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AUTHOR Moller, Gayle
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ABSTRACT

In March of 1999, the Professional Development Laboratory (PDL) of the New York University School of Education conducted an Evaluation Forum to address the issue of evaluating professional development. The Forum engaged PDL stakeholders, educational leaders, and community supporters in generating and responding to critical questions related to assessing professional development's impact on student learning. In addition to over 80 attendees, 8 national leaders in professional development served on a panel to offer recommendations, facilitate small group discussions, and respond to questions. The Forum addressed the following: (1) the context for professional development (public accountability and standardized tests, and teacher shortage); (2) what is known about professional development (resource drive decisions, complexity of teaching and professional development, culture of collaboration, and the difference the principal makes); and (3) evaluation of a PDL program (the PDL's theory-in-use, necessary agreements, whether the evidence is a result of PDL alone, effective strategies for collecting evidence, and where a PDL could collect evidence). Three appendixes contain a PDL overview, the Evaluation Forum panelists and guests, and the Evaluation Forum agenda. (SM)



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
LABORATORY

New York University
School of Education

The Evaluation Forum: Assessing Professional Development

Inquiring Minds Want to Know

March 2, 1999

Submitted by

Gayle Moller
Evaluation Forum Writer-in-Residence

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY
The Evaluation Forum: Assessing Professional Development
Inquiring Minds Want to Know

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inquiring minds actively pursue the process of exploration, research, and discovery. Dr. Thomas Guskey tells us “Good evaluations require the ability to ask good questions, and a basic understanding about how to find valid answers.” (Guskey, *Journal of Staff Development*, 1998).

The Evaluation Forum was convened to address the universal concern of evaluating professional development, which “is one of the most elusive subjects in education today and one of the most important,” as stated by Dean Ann Marcus of New York University’s School of Education. In her opening remarks, Dean Marcus initiated with probing queries:

How do you know when professional development is working? How do you know when it is enough? What are the best forms of professional development? How do you get hard evidence?

The Professional Development Laboratory (See Sidebar and Appendix A, *PDL Overview*) hosted The Evaluation Forum at New York University on March 2, 1999. The Forum engaged PDL stakeholders, educational leaders, and community supporters in generating and responding to critical questions related to assessing professional development’s impact on student learning. As Judith Rizzo, Deputy Chancellor for Instruction of the New York City Public Schools acknowledged:

It is time to dig deep and find out what it is that we are doing that works, continue it, and spread the word. If something is not yielding results, [let’s decide] what to do about it.

In addition to over eighty invited attendees, eight national leaders in professional development served on a panel to offer recommendations, facilitate small group discussions, and respond to key questions that emerged (See Appendix B, *Panelists & Guests*). PDL Director, Mary Ann Walsh, believes:

It is in having conversations with people who have expertise in this area, like our expert panelists *and* the experts sitting around the tables, that PDL will come away with new insight and new direction for the next evaluation of our core program.

Based in NYU’s School of Education, PDL is a unique collaboration with the university, New York City Board of Education, the United Federation of Teachers and the business community.

PDL is a voluntary, sustained, hands-on professional development experience, taking place in live “lab” classrooms during the school day. It incorporates many elements of successful classroom-based professional development practices, including: observing good practice, team teaching, peer coaching, reflecting on practice, assessing student work, developing collegial networks, leadership development, and district-level support.

(See Appendix A, *PDL Overview*)

PDL has led to greater collegiality and collaboration among teachers, while helping teachers to focus on, analyze, and change their teaching practice, improving student learning. Many participants indicate that PDL has improved their morale, has helped to alleviate their feelings of isolation, and has contributed to their sense of belonging to a “community of learners.” The great majority of teachers indicate that they had received a high level of support for their PDL experience from district PDL staff. This support included coaching, guidance, materials, training, preparation for participation in the PDL cycle, and follow-up.

Excerpted from past evaluation reports

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

Before the conversations focused on evaluation strategies, the participants considered the complex context in which teaching and learning takes place. Foremost in the discussions was the political climate of accountability, as Gary Sykes phrased it “Standardized tests are the coin of the realm.” Diana Lam confirmed that when test scores rise in an area where teachers took part in professional development, “it doesn’t give us proof, but it is good evidence that professional development works.” However, a more comprehensive picture of student growth must augment the use of standardized tests as evidence of achievement.

Deputy Chancellor Rizzo clarified the contextual reality of public reluctance to accept job-embedded professional development for educators:

The public easily accepts industry committing itself to professional development as an integral and necessary part of people’s work--not expecting it to take place on a Saturday, after work, during the summer, or during people’s vacation times, as it does for our industry.

Limited resources, of both time and funds, were acknowledged as the primary impediments to sustained, job-embedded longitudinal professional development. Deputy Chancellor Rizzo felt that through evaluation, “we can convince the general public that professional development for educators is a worthwhile investment-- an investment that pays off.”

Panelists and participants discussed the additional reluctance of some administrators to devote limited resources that move professional development from “one-shot” workshops to more relevant, on-going support that actually changes teacher practice. Joellen Killion ascertains, “if you want to have those kind of outcomes, you have to be willing to put forth that kind of money and effort.”

With limited resources of both funds and teachers, the press for accountability in a climate of harsh criticism creates a paradox. First, it discourages some people from selecting teaching as a profession. In addition, it pushes relatively new teachers, and teachers that are more experienced, from the field. Several teachers at The Forum claimed many newer and experienced teachers felt renewed having participated in PDL. During the afternoon plenary session, PDL Ambassador and Resident Teacher Jane Murphy confirmed their thoughts:

I think that I speak for all PDL teachers, or 80% of PDL teachers, who wouldn’t have continued with their careers [if not for PDL] – probably would’ve moved on, out of the classrooms.

Designing this level of adult learning recognizes both the complexity of teaching and effective professional development design. Paula Evans recognized that too often professional development is “done to” teachers. Professional development that substantively impacts both teacher practice and student learning rests within a school culture of collaboration focused on academic concerns.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

The leadership of the principal is a key factor in establishing this type of culture as it was widely agreed that the principal is the catalyst and support of the learning community. As requested by principals, a pilot PDL for Principals will support their efforts for change. In his experience, Tom Guskey has found,

Most principals want to offer whatever support is needed. Most are also willing to make the changes necessary to have schools become a learning community. The problem is they don't know how.

Before strategies for assessing the PDL program were shared, it was suggested that PDL staff and their partners might review their theory-in-use as to how the PDL program should be impacting teaching practice and student learning. Robyn Brady Ince, from Bankers Trust (now Deutsche Bank), spoke to the importance of reflecting on organizational theory: "One of the things I look for [as a funder] is what kind of questions are organizations asking about their practices." Critical questions, such as those below, were raised for consideration during the examination of PDL's theory-in-use.

