

LSC Core Update

1999-2000 DATA COLLECTION

Transition to Longitudinal Data Collection System

NSF has decided to make some modifications to the LSC core evaluation beginning in the 1999-2000 data collection year. First, in order to get a better measure of the impact of the LSC, the final round of data collection for each project will occur the spring after the final summer of professional development. (Thus, a typical five-year project will have six rounds of data collection, one in the Baseline Year and one following each summer's professional development.) Second, the core evaluation is moving to longitudinal data collection for classroom observations and a subset of teacher questionnaires.

The revised core evaluation system entails about the same total level of effort as the previous system. However, there will be a greater level of evaluation effort in some years and less in others. Some projects may choose to vary their evaluation budgets from year to year to reflect different levels of effort

for the core evaluation; others may wish to maintain a consistent budget and conduct additional project-specific evaluation activities in the "light" years.

The table below outlines the revised core evaluation data collection system for a typical five-year project. Existing projects will be transitioning to this system according to a plan worked out by HRI and approved by NSF. In the revised system, major data collection will take place in the Baseline Year (the "partial year" when projects are funded), in Year Two, and in the Final Year (the data collection year following the project's last summer of professional development). In the intervening years, a lesser effort of data collection will be required. The level of effort required for the yearly core evaluation report will also vary from year to year. Full reports will be due in the Baseline Year, Year Two, and Final Year of data collection; reports in other years will be abbreviated in scope.

The transition plan for current projects depends both on when the project began and when it will end. The cohort designation tells us (roughly) when each project began, but we are not always sure when projects will end, especially because some projects are

taking no-cost extensions. Accordingly, we have constructed a web-based data collection worksheet where PIs are asked to designate the final summer the project anticipates offering professional development. HRI's program will then display the appropriate data collection schedule for that project. PIs will have the option of "accepting" the displayed data collection schedule, or emailing HRI with any questions or concerns.

Once a data collection schedule is accepted by the PI, notification of this schedule will automatically be sent to NSF and HRI, as well as to the project's lead evaluator. If the project later decides to change the date of its final summer of professional development (e.g., through a no-cost extension) the PI would need to contact HRI to get a revised data collection schedule.

We are requesting that PIs of all Cohort One through Five projects complete the data collection worksheet and "accept" a data collection schedule by **October 15, 1999**. The data collection worksheet can be found by going to the LSC website: www.horizon-research.com/LSC (username: *****; password: *****).

Revised Longitudinal Data Collection System

	Baseline Year	Year One	Year Two	Interim Years	Final Year
Project Team Interview	Baseline	Follow-Up	Follow-Up & Sustaining	Follow-Up	Lessons Learned
Prof. Dev. Observations	2-5	5-8	5-8	5-8	5-8
School Sampling Frame	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Principal Questionnaires	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long
Teacher Sampling Frame	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher Interviews	---	10	10	10	10
Classroom Observations	16 per "subject"	---	16 per "subject"	---	16 per "subject"
Teacher Questionnaires	300* per "subject"	---	300* per "subject"	---	300* per "subject"
District Information Forms	Yes	---	---	---	Yes
District Policy Ratings	Yes	---	Yes	---	Yes
Project Policy Ratings	Yes	---	Yes	---	Yes
Report	Full	Abbreviated	Full	Abbreviated	Full

* Each project that administers questionnaires to a sample (as opposed to the entire population) of teachers will be asked to administer a small number of additional teacher questionnaires as part of the longitudinal program evaluation. The number will vary based on project size, but will not exceed 75 questionnaires.

1999-2000 DATA COLLECTION

1999-2000 Data Collection Manual

The Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual will be distributed to projects in mid-September. Starting this year, projects will be implementing different schedules of core evaluation data collection depending on the "stage" of the project. The core evaluation manual will continue to include the forms necessary for data collection and guidelines for their use. Individual projects should access the LSC website (www.horizon-research.com/LSC) for a project-specific data collection schedule. (See page 1, "Transition to Longitudinal Data Collection System.")

