

13 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

TACKLING BEHAVIOR FROM ALL SIDES

By Valerie von Frank

Principal Robin Weaver saw a problem and developed a passion. Too many children of color, particularly African-American boys, were showing up in special education classes. She believed children were being over-identified, based more on their behavior than abilities. So Weaver turned to her teachers.

“We wanted to develop the capacity of the general education teacher to change behavior,” said Weaver, principal of the multicultural Harmony Hills Elementary School in Silver Spring, Md. “What skill set do you need to be able to address the needs of a changing demographic, or because you’re a first-year teacher?”

The questions raised at Harmony Hills mirror a national trend. Teachers “are now expected to teach a population that is increasingly diverse not only in terms of unique cultural backgrounds, but also in terms of academic, behavioral, and social



skills sets” (Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009, p. 1).

Recent surveys by MetLife indicate that many teachers are challenged by the issue. The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* (2006) showed principals reporting that only about 30% of newly graduated teachers were prepared to manage children’s behavior. The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future* (2008) said, “Major changes in how special needs students are educated in public schools have increased diversity in regular classrooms.” Nearly half of teachers agreed that classes now have such a mix of ability

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“We develop the capacity of teachers to deal with student differences.”

— Robin Weaver

**PERCEPTION GAP
BETWEEN TEACHERS
AND PRINCIPALS**

Teachers spend 75% of their time or more on instruction rather than discipline or administration.

53%

81%

Our school’s disciplinary policy is excellent/good.

71%

96%

Classes have such a mix of ability levels that teachers can’t teach them effectively.

43%

24%

Source: The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present, and Future* (2008).

levels that they can’t teach effectively. Only half in the survey agreed that they spend more than 75% of their time teaching, as opposed to dealing with discipline or other matters. And, critically, while 71% of teachers surveyed rated their schools’ discipline policies highly, the survey also found “there is a larger difference between the number of teachers and principals who rate their school discipline policy as excellent or good than on any of the other school condition issues explored.”

“There are a lot of reasons behavior is such a prominent issue” for teachers across the country, said Michael Epstein, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor in the College of Education and Human Services who, with Weaver, co-authored an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) report on behavior management. He said national polls show 20% of school-aged children are at risk of having emotional or behavior problems. And many educators are not being prepared well to manage these needs.

“We spend very little time — only about 10% of professional development covers managing behavior,” Epstein said. The IES guide (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008) cites research showing that just 36% of students had teachers who spent at least eight hours — over three years — in professional development related to behavior management.

“We don’t provide staff development opportunities in sufficient intensity,” Epstein said. “We know so much about the prevention of problems; if we implemented several recommendations, we could prevent the onset of more severe behavioral challenges.”

At Harmony Hills, Weaver said her job is to carve out regular time from the school day for teachers to meet together in grade-level teams to address common needs, to arrange for classes to be covered during the released time, and to be sure that the time is honored.

Giving teachers leadership in addressing classroom concerns has made the difference. The school’s suspension rate is less than 1%; despite an

**Harmony Hills Elementary School
Silver Spring, Md.**

Grades: PK-5

Enrollment: 542

Staff: 44 teachers

Racial/ethnic mix:

White: 6.8%

Black: 24.5%

Hispanic: 61.8%

Asian/Pacific Islander: 6.6%

Native American: 0.2%

Limited English proficiency: 39.5%

Free/reduced lunch: 80.3%

Special education: 7.7%

80% poverty rate, it has made Adequate Yearly Progress; and special education referrals are down over the four years since classroom teachers began focusing on interventions for students with behavioral problems. In 2005, before the focus on behavior, nearly 10% of students received special education services. In 2008, that number was just over 7%. And throughout the 2007-08 year, just 30 students were referred to building-level intervention from the grade-level teams.

Of those, eight were screened for special education services and six of the eight received individualized education plans.

“We develop the capacity of teachers to deal with student differences,” Weaver said. “It’s a collaborative, professional community around behavior and learning. It’s usually behavior that impacts learning. If you can get the behavior in line, you can see the progress in math.”