1. Would developing a critical mass of PDL teachers within a whole-school approach be a more effective strategy than the 'ripple effect' of individual Visiting Teachers returning to their schools?
2. As financial constraints have limited the PDL post-visitation period, how could PDL provide long-term support for follow-up and additional teacher learning?
3. How can Visiting Teachers be further supported to ensure that their PDL goals are clearly linked to research-based practice?

Additionally, there must be agreement as to what are expected outcomes from student learning and acceptable measures of those outcomes. Several lists indicating evidence of student learning were mentioned as an attempt at standardization of criteria. However, discrepancies between teachers' and administrators' acceptable indicators were also noted. Deciding what will be acceptable evidence of student learning must involve multiple constituencies, as Victor Young believes this process will "inform this notion of what the 'promised land' looks like." Criterion must be developed, and accepted, that moves beyond the standardized tests.

Connecting student outcomes with the standards by means of professional development was seen as the seminal place for agreement on what these student outcomes should be as well as what would be evidence of those outcomes. Diana Lam "cannot imagine, now, engaging in any kind of professional development activity that's not really linked to the standards." Numerous participants echoed her conviction, although limited resources of time and funds were again cited as primary restrictions. A foundation representative candidly stated why time must be taken to determine the best measures of student achievement: "Foundations want to know what is happening to the kids, not what is happening to the teachers."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

Three primary strategies for collecting evidence emerged from the discourse. Each approach requires a high-level of commitment of resources, but more closely ensures success in meeting the comprehensive goals of examining the impact of professional development on both teaching practice and student learning. These suggestions were:

- **Case studies:** An NYU faculty member, Harold Vine, made the fervent point that case studies are “much harder to do than the number crunching . . . but it is the only type of evidence which will show the value of the PDL theory.”
- **Action research:** With proper support, ask teachers to connect with research, reflect on their practice, and examine its impact on student achievement.
- **Examination of student work using the standards:** Recognizing that implementing standards into teaching practice is a complicated process, Joellen Killion offered a logical, progressive approach as a paradigm for teachers to follow.

As expected, at the end of the day there were few concrete solutions, but there was an array of ideas that came from a rigorous examination of this complex issue of evaluating professional development by those who care about their profession. Listening to the voices of those present, PDL will attempt to rise to the challenge of constructing an appropriate evaluation design. The challenge lies ahead in validating this most “elusive” of subjects, and has been strengthened by the participation of the diverse constituents at The Evaluation Forum.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY
The Evaluation Forum: Assessing Professional Development
Raising Questions in Uncharted Territory

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 1999, the Professional Development Laboratory (PDL) staff and over eighty colleagues entered into a conversation exploring the evaluation of professional development. The day was arranged to collect recommendations that could inform PDL's next evaluation design, measuring the effectiveness of its professional development model (See Appendix C, *The Evaluation Forum Agenda*).

To initiate conversations among those present, PDL invited a panel of national experts in professional development. The panel members shared their recommendations, raised critical questions, and suggested future actions for the evaluation of the PDL program. The panel members included:

Mary Beth Blegen
U. S. Department of Education

Joellen Killion
National Staff Development Council

Paula Evans
Annenberg Institute

Diana Lam
Former Superintendent of Schools
San Antonio Public Schools

Valarie French
National Board for Professional
Standards

Gary Sykes
Michigan State University

Thomas Guskey
University of Kentucky

Victor Young
The Learning Communities Network, Inc.

In addition to this panel, Elizabeth (Betty) Hale, Vice President of the Institution for Educational Leadership, served as The Forum Facilitator. Her sharp wit and succinct observations guided the panel and served to focus discussions throughout the day. Peter Wilson, educational consultant and former program director of The Danforth Foundation, was charged with writing a Summary & Analysis of PDL's previous evaluations. This brief document was sent to attendees prior to The Forum, providing a common ground for the day's dialogue.

The Evaluation Forum attracted a diverse group of participants. Inquiries about the focus for the day came from across the state, region, and nation. This is evidence that determining how to effectively evaluate professional development is critical to policymakers, school

district leaders, the community, funders, and others. At the beginning of The Forum, Dean Marcus reflected this universal concern: “. . . [evaluating professional development] is one of the most elusive subjects in education today and one of the most important.”

During the panelist-led small group discussions, a representative from another non-profit organization shared that they had also struggled with evaluation of their program, and that was why she was “real excited about the topic for today . . . because we are exactly at this point [in evaluating professional development].” Representing another perspective, Fredrica Jarcho, Program Officer with The Greenwall Foundation, revealed that very few grantees “. . . have really managed to do the kind of evaluation we’re talking about today which deals primarily with student outcomes. Everybody is looking for this information.”

PDL arranged for a writer-in-residence to capture the essence of the conversations. One day, many good ideas, and only one writer was a challenge. Determined to gather as much information as possible to help PDL make decisions about its next steps in evaluation and to contribute to the national conversation on this topic, the PDL staff made extraordinary efforts to support the development of this report. The event was videotaped and audiotaped, and many of these data sources were transcribed.

Using the documentation products provided by the PDL staff, this document reflects an analysis of all the data from both the large group presentations and small group discussions. In addition, it provides the general themes that emerged during the day. The conversations were rich, and selected quotes are reflected within the text. When possible, the speakers are acknowledged, while at other times a quote will appear which was captured during informal group discussions without the benefit of the contributor’s identity. Regardless of the sources, the synergy of the day resulted in descriptions of the contextual complexity inherent in evaluating professional development, along with specific questions for PDL staff and partners to consider as they move through this uncharted territory.

CHARGE FOR THE DAY

During the past ten years the PDL program has evolved into a sophisticated professional development experience which reflects the needs of the school districts and the teachers it serves. At the beginning of the session, Mary Ann Walsh, PDL Project Director, asked the group to recognize PDL’s varied initiatives, but to maintain “focus on the heart of PDL.” The core of PDL is a laboratory cycle that allows time for a teacher, who identifies a learning interest, to visit and co-teach within the classroom of an exemplary teacher who has expertise in this identified area. The visits last for one to three weeks. Meanwhile, Replacement Teachers are specially prepared to assume the responsibilities of teaching the Visiting Teachers’ classes while they are away from the classrooms. The goal of PDL is to impact: (1) teaching and teaching practice; and (2) student learning. Rather than an add-on program, PDL supports the instructional goals of the school district and the local site.

The PDL program is a collaborative project with New York University, the New York City Board of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and the business community. It has received substantial funding from corporations and foundations, such as J. P. Morgan, AT&T, IBM, Metropolitan Life Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, The New York Community Trust, The Greenwall Foundation, and Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc. With this level of support, PDL has long recognized the importance of evaluating their efforts. Peter Wilson, referencing his aforementioned Summary & Analysis, asked the participants to see as their purpose “. . . to assist PDL and its advisory board members in asking good questions” which will aid their timely strategic planning process and future evaluation design.