Professional Development Protocol

Observations of professional development activities that occur on or after September 1, 1999 must be recorded on the 1999-2000 Professional Development Observation Protocol. To avoid confusion with data being submitted for 1998-99, the new Professional Development Observation Protocol will not be available for on-line submission until October 15. For a printer-friendly copy of this form, go to www.horizon-research.com/LSC and click on "LSC Protocols and Questionnaires."

1998-99 REPORT WRITING

Reporting Guidelines

Reporting requirements for the 1998-99 Core Evaluation Report were approved by NSF, e-mailed to lead evaluators and PIs, and are available on the Web. As was true last year, there are different versions of the reporting guidelines for projects (Baseline Year, Final Year, etc.). Lead evaluators of all projects should go to the LSC website (www.horizon-research.com/LSC) and click on the "Reporting Requirements" headline to locate the appropriate version of the reporting requirements based on the project's cohort and duration. A worksheet is available at that

site to help you determine which reporting requirements your project should follow.

The reports and ratings forms, as well as all observation protocols and interview summaries are due **October 15, 1999**. Reports are to be sent on disk, and ratings should be submitted via the Web. (Go to "On-line Forms" on the LSC Web page for all form submissions.)

Please note that HRI cannot grant extensions. Projects must contact the NSF program officer, if they anticipate not being able to meet core evaluation deadlines.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Archiving Data

During analysis of 1998 questionnaire data, HRI conducted an in-depth conceptual and statistical analysis of both the teacher and principal questionnaires and revised the composites for both. To facilitate comparison of data across years, HRI recalculated the composites for 1997 and 1996 using the revised 1998 definitions and distributed the revisions for previous years along with the 1998 composites. As a result, last year's mailing of data tables and composites contained data over several years for many projects.

The most recent mailings of tables and composites contained only data from the Spring 1999 questionnaires. Projects will need to refer back to the data packet received last year in order to make comparisons with previous data. Lead evaluators who are unable to locate last year's mailing may wish to contact the PI who also received the mailing. In cases where neither the PI nor lead evaluator has the data from previous years, you may contact HRI as we have maintained these records for our own use. However, because we are not staffed to provide a continuing archive service, in the future **projects will need to be sure to save these data from year to year**.

Also, note that the same is true of data submitted on-line. Once core evaluation reports have been submitted, and the next year's on-line forms are available, data from the previous year's protocols will be removed from the LSC website.

PI Progress Reports

Please be advised that the revised core evaluation data collection system will not impact requirements for PI progress reports. In addition, be alert to the fact that Principal Investigator progress reports will now be submitted to NSF by Fast Lane. Watch for detailed guidelines in the near future. These reports are still due November 15.

Annual LSC Core Evaluation Requirements

All projects:

- Professional Development Observations (5-8 per year)
- Principal Questionnaires (population)
- Individual Teacher Interviews (10; *not* conducted Baseline Year)
- Project Team Interviews

In addition, Baseline Year, Year Two, and Final Year projects:

- Classroom Observations (16 per subject; For 1999-2000 this will vary)
- Teacher Questionnaires (300 per subject) (Each project that administers questionnaires to a sample, as opposed to the entire population of teachers will be asked to administer a small number of additional teacher questionnaires as part of the longitudinal program evaluation. The number will vary based on project size, but will not exceed 75 questionnaires.)

Most data collection activities are conducted March-May annually, except Professional Development Observation and the Project Team Interviews, which may be conducted throughout the data collection year (September 1-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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Q: We have a high turnover of teachers in our LSC. It is frustrating to provide professional development year after year only to have those hours "disappear" when a teacher leaves the district. Is there some way we can "get credit" for these "lost" hours?

A: Yes, you may be able to "get credit." Built into the revised data collection system will be a method for documenting these "lost" hours. Teachers who leave targeted schools or districts will no longer be deleted from a project's sampling frame. In fact, projects may re-enter the names of those treated teachers who have left when updating the file for 1999–2000. In addition, the revised data collection system calls for more detailed information regarding a teacher's treatment level. No longer will teachers be classified as simply "treated" or "untreated." Using a more detailed breakdown of treatment levels, projects will be asked to update this field annually. (See 1999–2000 Data Collection Manual: Teacher Sampling Frame Guidelines.)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New LSC Contact Information

The LSC Core Evaluation team at HRI is now housed under one roof in our Annex building. Though e-mail and mailing addresses remain the same, you should note our new phone and fax numbers.