Grade-level teams meet for one hour a week on reading, one hour a week on math, and twice a month for 45 minutes to talk about student cases and make group decisions. Teachers identify a child with problem behaviors, then focus on addressing the teacher’s single greatest concern. The teacher sets a four- to six-week goal and contracts with the student, rewarding the student for achieving positive behavior benchmarks. After working with the student for several weeks, the teacher updates the team on progress.

The ideas come from the teacher, Weaver stresses, with support from the grade-level team and a “coach” who volunteers from each team at the start of the school year. Those coaches spend one hour a month working with the school reading specialist, math specialist, nurse, psychologist, social worker, and administrator to review case data, learn about behavior interventions, and bring their developing expertise back to their teams.

“It’s general education teachers working with general education teachers to set the goals, monitor the goals, report on the goals, and determine whether the intervention did what it was supposed to do or we need to tweak it,” Weaver said.

“Kids who need special services get them,” she continued, “but they get them after we have tried many, many interventions. Educators often fall into the trap of thinking, ‘We did it already, and it didn’t work.’ Change doesn’t happen in a week. It comes incrementally and with practice, as the child gets feedback on what he or she is doing that is appropriate — what does it look like, what does it sound like.”

She said seven or eight students out of 10 respond to interventions before needing a special education referral, and attempts to modify the child’s behavior may last throughout a school year.

Epstein said focusing more professional learning around behavior interventions could help teachers, and more importantly, student achievement.

“There’s a clear relationship between academic performance and behavior,” he said. “Kids who misbehave, are disobedient, unruly, or uncooperative are at risk of having (academic) problems. ... The more active they are in learning, the lower the discipline problems.”

Epstein recommended that school administrators develop their awareness of classroom discipline issues with frequent walk-throughs. Then provide professional learning. Epstein said there are evidence-based practices to improve student behavior, for example, the First Step to Success program (Walker, 1998).

“The onus falls on universities (preparing teachers) and school districts to provide relevant, evidence-based staff development on managing behavior,” Epstein said.

He said professional development should help prepare teachers to:

- Observe and record student behavior, developing data about when and where students misbehave most often and to use that data to change the conditions for misbehavior.
- Set up the classroom to be physically effective for managing instruction.
- Schedule and pace the content and create an environment in which students understand the teacher’s expectations.
- Manage behavior of individual children and groups through praise/recognition and ignoring certain behaviors.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, especially young teachers, around developing effective

Model standards

In 2001, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), published *The Model Standards for Licensing General and Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities: A Resource for State Dialogue*.

These standards outline what general and special education teachers should know and be able to do to meet the general classroom needs of students with disabilities. The project uses these standards to articulate the information and activities that help general classroom educators address the needs of students with disabilities in the regular classroom and connects general classroom teachers with excellent resources available from governmental and non-profit resources. See www.ccsso.org/projects/interstate_New_Teacher_Assessment_and_Support_Consortium/Projects/Special_Education_Resources_for_General_Educators_SERGE/

interventions.

- Work collaboratively with parents/guardians on modifying the student’s behavior.

Weaver stressed the potential of grade-level teaching teams to bring about significant successes in modifying students’ behavior. She talked about the school’s mascot, the Harmony Huskies.

“The characteristics of that dog are really what we are,” Weaver said. “It’s a team dog with a leader, and then that leader drops back (into the team) and another leader comes up. Yet we’re all going in the same direction, with a purpose.”

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The entire *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* is available online at the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) web site: www.eric.ed.gov

NSDC’S BELIEF

Remarkable professional learning begins with ambitious goals for students.

To answer the question: *How do I manage my classroom to optimize learning?* See http://serge.ccsso.org/question_3.html

Effective behavior support

SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY VERSION 2.0

Effective Behavior Support (EBS) survey assessing and planning behavior support in schools

Name of school _____ Date _____ District _____ State _____

PERSON COMPLETING THE SURVEY:

- Administrator Special educator Parent/family member General educator Counselor
 School psychologist Educational/teacher assistant Community member Other

1. Complete the survey independently.
2. Schedule 20-30 minutes to complete the survey.
3. Base your rating on your individual experiences in the school. If you do not work in classrooms, answer questions that are applicable to you.