Previous evaluations of PDL looked at the program’s process and specific case studies of teachers’ impressions as to how the program affected them personally. Typical of most professional development evaluations, PDL had not established strategies to measure the impact on teaching practices and student learning. Although not alone in this quest, PDL staff and colleagues were faced with the tough questions put forth by Dean Ann Marcus:

- How do you know when professional development is working?
- How do you know when it’s enough?
- What are the best forms of professional development?
- How do you get hard evidence?

Throughout the day, PDL was commended for taking the risk to make its struggle public by asking colleagues for assistance. Judith Rizzo, Deputy Chancellor for Instruction of the New York City Public Schools, made this clear in her opening remarks, stating:

It’s time to dig deep and find out what it is that we are doing that works, continue it, and spread the word. If something is not yielding results, [let’s decide] what to do about it. So, I congratulate [PDL] for having the courage to do this.

In a less public setting, an attendee shared: “I think its great that PDL really is open to hearing what other people have to say. Most often, organizations are defensive.”

Process goals for the day included putting forward common dilemmas and gathering the critical questions to be considered in the search for ways to know that PDL is making a difference in the lives of the teachers and students it serves. The feedback from the panelists, the small group discussions, and the informal give-and-take of the participants provided PDL with a capital return on its investment. The Forum participants affirmed their own struggles with evaluation and offered recommendations to further PDL’s quest for answers. This plethora of valuable conversation and suggestions could have taken the PDL staff much longer to collect through other strategies.

The day’s agenda was designed to capture the ideas of the panelists, then engage the participants with the panelists in small groups, and, finally, to encourage a large group discussion on the major issues that surfaced during the small group sessions. Participants

included teachers, principals, superintendents, university professors, business community foundation officers, teacher union representatives, non-profit educational organization leaders, and others interested in the topic.

CONTEXT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation of professional development cannot occur in isolation without attending to the context. The panelists' presentations and the small group discussions nested the professional development component within the complexity of understanding the context of education. Political realities, limited resources, and human factors all contribute to understanding how difficult it is to measure adult learning, especially in terms of student outcomes.

Public Accountability & Standardized Tests: The Coin of the Realm

Gary Sykes set the stage for discussing the political realities of education:

Professional development cannot simply ignore the fact that all over the country, standardized tests are the coin of the realm, politically. But, secondly, as a professional obligation, professional development must also be connected to a variety of other forms of assessment of learning.

One teacher lamented: "That's where people are. Those tests overshadow everything else. I'm teaching to the test." Another participant echoed: "Professional development needs to look at standardized tests because of the political reality." Within this framework, the panelists and participants recognized the need to pay attention to standardized tests, but also asserted that they cannot be satisfied with only one measure.

Measuring the effectiveness of professional development is crucial for sustaining vital resources. Diana Lam gave the example of San Antonio's school system, which spends 4% of the general budget on professional development.

The Board and the public at large are requesting to see if [professional development] makes a difference . . . We cannot shy away from asking ourselves about the connection between teachers' professional development and student outcomes.

Convincing the public with ". . . words the public can understand (Betty Hale)," is a strategy the Danforth Foundation suggests, based on its five year project with state policymakers. Selecting measures that will be acceptable to the public was a concern voiced during a group discussion:

As teachers we have to convince the larger public, or whatever publics we care about, that they [other assessment measures] are valid measures.

Secondarily, but no less important, we need to figure out ways to use the measures the public wants to use as well. . . . If you can convince the public there is more to life than the [standardized] tests, . . . such as portfolios and performance-based assessment, they'd be open to that . . . but we have to look at how to package it to convince the public.

The urge to engage public support of professional development takes time and additional resources. Participants agreed that professional development exists within a political context and that it would be unwise to ignore the audiences for the evaluation studies. Judith Rizzo questioned the public's reluctance to support the professional development of educators:

We all know that for the most part, the public does not appreciate professional development for teachers and for administrators. The public easily accepts industry committing itself to professional development as an integral and necessary part of people's work--not expecting it to take place on a Saturday, after work, during the summer, or during people's vacation times, as it does for our industry. We all know that we have limited resources to deal with. We need to make sure that professional development is focused, targeted, and gets the results that we need to see in our school systems. And we need to do it in such a way that we can convince the general public that professional development for educators is a worthwhile investment-- an investment that pays off.

Teacher Shortage

An interesting paradox emerged during the discussions of public accountability. On one hand, there is the public demanding that teachers improve student learning, and, on the other hand, the nation is experiencing a teacher shortage. A member of one group discussion was dismayed:

Applications are down in teacher education programs. People are reading the media. The profession is being driven into the ground. In one state the teachers are told that they have two years to turn the scores around or the school will be closed. What will you do when you fire those teachers?

It was reported in a small group discussion that one state is giving \$20,000 bonuses for some new incoming teachers. Another person recognized the reality of the situation:

Why would you become one of the most grossly underpaid, accountable, yet accused individuals in this society? Teachers are very underpaid, they are absolutely responsible for student learning which we can't even define, and they are not given basic public faith to do the job they have to do.

Also, experienced teachers are leaving education. One person who had previously taught seven and one-half years " . . . in a very nice school west of Syracuse," New York shared:

Imagine surviving [that long] in an [urban] school with revolving doors, schools with [frequently changing] principals and all the other problems, and

not enough books and supplies. The fact that anyone is out there doing anything--they are all heroes in my book. . . . When people think of burn out, they think of people in their 25th year of teaching. But it happens in year three and four. There is a huge drop-off after year five for people who come in very idealistic and who just get smacked in the eyes.

Several participants familiar with the results of the PDL program gave testimony to the observations of teachers who were renewed through the process and may have stayed in the profession as a result of the experience. One person noted:

(PDL) has saved many teachers from burnout and to retirement. Experienced classroom teachers who have almost said forget it, have become renewed and excited. They feel that their voices are important, and they are listening to one another, sharing, networking.

During the afternoon plenary discussion, Jane Murphy, a PDL Resident Teacher recently certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, received enthusiastic applause for her statement:

They (PDL) gave me time out of my classroom . . . time to spend with really accomplished teachers. I would have left the classroom years ago. . . . I think that I speak for all PDL teachers, or 80% of PDL teachers, who wouldn't have continued with their careers – probably would've moved on, out of the classrooms – I really believe that.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

While the battle is waged between demands for accountability and the teachers' struggle to meet these demands, there are also the efforts to educate the public, the educators, and ultimately the students. Within this context, PDL can draw from a common understanding of what works and what does not work in professional development.

