaluation focuses on the team functionality. Maintaining a team that has a safe and productive environment in which all members contribute to the team's success and feel valued and appreciated requires effort. High-performing teams are neither magic nor luck. They result from trial and error, open communication, courage, commitment, and effort. Team members, to move beyond the congeniality phase into the joint work phase, face hurdles in which people adjust their individual behaviors and views to create a team that shares a common set of goals and vision for the work they do together. Within this developmental process, teams face challenges that are uncomfortable for individuals. The team's willingness to examine how well members work together, including members' agreements with one another, processes for accomplishing their work and for handling problems that arise, and members' basic efficiency, advances a team from a collection of individuals focused on their individual needs to a true team. True teams get their work done efficiently and effectively, often with invisible leadership and structures, enjoy one

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AREA OF EVALUATION	TIME	DATA EXAMINED	ACTION
Student results	20 minutes	Student achievement data from classroom assessments.	Develop a short-term goal related to a schoolwide goal for increasing student achievement in area(s) identified in this data analysis.
Team functionality	10 minutes	Discussion of team members' perceptions of how well the team is keeping agreements.	Identify agreements members are keeping easily and well and agreements to focus on for the next several meetings.
Team learning	15 minutes	NSDC's self-assessment tool on the process standards with individual scores aggregated into team mean scores.	Develop a goal for improving learning processes.
Individual contribution to team	10 minutes	Individual team members identify one contribution each makes to the team and one behavior to strengthen, along with the kind of data the member wants from colleagues.	• List team members with their area and type of data requested. • Provide feedback to individuals at a subsequent meeting.
Student results	30 minutes	Student classroom work assessed in terms of the short-term goal achievement; identification of new area of focus for next goal.	Develop a new short-term goal related to a schoolwide goal for increasing student achievement in area(s) identified in this data analysis.

another, prefer to work as a team, and use the collective success of every team member and all of their students as their standard of accomplishment.

4. Contributions

Beyond the functioning of a team, though, is the commitment of each team member to assess his or her contribution to the team. This contribution can be defined in several ways, including keeping agreements, meeting deadlines, following through on commitments, placing the well-being of the team above one's own, speaking honestly, succinctly, and straightforwardly, having the courage to challenge the status quo, speaking directly to others when an agreement is broken, and supporting both individuals and the team to accomplish goals.

Evaluation in one or several of these areas can easily be integrated routinely into the agenda for each team meeting. If a team is meeting several times a week or month, each meeting might include a portion of time set aside for discussion in one of the areas. The table on p. 11 outlines a possible five-meeting cycle for integrating evaluation into each meeting.

The success of any effort depends largely on the willingness of those leading, implementing, and supporting the effort to examine continuously their effectiveness on multiple levels and with multiple data. This is particularly true in collaborative learning teams because they function on different levels and in different ways. What works in one team may not work or be appropriate for another team, yet if both teams are producing results for students, have effective learning experiences that contribute to refined instruction, are functioning well as a team so that members feel valued and appreciated, and individuals are strengthening their ability to be more effective team members, both teams are successful. Evaluation provides this information. Yet information alone is insufficient; it takes a parallel commitment to examine the information about practice, process, structures, and results, to set goals for improvement, to take deliberate action toward improvement, and to re-evaluate for a team to gain leverage to strengthen its results. ◆