To assess behavior support, first evaluate the status of each system feature (i.e. in place, partially in place, not in place) (left hand side of survey). Next, examine each feature:

- a. "What is the current status of this feature (i.e. in place, partially in place, not in place)?"
- b. For those features rated as partially in place or not in place, "What is the priority for improvement for this feature (i.e., high, medium, low)?"

4. Return your completed survey to _____ by _____.

Current status			Feature	Priority for improvement		
In place	Partially in place	Not in place		High	Med.	Low
SCHOOLWIDE SYSTEMS						
			Schoolwide means involving all students, all staff, and all settings.			
			1. A small number (e.g., 3-5) of positively and clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.			
			2. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.			
			3. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.			
			4. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.			
			5. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.			
			6. Distinctions between office vs. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.			
			7. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.			
			8. Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.			
			9. A team exists for behavior support planning and problem solving.			
			10. The school administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.			
			11. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an ongoing system.			
			12. Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g., monthly).			
			13. The school has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.			
			14. Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, and conducted based on school data.			
			15. Schoolwide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) ongoing rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.			
			16. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in schoolwide interventions.			
			17. The school team has access to ongoing training and support from district personnel.			
			18. The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level, or student behavior at least annually.			

Source: www.pbis.org. The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. Survey authors are Anne W. Todd, George Sugai, and Robert H. Horner.

Current status			Feature	Priority for improvement		
NON-CLASSROOM SYSTEMS						
In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Nonclassroom settings are defined as particular times or places where supervision is emphasized (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, bus).	High	Med.	Low
			1. Schoolwide expected student behaviors apply to nonclassroom settings.			
			2. Schoolwide expected student behaviors are taught in nonclassroom settings.			
			3. Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, and interact) students in nonclassroom settings.			
			4. Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in nonclassroom settings.			
			5. Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to and exit from school grounds.			
			6. Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in nonclassroom spaces.			
			7. Staff receives regular opportunities to develop and improve active supervision skills.			
			8. Status of student behavior and management practices is evaluated quarterly from data.			
			9. All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of nonclassroom settings.			

CLASSROOM SYSTEMS						
In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Classroom settings are instructional settings in which teacher(s) supervise and teach groups of students.	High	Med.	Low
			1. Expected student behavior and routines in classrooms are stated positively and defined clearly.			
			2. Problem behaviors are defined clearly.			
			3. Expected student behavior and routines in classrooms are taught directly.			
			4. Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (more than 4 positives to 1 negative).			
			5. Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.			
			6. Procedures for expected and problem behaviors are consistent with schoolwide procedures.			
			7. Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.			
			8. Instruction and curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).			
			9. Students experience high rates of academic success (> 75% correct).			
			10. Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance and recommendations (observation, instruction, and coaching).			
			11. Transitions between instructional and noninstructional activities are efficient and orderly.			

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SYSTEMS						
In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Individual student systems are specific supports for students who engage in chronic problem behaviors (1% to 7% of enrollment)	High	Med.	Low
			1. Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.			
			2. A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.			
			3. A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.			
			4. Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.			
			5. Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning.			
			6. Significant family and/or community members are involved when appropriate and possible.			
			7. School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.			
			8. Behavior is monitored, feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team and relevant staff.			

Source: www.pbis.org. The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. Survey authors are Anne W. Todd, George Sugai, and Robert H. Horner.



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We get rid of all of the excuses

Q How do you help teachers create a positive school climate for student achievement?

We have to have our children as No. 1. It starts with that mindset. We have to get rid of all the excuses. Our professional development must be academic and child-centered. That's not the time for us to talk about how old the building is or how we don't get parental involvement or, 'I don't have enough chairs.' It's not gripe-session time. Let's get the data about where our children are, identify their greatest needs, and decide how to attack the issues as a school. No teachers here work in isolation. No one goes into the classroom, shuts the door, and then that's their world. Everything is transparent. Teachers' classrooms are constantly visited.

Then, people at the top have to be role models for how we interact with our students and our parents, even when, at times, those are difficult peo-

ple. Even when they are angry or frustrated, we can't act in kind. Leaders model, "This is how I expect you to talk to this child when this child is having a bad day." I'm going to show how I expect a teacher to deal with an at-risk child or a difficult child, to talk to them — listen to them.