Resources Drive Decisions

Hopefully, we learn from successes and mistakes. This cycle is especially relevant in the field of professional development. Unfortunately, the continuation of practices that often do not yield enduring results contributes to the reason for convening The Evaluation Forum. Several participants spoke of the "one-shot workshops" without follow-up in the classroom. Yet it was acknowledged that this practice continues because well-designed programs, like PDL, reach a small audience and therefore require more resources. One small group discussion reflected on sustained professional development being instituted based on limited resources:

This model (PDL) is very expensive. I think that is one of the realities as to why professional development takes place in the context that it does. It has a lot to do with cost and who's going to foot the bill for the things we say we want to do.

Joellen Killion added, "... if you want to have those kind of outcomes, you have to be willing to put forth that kind of money and effort. I appreciate cost, because it is a major issue when we talk about good staff development that obtains the results we want."

Complexity of Teaching & Professional Development

During the panel presentation, Gary Sykes suggested the group consider the following three hypotheses to help guide the conversations:

1. Specificity Hypothesis - The knowledge transmitted in professional development needs to be highly specific to the curriculum of the child. There is to be a connection between professional development and what the child learns.
2. Content Hypothesis - Three forms of knowledge as related to student work are important to work on in professional development:
 - Knowledge of subject matter as a subject - Teachers need to be engaged in the intellectual work of deepening their own understanding of subject matter, whether it's a first grade mathematics teacher or a twelfth grade physics teacher.
 - Pedagogical knowledge of subjects - the knowledge of how you teach a subject.
 - Knowledge of how children learn a subject.
3. Assessment Hypothesis – Professional development must attend not only to standardized tests, but also to a variety of other forms of learning assessment, whether or not these are advanced by the district or state.

These three hypotheses were well received by the larger group and influenced their conversations and recommendations to PDL regarding the alignment of professional development. One participant put this into perspective: "Professional development is a difficult topic because of the complexity of teaching." Gary Sykes' three hypotheses reflect that complexity. Joellen Killion warned that too many people "... assume a linear view of (the) change process ... it is not linear." In agreement with Killion's view, Tom Guskey stated: "This relationship between professional development and student learning is very complex, and it is not direct."

Culture of Collaboration

The PDL model recognizes the importance of teachers learning from each other within district and school cultures that encourage this type of collaboration. Mary Beth Blegen and Paula Evans both challenged the audience to engage the teachers in this conversation of how to evaluate professional development. Mary Beth Blegen suggested:

We should investigate how we as teachers learn to talk with each other . . . actually learning how to talk about [what was discussed today], learning to question our own practice so that all of the work that's done in the classroom is also taken out in the hall.

Valarie French felt that there was a need “to create a common vocabulary” such as the core propositions of the National Board standards, which “help forward the conversation beyond, what are we going to do tomorrow . . . and try to get beneath the surface.”

Teachers being “done to” was a concern of Paula Evans. After teachers attend professional development, they may not “internalize it, don’t have ownership of it, and oftentimes don’t think about how to adapt it to their own particular kids, or particular classroom.” This panelist felt that “we have stripped teaching of the importance of relationship building among the adults in schools that will enable the kinds of changes that we want to take place.”

A culture of collaboration must be focused on academic issues. Gary Sykes shared research which

disentangled measures of teacher professional community in schools from measures of school-wide academic press, as a separate variable. The studies have found that the schools which are high on measures of community and low on measures of academic press tend not to produce as much learning in children. . . . The key is to have both.

His comments were a reaction to the panelists’ discussion of the value in building community. Paula Evans responded by clarifying that “we are not just building a ‘feel good,’ congenial community. But we’re building deep collegiality where people are taking risks, where they’re learning how to be more self-critical and critical of each other.”

The Principal Makes the Difference

The best situation is to have teachers working in a collaborative school environment where it is the norm to examine their practice. Until schools are organized in a different way, the person with whom the responsibility rests to build these communities is the principal. A participant in one of the group discussions agreed and felt that “principals spark that learning community.”

The current organizational structure of the majority of the schools is designed with the principal as the primary leader of the school. There are exceptions where teacher leaders

share this responsibility, or when teacher leaders move forward regardless of the lack of leadership from a principal, but these situations are rare. It was evident from Paula Evans' comments that she learned the hard way:

The principal is critical, absolutely critical in changing classroom practice-- and not just being supporting and giving the go ahead, but in understanding deeply what teachers are trying to do differently in their classrooms.

A district superintendent shared an example of visiting a school where he observed that there was "no evidence of a print-rich environment, [only] commercially developed and teacher-made materials." When the superintendent was leaving, an assistant principal said: 'She's a model for a print-rich environment.' The superintendent felt that if "[the administrator] doesn't have an understanding, how is the teacher supposed to understand."

Although a principal agreed with the emphasis on her critical role, she also shared her frustrations:

As an administrator, you're almost isolated in your world because there are certain pressures coming down, which have caused your focus to be isolated. You can't spread yourself out to do what you want to do.

Regardless of the reasons, some principals are unwilling or unable to assume the instructional role. Tom Guskey addressed this leadership gap:

The issue of principal leadership is a crucial one. Often we do everything right from a professional development perspective, but then send people back into organizations that are not set up to support them in their implementation efforts. A key element in that support is the building principal. In my experience, most principals want to offer whatever support is needed. Most are also willing to make the changes necessary to have schools become a learning community. The problem is they don't know how. This points to the vital importance of well-designed professional development for school leaders. It also shows how important it is to include assessments of organization support and change in evaluating the effects of any professional development effort.

If the principal is critical to the success of building a collaborative culture but wants to learn how to do so, what are the options? Having responded to requests from the field, PDL will soon be expanding to include a pilot PDL for Principals. Furthermore, should efforts be concentrated to build the leadership capacity of these principals or should the evaluation process inform the leadership about what needs to be done? These are the questions educators across the country struggle with in their attempts to provide the most effective professional development.

EVALUATION OF PDL PROGRAM

The purpose of The Forum was to answer this question: How can PDL more effectively evaluate its impact on teaching practice and student learning? The discussions about context and the knowledge base within professional development laid the foundation for strategies addressing the evaluation process.

The panelist at each table served as a facilitator to guide the small group in the task for the day. The conversations were wide ranging, as the synergy of the small group discussions moved from context, to personal experience, to advice for PDL. Following the small group discussions, each group's notes were handed to Betty Hale and Peter Wilson, who condensed the main topics into five questions to consider during the afternoon plenary session:

1. What should be used as evidence of PDL impact?
2. How can PDL have an impact on university preparation programs?
3. How can examination of student work be incorporated into the PDL process, including evaluation?
4. How do we overcome the apparent difficulty of isolating the effects of PDL on student achievement?
5. What strategies will ensure that what teachers want to learn through PDL is tied to student achievement?

