

# LSC Core Update

## CORE EVALUATION REPORTS

### Status of LSC Reports

NSF is now reviewing the Year Four Cross-Site Report which will be distributed to projects prior to the January PI meeting.

Most 1998-99 Core Evaluation Reports have arrived on time, and the analysis process is already beginning at HRI. Web submission of data went smoothly from our standpoint, and HRI appreciates all efforts made to get protocols submitted by the October 15 deadline.

Each year we learn ways to simplify and improve the process. *Thanks for your efforts to complete requests in a timely fashion and to work to understand the revised data collection schedules for 1999-2000 and beyond.*

## 1999-2000 DATA COLLECTION

### 1999-2000 LSC Professional Development Observations

While most of the LSC data collection occurs in the spring each year, professional development observations take place throughout the year. The following information is excerpted from the 1999-2000 LSC Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual

Projects are required to conduct 5-8 professional development observations per year. The only exception to this requirement is projects in their final year of data collection where the number of sessions to be observed will depend on each project's professional development timeline.

#### Observers

All members of the project's evaluation team need to be approved by NSF. Lead evaluators are required to personally conduct three of the 5-8

professional development observations. As of September 1999, other observers of professional development sessions must have been trained (either by HRI or by the lead evaluator) to conduct these observations. Professional development training materials are available from HRI. To obtain these materials, email a request to us at

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

#### Selecting Sessions to Observe

Interviews with the PI and other members of the project team are part of the core evaluation and should familiarize the evaluator with both the goals of the LSC professional development and the project design for achieving these goals. These interviews should be conducted early in the data collection year to aid evaluators in the selection of the sessions to observe. *Lead evaluators should discuss with the PI the range of the project's professional development offerings and make sure to include sessions that address each of the major functions of LSC Professional Development:*

- Providing an opportunity to deepen teachers' content knowledge
- Helping teachers to learn the appropriate pedagogy to develop students' conceptual understanding of mathematics/science
- Helping teachers learn how to use the designated instructional materials; and
- Providing support as teachers implement the materials in their classrooms.

In many projects, multiple professional development approaches are used to achieve a particular purpose; evaluators should try to observe a variety of these approaches but not at the expense of covering all of the functions of the LSC professional

development. Evaluation teams are welcome to observe and submit as many professional development sessions as they wish, but only 5 are required. In selecting sessions to observe, please remember:

- ❖ The segment of professional development included in a single observation should not exceed one half day.
- ❖ In cases where a single session being observed consists of multiple break-out sessions, the observer should select one of the break-out sessions and observe it long enough to get the information needed to complete the Professional Development Observation Protocol. Afterward you may wish to circulate to other break-out sessions to gain a more complete view of the nature and quality of the professional development.

#### Submitting Web-Based Forms

Prior to electronic submission of Professional Development Observation Protocols, the lead evaluator for each project should review and update the names of observers approved to conduct professional development observations for the project. This can be accomplished by going to the Lead Evaluator Section of the LSC on-line forms page

The HRI web site and the LSC on-line 1999-2000 Professional Development Observation Protocol can be found at

[www.horizon-research.com/LSC\\_Forms](http://www.horizon-research.com/LSC_Forms)

You will be asked to enter a user name (\*\*\*\*\*) and password (\*\*\*)

Please note that the web system for submitting protocols to HRI will accept only two professional development observations for a given date. If you anticipate the need to submit more than two observations for a particular day, please email HRI prior to

attempting to complete the form on the web.

### ADDITIONAL DATA COLLECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 1999–2000

#### Supplementing the Core

As in the past, NSF will provide opportunities for projects to supplement the core evaluation data collection. For 1999–2000, core evaluation funds will make it possible for projects to:

1. Administer teacher questionnaires beyond the core sample; and
2. Conduct additional classroom observations beyond the core sample.

Applications for these two options are being e-mailed to PIs and must be returned to HRI by **December 15, 1999**. The following describes the opportunities available and corresponding reporting requirements:

#### Extra Teacher Questionnaires

Due to the revised data collection schedule, not all projects are required to administer teacher questionnaires as part of the core evaluation this year. Only projects in their Baseline Year, Year Two, and Final Year of data collection will be provided questionnaires for a random sample of teachers. As in the past, projects may request questionnaires beyond the sample (e.g., to all lead teachers who were not already in the sample). HRI again anticipates being able to provide questionnaires to all projects that submit their requests by the December 15 deadline. *In addition, projects who are not scheduled to administer teacher questionnaires in 1999–2000 may request them.*

For projects requesting supplemental questionnaires that are not a random sample of all targeted, eligible teachers in the sampling frame, the project will be responsible for creating questionnaire labels and analyzing the data. HRI will scan all questionnaires, but will provide data tables only for those questionnaires included in a random sample. No supplementary report is required.