When we look at the plight of our urban communities, we have to look at teaching the whole child and not just the three Rs. When I consider some of the negative things that have gone on in my community, I know we cannot just sit back, relax, and say, "Well, that's not my kid." If what's happening is a part of this city, a part of this state, a part of this country, then we have a stake and a responsibility to try to do something to improve it. Since I don't have any control over what goes on at home, I have to do as much as I can, as often as I can, when I have these children in school. When we put the whole picture together, any educator sees that responsibility. ♦

NSDC ON FACEBOOK

NSDC has joined the world's premiere social networking site. Friend us to get the latest NSDC news, share your stories, and tell us what's on your mind.



facebook

Questions? E-mail us at community@nsdc.org



Bill Ferriter is a 6th-grade social studies and language arts teacher at Salem Middle School, Apex, N.C.

Bad example brings good resolve

The most ineffective educator that I've ever met was a guy — let's call him Joe — charged with providing support to struggling students in one of my previous schools. I feel pretty comfortable saying that in the years we spent roaming the same hallways, Joe never made a meaningful contribution to our building.

Harsh words, huh?

Joe's flaws were many. To start with, entire months could go by where we'd never even see him. We'd joke about "Joe-dini's Great Disappearing Act," wondering how he could support students that he didn't know who were struggling in classes with teachers he'd never met.

Joe made matters worse by constantly reminding everyone that he was responsible for an entire grade level. "I have a caseload of 365 students," he'd say when we'd press him to explain what he had done for one of our kids. "Name 12," we'd mumble, knowing that it would be an impossible task for Joe.

Most frustrating was Joe's insistence that his door was always open. "All you have to do is stop by," he'd say, knowing full well that between teaching, planning, and meeting, there was little chance that we'd take him up on his offer.

Looking back, though, I realize that I learned a lot of lessons about working beyond the classroom from Joe. They include three broad actions that I'm committed to:

BEING VISIBLE: Today's classroom teachers are swamped by new demands. Under constant pressure to perform, they're learning to manipulate data, respond to results, and work together. They're

consumed by responsibility.

That means no matter how open my door is, teachers won't have the flexibility to "just stop by." Instead, it's my job to reach out and look for someone to help.

BEING VOCAL: If I'm honest, I've got to admit that Joe probably did something worthwhile in our school. We just never saw the tangible results of his work.

That means I've got to make sure that teachers are aware of the services that I can provide and see examples of what those services look like in action. Without clear pictures of why my work matters, teachers are going to rightfully question my contributions.

BEING HUMBLE: The opportunities that are available to educators practicing beyond the classroom are pretty amazing. From simple perks like having the flexibility to determine our schedule to legitimate rewards like being able to attend county and state professional development sessions, our work carries a sense of importance and professionalism missing for many classroom teachers.

Sometimes it's difficult to remember that the most important — and difficult — work that happens in our school is carried out by teachers. The rest of us have to realize that we're support staffers instead of the all-star team. Our job is to serve.

Does any of this make sense to you? What kinds of actions do you think are important for those working beyond the classroom?

Have you learned any lessons from the Joes in your life? ♦



Bill Ferriter has been a valued contributor to T3 since September 2006. This is his final column.

Join the conversation with Bill by visiting www.nsd.org/learningblog/ and offering your opinion. Bill posts his provocative ideas frequently — be sure to return often.

Behavior needs schoolwide effort

By **Carla Thomas McClure**

The “get tough, then tougher” approach to increasing discipline and control in schools has its limits, according to George Sugai, an expert in behavior disorders. In an article published in *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, he and colleagues Brandi Simonsen and



Madeline Negrón promote, instead, a continuum of positive behavior supports for all students, including children who require highly individualized interventions. Research cited by these and other experts suggest that schools can support classroom teachers by focusing on prevention; using multiple data sources to develop strategies for screening, identification,

and treatment; and taking a comprehensive, coordinated, schoolwide approach to reducing problem behaviors among students.

Schoolwide positive behavior supports

When Sugai and colleagues reviewed research supporting schoolwide implementation of positive behavior supports, they found several individual studies that associated such supports with decreases in office discipline referrals and increases in consistency and positive interactions among staff. Randomized control trials indicated improved academic and behavior outcomes. And a cost-benefit analysis found that schools implementing schoolwide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) saved administrators an average of 15.75 days a year on office discipline referrals, while students saved an

average of 79.5 days of instructional time.