The following ideas do not represent a consensus of either the small group or plenary discussions, but reflect various deliberations throughout the day.

What is PDL's Theory-in-Use?

Before PDL begins to establish strategies for collecting evidence, Gary Sykes suggested that the program staff and partners clarify their belief system about professional development before deciding on what type of evidence to collect. In this way, the context of PDL and what is predicted to happen is taken into consideration. He outlined steps the group might follow:

- The first question that I would ask is: 'What is your argument for how this particular model is ever going to get to kids?' and let's forget about evidence and just talk . . .

- Then I'd push the conversation, I'd say: 'What's your theory-in-use?' and let's put a diagram up that would start to try, in a fairly formal and objective way, to lay out how something over here is ever going to get to something over there.
- And then I might begin to ask: 'Alright, now that you've begun to make explicit what your assumptions are, your strategic assumptions, your theoretical assumptions, then you can say: Now, what kinds of evidence could you begin to think about collecting that would start to test these arguments and these theories.'

In the afternoon plenary discussion, Robyn Brady Ince, Assistant Vice President from Bankers Trust, now Deutsche Bank, supported Gary Sykes' ideas from a funder's perspective.

One of the things I look for [as a funder] is what kind of questions are organizations asking about their practices. What theories they have, what their hypothesis is, what theories they have for change, and how they're going about reflecting on that.

Many of the participants in The Forum were either directly involved in PDL or quite familiar with the program. The remainder of the group grew to better understand the model through the small group discussions. Recognizing that PDL was a program that exceeds the majority of professional development offered across the country, the participants made recommendations that would enhance rather than substantially redesign the program. The critical questions raised by the participants might influence the theory-in-use strategy.

- **Would a whole-school approach be more effective?**

In small group discussions, there was concern that PDL visiting teachers that returned to their home schools might not always find supportive environments. Several people mentioned a "ripple effect" when the teacher returns and shares with other teachers the positive experience of PDL. A PDL teacher shared how her school specifically selected several teachers so that they would not be isolated, but in contrast, there may be schools with isolated, less supported PDL teachers. Building a critical mass of teachers within a school was attractive to several of the participants, as one teacher suggested:

PDL is promoting a one-on-one experience which has group components outside the workplace with folks from other schools, and as good as that is, I still go back into my school and my classroom and do my PDL thing, but all the rest of you in my school may not have any involvement at all. . . . And if we want to see PDL have an impact, I think we maybe need to look more at PDL as a school effort, where a lot of the faculty go through the experience and end up with a place that becomes self-sustaining, because it is a community of learners . . .

One participant in a small group discussion stated: “It has to be a schoolwide movement.” Another felt that this approach was crucial for evaluating the long-term effects of PDL on student learning.

If you watch the Visiting Teacher over time, you can see how practice changes and is sustained and evolved over time. However, looking at the students, they get dispersed to five different classrooms the next year. Until there is a critical mass in the school who is going through the program, you are not going to be able to measure student achievement.

The decision to encourage a schoolwide focus on PDL could influence the effectiveness of the evaluation process. These recommendations reflect the general discussion on the critical component of context. If a school is prepared to take advantage of the PDL teachers, combined with other effective professional development efforts, then as one person said, “there is a clear, structural focus and everyone is rooting together.”

- **How could PDL provide long-term support for teacher learning?**

In Peter Wilson’s analysis of the previous evaluations of PDL, he cited that due to financial constraints the staff recognizes the post-visitation component has been limited. He explained further during The Forum:

The research is very clear in the evaluation’s reference that there is need for extended coaching, perhaps for up to a year, if we’re hoping to really build the new skills into teachers’ repertoires on a long term basis.

One small group discussion devoted time to brainstorming how the program could provide that type of long-term support and opportunities for data collection. The following comments summarize one thread of the group’s discussion:

If we tried to focus those visits in September and October, in some ways it could make it easier for the Site Facilitators to streamline the cycles instead of spreading them out over the year. It would then become like action research over the rest of the year.

Increasingly it makes sense to start those cycles with the Visiting/Resident Teacher relationship at the beginning of the year. The role of the Site Facilitator will then become more of a coach with less juggling of cycles. Perhaps it becomes a 12-month job, so during the summer the Site Facilitators organize cycles to start at the beginning of year.

Consideration of the PDL cycle as a year-long approach has significant implications for the scope of the program because of the associated funding issues. Perhaps these participants were reflecting the current trend to look at initiatives in the “less is more” mindset. If increased funding were not available, the PDL staff and their partners would have to decide whether or not they would want to scale down the program in order to meet these goals. In a climate of pushing to “scale up,” this would be a difficult decision.

- **Are the visiting teachers' learning interests linked to research-based knowledge about student learning?**

PDL's goal is to have the area identified by the Visiting Teacher linked to district goals. The Site Facilitator then matches the Visiting Teacher's need with the Resident Teacher's expertise. When a participant asked a question about the identification of the topic the Visiting Teacher wanted to learn, someone replied that "the linkage [to research-based knowledge] is not as explicit as it should be." Peter Wilson's analysis of the previous PDL evaluations supports this conclusion. He said there was improvement needed to "help Visiting Teachers make a clear, explicit connection to research-based practice."

What Agreements Are Necessary?

The panelists and the participants both stressed the importance of gaining agreement on what were desirable student outcomes and what would be evidence of these outcomes. The group felt that after the student outcomes were delineated, strategies could be recommended for how to collect evidence of the learning.

- **Outcomes**

What should the student learn? This universal question drove a significant amount of the conversation during the day. If educators are not clear on what the outcomes of the learning should be, it is difficult to measure the outcomes for the student, and in turn, to measure the impact of professional development. Tom Guskey reminded everyone that Ralph Tyler taught this to educators in the 1940's:

[Tyler] said if you want to teach anyone anything, you must first decide what you want them to learn and, second, what evidence you would trust to verify they've learned it.

To gain agreement on the outcomes, there were recommendations to turn to the Standards. Diana Lam said:

I cannot imagine, now, engaging in any kind of professional development activity that's not really linked to the standards. If we do that, then I think it would be easier to make the connection between effective professional development and student outcomes.

One participant felt that "referencing (student work) in the standards is such a terrific thing to do, to really get a handle on building a common knowledge . . . having some agreement on what quality is."

Time is needed for teachers to make sense of the standards and link it to their teaching practice. One attendee described a project that invited teachers to be part of an inquiry project about the language arts standards.