#### Extra Classroom Observations

Again this year, funds will be available up to a maximum of \$2,000 per project to help support classroom observations beyond the random

samples required by the core evaluation. The project PI should submit the application indicating how teachers will be selected for observation. Notification of awards will be no later than January 29, 2000. Separate reports outlining what the program learned are required of any project observing additional teachers with core evaluation contract funds.

### 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. (Of course, we will continue answering individual questions as needed.)*

#### Revised Data Collection Schedule in 1999–2000

**Q.** I'm confused by the data collection schedule and reporting guidelines that classify our project (Cohort 4) as a Year Two project. We're entering our third year of data collection, so shouldn't we be in our "third year"?

**A.** Even though your project is entering its third year of data collection, it has been accurately characterized as a "Year Two" project. In the revised core evaluation data collection system, the first round of data that you collected in the partial year that you were funded (prior to the onset of your professional development) was "Year Zero" or as it is called in the revised system, the "Baseline Year." Your next round of data collection that followed your Baseline Year is now considered Year One data collection. And with your current round of data collection, you are entering into Year Two data collection. All projects will be classified in one of the following data collection "Years":

**Baseline Year** – The data collection that takes place in the partial year when a project is funded prior to the onset of LSC professional development

**Year One** – The first full year of data collection (September 1 to August 31) following Baseline Year and the onset of LSC professional development

**Year Two** – The second full year of data collection (September 1 to August 31) following Baseline Year and the onset of LSC professional development

**Final Year** – The data collection year following the project's last summer of professional development

**Interim Year(s)** - All data collection years, between Year Two and Final Year, that are followed by a summer of LSC professional development. (Note: The number of Interim Years will depend on the duration of the project.)

**Q.** Under the revised data collection system, our project is no longer scheduled to administer teacher questionnaires during Spring 2000 data collection. We find the core evaluation questionnaire data useful to the project. Is it possible to get questionnaires anyway so we can continue with our plan?

**A.** Yes. Projects may apply to supplement the core evaluation with extra questionnaires in the "off years." (See "Supplementing the Core," column 1.) HRI will provide the questionnaires, labels, scanning, raw data and results tables and composites in these cases.

**Q.** Five professional development observations don't seem to give a complete picture of our project's professional development program. Are we permitted to do more?

**A.** Yes. A minimum of 5 professional development sessions must be observed to fulfill the core evaluation requirements, 3 of which need to be conducted by the lead evaluator. The lead evaluator and PI should consider all of the professional development offerings for the year, and select for observation a range of events that will provide a representative picture for rating the quality of the overall program. For multiple-subject projects or those that serve a wide range of grades or a large geographic area, it may be in the best interest of the evaluation to conduct more than 8 observations. HRI will accept as many observations as the evaluation team wishes to submit. You don't need to submit them all via the Web if you are doing more observations, unless it would be helpful for you to do so (for instance, from the Lead Evaluator section you can access the "View Data" function which displays

all the data from the observations as a text file, and which you can convert into a spreadsheet; instructions are provided). Some projects do many more than the required amount of professional development observations for their own analyses. At any rate, there is no "ceiling" to the number you may submit on the web.

#### PREPARATION FOR 1999–2000 LSC DATA COLLECTION

### Two Sampling Frames Due

Under the revised longitudinal data collection system beginning in 1999–2000 (See feature article of LSC Core Update, September 1999), projects will be submitting two separate sampling frames each year. The two files required are (1) a teacher sampling frame, updated from the file submitted the previous year, listing all targeted teachers, and (2) a school sampling frame providing demographic data for all participating schools.

*Detailed procedures are outlined under Tab 3 of the 1999-2000 Core Evaluation Data Collection Manual (new orange edition distributed in September 1999), but note the following highlights:*

#### Teacher Sampling Frame

1. The number of levels of treatment for teachers has been increased from two ("untreated" and "treated") to eight categories. NSF has requested the more detailed breakdown to allow projects to record over the years the progress of individual teachers towards NSF's treatment goal.
2. Updating the Teacher Sampling Frame **no longer means deleting teachers who are not eligible** or are not teaching the subject in a given year, for whatever reason. Instead, instructions are provided for designating whether each teacher is eligible, ineligible or gone from the system. Leaving them in the sampling frame will allow projects to keep a record of all teachers who have participated at some point in the LSC, and to account for the hours these teachers accumulated while they were participants, even if they have left the participating district.