Elements of SWPBS include gaining staff involvement and buy-in, using data to make decisions, teaching expectations and rules, providing effective consequences, and developing reward systems. Detailed information and technical assistance related to SWPBS is available from the federally funded Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (see box on the next page).

The center describes SWPBS as a three-tiered framework that a team customizes. The school team selects outcomes, data, practices, and systems that are meaningful and appropriate within the school’s context. The primary intervention tier supports all students across all school settings by establishing schoolwide rules, a program of social skills instruction, a schoolwide reinforcement system, and so forth. Most students (89% of elementary school students and 71% to 74% of secondary students) respond to such interventions when they are implemented effectively. The secondary intervention tier provides additional behavior supports for students who do not respond to the primary tier. The tertiary intervention tier supports the 1% to 5% of students who require highly individualized interventions, either because other interventions are not effective or appropriate or because the students’ behaviors pose a risk to themselves or others.

School-based mental health programs

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2005) reports that “half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.” At school, children with untreated mental disorders may find it difficult to focus on tasks and to manage their emotions and behaviors. Families do not always have the knowledge or resources to secure quality mental health screening, referral, and treatment services for their children. As a result, schools often function as the de facto mental health system.

EDVANTIA™

Carla Thomas McClure is a staff writer at Edvantia (www.edvantia.org), a nonprofit research and development organization that works with federal, state, and local education agencies to improve student achievement.

School-based mental health programs support not only the children who need help but their teachers as well. Research compiled by the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools suggests that school-based mental health programs are most likely to be effective when they:

- Provide a comprehensive system of supports;
- Take a proactive, preventive, and multifaceted approach;
- Offer a continuum of interventions and services;
- Are responsive to students' individual, developmental, and cultural differences;
- Are coordinated and fully integrated with other education programs, school improvement plans, and services;
- Include accountability and evaluation components based on student outcomes;
- Build strong connections to families, communities, and appropriate agencies;
- Employ credentialed, professional school counselors; and
- Afford school counselors the time and resources to reach all students.

Also, mainstream educators need opportunities to learn about common mental health conditions such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). For example, teachers may find it helpful to know some basic facts about ADHD:

- (1) According to NIMH, its causes seem to be grounded in neurobiology and genetics; the disorder does not arise purely from social fac-

tors or child-rearing methods.

- (2) Not all children with ADHD exhibit the same types of attention and learning problems, and it's not uncommon for a child with ADHD to exhibit problems that vary from day to day.
- (3) Medication alone is no guarantee that ADHD symptoms will subside. Armed with such knowledge, teachers may be less likely to blame themselves or students for problem behaviors — and more likely to tap into school and community resources to find solutions.

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School-based mental health programs support not only the children who need help but their teachers as well.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

• **Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports**

www.pbis.org

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, the center offers information and technical assistance to help schools identify, adapt, and sustain effective schoolwide disciplinary practices. Includes a video overview of PBIS:

www.pbis.org/swpbs_videos/pbs_video-discovering_swpbs.aspx

• **U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences**

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom: A Practice Guide

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf

(See summary, "5 strategies target bad behavior," in the March 2009 edition of T3)

• **School Mental Health Connection**

Fact sheets provide information on how to enhance the classroom behavior and academic performance of children with

anxiety disorders, Tourette's Syndrome, and other mental health challenges.

www.schoolmentalhealth.org/Resources/Educ/MACMH/MACMH.html

• **Teaching Exceptional Children Plus**

Articles and multimedia content for those working with children with special needs; includes abstracts from *TEACHING Exceptional Children*.

<http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus>



Joellen Killion is deputy executive director of the National Staff Development Council.

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.nsd.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.nsd.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

Those facilitating or advising collaborative learning teams assist them to embed evaluation of their learning experiences in their ongoing collaborative work.

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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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. ♦

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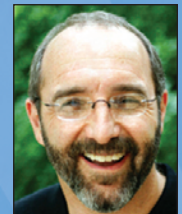
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