We spent a year talking about the standards. Year two we started the inquiry projects . . . we are three-quarters of the way through and some of the teachers are coming in saying: ‘You know, I was really intrigued with the question and now I’m really intrigued with what’s happening to me as the teacher.’ And the nice thing that I see coming out of that is this sort of outrage as to why is this the first time that I’ve had this experience? Then as a staff development person, my outrage translates to the district folks to say: ‘You know, this is happening after school, on the weekends, during vacation time’ . . . but it can’t happen unless that district supports the time and place for that to happen.”

Another participant acknowledged the gap in resources:

This whole issue of curriculum, and figuring out that these are the standards against which we’re going to work; curriculum (and) expectations for students - it feels to me like it’s a conversation that has to happen within a school context and I don’t see it [happening], . . . providing the kind of time for teachers to have that conversation. The conversation about expectations is critical and the conversation about curriculum is critical.

Several participants called for the inclusion of a larger constituency to reach agreement on the outcomes. Victor Young proposed:

. . . teachers are important, principals, so forth and so on, but so are parents, so are non-parents, and so are other constituents in the communities. As difficult as those conversations can be, if the dialogue does not inform this notion of what the ‘promised land’ [outcomes] looks like, we will never get there. We must believe in our hearts that we can help all kids do better—and that ‘promised land’ must be articulated through these larger conversations . . . or we’ll never get there.

- **Evidence**

Although it may be a formidable task to reach agreement on what the student should learn, it is equally challenging to agree on what evidence of student learning will be acceptable. Joellen Killion suggested that “the evidence may need to change, depending on who is receiving the answer to that question.” Funders, legislators, school board members, school district leaders, school administrators and classroom teachers may not agree on the same evidence.

Tom Guskey described an exercise he developed based on a list of 12 different indicators of student learning. These indicators ranged from nationally normed achievement tests and statewide performance assessments to teacher-developed classroom assessments and homework assignments.

When I asked both administrators and teachers to rank these based on which they thought were the most valid indicators of student learning, their rank orderings were almost exactly reversed. In other words, administrators and teachers do not agree on what evidence of student learning is best or most valid.

Together with teachers, the National Staff Development Council's Middle School Research Project, headed by Joellen Killion, compiled an acceptable indicator list of student achievement. This list included portfolios, student exhibitions, performance tasks, state assessment results, local criteria test results, student participation in non-external academic events such as science fairs, and student participation in advanced courses.

Although the group recognized the limitation of standardized tests, they saw them as one form of evidence, which the public might want to see. Diana Lam described an example of San Antonio's struggle to raise the test scores in algebra. Over a three-year period the students' test scores improved significantly because of changes in teacher practice. She felt "that's good evidence--it doesn't give us proof, but it's good evidence that professional development works."

Reaching agreement on measures of student learning is a time-consuming process that should include all the constituents, but especially the classroom teachers. A foundation leader recognized the importance of taking the time to determine the best measures: "Foundations want to know what is happening to the kids, not what is happening to the teachers . . . It is a long-term process."

Is the Evidence a Result of PDL Alone?

Schools are involved in multiple innovations and it was questioned whether an evaluation could separate out the impact of just one program, such as PDL. One small group discussed this concern at length. They acknowledged that PDL teachers are often lifelong learners, involved in multiple learning experiences, and it would be difficult to know which experience resulted in measurable changes in teaching practice and student learning. It was suggested that PDL examine the work of Newmann and Associates¹ (1996), who used methodology to focus on one variable.

Joellen Killion extended an invitation to academics to join in with practitioners to discover new ways to measure the impact of professional development. "What we need now is the support and assistance of the research world to help us to figure out how we get to the what [measuring student achievement]."

¹ Newmann, F. and Associates. *Authentic Achievement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.

What Are Effective Strategies for Collecting Evidence?

The participants suggested a variety of strategies for collecting evidence that the PDL program was fulfilling its purposes. Three compatible strategies emerged as the most frequently mentioned approaches. These included:

1. Case studies
2. Action research
3. Examination of student work based on standards

Although these three strategies will be described separately, they have common characteristics. Each approach requires a long-term collection of data, focuses on teacher and student behavior, and is context-driven.

- **Case Studies**

Case studies are labor intensive since the collection of data is over time. Harold Vine, from NYU's Department of Teaching and Learning, supported this approach:

I want to make a very strong argument that the type of analysis we need to produce evidence to show the value of PDL is long-term intensive qualitative analysis. . . . It is much harder to do than the number crunching . . . but it is the only type of evidence which will show the value of the PDL theory.

Several panelists suggested the same approach. Paula Evans recommended that PDL:

First, talk to people over and over and over again in a very structured interview. Second, watch people within specific framework . . . over time. Third, would be to look at student work with very clear criteria for what you are looking for. Look at it collaboratively, and have the evaluators look at it.

Joellen Killion's ideas paralleled these and challenged PDL to

. . . get bold and courageous, and step outside the box, even though you may create a little furor in the academic research world . . . let teachers tell you how they see student performance changing and show you the evidence they are using to make those decisions. . . . They have hardcore evidence indicating what students can achieve that they previously could not, because teachers were not able to get the students there.

Another panelist, Valarie French, agreed with this approach:

I like the idea of case studies. Let's ask the professionals in the classrooms what it is they are using, what are they seeing in the student work, what are they asking about the student work, how does that in fact drive their instructional planning and decisions?

- **Action Research**

Several participants in the small groups shared examples of projects in which they are using action research. Ellen Dempsey and Ellen Meyers, leaders of the IMPACT II program, described their attempts to use action research to get at the effect of their program on student achievement:

The powerful thing we're doing with teachers right now is that they have to define the question. They have to come up with a research question that is not so big you can't get an answer and it has to be tied to student achievement.

A concern about this approach was expressed: "We don't want to overload [teachers], because that's what schools do all the time. They put more and more on your plate but [they] never take anything off." The representatives from IMPACT II shared the level of support they are providing for the teachers who are doing the action research: "... teachers need a tremendous amount of support . . . we give them assistance in how to go about action research methodology."

Consequently, this raised the idea of connecting a research component with the PDL teacher's experience, "... actual research asking teachers, . . . reflecting on what you're doing, what's working, what's not, what are students' assessments and what can I do differently next time."

- **Examination of student work based on standards**

The examination of student work is linked to the teacher's knowledge of the standards. A teacher may ask: 'What is the standard we expect there?' One person suggested that "... we have paper standards and now the reality of what that looks like in the classroom is something that needs to unfold, and then how do we push that into our teaching practice."

Joellen Killion outlined an approach to use:

Ask them to gather five or six samples of student work, that they are pleased with, disappointed in, and one they think is in the middle. . . . Ask them as an early process 'what do you like about this, what are the good things about this, what disappoints you about this work' --all those kinds of questions--'what did you contribute to this work for having it look the way it looks' -- sometimes they won't want to admit it because that's a hard admission. Store that, put that in your portfolio, put it away and do what you are currently doing in terms of your processes, but maybe intervene now with a new step. At midpoint take this work out and gather some new work from students and do some comparison. 'Okay, what's different, what are you noticing that's different,' and ask the teacher, 'what have you done differently to bring this about' or 'what do you need to do differently.'