Projects will begin with the teacher sampling frame submitted last year, and will then add columns to the file to record changes in each teacher's status (including school assignment, treatment level and current eligibility) for 1999–2000. A teacher sampling frame must be submitted regardless of whether or not the project is scheduled to administer teacher questionnaires and conduct class-room observations, as NSF needs the information on treatment levels and HRI needs to draw samples for teacher interviews.

#### School Sampling Frame

1. The new school sampling frame will provide current demographic information for each school in the project. These questions will be removed from the principal questionnaire, reducing the data collection burden for individual principals.
2. Projects will be asked to use a numbering system for schools and districts identical to that utilized in the teacher sampling frame, therefore keeping the district and school numbers consistent between the two sampling frames. Keeping the numbers consistent between sampling frames and from year to year will enable HRI to conduct important program-wide research about reform implementation over time.

Because of the changes in the system for compiling the sampling frames, projects are advised to **start the revision process early**. Please be reminded that sampling frames are due to HRI at least 30 days prior to the date that teacher interview and observation samples and questionnaires are required.

#### REQUESTS & REMINDERS

### Confirming Project Info

As early as December, each data collection year, HRI orders questionnaires for spring administration. Therefore, it is important that we have an accurate understanding of the number of targeted teachers and schools for each LSC. This information also affects our formulas for weighting of data from questionnaires. If you have had any substantial change in either the number of targeted schools or targeted teachers, please notify us as soon as possible, but no later than December 15. You may e-

mail this updated information to the following address:

**lsc@horizon-research.com**

### Teacher Interviews

Each data collection year, project evaluation teams are asked to interview a random sample of 10 teachers regarding their experience with the LSC and the impact it has had on them and their classroom practices. Interviews are summarized on the Teacher Interview Summary form and submitted electronically to HRI. In this summary form, the interviewer is asked to provide direct quotes from the teacher's responses along with other descriptive information from the interview. The purpose of these quotes is to get a teacher's opinions in his/her own words. Quotes submitted to HRI on the Teacher Interview Summary should be the actual responses of the teacher, exactly as stated in the interview. In analyzing recent interviews we have found cases where evaluators paraphrased the teacher's remarks, markedly decreasing the utility of the information. The following examples illustrate both acceptable and unacceptable versions:

#### Quote 1

##### **Poor-quality version**

"He now spends more time teaching science and technology than he did in the past"

##### **Acceptable quote**

"I teach science more now. I definitely use more technology, too, since the training last summer."

#### Quote 2

##### **Poor-quality version**

"...do like the program...parts good – field trips..."

##### **Acceptable quote**

"I like a lot of different things about the program. My favorite part is when we go on field trips."

Sometimes evaluators need to add information to make the quote interpretable to HRI, e.g., indicating that a particular person referenced by a teacher is a scientist from a local university. This kind of information should not be enclosed in quotation marks. Rather, the interviewer's interpretation or summary of any part of the conversation should appear as

plain text in the final item. (See Item #11, Teacher Interview Summaries, Tab 7, 1999–2000 LSC Data Collection Manual.)



## Dates to Remember

- 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
- 12/15/99** Supplementing the Core applications due at HRI
- Year 2000**
- 01/27** Core evaluation pre-session with "volunteer" PIs 10 AM–4 PM
- 01/27–29** PI Meeting, Washington, DC
- 02/10–11** Classroom Observation Training, Chapel Hill, NC
- 03/01–** 1999 LSC Core Evaluation
- 05/31** Spring Data Collection Activities

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### Annual LSC Core Evaluation Requirements

#### All projects:

- Professional Development Observations (5–8 per year, optional for projects in the Final 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 plus program sample)

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.

### January PI Pre-session Set

Again this year, interested PIs will be invited to attend a meeting from 10 AM to 4 PM on Thursday, January 27 to discuss aspects of the core evaluation with HRI. Details will follow by e-mail.

### Opportunities to Train Classroom Observers

HRI will host classroom observation training in Chapel Hill this year. Projects with new observers or lead evaluators who need certification may attend a two-day session February 10 and 11, 2000. Details to follow.

#### How To Reach Us

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*(This newsletter is available on the Web.)*