

# LSC Core Update

## 1997-98 DATA COLLECTION

### Spring Data Collection Well Underway

Spring data collection is now in full swing. HRI has been able to streamline the sampling process, and samples were e-mailed to lead evaluators usually within a week of receipt of a usable sampling frame. Projects that followed the sampling frame procedures saved precious time for themselves and HRI.

In most cases, questionnaires were shipped to projects within a day of the drawing of samples. The National Science Foundation has set 80 percent as the minimally acceptable response rate on teacher questionnaires. We're hoping for as close to 100 percent as possible on principal questionnaires so that information can be linked to teacher questionnaires.

As you are packing up questionnaires for return to HRI, be aware that only usable questionnaires will count in the response rate. The following types of errors will eliminate a questionnaire form being counted in the response rate: mostly blanks, missing LSC ID number, and duplicate ID numbers.

Don't forget to remove name labels still attached to questionnaires before returning them to HRI. Each project should send their completed questionnaires to HRI in a single shipment by **June 19, 1998, if possible, and not later than June 30, 1998.**

Project questionnaires will be scanned as they come back, first come, first served. We hope to distribute data tables on a similar flow basis, which should expedite report writing for

those who get their questionnaires in early.

Classroom observations and teacher interviews are to be completed before the end of the school year. Professional development observations may continue throughout the summer, but all 1997-98 data collection needs to be completed by **August 31, 1998.**

Remember that observations and teacher interviews may be submitted via the Web. Be sure to use the revised professional development observation protocol for all sessions observed after March 1, 1998. To submit professional development observations completed prior to this date, please contact HRI for a special password.

Projects without Web access may submit the data on scannable forms. Remember to request these from HRI at least 2 weeks prior to the date you need them. Photocopies will not scan.

## FYI

### 1999 PI Meeting Date Announced

NSF recently notified PIs that the 1999 LSC PI meeting will be held January 21-23, 1999, at the Washington Marriott. All projects in Cohorts I through IV will be invited to this meeting, which will be coordinated by the Merck Institute.

Due to the large number of projects, along with constraints on meeting size, NSF has requested that there be separate meetings for PIs and evaluators next year. Because HRI believes that PI input is essential to our work, and also because a number of projects have asked that they be able to involve additional evaluators beyond their lead evaluator in these

meetings, we have devised the following plan for 1999:

The PI meeting is scheduled to begin late afternoon or early evening on Thursday, January 21. We plan to invite interested PIs to come early and spend the pre-session day with NSF and Horizon Research, Inc. staff on core evaluation issues, including discussing videotapes of classroom instruction and professional development sessions. HRI will then conduct regional meetings for evaluators in February 1999, tentatively planned for San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

While projects typically budgeted to have only one evaluator attend a meeting each year, the lower travel costs associated with regional meetings may make it feasible for them to send additional members of the evaluation team as well.

Several PIs who attend the pre-session will be invited to participate in the regional meeting in their area at core evaluation contract expense to help us share the results of the pre-session discussions and any other evaluation-relevant issues that were discussed at the PI meeting. Training sessions for prospective classroom observers will likely be piggybacked onto the regional meetings as well. More details about the dates and sites for these regional meetings will follow at a later date.

## How To Reach Us

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## Reporting Dates Set: Guidelines Under Revision

HRI and NSF have been working on revisions to the guidelines for writing of the Core Evaluation Report. Recently these revisions were sent for review and feedback to PIs and Lead Evaluators of projects in Cohorts I through IV. The reporting guidelines have the same basic structure as last year, with Parts One and Three identical to last year's version. The interpretive questions in Part II are different. For Core Evaluation Question I, we have highlighted important key factors in the quality of the professional development program as a whole, rather than focusing on components of individual professional development sessions.

Note that the current thinking is that evaluators will not need to report to HRI on the impact of the project on teacher attitudes or classroom instruction (Core Evaluation Questions III and IV) since we will have the data we need in the questionnaires, interview summaries, and classroom observation protocols.

The guidelines for Core Evaluation Questions V and VI take into account the new procedures described in Tab 8 of the 1997-98 Data Collection Manual, where the PI completes forms for each of up to three districts in the project, and the PI and evaluator then collaborate in completing forms for the project as a whole. Note that two versions of the project Team Interview Protocol are provided in Tab 8; Year One: Project Plans (to be used by new projects), and Years 2-4: Follow-up on Project Plans (more appropriate for use in subsequent years, focusing on progress and changes made).