To learn about the standards, teachers must look at student work as measured against those standards. In this way, teachers will compile evidence that the PDL experience is making a difference.

- **Other Strategies**

There were several other strategies mentioned in isolation during the small group discussions. Since there was not a high frequency of discussion about the approaches, they are listed below to honor the suggestions without elaboration.

1. Collect evidence that PDL is replacing other, less-effective models of professional development
2. Track PDL's alignment with school district goals
3. Ask parents to provide evidence
4. Measure the impact on reducing teacher burnout

Where could PDL collect evidence?

The advice to PDL was to not only look at the teacher but also the systems in which the teachers work. It was reported that there is a school in the program in which 85% of the teachers have participated in PDL. Betty Hale suggested that this school might be a "laboratory in which you could begin to do some of the more focused evaluating activities." Once PDL defines what they are looking for in the classroom and how to measure it, then they can determine "whether you've got a single teacher doing it or whether it has more broadly infiltrated the whole school."

CONCLUSION

The 'rigorous learners' during this day struggled with a national concern of professional development leaders and providers--the assessment of adult learning in education and its impact on student achievement. Recognizing the complexity of this task, the PDL staff appreciated the common issues that emerged throughout the day's dialogue.

Comments from numerous participants revealed it was beneficial to hear that they are not alone in the quest for demonstrating impact. PDL stakeholders--from teachers to funders--valued the opportunity to have their voices heard, expressed their concerns and shared varied perspectives. Feedback from the attendees indicated the day was helpful and served to deepen and broaden their understanding of the approaches to evaluation.

The richness of the day's exchange will inform PDL while working toward a more effective process of evaluating its professional development efforts. The notion of having teachers participate as an integral part of the evaluation process and report on what they see as evidence of student achievement, repeatedly punctuated the day, as did the need for determining criteria for meaningful evaluation related to the standards. It was felt involving more people on the school level in a similar discussion – principals, staff developers, PDL teachers, etc, could further this conversation. Several administrators in attendance reported that they intend to bring these issues to the teachers and staff with whom they work. The attendees walked away with an understanding that PDL is not alone in the journey to measure student achievement, that all constituents must work together to meet this common goal.

The challenge for the Professional Development Laboratory will now be to design an evaluation plan that will validate the following statement emphatically shared by a PDL Resident Teacher:

In the absence of hard, cold evidence, . . . I know that my students leave my classroom at the end of each school year better prepared for successful lives because of the direct influence of the Professional Development Laboratory on my teaching practice.

In pursuit of this challenge and subsequent to The Forum, PDL has assembled a committee of national reviewers to help craft its next evaluation:

- Mark Alter, Chair of the NYU School of Education's Department of Teaching and Learning
- Fred Frelow, Director of National Outreach at the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)

- Linda Darling Hammond, Executive Director of the NCTAF, as well as a professor at Stanford University
- Joellen Killion, the National Staff Development Council's Director of Special Projects
- Joe McDonald, NYU professor, previous Director of Research at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and current Co-Director of the Cross-Site Research Project of the Annenberg Challenge
- Lori Mei, Deputy Executive Director of the NYC Board of Education's Division of Assessment and Accountability

The group will collectively refine an evaluation design and choose an evaluation team. As the design is in process at this writing, it is premature to be specific about its content. However, many of the worthy suggestions raised at The Forum are being considered for inclusion, such as:

- the use of focus groups and case studies
- comparative study between a new and existing PDL district
- evaluating the extent to which PDL supports the districts' goals
- analyzing the link between PDL and achievement within the new standards
- incorporating the teachers into the actual evaluation process through action research

The inquiry into the depths of assessing professional development as it impacts student learning has been an exploration of collaborative discovery. Together with colleagues and stakeholders, PDL has explored the concerns of its constituents, gathered suggestions from those well versed in evaluating and those familiar with the primary sources, the students themselves. The Evaluation Forum convened affiliates on the issues at hand to ultimately further PDL's own goals, while hopefully enriching the national conversation on this "elusive subject" of evaluating professional development.

APPENDICES

Appendix A PDL Overview

Appendix BThe Evaluation Forum Panelists and Guests

Appendix CThe Evaluation Forum Agenda

Professional Development Laboratory Overview

The mission of the Professional Development Laboratory (PDL) is to improve student learning by supporting teachers in their quest for professional excellence at all stages of their careers. Based in New York University's School of Education, PDL is a unique collaboration of the university, the New York City Board of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and the private sector. PDL originated in 1989 with a vision for a new approach to professional development where classrooms become "laboratories" for teacher learning that takes place during the school day. It is a growth model, not a deficit model, with voluntary participation, building on the internal motivation to learn and grow. PDL enables teachers to develop their professionalism in the context of school plans, district objectives, and state and national standards. Districts and schools can adapt PDL to respond to their specific needs and goals. At the close of the 1998-1999 school year, PDL had assisted over 2,300 teachers and 65,000 students in New York City public schools.

A PDL classroom visitation cycle is the core element of the program. A cycle is a multi-week visit with complementary pre- and post-visitation activities involving an exemplary Resident Teacher, a Visiting Teacher, and a Replacement Teacher. Resident and Visiting teachers are paired based on the Visiting Teacher's goals within the district's PDL initiative.

The cycle begins with the exemplary Resident Teacher observing the classroom of the Visiting Teacher, and then assisting the Visiting Teacher in formulating an action plan that details the professional goals for the cycle. During this pre-visitation period, a prepared Replacement Teacher assists in the Visiting Teacher's classroom, allowing for a smooth transition when the Visiting Teacher leaves and the Replacement Teacher takes over the class. During the visitation portion of the cycle, the Replacement and Visiting Teachers maintain close contact.

The visitation period to the Resident Teacher's classroom stresses the Resident Teacher's exemplary teaching practices as s/he models the goals defined by the Visiting Teacher. During common planning times, the two teachers constantly review those goals, assess progress, give each other feedback, and establish next steps as they increasingly co-teach classes. This establishment of democratic collegiality and reflection facilitates the learning process for both the Visiting and Resident Teachers. These teachers draw on a variety of techniques (including journals, video and audiotapes, portfolios, and mini-projects) to document their learning processes over the course of the cycle, for their future reference and to share with interested colleagues.

