

LSC Core Update

FYI

Spring Data Collection

HRI is gearing up for core evaluation spring data collection. 1997 marks the third year of implementation for the core evaluation system and we would like to thank everyone for their input and cooperation as the system has developed.

To be considered for continued LSC funding, NSF requires that each LSC project participate fully in the core evaluation (see the box marked "Annual LSC Core Evaluation Requirements" for a system summary).

March through May marks the main core evaluation data collection period (the only exception is professional development observations, which are conducted throughout the year).

1997 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual

In mid-January, we will ship one copy of the 1997 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual to each LSC project lead evaluator. In addition, each project's "PI contact" for the core evaluation will receive a copy of the manual. We will send a limited number of additional copies of the manual to each project on request. (We hope to have the entire manual on the Web shortly so people can access it there.)

This manual includes a copy of each current data collection instrument: the principal questionnaire, classroom and professional development observation protocols, the teacher interview protocol, and several versions of the teacher questionnaire (K-8 science, K-8 mathematics, 7-12 mathematics).

Along with copies of the instruments, the manual also includes detailed guidelines for conducting the core evaluation data collection activities.

Data Collection Sampling Frame

As explained in the November '96 *LSC Core Update*, each LSC project must provide HRI with a file containing information for each teacher targeted for the project's professional development and teaching the targeted subject this spring. (This file was formerly referred to as the "Targeted Teacher File.")

This file will serve as the sampling frame for LSC core evaluation data collection activities, so its accuracy is essential. Detailed guidelines for compiling this file are included in the 1997 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual and are available on HRI's web site.

Overview of the Process

We have made several changes to the system that should streamline the spring data collection process for LSC projects.

Like last year, each project should send the Data Collection Sampling Frame to HRI at least a month prior to the date the project wishes to receive questionnaires and samples. Because data collection activities take time and must be conducted between March 1 and May 31, projects should send the file to HRI in February if possible, and certainly no later than the beginning of April. Within a month of receiving the file, HRI will provide the project with teacher samples and supplies of scannable questionnaires. Projects will need to develop their own cover letters to accompany the questionnaires.

Cover Letters

At the request of the projects, the Teacher Questionnaires now contain

information about the core evaluation, including an explanation of the reason for using teacher names and IDs as part of the data collection process and an assurance of confidentiality of the data.

Each project will need to prepare a cover letter to accompany the questionnaires, letting respondents know where to return their completed forms, and reminding them to remove their name labels before doing so. You will also need to "identify" your LSC project so they can respond to questions about their involvement in LSC. For example, you might indicate that: "The questionnaire includes several items about 'the LSC project in your district.' Our LSC project is called 'Science For All' and has been in operation since the summer of 1995."

Please note that the principal questionnaire does not include information about the core evaluation.¹ You may want to excerpt some of the information from the teacher questionnaire and include it in the cover letter to principals along with identification of your LSC and instructions on returning the questionnaire. The data collection manual includes a hard copy of the teacher questionnaires for your reference, and the information page (from the inside cover of the teacher questionnaire) can be downloaded from HRI's web site.

⇒ Teacher Questionnaires

HRI provides each project with a supply of pre-numbered questionnaires and labels listing the name, school, district, and questionnaire ID number

¹ This omission is deliberate; questionnaire booklets come in 4-page increments and we didn't want to print the 4-page principal questionnaire on 8 pages for this purpose. The teacher questionnaires are 6 pages in length, so this was not an issue.

FYI (CONTINUED)

for each teacher to be surveyed as part of the random sample.

For projects targeting a single subject and serving more than 350 elementary teachers, HRI selects a random sample of 300 teachers. Projects targeting fewer than 350 teachers are provided labels for their population of teachers.

Projects targeting both science and mathematics administer three different questionnaires: science, mathematics, and a hybrid science/mathematics teacher questionnaire. Each is administered to a random sample of 150 teachers.

K-12 mathematics projects administer the K-8 questionnaire to a sample of 300 elementary teachers. In addition, these projects administer the 7-12 mathematics teacher questionnaire to a sample of 300 secondary teachers (or the population, if it is less than 350). Please refer to "Q&A" in this issue for more information on sample sizes.

To avoid confusion, the questionnaire to be administered to lead teachers or other teachers in addition to the random sample will have a different "look" (achieved by shading the cover differently). Projects that have requested these additional questionnaires will be responsible for bubbling in the IDs before distributing them.