If you did not receive the proposed 1997-98 reporting guidelines and would like to have them e-mailed or Faxed, contact Claudia Templeton at: [lsc@horizon-research.com](mailto:lsc@horizon-research.com).

We will revise the evaluation report guidelines based on feedback we receive from PIs and evaluators, and once NSF has approved the changes, send the final guidelines to PIs and evaluators, hopefully no later than June 30, 1998.

Core evaluation reports will be due at HRI on October 15, 1998. Please note that all observation protocols and teacher interview summaries must be submitted by October 15, 1998, as well, so that HRI can proceed with data processing and analysis in a timely fashion.

Please note that the evaluator's report to the PI for submission to NSF can be a separate report entirely or may be the same as the one submitted to HRI with the addition of the responses to Core Evaluation Questions III and IV. The latter may be in whatever format best tells the project's story.

### WHAT'S NEW?

## Web Capabilities Expand

Again this year, projects are encouraged to submit observation and interview data via the Web. From the main LSC page (<http://www.horizon-research.com/LSC>), the forms are available by clicking on the LSC Online Forms link. After you have entered the username and password, you will be able to submit data or edit previously submitted classroom observation and teacher interview entries. (Note: At this time, Professional Development Observation Protocols must be completed in one sitting. The form-editing feature will be added to the 1998-99 core evaluation data collection.)

A new feature this year allows lead evaluators with a separate, project-specific username and password to view all interview or classroom observation data submitted thus far by the project. You can convert the data into an Excel spreadsheet by following on-line instructions. So, once you complete your protocols you can get an immediate summary of results—another incentive for submitting forms via the Web instead of on scannables! Specific questions about use of online forms should be directed to Scott Hanrath at HRI ([webmaster@horizon-research.com](mailto:webmaster@horizon-research.com)).

Copies of the protocols, along with other LSC documents, may be downloaded for printing from the LSC

Downloads page. Just follow the LSC Downloads link.

For projects without access to the Web, scannables are available upon request. Contact Claudia Templeton at:

[lsc@horizon-research.com](mailto:lsc@horizon-research.com).

## Welcome to New LSC Projects

At press time, four new projects have received official funding this spring and have begun data collection activities. These include secondary mathematics projects in Iowa City, IA and Philadelphia, PA, as well as elementary science projects in El Centro, CA and Kingston, RI. These and other prospective Cohort IV projects attended a New Project Orientation Meeting at NSF in March. You may look for information about all LSC projects and staff by going to the TEECH-LSC Web site at:

<http://teech-lsc.terc.edu>.

## Data Collection Summaries Due August 31

NSF has asked us to remind PIs that full compliance with the core evaluation requirements is a condition of their awards. In the past, evaluators were asked to provide information about questionnaire response rates, number of observations completed, etc., as an appendix to the core evaluation annual report. (See Appendix A, Tab 11 of the 1997-98 LSC Data Collection Manual.) Program Officers would like that information earlier in the process so they can consider it in making decisions about continuing awards. Consequently, HRI will be sending each lead evaluator (with an information copy to the PI) a data collection summary form to be completed immediately after the August 31, 1998, close of data collection.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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.

## Training Opportunities

**Q:** Our project wants to provide LSC Observation training as professional development for teacher leaders, principals, and other district personnel. Can they attend LSC Core Evaluation training sessions, or better yet, can Horizon come to us to provide such training?

**A:** Training provided by HRI is limited to those individuals who plan to serve as LSC observers for the core evaluation. Though we recognize there is a demand for training additional project staff, principals and teachers, expanding the sessions to non-observers makes the sessions larger and less conducive to discussion. Moreover, introducing observers to the protocol and getting them calibrated so they can be certified to conduct observations for the core is in itself an ambitious task for two days; having people there for different purposes makes it even more difficult. Next year's LSC meeting plan (See *1999 PI Meeting Date Announced*, page 1) will provide opportunities for projects to send additional prospective observers to observation training sessions scheduled to follow the regional Evaluator meetings.