After the visitation portion of the cycle, the Visiting Teacher returns to his/her classroom and transitions back, while the Replacement Teacher remains for the post-visitation period. The Visiting Teacher works to implement new teaching strategies learned from the Resident Teacher. During a follow-up visit, the Resident Teacher provides on-site assistance to further incorporate changes that the Visiting Teacher is trying to make. Many Visiting and Resident Teachers continue to stay in touch by telephone or email long after the cycle ends.

PDL challenges teachers to reflect on practice and explore new methods of teaching in order to increase student learning, expanding beyond the basic core cycle to include extension activities that follow the collegial, longitudinal perspective of development in various formats and topics. A variety of cross-district activities, sponsored by PDL, contribute to the continual learning process that distinguishes PDL from other approaches to professional development. PDL Teachers as Ambassadors invites PDL educators to serve as representatives of the profession to their peers on local, regional and national levels. The Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI) is a graduate-level course offered by PDL through the NYU School of Education. In TLI, teachers engage in hands-on, intensive learning to further their skills as leaders, collaborators, and researchers. PDL teachers also engage in presentations at conferences with audiences ranging from the district to national levels.

Through the cycles and extension activities, teachers grow while students thrive and come to view their teachers as learners. In turn, schools become collaborative centers where professionals reflect together on student work and share effective teaching practices. This transforms school districts into learning communities where collegiality, confidence, desire and a love for teaching and learning create a synergism, furthering the careers of teachers and the education of New York City Public School students, the leaders of tomorrow.

The Evaluation Forum Panelists & Guests

Mary Beth Blegen, 1996 National Teacher of the Year, is a Teacher in Residence at the U.S. Department of Education, brought by Secretary Richard Riley to work with Terry Dozier, his Special Advisor on Teaching. They are responsible for helping to bridge communications between the nation's teachers and the Department's top policy makers by soliciting teachers' views and by presenting the teacher's perspective on various issues.

Paula Evans is Director of Professional Development at the Annenberg Institute. Since 1984, she has been at Brown University in several different capacities – as founder and director of the Institute for Secondary Education; as director of Brown's teacher education programs; as director of professional development, first for the Coalition of Essential Schools and now for the Annenberg Institute. She is currently responsible for developing, leading and supporting the National School Reform Faculty.

Valarie Willis French is the Vice President, Assessment Operations, for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Prior to coming to the National Board, she was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction Development in the Office of Academic Affairs at The College Board in New York, NY, and was Special Assistant to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education.

Thomas R. Guskey is Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. He served as an administrator in Chicago Public Schools, has been a teacher at all levels, and has worked in the area of staff development for over 20 years. He is a regular presenter at the annual conference of the National Staff Development Council and is one of the authors of the new Standards for Staff Development. Among many other publications, he has authored *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices*, with M. Huberman, (Teachers College Press, 1995), which was named the NSDC Book of the Year.

Elizabeth L. Hale served as PDL's Evaluation Forum Facilitator. She is Vice President of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), a nationally based, locally rooted organization whose mission is to help individuals and institutions make decisions to improve the education and well-being of children. She helps to create and implement initiatives that bridge the research, policy, and practice worlds, connecting policy with practice leaders and networks.

Joellen Killion serves as a staff developer for a large suburban school district north of Denver. She coordinates the district's involvement with the Partners in Education Program, a collaborative partnership among several districts and the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is currently the National Staff Development Council's Director of Special Projects, and recently directed a project that identified middle level staff development initiatives that have improved the achievement of urban middle school students. The findings have been published in a resource guide.

Diana Lam, as a previous superintendent, perceives the direct link between student achievement and teachers' professional development. Supervising three very different districts in Texas, Iowa and Massachusetts, she has helped student test scores reach new highs. During her tenure in Texas, the number of low-rated San Antonio schools fell from 42 to a mere 2, even while the standard had increased. San Antonio is a New American Schools jurisdiction, with 70% of the schools committed to implementing a comprehensive design for school reform.

Gayle Moller served as PDL's Evaluation Forum Writer-in-Residence, and is Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Allied Professions at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC. She also serves as a Board of Trustee member for the NSDC and is co-developer in a national project, *Creating Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*, sponsored by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. She has been involved in several comprehensive projects that have provided learning support systems for educators as they learn to work together to solve problems. Among many other publications, Ms. Moller, with M. Katzenmeyer, has written *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Leadership Development for Teachers*, published by Corwin Press (1996).

Gary Sykes has been involved in policy research and reform around issues of teacher professionalism. Over the past seven years he has served as chief of staff to The Holmes Group. He has worked with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, has conducted policy research for the Center for Policy Research in Education, and has consulted with states across the country on issues of teaching policy and reform. Currently, he is also working with an NCATE project to develop standards for Professional Development Schools and is co-authoring the forthcoming report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Peter Wilson served as PDL's Evaluation Forum Analyst and is presently an educational consultant for leadership development primarily in the St. Louis Public Schools and The Charlottesville, Virginia Public Schools. From 1990-1997, he served as Program Director for The Danforth Foundation where he was responsible for developing and directing national and local programs.

Victor C. Young is founder and president of the Learning Communities Network, Inc. Prior to launching LCN, he was Senior Consultant in the School Reform division at the Rockefeller Foundation, where he helped craft their professional development initiative. Mr. Young is nationally recognized as a speaker and consultant on issues relating to education and philanthropy.

The Evaluation Forum Agenda*The Evaluation Forum*

- 9:30 *Welcome & Introductions*
- ❖ Mary Ann Walsh, PDL Director
 - ❖ Ann Marcus, Dean, School of Education
 - ❖ Judith Rizzo, Deputy Chancellor, NYC Public Schools
- 9:45 *Forum Focus*
- ❖ Betty Hale, Evaluation Forum Facilitator
 - ❖ Peter Wilson, Evaluation Forum Analyst
- 10:00 *Panel Discussion*
- ❖ Introductions
 - ❖ Betty Hale moderates
- 11:00 *Round Table Discussions with Panelists*
- ❖ Summarize main issues and questions at each table
- 12:00 *Break*
- 12:15 *Lunch*
- ❖ Informal discussion continues with Panelists
 - ❖ Betty Hale & Peter Wilson condense table summaries
- 1:15 *Dessert*
- ❖ Betty Hale presents key issues raised at table discussions
 - ❖ Panelists & Attendees respond
- 2:15 *Closing Remarks*
- ❖ Mary Ann Walsh



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Signature: <i>Tina Rappaport</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>Tina Rappaport, Project Associate for Development</i>	
Organization/Address: <i>Professional Development Laboratory, New York University Pless Annex, Rm 661, 82 Washington Square East New York, NY 10003-6680</i>	Telephone: <i>212-998-5031</i>	FAX: <i>212-995-2563</i>
	E-Mail Address: <i>tr13(a)is9.nyu.edu</i>	Date: <i>3/1/00</i>