⇒ **Principal Questionnaires**

HRI provides each project with a supply of pre-numbered questionnaires and labels listing the school, district, and questionnaire ID number for each principal.

⇒ **Classroom Observations**

HRI provides each project evaluator with a random sample of teachers for classroom observations.

⇒ **Teacher Interviews**

HRI provides each project evaluator (for Cohort 1 and 2 projects only) with a random sample of 10 teachers for teacher interviews.

⇒ **Questionnaire Processing**

Projects should ship all completed questionnaires to HRI for processing by June 20, 1997. HRI will scan ques-

Annual LSC Core Evaluation Requirements

- Professional Development Observations (5-8 per year)
- Teacher Questionnaires (300 if one subject; 450 if two subjects)
- Principal Questionnaires (population)
- Classroom Observations (10 per subject)
- Individual Teacher Interviews (10; not conducted baseline data collection year)

All data collection activities conducted March-May annually, except professional development observations which are conducted throughout the year.

Project evaluators are responsible for reporting these data to HRI each fall for inclusion in the annual Cross-Site Report prepared by HRI.

tionnaires and provide results to each project by the end of August.

Observation Training

As indicated in a message sent to project evaluators and PIs last month, NSF has asked HRI to conduct a series of 2-day regional workshops to improve interrater reliability prior to the spring data collection.

All those who will be observing classrooms as part of the core evaluation have been asked to send HRI a list of their days available between February 15 and March 15 so regional workshops can be planned for the most

convenient times and locations. PIs need to make sure that all potential observers are on HRI's e-mail distribution list or otherwise receive the information about the training sessions. HRI will get the final schedule out to all observers via e-mail as soon as possible.

SOMETHING NEW (CONTINUED)

Forms

NSF is creating a database so they can answer the many questions they get about the LSC program. Starting this year, new projects are being asked to provide information for that database during negotiations, including details about the demographics and policies of participating districts.

Rather than asking the existing projects to provide information NSF already has on hand, the Program Officers will fill out the project data forms and send them to the PIs for verification and completion. The LSC data collection manual includes copies of all the forms NSF needs from each project. Projects that have already provided NSF with information about district policies will need only to provide the requested demographic information.

HRI on the Web

CORE EVALUATION Q&A

A site on the World Wide Web that includes information on the LSC core evaluation. The site can be accessed by pointing your web browser to the following address:

<http://www.horizon-research.com>

Through the site you can access the following information:

1997 Data Collection Sampling Frame Guidelines

The information sheet from the inside cover of the teacher questionnaire; projects may wish to use this information in the cover letter that accompanies the principal questionnaire.

These documents can be read online and printed directly from a web browser. They can also be downloaded from the web site and saved in

Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files can be viewed and printed

using Adobe Acrobat Reader, which can be downloaded free of charge from Adobe's web site at

www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html.

Text from PDF files can then be transferred into word processing programs (e.g., Word for Windows95 or Word for Macintosh).

Evaluators are encouraged to complete the forms on the Web and submit the data directly to HRI. To keep a copy, the completed form should be printed from your web browser.

Anyone wishing to print a blank copy of these forms can do so by downloading a corresponding PDF file from the LSC Downloads page at

www.horizon-research.com/lsc/lscdwnlds.htm.

Please note that these PDF files are *not* to be completed and returned to HRI. These files, as well as the observation protocols in the 1997 LSC data collection manual, are for information purposes only. Evaluators who are unable to access the Web will need to request scannable versions of the forms from HRI and provide the opened responses to HRI on disk. (We strongly urge you to use the Web to avoid hassle both for you and for HRI. Try it. You'll like it!)

Questionnaire Sample Sizes

Send us your questions about the LSC core evaluation system. Any questions of general interest to the LSC community will be answered in this newsletter.

SOMETHING NEW

Q. We are working with our teachers in phases over the next few years. Why are projects asked to survey teachers who have not yet participated in our professional development?

A. Each LSC is charged with improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the entire district or set of districts. The various projects are going about it in very different ways.

How To Reach Us

Horizon Research, Inc.
 111 Cloister Court–Suite 220
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Phone: 919-489-1725
Fax: 919-493-7589
E-mail:
 hri1@mindspring.com
Web site: www.horizon-research.com

Some are working intensively with a small groups of lead teachers for the first couple of years, others are working with a subset of all teachers each year, others are working less intensively with all of the teachers each year, and still others have combinations of these approaches. While each approach suggests a different evaluation strategy, the core evaluation needs to be consistent in order to aggregate data across projects. NSF chose to take a snapshot of the entire district each year to see the extent to which the reforms are filtering out into the classroom. At the end of 5 years, the evaluation strategy works equally well for all projects, where the interest is in comparing teaching in the targeted district(s) as a whole to how it was prior to the project.