Phone: (919) 403-1661
Fax: (919) 403-0726

In addition, Gail Gellatly has taken on responsibilities for another project at HRI. Claudia Templeton has returned as the primary contact for LSC questions. The transition should be smooth, as Gail is still nearby, and Claudia is returning to familiar duties.

WEB UPDATE

Reviewing Web-Submitted Data

Again this year lead evaluators may use the "View Data" option to access all previously submitted 1998–99 interview and observation data. Under the "On-Line Forms" section of the LSC Web page, go to the "Lead Evaluator" heading in order to get a summary of the number of protocols submitted thus far.

The Data Collection Summary page for your project displays the number of completed and partial protocols/ summaries of all types that have been submitted to date. Be sure to note the number of partial forms, if any, as **these will not be accepted as usable data unless finished and submitted as complete forms by the October 15, 1999 deadline.** To determine which protocols/summaries are incomplete, click on "Summary" for a list of individual protocols/ summaries. Look in the "status" column to see the forms that need to be completed. (Use the "Edit/Finish" button in order to make changes to the particular protocol/summary.)

For those of you who wish to view all the data in a spreadsheet, click on "View Data" for any of the on-line forms to retrieve your project's data as a plain-text file. Follow the on-line instructions to convert your data to an Excel spreadsheet, a helpful tool as you analyze data.

Submitting Observation Protocols on the Web

Prior to submitting observation protocols, LSC observers of either classrooms or professional development sessions must first be entered into HRI's web database by the lead evaluator. Under the Lead Evaluator Section for each project, there are headings for viewing the "Observer List" and for "Add Observer." Remember to add any observers who will be submitting observation protocols for the

1998–99 data collection year indicating which forms they will be completing. NSF has asked HRI to remind projects that in addition to meeting core evaluation training requirements, all members of the evaluation team, including those conducting observations, must have been approved by NSF.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Training Materials Available

Reminder: As of September 1999, anyone conducting professional development observations to be submitted to HRI for the core evaluation must have completed the appropriate training process.

Projects had two options for training observers: (1) attending a regional lead evaluator meeting in February 1999, or (2) obtaining HRI-developed materials and conducting training locally under the supervision of the lead evaluator who was trained at this meeting.

Materials for training additional professional development observers were made available to projects in mid-August. These materials are for the exclusive purpose of training LSC observers of professional development sessions and should not be used for any other purposes (e.g., training of lead teachers). Lead evaluators are reminded that the observers who complete the training should be added to the project's list of approved observers in the lead evaluator section of the LSC on-line forms; you should remove others that remain from the 1998–99 data collection year that have not gone through the training process. These changes can be made after October 15 when the web site for the new data collection year is available to projects.

Evaluators who would like to borrow the professional development training materials for a 30-day period should e-mail HRI:

(lsc@horizon-research.com)
to obtain a request and agreement form.



Dates to Remember

- 10/15/99** Projects must complete Data Collection Worksheet and accept schedule for 1999–2000 data collection year
- 10/15/99** Project Core Evaluation Reports due at HRI (all observation and interview protocols due by web submission)
- 11/15/99** PI Progress Reports due to NSF
- 11/15/99** School Documentation Reports due at HRI
- 11/15/99** Extra Observation Reports due at HRI
- 12/10/99** Supplementing the Core applications due at HRI

Year 2000

- 01/27–29** PI Meeting, Washington, DC
- 02/10–11** Classroom Observation Training, Chapel Hill, NC
- 03/01–05/31** 1999 LSC Core Evaluation Spring Data Collection Activities

Lead Evaluator Meeting

In lieu of a lead evaluator meeting next spring, NSF has asked HRI to explore the possibility of scheduling several smaller conferences to which lead evaluators would be invited. These meetings would focus on “lessons learned” and would likely occur in early June.

Log-in Help Available

The Lead Evaluator Section of HRI's LSC website has a new feature designed to help lead evaluators access their project-specific data. Lead evaluators who have forgotten or misplaced their project-specific username and password can click on “Log-in Help” to easily retrieve these essential pieces of information.

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