Current demands on HRI staff do not allow us to provide project-specific training events. Projects are welcome to use the core evaluation protocols and a selection of the videotapes from HRI training. (Certain videotapes cannot be released, as they were provided to HRI on the condition that they be used only for official LSC training sessions.) While it is not feasible for us to lend our tapes to projects, many are available commercially. A list of videos we have used and their sources was included in the training manual and is posted on our Website. Overheads used in the training are available on our Website, as well.

## Broader Use of LSC Instruments

**Q:** Use of the questionnaires and protocols has sparked interest in using them or altered versions for other research purposes in our district. Is this permissible?

**A:** Permission is granted for use of the LSC core evaluation data collection instruments, with appropriate attribution, for other educational and research purposes, e.g., professional development of teacher leaders. Instruments may be photocopied. We ask only that you notify Joyce Evans at NSF and Claudia Templeton at HRI to indicate your intended use.

## On Observations

**Q:** What do we do if we can't observe a particular teacher from the observation list? Can we use another teacher at that school?

Evaluators should schedule observations of the 10 teachers (per subject) in the sample generated by HRI. These teachers are taken from the random sample drawn to receive teacher questionnaires. Another teacher from the same school won't necessarily have received the questionnaire, and therefore, would not be a candidate for observation this year. Please go to the first name on the back-up list and proceed until you have completed 10 observations. Evaluators will be asked to report the number of teachers from the original and back-up samples, and to justify any observations of teachers not on these lists. NSF monitors the percentage of teachers from the original list. It is important to follow these procedures in order to preserve the randomness of samples.

**Q:** What if we observed that same teacher last year?

**A:** Odds are that you will not be observing the same teacher two years in a row, but it could happen, especially in smaller projects. Remind the teacher that you are not evaluating his or her teaching, but including the data anonymously in evaluation of the project's overall classroom practices and professional development.

## 1998-99 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manuals

Last year, HRI sent projects the 1997-98 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manuals in August so evaluators would have the new forms at the beginning of the 1997-98 data collection year. Since discussions at the PI and Evaluator meetings inevitably lead to changes in the forms, the plan for 1998-99 is to wait until after those meetings to finalize forms for the spring 1999 data collection period.

The current plan is to: (1) send PIs and evaluators the 1997-98 reporting guidelines at the end of June; (2) send PIs and evaluators a manual with the materials needed for the fall (including the Professional Development Observation Protocol and instructions for constructing the sampling frame) in August 1998; and (3) send the remaining materials for inclusion in the manual in February 1999.

## Annual LSC Core Evaluation Requirements

- Professional Development Observations (5-8 per year)
- Teacher Questionnaires (300 per subject)
- Principal Questionnaires (population)
- Classroom Observations (Minimum of 10 per subject)
- Individual Teacher Interviews (10; not conducted baseline data collection year)
- PI/Project Team Interviews

Most data collection activities are conducted March-May annually, except professional development observations and the PI/Project Team Interviews, which may be conducted throughout the data collection year (September 1 through August 31).

The PI is responsible for making sure that core evaluation data are collected in a timely fashion and reported to HRI each fall for inclusion in the annual Cross-Site Report prepared by HRI.



## Dates to Remember

- 5/31/98** End of LSC core evaluation Spring data collection activities
- 6/19/98** Target date for sending completed teacher and principal questionnaires to HRI
- 6/30/98** Target date for sending final Core Evaluation Reporting Guidelines to projects
- 8/31/98** End of data collection
- Professional development observations end
- Data collection procedures and response rate information due at HRI

**10/15/98** 1997–98 observation protocols, interview summaries, and core evaluation reports due at HRI

**1/21–23/99** LSC PI Meeting  
Washington, DC

### HRI REQUEST

## Searching for Videotapes for Training Evaluators

### 1. Professional Development Videotapes

There is a continuing need for videotapes of professional development sessions for use in training evaluators. Please let HRI know if you are willing to videotape one of

your professional development activities. The core evaluation contract can pay up to \$250 for you to hire someone to videotape two hours of a professional development session with the understanding that we can use it in training evaluators. We are especially interested in videotapes of sessions aimed at deepening teacher content knowledge to allow them to more effectively use the exemplary curriculum materials selected by their district. Let us know if you are interested and we can decide together what segment to tape.

### 2. Secondary Science Videotapes

NSF has already funded one secondary science LSC project and expects to fund a number of additional Grade 6–12 Science projects in the next year. We have a pressing need for videotapes of secondary science classes for use in training evaluators. Any leads you have will be greatly appreciated.

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