Q. Do K–12 LSC mathematics projects need to conduct 10 observations of elementary classrooms and a separate 10 observations of secondary classrooms? Must they administer both versions (K–8 and 7–12) of the mathematics teacher questionnaire to two separate random samples?

A. The answer to both questions is “yes,” and is explained by the following general rubric which was provided by NSF’s Diane Spresser. “Teachers funded through the K–8 guidelines (e.g., 100 hours of professional development at \$3,000) constitute a K–8 “project” and follow all the testing protocols as if they were a separate project. Similarly, teachers funded through the 7–12 guidelines (e.g., 130 hours of professional development at \$4,500 each) constitute a 7–12 “project.” So, the middle school teachers in the K–12 mathematics

projects should be categorized accordingly.

In effect, since the middle school teachers in all the K–12 mathematics projects were funded under the 7–12 guidelines, they should use the 7–12 mathematics teacher questionnaire. Under this rubric, K–12 projects should do 20 classroom observations: 10 for the K–8 teachers and 10 for the 7–12 teachers. It's worth noting that this rubric also deals nicely with future cross-site comparisons: the K–8 components of these K–12 projects can be compared with other K–8 projects, and similarly, the 7–12 components with other 7–12's."

On a similar note, projects targeting both science and mathematics must also conduct a separate set of classroom observations for each group (that is, 10 observations of science lessons plus 10 observations of mathematics lessons).

All other projects conduct 10 classroom observations for the core evaluation.

Principal Training

We invite you to write briefly (350 words or less) about anything you would like to share with other LSC projects. We particularly encourage evaluators to share project-specific evaluation activities and ideas for integrating core activities with project evaluations. We will include in this newsletter any items that might be of interest to the LSC community.

To create more administrative support in our LSC, we want to respond to some principals' requests for training on how to observe science lessons as part of a normal evaluation cycle. I am having difficulty identifying people with expertise in this area to advise us. Have any LSC projects used principal training as part of their reform efforts? Have any evaluation tools been produced specifically for the use of administrators? We would appreciate any suggestions that could provide some direction in this area.

Dara Hallman Gardner
Teacher Education Specialist
Pacific Science Center

HRI REQUESTS & REMINDERS



Dates to Remember

- 01/10/97:** 1997 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manuals sent to projects
- 01/15/97:** Applications for additional observations due at HRI
- 01/23–01/25/97:** LSC PI Meeting in Washington, DC
- 02/15–3/15/97:** Observation training workshops at regional sites
- 03/01–05/31/97:** LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Activities
- 06/20/97:** Completed questionnaires due at HRI for processing
- 08/30/97:** HRI sends questionnaire results to PI and evaluator
- 10/01/97:** Evaluator sends evaluation report to PI for feedback
- 10/15/97:** Evaluator sends evaluation report to HRI
- 11/15/97:** PI sends progress report to NSF with copy of evaluation report

Please Note

The instruments in the 1997 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual supersede the previous versions. **All core evaluation professional development and classroom observations, as well as teacher interviews, conducted in 1997 need to be reported on 1997 forms.** These forms can now be accessed on the World Wide Web (www.horizon-research.com) and submitted electronically to HRI.

To simplify communications with the LSC projects, each project should identify two main contacts for LSC core evaluation issues: a PI contact (this can be a co-PI, a project director, or whoever is most appropriate for your project) and a Lead Evaluator contact. Included with the LSC manual is a list in-

LSC PROJECT FORUM

check the information for your project and notify HRI of any changes.

Interested PIs should request an application from HRI for conducting additional observations (see "Extending the Core" on p. 2 of the 11/96 *LSC Core News*). Com-

pleted applications for additional observations are due 1/15/97. Your Data Collection Sampling Frame should be sent to HRI at least 30 days prior to the date you want to receive questionnaires and samples in the spring. HRI is continuing the search for classroom and professional development videos to use for observation training purposes. Please let us

know about sources of videotapes that could be used for training, especially "exemplary" science and mathematics instruction and professional development (in the 4-5 range on the LSC rating scale). Our new email address is hri1@mindspring.com; our web site is www.horizon-research.com.

Horizon Research, Inc.

Suite 220
111 Cloister Court
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-2296